

THE COMMUNICATOR

July 2024

From the Pastor's Keyboard...

"freedom"

I am writing this article on the two-year anniversary of one of the darkest days I have ever seen in the life of our country; the anniversary of the Dobbs decision before the Supreme Court, where for the first time in our history, constitutional freedoms for individuals interpreted by a sitting Supreme Court were taken away by a later, more regressive sitting Supreme Court. This 2022 Dobbs decision reversed the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that granted women freedom over their own bodies, taking vital freedoms away from half of the citizens of the United States. Women growing up today have significantly less freedom than women growing up a generation ago.

This regression of freedom has caused me to think considerably about the idea of freedom over the past two years; and I am not alone. All across the country, U.S. citizens have seen their freedoms taken away by legislators and judges who subscribe to the new fascism that has seized the thought processes of many in our country. This fascist oppression has caused many to ask: "what is freedom, really?"

There is no such thing as true freedom. Even in a "free country" one is not free to do anything one chooses. We are still not "free" to yell "fire" in a crowded movie theatre. We are not "free" to operate dangerous equipment without training and licensure. We are not "free" to commit actions that harm others. Freedom is not something you can touch, it is an intangible concept; it is an ideal to live into.

When our founders put structure to this country in 1789, they did so with the ideals of freedom ringing in their ears; but by the time our founding documents were inked, the freedoms that were articulated were only conferred on white men. Black men did not receive any degree of freedom until June 19, 1865 and women did not receive freedom to vote until August, 1920. Many Asians and Black Women were denied the freedom to vote until the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The freedom to marry across racial lines was not granted to interracial couples until 1967 and the queer community did not gain the freedom to marry whomever they love until 2015. Women did not gain control over their own bodies until 1973; a freedom that would be taken away from them 49 years later. Last week, freedom from religious oppression was taken away from every student in Louisiana Public Schools who will now be indoctrinated by a very narrow view of religion. What we label as a "free country" does not have a very clean history of "freedom."

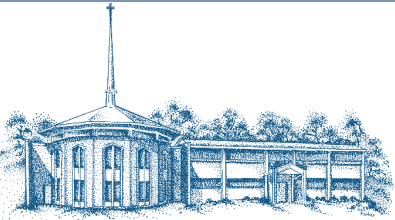
Maybe "freedom" is not something we have, as much as it is something aspirational. Maybe "freedom" is something we draw out, a bit at a time; live into, struggle with, and struggle for. Maybe "freedom" is an unattainable goal, but a goal to strive for nonetheless. Maybe "freedom" is something that will always be just over the horizon, like a rainbow that we can't reach out and touch but that brightens our souls anyway.



A mentor of mine once said that "freedom is the right to choose for yourself whom you will serve." In other words, freedom is still servitude; but serving whom you choose. As Christians, we are called by Jesus to serve a God who is inclusive of all, pluralistic in relationship, and not bound by the doctrines of humanity. We are called to serve a God who affirms the value and worth of each person. We are called to serve a God of limitless love and we are called to exemplify that ourselves.

The freedom-denying fascists of our society are seeking to take away our freedoms to choose, to love, to think intelligently, and to live as God intends us to live. It is up to us to fight for our freedom, just as our ancestors have. For now, we still have the freedom to choose for ourselves whom we will serve. It is time to make that choice. Who will we serve, God or Mammon?

-Pastor Rick



Columbia United Church of Christ

**3201 I-70 Drive NW
Columbia, MO 65202**

Rev. Rick Oberle

Pastor

Rev. Fred Brandenburg

Pastor Emeritus

Shelly Adams

Student Pastor

Casey Wood

Music Coordinator

Steven Jannetti

Organist/Accompanist

Alexandra Roper

Office Administrator

Erika Maltsbarger

Director, Little One's Day Out

Caleb Berry

Custodian

Sunday Schedule:

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation

9:00 a.m. Fellowship Time

9:30 a.m. Worship

Office Hours:

Monday through Friday

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Phone:

(573) 445-7931

Email:

office@columbiaucc.com

Website:

www.columbiaucc.com



News & Updates

SUNDAY MORNING SAFETY

For the safety and security of our church, and the people present, a Church Council member will now be available in the Gathering Area each Sunday during worship. The Council Steward will be available to greet visitors who arrive after worship has begun, assist those who may not feel well, answer questions and give directions to people who need to step out of worship, and monitor the Gathering Area as needed.

The Nurture & Education Ministry Team has been talking to our children and youth about being safe at church, including walking - not running - inside our church building, and staying only in the Gathering Area or the sanctuary during Worship. We ask that parents and guardians help reinforce these safety standards and ensure that our children and youth follow these worship guidelines.

Member Information Update

Helen Graves has moved to Colony Point Assisted Living. Her new address is 1510 Chapel Hill Rd. Room A2, Columbia, MO 65203. Make sure to update your address books.

MOBILITY WORLD WIDE FUNDRAISER CRAFT BEER AND CARTS

Mobility World Wide is an organization that builds and gives Mobility Carts to those who have mobility challenges in 75 different countries. Our cart was put into The Gathering Area on June 30, to be decorated by our congregation! We encourage all to add to the cart to show your care and support.

Craft Beer and Carts is the annual fundraiser for Mobility World Wide - Columbia. It will be located at the MU Health Care Pavilion at 1701 W. Ash Street, Columbia, MO 65203, on July 14 from noon to 4:00 p.m. We are aiming to raise at least \$800 this year to be at the "Band Sponsor" level.

THE CHRISTMAS FUND- CHRISTMAS IN AUGUST

Many people who serve the church do so with great love but small financial compensation. This is especially true of retired clergy and their spouses. The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. This year's collection date is August 4.

Funds from this offering provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses may be eligible for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and/or Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks. Please give generously to the Christmas Fund Special Offering.



