

The Communicator

March 2025

From the Pastor's Keyboard . . .

"Ashes to Ashes"

We are about to embark upon a journey- one that we have taken before, one with a destination we have visited all too often. Starting on March 5, we begin a closer walk with Jesus; one that will lead us to betrayal, desertion, denial, and crucifixion. It is not a journey for the faint of heart; but it is one that we will take together. *(Spoiler alert- this journey ends in a joyful Resurrection!)*

The journey actually begins with Transfiguration Sunday, March 2. This day is the day Jesus climbed Mt. Tabor with Peter, James and John and communed directly with Moses, Elijah, and God. Jesus was *transfigured* that day; he face shone with God's brilliance; but he was also *transformed* that day, in a way; for it was from this moment on that his sights were set on Jerusalem and the certain death that awaited him.

Prior to the transfiguration, Jesus was touring the Galilean countryside, proclaiming a message of peace and justice, healing the sick, and driving out demons. But after the transfiguration, Jesus' sights were set on the end. He began his journey to Jerusalem, where he knew that his prophetic message of diversity, equity, and inclusion would most likely lead to his death. Jesus did not "have to die;" God did not require it, as some people claim; but death was the most likely outcome for someone as politically outspoken as Jesus.

Part of what we celebrate on Ash Wednesday, and throughout the Lenten Season, is our commitment to walk this path to Jerusalem with Jesus. As we receive ashes on our forehead and hear the words, "from ashes you have come, and to ashes you shall return," we are not just recognizing our own mortality. We are also recognizing the fickle nature of the world around us and the truth of what really matters in life. We are acknowledging that all the bigotry and narcissism the leaders of this world heap upon us are inconsequential; what matters is the ultimate truth of Jesus Christ and the love he calls us to embody. We are claiming that the things of this world, including our very bodies, are fleeting; what is lasting is the divine truth of God, and the heavenly bodies we all one day will wear as we gather together, in perfect communion with God.

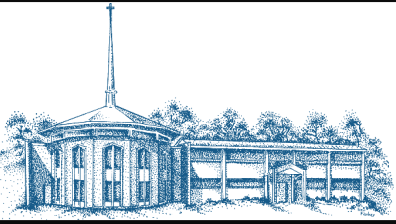
Jesus was committed to fighting the evils of the world. As he walked to Jerusalem, he preached a message that ran counter to the oppressive leadership of the government. He lifted up the poor, the excluded, those who were having their dignity destroyed because they were not considered socially acceptable because of how God created them. He touched and loved people who were labeled "unclean" because of who they were or where they were on life's journey. He turned over tables, literally and figuratively, to proclaim the year of God's favor. All of this was a slap in the face of the political and religious authorities.

As we walk with Jesus this Lenten season, in a world that is increasingly intolerant of the beauty of diversity, the joy of equity, and the Biblical mandate toward inclusion, our call is to be as revolutionary as Jesus was. Our duty as Christians is to continue the work of Jesus, the work that seeks to restore the dignity of the ones who are having that dignity stripped away by the empire.



As we begin this journey, I invite you to consider ways to walk more closely with Jesus this season. One possibility is to participate in Lenten disciplines. We will be distributing Lenten Devotionals in worship on Ash Wednesday and the Sundays after (until they are gone.) These can be a helpful guide to an increased spiritual practice. Increased worship attendance, Focused Bible study, and intentional time spent in prayer during Lent also help in the spiritual journey. Allyship with those whose dignity is being diminished in our society by oppressive reforms is another way to walk more closely with Jesus. How can we help restore dignity to those from whom it is being stolen? Whatever your spiritual walk this Lenten season, remember that you are not walking alone; Jesus is walking with you.

-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
10:00 a.m. Fellowship Time
10:30 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

LET'S CLEAN UP COLUMBIA! SATURDAY, APRIL 12

It's time once again to spruce up the road to Columbia United Church of Christ. "Clean Up Columbia" will be a one-day citywide event again this year (first time since 2019.) Please plan to join the crew on Saturday, April 12, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. to pick up litter along I-70 Drive NW from the church to Garden Drive. Most supplies will be provided, such as trash bags, high visibility vests, etc. If you have your own gloves and materials you would like to bring for yourself or provide for others feel free to do so. Last year we picked up 36 bags of trash and a handful of odd large items. Let's see how many we can pick up this year!



ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP- LENT BEGINS

Lent will begin on Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025. On this day, we will share our traditional imposition of ashes and communion together. Worship begins at 7:00 p.m. This begins the season of Lent, a six-week contemplative time to walk closely with Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem. As we do, we will be following the daily devotional "For the Beauty of the Earth" by Leah D. Shade, published by Chalice Press. Copies of this resource will be available in the Sanctuary starting March 2 and through Lent, until they are gone. Pick up your copy in worship on Ash Wednesday!

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

The theme for the 2025 One Great Hour of Sharing offering we will observe on April 6, 2025 is "Be the Light."

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a vital special mission offering of the United Church of Christ. It connects you to disaster relief, refugee assistance, and development efforts around the globe. When disasters strike, or when individuals are displaced due to violence or poverty, OGHS ensures immediate response and ongoing recovery.

Through your support, OGHS funds comprehensive development programs in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, food security, microfinancing, and women's empowerment. By partnering with Global Ministries and international response networks, OGHS maximizes its impact. Your contributions help meet urgent needs while addressing the root causes of vulnerability, ensuring long-term, sustainable solutions for affected communities. Through Global Ministries, OGHS is the collection that also funds the work of our overseas missions in Chiapas! Special projects and missionary support for Chiapas (and other mission partners worldwide) are made possible by your gifts to this fund.

Thanks for your consideration in how you may Be the Light as we observe One Great Hour of Sharing on April 6!

Sunday Volunteer Schedule for March

Date	Greeter	Usher	Worship Leader	Tech Booth
03/02	Jolene Kirchhoff	Jerry Kiesling Christine Staelens	Lena Muench	Brent Marcks Lorry Dreier
03/05		Joe Remeika	Audrey Lasley	Doug Privitt
03/09		Pat Forward Charlie Marcks	Judi Privitt	Mike Pierson Doug Privitt
03/16	Anne Heine	Llona Weiss Mark Duncan	Tricia Soncasie	John Muench Judi Privitt
03/23		Jim Loveless Phillip Neale	Llona Weiss	Ted Dachroeden Brent Marcks
03/30		John Muench Brenda Muench	Mahree Skala	Carissa Graves John Graves

March Birthdays

Steve Keithahn - 03/01	Tim Soncasie - 03/01	Jim Buesing - 03/02
Katie Marienfeld - 03/03	Linda Graves - 03/05	Jonathon Schultz - 03/06
Steve Camden - 03/07	Russell Eveler - 03/08	Fred Brandenburg - 03/09
Katelin Odneal - 03/09	Paul Sanderson - 03/10	Dalane Camden - 03/11
Tracie Huffman - 03/12	Emily Malicoat - 03/12	Sue McDaniel - 03/13
Erika McBane - 03/14	Sharon Rapp - 03/14	Adelynn Zimny - 03/16
Phillip Neale - 03/18	Jessica Lucas - 03/20	Jason Schoeneberg - 03/20
Harold Hackman - 03/21	Eleanor Bashinski - 03/23	Marcia Crousore - 03/23
Christine Mseke - 03/23	Lena Muench - 03/23	Edie Diel - 03/24
Susan Dunham - 03/26	Aidan Pierson - 03/27	Trevor Pierson 03/27
Ron Schmidt - 03/28		



Moderator's Moment

In preparation for Ash Wednesday, which is coming up this month, I did a little research on the subject to deepen my understanding of how it's celebrated and what Ash Wednesday is all about. Ash Wednesday comes from the ancient Jewish tradition of penance and fasting. The practice largely adopted by Christians includes the wearing of ashes on the head. The ashes symbolize the dust from which God made us. As the ashes are applied to your forehead, the pastor speaks the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Alternatively, the pastor may speak the words, "Repent and believe in the Gospel." Ashes also symbolize grief; in this case, ashes symbolize grief that we have sinned and caused division from God.