July Birthdays

Harry Beckett - 7/2 Marshia Beckmann - 7/3 Kurt Heine - 7/6 Linda Evans - 7/8 Mike Pierson - 7/8
 Alex Tennill - 7/8 Annabelle Veteto - 7/9 Parker Grace - 7/10 Corinne Remeika - 7/11 Jo Ellen Grace - 7/12
 Lillyann Lentz - 7/12 Linda Neale - 7/13 Grace Williams - 7/13 Jack Hall - 7/14 James Loveless - 7/15
 John Muench - 7/15 Karen Schmidt - 7/15 Sharon Elliott - 7/17 John Graves - 7/17 Shelly Adams - 7/19
 Gary Ehrhardt - 7/19 Helen Graves - 7/20 Harrison Keithahn - 7/23 Audrey Lasley - 7/23 Dorothy Williams - 7/23
 Erin Markway - 7/24 Derek Flood-Lorber - 7/26 Megan Hall - 7/27

Sunday Volunteer Schedule for July

DATE	GREETERS	USHERS	WORSHIP LEADERS	TECH BOOTH
07/07	JOLENE KIRCHHOFF	LLONA WEISS AUDREY LASLEY	TRICIA SONCASIE	BRENT MARCKS LORRY DREIER
07/14	JUDI PRIVITT	PAT FORWARD MARK DUNCAN	AUDREY LASLEY	DOUG PRIVITT JUDI PRIVITT
07/21	JESSICA LUCAS	MAHREE SKALA CHRISTINE STAELENS	LYDIA WHITACRE	TED DACHROEDEN JOSH MUENCH
07/28		MARY LORBER TOM SOLT	MAHREE SKALA	JOHN GRAVES

COLUMBIA UCC CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderator:
Vice Moderator:
Secretary:
Treasurer:
Recording Treasurer:
Building & Grounds:
Fellowship & Hospitality:
Finance & Stewardship:
Inclusion & Affirmation:
Little One's Day Out:
Membership & Care:
Nurture & Education:
Outreach & Advocacy:
Worship & Music:
Pastor:

Kurt Heine
 Jerry Kiesling
 Alethea Tennill
 Deborah Long Birkes
 Christine Staelens
 Ted Dachroeden
 Mary Lorber-Solt
 Vacant
 Tricia Price
 Kristin Veteto
 Judi Privitt
 Lena Muench
 Mark Duncan
 Jedd Schneider
 Rev. Rick Oberle

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elusive4thtenor@icloud.com
rick@columbiaucc.com



CUCC Church Council

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Kurt Heine. Pastor Rick opened us with prayer.

Present: Kurt Heine, Jerry Kiesling, Sue Ann Schaefer, Christine Staelens, Ted Dachroeden, Mary Lorber-Solt, Keith Birkes, Tricia Price, Lorry Dreier, Pat Forward, Mark Duncan, Rick Oberle, Alethea Tennill, Lena Muench, Jed Schneider, Deb Birkes, and Jessica Lucas.

Motion to approve the agenda passed. Motion to approve the April minutes passed.

Unfinished Business:

- ✿ Policy and Procedures Manual Update: Personnel Committee met in May. Added parental leave.
- ✿ Land Donation Update: Closing date is set for June 2.
- ✿ HVAC Bid: Three units have been replaced. Ted suggested that we get a security camera over the units.
- ✿ Council Retreat: The retreat has been set for Thursday, June 6 at 6 p.m. at The Heidelberg.

New Business:

- ✿ Scout Troop Charter: Bob Maltsbarger and other scout leaders proposed use of our church for their meetings. It would include Scout Troop 708 (boys), Scout Troop 4475 (girls), and Cub Scout Troop 5183. Some equipment will be stored on our property; our church will hold the title to the trailers with liability insurance. We will authorize them to open an extra checking account. They are hoping to also participate in our worship services. Motion passed.
- ✿ Purchase bus for the church: Jessica Lucas proposed that we purchase a 14-passenger bus from St. John UCC in St. Charles for \$7,500. Motion coming from council to purchase the bus. Motion passed.
- ✿ Urban Mission Experience: Pastor Rick discussed initiating a COMO Mission Experience at CUCC. Groups of youth would be hosted at our church during the week and coordinate mission work in Columbia for non-profit agencies that we serve during the year. Moving forward with the idea.
- ✿ Appoint new LODO Ministry Team Members: The nomination committee made a motion to appoint Christine Meske and Lydia Whitacre to the LODO Ministry Team. Motion passed.
- ✿ Mader Fund: The congregation voted at the meeting in May to create an Endowment fund for CUCC. Once the Endowment Fund reaches \$500,000, four percent of the profit will be used to support the budget. Keith Birkes made a motion to transfer from the Mader Fund \$60,000 to the Endowment Fund, \$5,000 to Transportation Fund, and the rest to be moved to undesignated church funds. Ted Dachroeden seconded the motion. Motion passed.
- ✿ Council Meetings will remain on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.
- ✿ Finance & Stewardship Chair is still open: The nominating committee is still working on finding someone to fill this position.

Pastor's Report: Pastor's Report is attached. Financials were presented.

Ministry Reports:

- ✿ Fellowship & Hospitality: Questionnaires were handed out at the annual meeting to determine what activities the congregation would like. They received 48 questionnaires back.
- ✿ Finance & Stewardship: They are starting to promote the Endowment Fund.
- ✿ Inclusion & Affirmation: The handicapped access ramp is available for the chancel steps. The bookshelves for the children in the sanctuary have spotlights on them.
- ✿ Nurture & Education: Lainey will be in the nursery during the summer. VBS is in July.
- ✿ Outreach & Advocacy: Missourians for Constitutional Freedom acquired double the number of signatures needed. It will be on the November ballot. "Green Team" will begin exploring and caring for the world we live in.
- ✿ Worship & Music; LODO; Membership & Care; Building & Grounds: Reports attached.

Pastor Rick closed us in prayer. Motion to adjourn by Lorry Dreier, second by Tricia Price. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Alethea Tennill,
Secretary



Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team

The dog days of summer have arrived early and the heat is on. With the summer heat and spare time, I understand that most people have many are going on: vacation, attending summer camps, visiting relatives and friends and all kinds of fun things. That includes us. CUCC is also very busy this summer. There are still opportunities to give of your time or just enjoy your time with the events of the summer.

We have Vacation Bible School July 29-31; Team Earth's kick off meeting July 14; Taizé Prayer service every Wednesday June 19 through July 24; a Trip To The Muny in St Louis on Sunday, July 21; and a Summer Book Study covering "Green Faith: Mobilizing God's People to Save the Earth," to name a few of the summer events and opportunities for you.

Don't forget this summer that CUCC needs your time, your talent and your joyful giving. Thank you so much for all that you do.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sue Ann Schaefer



Financial Update

	Actual	Budget	Over/(Under)
May Income	\$25,731.96	\$27,320.00	(-\$1,588.04)
May Expenses	\$38,443.63	\$29,425.83	\$9,017.80
YTD Income	\$161,044.84	\$151,070.00	\$9,974.84
YTD Expenses	\$171,134.12	\$158,531.47	\$12,602.65
Surplus/(Deficit)	(-\$10,089.28)	(-\$7,461.47)	(-\$2,627.81)
May Joyful Giving	\$21,365.30	\$26,500.00	(-\$5,134.70)
YTD Joyful Giving	\$152,620.63	\$145,500.00	\$7,120.63

Worship Attendance

Date	Attendance
05/05	96
05/12	97
05/19	101
05/26	63

CUCC ONLINE GIVING

You can now give online to Columbia United Church of Christ through our online giving partner, Kindrid!

There are several ways to make a one time or recurring gift through Kindrid:

1. Click on this link (or type into your web browser): <https://www.kindridgiving.com/app/giving/cucc>
2. Access the Kindrid giving site through our CUCC website: www.columbiaucc.com and click on the "Donate to CUCC" button.
3. Text "GIVE" to 573-240-4041 and follow the prompts to set up your one time or recurring gift.

Moderator's Moment

Take one dose every couple of weeks or once per month as directed. Side effects may include: increased sense of purpose and belonging in your church, sense of well being, positive interactions with types of people that you don't normally interact with, broken barriers and divisions of what separates us, loss of a sense of entitlement, and the overwhelming feeling of Christian love. If there was an tv commercial for a prescription drug called "volunteering," I think this is what it would sound like. I came up with this idea because I was thinking about why I volunteer and I thought about how the "side effects" of volunteering in general overshadow or outweigh the initial intended purpose, much like a drug commercial where the side effects are read off at a lightning fast clip just so they can fit into a 30 second spot.

As a teenager my parents encouraged me to volunteer so that I could have something to put on my resume for college and scholarship applications. I begrudgingly signed up for the City Of Columbia's Volunteer program, which connected youth with various volunteer opportunities, and for two summers I did a whole lot of volunteering. Special Olympics, bike races, food pantry, parades, the list went on and on. Then later in my life, I got involved helping out with the True/False film festival. I got assigned to the set up crew with the Missouri River relief folks, they had the trucks and trailers necessary to move large quantities of tables, chairs, stage risers, kiosks and wacky art installations that have become a hallmark of the fest. In all the instances of volunteering I have come to find that the side effects, though they may not be immediate, have helped to shape my positive outlook on humanity. I may not have gotten those big ticket scholarships, but what I gained from those experiences will stay with me forever.

When a group of strangers can come together, coordinate efforts, and pull something off, that is truly magic. Our ministry teams have that same magic within them, they just need one ingredient- you. Please come to the ministry team fair on August 25 after church to find out where you fit best. Any level of involvement, no matter how small is a help and a blessing to this church family.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kurt Heine, Moderator



Clergy Personnel Committee

The Clergy Personnel Committee, including Pat Forward, Kristy Hayward, outgoing member John Graves and myself, convened on June 13 with Pastor Rick. The committee welcomed me as the newest member, and we thanked John for his contributions. Pastor Rick noted the addition of the Scout troop as an exciting addition to the church. They should start using our space soon. We also discussed improving ways we communicate with the wider world, as well as with current membership, about upcoming events, any new policies, and ways to sign up for volunteering opportunities.

Our main topic of conversation was the pastoral evaluation results. These results appeared to be highly positive with majority excellent and good ratings. Specific goals were identified from the evaluation. In summary, we recognized the challenge intrinsic to a Pastor's role, both maintaining pastoral relationships with members and managing day-to-day functions of the church/ministry teams, which can be a difficult balance.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mike Pierson



Music & Worship

Throughout this month, I've been feeling grateful for the opportunities I've had to serve through music. I've spent almost the entire month of June in my home state of Utah. Of course, I've been visiting family and friends, but I've also taken many opportunities to set up various music events. You may remember that I submitted a video for an anthem performance during Sunday service a few weeks back. That was something I was very excited to share with the congregation. It was something all of the singers were very excited about as well. Almost all of those singers are either students or professionals in an area other than music. They frequently communicate how much they miss being able to sing in groups. I know how important it is to participate in your passions and hobbies outside of employment, so I'm always looking for ways to produce community music.

I've also founded and directed multiple acapella quartets. These groups are for the most advanced of my former students. We sing anything from classical to vocal jazz music. It gives young singers an opportunity to compose and arrange music and get it performed. We also submit for various public performances and competitions. The most recent group I've founded is a treble quartet called the Little Mountain Singers.