Writings from the Second-century Church refer to the wearing of sackcloth and ashes as a sign of penance.

Pastors administer ashes during worship and all are invited to accept the ashes as a visible symbol of penance. Even non-Christians and the excommunicated from the catholic faith are welcome to receive the ashes. The ashes are made from blessed palm branches, taken from the previous year's palm Sunday worship service.

It is important to remember that Ash Wednesday is a day of penitential prayer and fasting. Some faithful take the rest of the day off work and remain home. In some faiths, it is generally inappropriate to dine out, to shop, or to go about in public after receiving the ashes.

I think it's fascinating how Christians have come to celebrate the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in his time of doubt and pain in the wilderness. We can look to him as an example to live out every day. There is temptation to turn against each other with every news story that comes down the pike. We must seek out and celebrate the common good instead- resisting the temptation of mockery and moral superiority and focus on what we can control, how we react. Let it be a Christian reaction, with love and understanding leading the way.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kurt Heine, Moderator



COLUMBIA UCC CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderator:	Kurt Heine	heinekurt@gmail.com
Vice Moderator:	Jerry Kiesling	rollzierp50@gmail.com
Secretary:	Alethea Tennill	atennill108@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Deborah Long Birkes	dlong@elon.edu
Recording Treasurer:	Christine Staelens	tigersfour@gmail.com
Building & Grounds:	Ted Dachroeden	gpadoc4gd@gmail.com
Fellowship & Hospitality:	Mary Lorber-Solt	eldercow@gmail.com
Finance & Stewardship:	Shelly Adams	shellyraeadams@gmail.com
Inclusion & Affirmation:	Tricia Price	tricialprice@gmail.com
Little One's Day Out:	Kristin Veteto	kristinnoelveteto@gmail.com
Membership & Care:	Judi Privitt	judiprivitt811@gmail.com
Nurture & Education:	Lena Muench	cfg323@yahoo.com
Outreach & Advocacy:	Mark Duncan	markduncan2@mchsi.com
Worship & Music:	Jedd Schneider	elusive4thtenor@icloud.com
Pastor:	Rev. Rick Oberle	rick@columbiaucc.com



Council Minutes

The meeting was called to order on January 21 at 6:38 p.m. by Kurt Heine. Present: Kurt Heine, Jerry Kiesling, Deb Birkes, Christine Staelens, Ted Dachroeden, Mary Lorber-Solt, Tricia Price, Kristin Veteto, Judi Privitt, Jedd Schneider, Mark Duncan, Lena Muench, Rick Oberle, and Shelly Adams. Lena Muench made a motion to approve the agenda with a second from Judi Privitt. The motion passed. The December minutes were not available at this meeting and will be approved in February.

Unfinished Business

- ♣ New Light for sign: Ted talked to Fred Sunday, and he said he would make it happen once the ground thaws.
- ♣ Financial review: The mutual funds all reconcile as of December. They are working on the rest of it. Christine is working on an end-of-month document for Alexandra to use, but she thinks the treasurers need to sit down each month with Alexandra to review the books before they are closed out.
- ♣ COMO Gives: \$1,810 raised by 14 donors for the LODO Fund.
- ♣ Conference Youth Event at CUCC 2/14/25 - 2/16/25: Council will provide dinner, and there will probably be 25-30 people there. Judi's putting together a SignUp Genius to send out, so we can sign up for sides, drinks, and desserts. Pastor Rick will buy the pizza, and we can pay him back.
- ♣ Bus Graphics: We had some ideas how to improve the design that was presented to us, including a different font, adding "You are welcome here," removing the street address, and moving the rainbow comma up off the mudflap. We are going to ask Alexandra to tinker with the design, and Judi will send us a couple options to vote on via email.
- ♣ Annual Reports are now overdue, so they need to be turned in immediately.
- ♣ COMO Values Diversity Breakfast 1/29: We have filled six seats for sure. Mark is a maybe, and Judi can go if we have extra seats.