Perhaps my favorite group I worked with in Utah is a group called the Summit Singers. It is a 50 voice semi-professional mixed choir. It is made up of music teachers, music majors, and also non-career musicians. This group has performed at state conferences. But it is most fulfilling because of the opportunities it gives the singers to enjoy their hobbies at a very high level. Are there any ways that you can use your talents and hobbies to provide communities for others?

Respectfully Submitted,
Casey Wood,



Green Team

How is God Calling CUCC to Care for God's Creation?

Dear friends, many of you are likely familiar with the book "The Giving Tree" by Shel Silverstein. It's a story that holds many lessons about how we live with and among one another. In the book, a young boy meets and befriends a tree. Over the course of the book, the boy asks the tree for parts of itself, beginning with an apple, then its branches, and eventually the boy takes and takes and takes and all that is left of the tree is a stump with nothing left to give. Many see this as a story of generosity. But it's also a story of self-sacrifice on the part of the tree and unsustainable consumption on the part of the boy. I see this story not just as a story about a boy and a tree, but a story of humankind and God's creation.

Like the tree, God's creation has limited resources. And like the boy, we continue to extract more and more from creation to satisfy our needs - personally and collectively. But we know that God calls us to be stewards of God's creation. Stewardship involves responsibility and care - care for creation and care for those among us who are most impacted by our often acquisitive, extractive ways of using the gifts of creation. We often use water as if it's an unlimited resource, yet there are many among us who don't have enough water. Our industrial practices release greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere, contributing to the changing climate we are experiencing. Highly intensive factory farming practices, fueled by our own food choices, are taking a toll on God's creation.

Our congregation can't completely eliminate these issues. But what we can do is discern what God is calling us to do to care for God's creation. What does that look like? It starts with prayer. Individually and collectively, we can pray, listening for God's still, small voice. And it continues with openness to learning and the willingness to examine our own daily practices and how they impact creation, and discernment together on how CUCC can be faithful stewards of the earth.

To that end, we are assembling "Team Earth" at CUCC to lead that discernment process. Pastor Rick, Llona, Mahree, and I have been meeting to get things started. We're having our first official Team Earth meeting on Sunday, July 14, right after worship. Some of you have already expressed interest in participating on Team Earth. All are welcome to join us as we learn and discern. If you have questions, reach out to Pastor Rick, Mahree, Llona, and me. Please join us on July 14 as we begin this important discussion as a faith community.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shelly Adams



Inclusion and Affirmation Ministry Team

Meetings of the Inclusion and Affirmation Ministry Team cover a wide variety of subjects and projects. Listed below are just a few of them:

- ✿ Sponsorship of Columbia's PrideFest, with a booth staffed by volunteers from our church.
- ✿ Yearly attendance at the Columbia Values Diversity breakfast.
- ✿ Book studies pertaining to the accomplishments and/or struggles of various communities in the U.S., as well as the world.
- ✿ Thoughtful additions to the church including: a portable ramp to allow access for all to the church chancel; preparing to hang Mayan tapestries in solidarity with our sister community in Chiapas; planning to update the wooden Nativity set by making the skin tone representative of the people of Bethlehem and providing our children with reading materials showcasing how our differences make us stronger.
- ✿ Partnering with the LBGQTIA Choral Spectrum of Kansas City and The Quorus of Columbia.
- ✿ Monthly bulletin and Communicator pieces highlighting individuals and groups who have contributed to our understanding of the Glory of God's diverse creation.
- ✿ Tours of historical neighborhoods (in St. Louis and Columbia) to understand past incidents, how we have improved, and where more work is needed to better uplift and support one another.

In our current politically polarized, economically divided, religiously antagonistic, power hungry and war ravished world, the above programs are meant to enrich, enlighten, and empower God's children to work towards a better life for all.

Regularly attending members include Tricia Price, Tricia Soncasie, Kristy Hayward, Alisa Lau-Sieckman, and, of course, Pastor Rick. This is a tiny group for such an important church ministry. Per our bylaws, we should have around eight committee members. We meet about six times per year. Please, consider this a personal invitation to join us. We need your voice, your insight, and your helping hands.

Respectfully submitted,
Alisa Lau-Sieckman



CUCC OPEN AND AFFIRMING/INCLUSION COVENANT

Columbia United Church of Christ celebrates God's boundless and unconditional love by intentionally welcoming and affirming all God's children.

- * No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey;
- * No matter where you are on your faith journey;
- * No matter your sexual orientation, gender expression or identity;
- * No matter your race, culture, ethnicity, nationality or politics;
- * No matter your age, ability, health, relationship status or family structure;
- * No matter your social, economic, educational, legal or life circumstances;
- * You are welcome here!

Called by Jesus to be an Open and Affirming, inclusive faith community, Columbia United Church of Christ commits to welcoming everyone into the full life of our congregation. Our paths and voices may differ, but we journey in faith together.



LODO Ministry Team

Our summer closing at LODO means lots of projects before the upcoming school year! Our classroom floors will receive a new coat of wax in July to keep them looking fresh. We will touch-up paint in classrooms, clean carpets and windows, and reorganize our back storage area. Our biggest project of the summer - our LODO Rummage Sale Fundraiser – was held on June 28 and 29! Thank you to everyone for your donations and shopping the sale! All proceeds have been placed in the new LODO Ministry Fund.

In Love and Laughter,
Erika Maltsbarger



2024-2025 Enrollment

LODO has very limited enrollment remaining in our classrooms for the 2024-2025 school year. Information on the program can be found on the website at www.columbiaucc.com/lodohome. Please spread the word and have interested families contact Erika Maltsbarger at littleonesdayout@yahoo.com. You can help by sharing our social media posts about enrollment on your page or to groups that might find the information helpful.

2024-2025 Employment Opportunities

We are looking to fill positions for the 2024-2025 school year. Current employment opportunities with position details are available on our website <https://www.columbiaucc.com/lodoemployment>.

Ways to Support the LODO Ministry

- ✱ LODO maintains an ongoing Amazon Wish List for supplies and materials to create lasting memories and learning in our preschool. Donations can be made by purchasing items on the list or making a monetary donation to the LODO ministry.

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3135KEL32FTBN?ref_=wl_share

- ✱ Continue to grow our LODO Ministry Fund for future large cost needs by making a donation to the LODO Ministry Fund.

2024-2025 Important Dates

LODO Staff Annual Planning Meeting
Monday, August 12 | 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

LODO Team Building
Tuesday, August 20 | 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

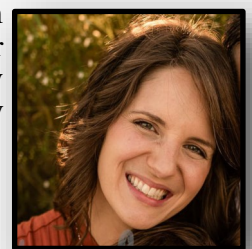
LODO Back to School/Meet the Teacher Night First Day of LODO 2024-2025 School Year

“Thought breeds thought; children familiar with great thoughts take as naturally to thinking for themselves as the well-nourished body takes to growing; and we must bear in mind that growth, physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, is the sole end of education.” - Charlotte Mason

As I’ve had the occasion lately to bury my head in policies and descriptions while preparing for this new role as LODO Ministry Chair, I was reminded of the importance of it all, especially for our little ones. It is our duty as the LODO Ministry Team to facilitate a nurturing educational environment for preschool children in our community and our church family. This is not only our duty as the ministry team, but our calling as a church body. I love this quote by Charlotte Mason who sees the development of a child as a whole body, not as individual parts to be addressed separately. In fact, her first and most important principle is that “children are born persons”- whole persons! Certainly a person in need of nourishment, guidance, and most importantly, love and acceptance. A thought to consider as we turn our eyes not only this past month to God’s abundant and steadfast love, but also forward to the importance of LODO as a vital part of the health and service of this church body.

This past month we met to review and approve the staff manual and parent/guardian handbooks, purchased a much needed printer for the LODO office, and made preparations for the LODO Rummage Sale coming up at the end of June. In addition we said welcome to new incoming members and farewell to those who have faithfully served on the board for many years. Welcome to Lydia Whitacre and Christine Mseke! Thank you Lorry Dreier, Jolene Kirchhoff, and Jo Ellen Grace for your excellent leadership and insight on the LODO Ministry Team!

Blessings,
Kristin Veteto



Nurture & Education

Greetings! My latest “hat” to wear at CUCC is that of the Nurture and Education Ministry Team Chair. “Taking this on” was made so much easier knowing that we have a super team that is so committed to all things educational, caring, and fun for the kiddos of all ages at CUCC (including those of us who consider ourselves adults!).

It may be summer, but our team is definitely not at rest. Our big venture of the summer is Vacation Bible School, from July 29 through July 31. We are excited to be promoting it more this year, as we have more space available with the completion of the amazing sanctuary remodel that was in progress last summer. Our fingers are crossed that we’ll have record attendance! We need your help though. Check out the VBS table in the Gathering Area, our flyer in the Communicator, the Friday e-mails, and our Facebook page. There’s lots of information about opportunities to help and to register attendees and volunteers. Registration is open for everyone until July 10, but why wait? We love seeing grandkids, nieces and nephews, other relatives, friends, neighbors... the sky’s the limit! Help us spread the word!

We’re also already planning for Rally Day and the Fall, thinking of even more ways to involve our kiddos and youth, to make coming on Sundays even more meaningful for families. We considering additional Adult Education opportunities. We are 100% not at rest right now.

I mentioned earlier that we have a super team - that is undisputed. However, we are small in numbers, and our crew is also lovingly committed to other ministry opportunities at CUCC. Frankly, we need more hands on deck. We’re going to be looking at more ways for people (like you!) to help, without having to necessarily come to “ugggghhh, meetings” (although ours are lively and fun if I do say so myself!). Quick things here and there... lots of possibilities. No experience required. Please let me know if you’re at least curious. We can even brainstorm together to figure out what you’d love doing and is within your comfort zone. Always feel free to hook me up with the names of others who you’d think would be great, too (wink, wink!)

Great things are happening at CUCC. Join the party.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lena Muench



July 29-31

5:15 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

Camp Firelight

A SUMMER CAMP ADVENTURE WITH GOD

Psalm 56:3

Register Below:

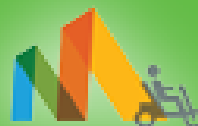
Attendee Registration

Volunteer Registration

The graphic features a cartoon bee character with wings, a small cabin with a red roof, and a campfire. The background is a dark blue night sky with a full moon and silhouettes of pine trees.



FUNDRAISER FOR MOBILITY WORLDWIDE MO - COLUMBIA



CRAFT BEER & CARTS

FOOD TRUCKS

LEFTY'S KETTLE CORN
ZYDECO'S CAJUN
GINA'S VEGAN A GO GO
MIA TACO

**ADULTS
TICKET \$20**

**STUDENTS
TICKET \$10**

**KIDS UNDER
10 FREE**



\$2,000

MAIN EVENT SPONSOR

\$800

BAND SPONSOR

\$425

CART SPONSOR

LIVE MUSIC

C. ROCK CITY
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**BROADWAY
BREWERY**

**SUNDAY
JULY 14TH NOON-4 PM**

**FARMERS MARKET:
MU HEALTH CARE PAVILION
1701 W. ASH ST. COLUMBIA, MO 65203**

TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT DOOR INCLUDING SPONSOR TICKETS
EACH SPONSOR GETS 2 TICKETS & A CART TO DECORATE

DONATIONS CAN BE MAILED TO:
MOBILITY WORLDWIDE MO-COLUMBIA
4825 E MEYER INDUSTRIAL DRIVE
COLUMBIA, MO 65201

GIFTOFMOBILITY.ORG

FOR MORE INFO: GARY MOREAU, 573-886-7877

EXCITING NEW HAPPENINGS AT CUCC!