New Business

- ♣ Eric Moeller Concert April 4: He is a UCC pastor and a musician, and he'd like to have a concert here April 4. He plays progressive Christian music, about topics like social justice as well as theology and faith. He won't charge admission but will take donations. We approved this by consensus.
- ♣ Nominating Committee for 2025: We brainstormed names, because we need to ask them before next meeting. Names suggested included Danielle Dreier, Kennedy Lucas, Brent Marcks, Doug Privitt, Anne Heine, Josh Muench, Pat Forward, Jessica Lucas, and Carol Duermeyer.
- ♣ Annual Congregational Meeting will be May 18, 2025.

Ministry Team Reports:

- ♣ Building & Grounds: Ted Dachroeden: Our snow clearing company is doing a good job. It was really expensive during that first snowstorm.
- ♣ Fellowship & Hospitality: Mary Lorber: Cancelled the game night for January, but working on Fastnacht planning.
- ♣ Finance & Stewardship: Shelly Adams: Working on a stewardship plan for the year, using resources and theme from UCC. March 2 will be Stewardship Sunday, with a speaker who is a retired professor from Eden.
- ♣ Inclusion & Affirmation: Tricia Price: January 26 is Inclusion Sunday, and we're going to ask the congregation for feedback via a survey.
- ♣ LODO: Kristin Veteto: Staffing has been difficult and the assistant director has to cover a class. However, enrollment is good, so income has been much greater than expenses. The search committee will have their first meeting soon. The ministry team is also wondering how to retain staff better; we might need to look at teacher pay and see if it needs to be raised in order to stay competitive with other programs.
- ♣ Membership & Care: Judi Privitt: They are working on updating the list of members.
- ♣ Nurture & Education: Lena Muench: We need more kids in Sunday School!
- ♣ Outreach & Advocacy: Mark Duncan: Christmas Eve offering was \$850 for CCUA.
- ♣ Worship & Music: Jedd Schneider: A team is updating the job descriptions for music director, accompanist, etc.
- ♣ Pastor's Report: Pastor's Report is attached. Financials were presented.

Pastor Rick closed us in prayer. Mary moved that we adjourn, and Ted seconded. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Fellowship & Hospitality Ministry Team

Greetings! Happy 41st Fastnacht Festival (say that five times in a row, fast!) As we prepare for this Lenten season, I hope this finds everyone well and warm! I, for one, am so looking forward to this month of March. Spring is in the air, my bees are buzzing, time to do deep hive inspections, and prepare for the gardening season. It is also the time we reflect on our own lives and faith journey. We eat, drink, and splurge on 'Fat Tuesday,' knowing that we will be practicing the three pillars of Lent by fasting, praying, and 'alms giving,' in preparation for Easter.

Giving is not only of money, but of our time and talents: volunteering to help in our community, with our church family, at our gatherings, our LODO program, in Sunday school. There is so much that each and everyone of us can do. So, if you haven't committed to a specific project, use this time to reflect on what you can give. Until next month, my friends, bee safe, bee healthy, and most of all bee Blessed.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Lorber
Fellowship and Hospitality
Ministry Team Chair



FASTNACHT FUN- MARCH 4

Join us for fun as we "feast before the fast" on March 4 with German food, music, and dancing. The festivities start at 5:30 p.m. [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up. If you have any questions, talk to [Mary Lorber](#).

Membership and Care Ministry Team

Our church bus has a new look; complete with the Columbia UCC logo and other identifying information. Many thanks to the anonymous donor who financed this graphic design. It looks fantastic!

The Membership & Care Ministry Team will once again be hosting "Bring a Friend Sunday" on Sunday, April 6, 2025. We will be asking everyone in the congregation to bring a friend to worship, and stay for a Taco Bar Luncheon immediately following worship. Did you know that 83% of people who come to a church for the first time come because of personal invitation? A personal invite means so much more than marketing. Start thinking NOW who you could invite on April 6.