There are lots of exciting things happening at CUCC! From our Annual Congregational Meeting to our June Council meeting, several decisions were made that will change the future of our church. We hope you are getting excited, because great things are in store for us. The best is yet to come for CUCC!

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

At our Annual Congregational Meeting on May 19, we elected new Council Members. The entire Council roster is on page three of this Communicator. New members include: Deborah Long Birkes, Treasurer; Lena Muench, Nurture & Education Ministry Team Chair; Jedd Schneider, Worship & Music Ministry Team Chair; and Kristin Veteto, LODO Ministry Team Chair. Ted Dachroeden (Building & Grounds) and Alethea Tennill (Secretary) were re-elected for second terms.

CUCC ENDOWMENT FUND

Also at the Annual Congregational Meeting, the Congregation approved establishing an Endowment Fund. The descriptive language for this fund was distributed to the congregation in March and in subsequent Friday emails. Over the next five years or so, the Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team will be marketing this fund, soliciting donations to grow it to a critical mass. Once it reaches \$500,000 we will utilize a 4% annual draw to supplement our Annual Budget. The goal for this fund is \$2,000,000 and will be achieved through estate donations, stock donations, living trusts, and other donations. Reaching our goal of \$2,000,000 over the next few years will bring a significant level of financial security to this congregation. The fund already has \$50,000 in it, the result of a donation from the Alan Mader Estate.

SCOUTING AMERICA PARTNERSHIP

At our May Council meeting, we entertained a proposal to enter into a charter with an established Scouting America Unit who is looking for a new charter organization. The Council approved entering into this charter agreement, and the new Scouting Unit will begin meeting here in August. This is a very significant relationship for CUCC. This group is not just a rental group; they will be “our” scouts. We will work with them to nurture them and support their work, and they will do the same for us. They will be very visible in the life of our church, and even in our worship life. The unit consists of four troops, including a Cub Scout Troop, a boys group, a girls group, and a Venture Troop. Over 100 Scouts and 50 adult leaders are chartered with this Unit. You will be seeing much more of these scouts as they work with us, and as we enable each other’s ministries.

CUCC MISSION TRIP DESTINATION – 2025 AND BEYOND

We also entertained a proposal at the May Council Meeting from the Nurture & Education Ministry Team and the Outreach & Advocacy Ministry Team to make CUCC a mission trip destination for church youth groups all across Missouri and beyond. Modeling after a very successful program in St. Louis (The Urban Mission Experience), we will be working with local non-profit agencies in Columbia to offer service opportunities in the summer of 2025 for churches and youth looking for a mission trip experience. We will be marketing this program to churches across rural Missouri and other states, inviting them to stay for a few days at CUCC and participate in service opportunities we put together.

Mission Groups would sign behavioral covenants regarding their stay at CUCC. The average group would stay three to four nights, in two of our Sunday School classrooms upstairs. During the day, they would work with our mission partners, such as The Food Bank, Ronald McDonald House, Fisher House, etc. participating in service opportunities. Tours of Mizzou, Columbia College, and Stephens College would be offered. We would prepare one meal for them during their stay, and lead them in a program one evening. Groups would pay a set fee per person per night; we anticipate bringing in \$9,600 our first year.

CHURCH BUS PURCHASE

At our May Meeting, the Council also approved a proposal brought by the Membership & Care Ministry Team to purchase a used church bus from St. John UCC in St. Charles, MO. They are selling of one of their busses, and offered it to us for \$7,500 (below blue book value). It is a 15-passenger, 2006 Ford step bus and could be utilized for youth events, Women’s Fellowship trips, picking up church members for worship, or other special trips. It is much more versatile than our current van, and much more practical for our purposes. Funds for this purchase will come from the Transportation Fund, one of our investments with United Church Funds. As we will be using this bus more than our current van, there may be more expenses incurred. Any donations to the Transportation Fund to offset maintenance expenses would be appreciated. If you are interested in donating, talk to Kurt Heine, Moderator; Jerry Kiesling, Vice-Moderator; or Deborah Long Birkes, Treasurer.

Membership & Care Ministry

WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Welcome Erika Kaitlin Faith McBane. She grew up in northeast Missouri. She is a caregiver with Visiting Angels. Erika has one child, Dartanian. She enjoys crafts, painting, reading, singing, and helping others. She was drawn to Columbia UCC because of the community she felt when visiting.

Welcome Rev. Mike Stewart Williams. Mike is the husband of Lily Santoro-Williams. Lily is a history professor, working at the Kinder Institute. Mike grew up in Creston, Iowa and has lived/served in churches in Iowa, Missouri, Delaware, and Maryland. Mike is a retired Air Force Reserve Chaplain and is ordained as a UCC minister. He is currently serving as a hospital chaplain, while attending Central Methodist as a counselor in training. He enjoys motorcycles, aviation, and bicycle riding.

TRANSPORTATION

You may have noticed a church bus in our parking lot. The Church Council approved the purchase of this used bus at the May meeting. As noted on the side of the bus, it previously belonged to St. John UCC, St. Charles, MO. We are looking forward to brainstorming the many possibilities this new mode of transportation will provide our congregation. Women's Fellowship took it on a "test drive" to Glasgow, MO and had a great time.

At our July meeting, Membership and Care Ministry Team will discuss options for the brown van (sell, keep, etc.) Please let me know if you have input.

Respectfully Submitted,
Judi Privitt



ERIKA MCBANE AND
DARTANIAN

REV. MIKE WILLIAMS AND
LILY SANTORO-WILLIAMS



YOU CAN HELP PUBLICIZE COLUMBIA UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST!

One of the greatest challenges for our congregation is our location – many people do not know we are here. Our new signage helps; but social media publicity would help even more. YOU can help make this a reality!

Two ways you can help: first of all, give us a 5-star review on Google! To do so [CLICK HERE](#). This will take you to a "Google Search" of CUCC. Click "Google Reviews" and "write a review." This will give you the opportunity to "review" our church. A five star review will help direct others to our church, and will cause our church to "pop up" more prominently on searches. The other way to help is to "share" our CUCC posts on Facebook. Don't just "like" them, "share" them. If you "share" our Facebooks posts, you will exponentially increase our social media presence and advertise our church to a wider community of people. Get the word out – share the Good News! Don't let CUCC remain the best kept secret in town!

Outreach & Advocacy Ministry Team



The June 17 evening meal at Loaves & Fishes consisted of chicken & rice casserole (left from the funeral luncheon for Jean Strothmann), lettuce salad (donated by Patty Beeson), green beans, and a variety of cookies and brownies. PBJ's were made and provided by Jessica Jenks. Servers were Patty Beeson; Jessica Jenks; Doug and Judi Privitt; and Jo Ellen Grace. Jim Loveless handled the dishwashing job like a champ! Thanks to all of you for your willingness to help with this community service. We served approximately 100 firsts and 40 seconds.



With the hot days of summer here, it doesn't feel like time to talk about a new school year yet. But, we want to start collecting PINK ERASERS for our Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary (AHL) students so they are ready to start school on August 20, 2024. You will see "the shopping cart" in the Gathering Area again after July 14 with a collection sign for AHL. We want to collect enough school pink erasers and pencil eraser tips (any color) to supply each student at AHL. The school plans to collect the different school supplies each student needs from the Partners and Friends and then assemble a pack for each student to receive before school starts. Since AHL is hand packing them, they need them as soon as possible. That means you have through Sunday August 4 to bring erasers to help our Friends start off the 2024-25 school year. AHL has almost 500 students, and we can help every one of them!

Also, if you are so inclined while shopping, AHL is always in need of boys and girls undies, shorts, and pants, especially size 6 or 8. You can put any donation in the box marked "AHL" in the Gathering Area Coat Room, and I will deliver them to AHL. Again, Thank You CUCC!

Respectfully Submitted,
Llona Weiss
Liaison for CUCC to AHL

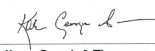


Thank You!

To the members of
Columbia UCC

for being a **5 for 5 Congregation** of
the United Church of Christ in 2023 .

5 for 5 Congregations support Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support and the Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing, The Christmas Fund, and Strengthen the Church Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ.


Karen Georgia A. Thompson
General Minister and President
United Church of Christ


Conference Minister



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST SAYS

Thank You!

To the members of

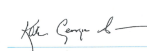
Columbia UCC

For your **2023** contribution of \$16,250.00

For Basic Support of

Our Church's Wider Mission

Changing Lives


Karen Georgia A. Thompson
General Minister and President
United Church of Christ


Conference Minister



THANK YOU!

Global Ministries thanks you for your gift of \$500. As indicated, your gift will be used in its entirety to support Melel Xojobal in San Cristobal, Chiapas, Mexico, which supports children and youth. Gifts like yours help manifest the bold vision that all God's people and creation share in God's abundant life.

Your generosity is a powerful peacemaking act. By walking alongside our partners and us, you are directly contributing to our collective efforts to impact the world positively. Peace is more than the absence of war and violence; it is the presence of justice. Joining with partners whose communities have faced decades of brutality, we embrace opportunities for reconciling relationships with God, humanity, and creation. In this season, we have been called to lift up the opportunity to bring justice to conflict-ridden communities.

Thank you for responding to the call to make peace with us.

Cynthia Newman
Acting Director of Strategic Engagement And Assistant Vice President of
Global Ministries

As the remainder of David Martin's Joyful Giving for 2024 comes to you, I reflect back. The church was a source of faith, hope, and strength for our dad and we are forever grateful to everyone in his church family.

We have also donated a check to the group that serves Loaves and Fishes. We know Audrey Lasley will be able to put this to good use for whatever is needed most in his memory. Dad took great pride in serving as the dishwasher while he was able to volunteer and believed in the mission of CUCC in "transforming both the congregation and community through service and outreach."

With warmest regards and grateful hearts,
Barbara Martin, Carolyn Martin Chang, and family

To CUCC,

I appreciate the sweet and loving comments from graduation. Thank you for the gifts and the loving and continuous support throughout these years at the church. I appreciate everything!

Brandon Lavelly

Many, many thanks to my friends at CUC for all the sympathy cards you sent me, all the kind words, and all the hugs you gave me in response to the death of my son, Grant. I will always remember your thoughtfulness and love.

Melba Shaffer

Thank you so much for your recent donation to Undue Medical Debt! Your contribution was received in the amount of \$1,187. *(This was our Christmas Eve collection)*

Your gift will abolish debilitating medical debt, giving recipients and their families a fresh start and empowering them to embark on a new path of greater financial stability. For the populations served by medical debt relief, this donation is a radical act of generosity and can be wide-reaching within communities.

We, along with more than 3,000,000 beneficiaries and their families, are very grateful for your compassionate action. Your support has helped Undue Medical Debt abolish over \$5 billion of medical debt since inception. On behalf of our program beneficiaries, thank you!

Scott G. Patton
Director of Development at
Undue Medical Debt

International Missions

CUCC IS WORKING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Inanda Seminary, founded in 1869, was the first secondary school exclusively for African girls in South Africa. The school is run by the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), a Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ Mission Partner. The vision of Inanda includes the empowerment of students to play a role in the development of the nation and become future leaders. The school provides holistic education that emphasizes academic excellence, leadership development, and a strong sense of community. Inanda Seminary has played a significant role in breaking down barriers and promoting gender equality, empowering young women to achieve their full potential.

Through **Global Ministries**, CUCC is a partner in mission with The Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) and Inanda Seminary and, through them, we are actively working in many families in South Africa. This month, please keep Global Ministries, UCCSA, and the people of South Africa in your prayers!



DR. NIBEDITA PRAMANIK AVAILABLE TO SPEAK IN CHURCHES THIS FALL

Global Ministries is happy to share that a Partner-in-Residence will be available to visit churches this Fall. Dr. Nibedita Pramanik will be available to speak from September 8 through October 24, 2024. Dr. Pramanik is the director of Evangelical Hospital Society Khariar, India. She has been serving this institution since 2007 in different capacities: as a junior medical officer, as a general and laparoscopic surgeon, and starting in 2015 as the director of the hospital. She trained at the CMC Vellore medical school and received additional training in urology in 2022. She was moved by the poverty and crying medical need of the area and heeded God's call for her to commit her life to missions. She dreams of making Evangelical Hospital Society Khariar a well-equipped tertiary care hospital that will be able to provide competent compassionate service to the most critical patients. She has additionally undergone training and education as a palliative consultant and has a heart for dying patients.

She says, "I strongly felt that God was leading me to be planted here in Khariar, and I was moved by the crying need for medical help in this region. I dedicated my life to missions at the tender age of 24 years to serve long-term in Khariar. I have the vision to make Khariar not just a surviving mission hospital, but a thriving mission hospital, a mini CMC, and a tertiary-level medical center with a medical school in the future. I hope to be able to let the churches (both UCC and the Disciples) and individuals know about how this little frail four-bedded medical mission started in 1930 and has grown into a 110-bedded secondary level multispecialty hospital. I want to share with them about the trying conditions of persecution and financial strains that this organization has suffered, and yet been richly blessed by the prayers, good wishes, and contributions of the churches and individuals. I want to testify to my brothers and sisters in the US on how God has enabled us to stand against all odds and be a progressive hospital adopting modern technology in medicine and surgery with a spirit of Christ's love and compassion, and offering competent care to the poorest of poor at very affordable prices, while all of the staff working in very low salaries, and striving to serve and follow Christ. I want to inform them about the needs and plans of this organization. I also want to inform them about the orphanage and the school that the hospital supports."

Dr. Pramanik's is a member of Mukti Marg Church, Church of North India, Khariar; one of our Global Ministries Mission Partners. CUCC is in talks with Dr. Pramanik and Global Ministries to bring her here to visit with us this fall. Watch for more information as we move into the fall!



On the Church Calendar in July

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 6:30 p.m. - Worship & Music Ministry Team meeting	2 10:00 a.m. - Quilters	3 6:30 p.m. - Taizé Prayer Service	4 - Independence Day - Office Closed	5	6
7 9:00 a.m. - Fellowship 9:30 a.m. - Worship 6:00 p.m. - Pastor Rick leads worship at Lenoir	8 5:00 p.m. - Membership & Care Ministry Team meeting	9 10:00 a.m. - Quilters	10 6:30 p.m. - Taizé Prayer Service	11	12	13
14 9:00 a.m. - Fellowship 9:30 a.m. - Worship 11:00 a.m. - Green Team 12:00 p.m. - Craft Beer & Carts Festival	15	16 10:00 a.m. - Quilters	17 6:30 p.m. - Taizé Prayer Service	18	19	20
21 9:00 a.m. - Fellowship 9:30 a.m. - Worship 11:00 a.m. - Stay & Learn with Shelly (Book Study) 5:00 p.m. - Trip to The Muny	22	23 10:00 a.m. - Quilters	24 6:30 p.m. - Taizé Prayer Service	25	26	27
28 9:00 a.m. - Fellowship 9:30 a.m. - Worship 11:00 a.m. - Stay & Learn with Shelly (Book Study)	29 5:15 p.m. - 8:15 p.m. VBS- CAMP FIRELIGHT	30 5:15 p.m. - 8:15 p.m. VBS- CAMP FIRELIGHT	31 5:15 p.m. - 8:15 p.m. VBS- CAMP FIRELIGHT			

The Communicator

Columbia United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation - ONA #1575
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ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

The Communicator is a publication of Columbia United Church of Christ. The stated purpose is to communicate with the congregation and our friends concerning the organizations and events of the church. It is published once each month. The deadline for articles is the 20th of each month.



Interested in Church Membership?

If you are interested in joining,
please contact [Rev. Rick Oberle](#).
rick@columbiaucc.com

**Become
Part of
Our
Church
Family**

LODO PLAYGROUND RESPECT

Please help us keep our playground safe for all children by following these guidelines:

- ♦ The CUCC playground is designed for, and should be used by, *only children ages 8 and younger*.
- ♦ Adult supervision is required while children are on the playground.
- ♦ Mulch must stay on the ground. When children dig up mulch it creates holes that are tripping hazards. Children should only dig in the sandbox.
- ♦ Sand should stay in the sandbox. Please do not allow sand to be carried and dumped in the playhouse or on play structures.
- ♦ Use playground equipment in the manner it is intended.

Columbia United Church of Christ Open and Affirming/Inclusion Covenant

Columbia United Church of Christ celebrates God's boundless and unconditional love by intentionally welcoming and affirming all God's children.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey;
No matter where you are on your faith journey;
No matter your sexual orientation, gender expression or identity;
No matter your race, culture, ethnicity, nationality or politics;
No matter your age, ability, health, relationship status or family structure;
No matter your social, economic, educational, legal or life circumstances;
You are welcome here!

Called by Jesus to be an Open and Affirming, inclusive faith community, Columbia United Church of Christ commits to welcoming everyone into the full life of our congregation. Our paths and voices may differ, but we journey in faith together.