The next meeting of the Membership & Care Ministry Team will be Monday, March 10 at 5 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We have a good time together as we work on ways to care for our members. All are welcome to join us.

Respectfully Submitted,
Judi Privitt
Membership & Care
Ministry Team Chair



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.

Pat Forward, Nurture & Education Ministry Team Chair, will be talking to our children and youth over the next several Sundays 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.

Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team

The Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team serves two very important purposes for CUCC. The first is to encourage our members and friends to share their time, talent and treasure with CUCC. Signing up for one or more Ministry Teams, volunteering for various projects/tasks, and contributing money to the extent you are able. These three things are at the heart of our church.

The second purpose of our Ministry Team is to prepare an annual budget with input from all segments of our Church. This requires a knowledge of our various activities, their cost and balancing those expenses with the Joyful Giving which we receive each year. There are many unknowns in preparing our budget each year but our objective is to balance our expenses with our receipts.

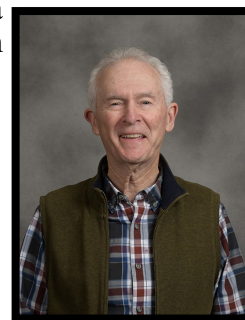
Most years we come very close to a balanced budget but the last two years our expenses have exceeded our receipts. Fortunately we have reserves which have been adequate to cover the deficit but we cannot continue deficit budgets indefinitely.

You'll recall that last year we created an Endowment Fund which is receiving estate gifts or other planned contributions above and beyond Joyful Giving contributions. Our goal is to create a fund that is large enough that its earnings can be used to supplement our Joyful Giving when it falls short of our annual needs. An Endowment Fund of several million dollars will be needed to accomplish that objective. Accordingly, large gifts are what we hope to receive from those who can afford such a contribution both while they are living and as an estate gift using their Wills and Trusts. Other planned giving of stocks, bonds and/or minimum required distributions are also excellent ways to contribute to the Endowment Fund.

March 2 is Stewardship Sunday. Rev. Dr. Kristin Leslie will be speaking about Stewardship. A pot luck lunch will be held immediately after church services that day. Please plan to attend and bring a pot with something you would like to contribute to the meal. This will be a celebration in all ways so please plan to attend.

Finally, thank you all for the time, talent, and treasure that you contribute to our unique church family and community. We value everyone who is part of our church and stewardship Sunday will be a celebration of all the wonderful things we accomplish.

Respectfully submitted,
Keith Birkes
Finance & Stewardship
Ministry Team Member



Financial Update

	Actual	Budget	Over/(Under)
January Income	\$17,897.72	\$49,187.00	(-\$31,269.28)
January Expenses	\$39,315.30	\$34,327.00	\$4,988.30
YTD Income	\$17,897.72	\$49,187.00	(-\$31,269.28)
YTD Expenses	\$39,315.30	\$34,327.00	\$4,988.30
Surplus/(Deficit)	(-\$21,417.58)	14,860.00	(-\$36,277.58)
January Joyful Giving	\$16,737.72	\$48,121.00	(-\$31,383.28)
YTD Joyful Giving	\$16,737.72	\$48,121.00	(-\$31,383.28)

Worship Attendance

01/05	86
01/12	75
01/19	107
01/26	84

Inclusion and Affirmation Ministry Team

Happy Women's History Month! This month, we'd like to share a few milestones and facts about the progress toward equality for women in the United States.

- ♣ The women's suffrage movement began in 1848 at the Seneca Falls Convention. Suffragists used many strategies to win the right to vote - public speaking, writing, protesting, and even civil disobedience. The U.S. ratified the 19th Amendment to the Constitution in 1920, granting women the right to vote. However, many women of color were still denied the right to vote for another 127 years until President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 into law. Even today, attempts to deny the vote to people of color, immigrants, and others persist.
- ♣ In 1963, President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law, which prohibits employers from discriminating against employees based on sex when considering wages. In 1963, women earned just 59% of what their male counterparts earned. There has been progress, to be sure. But despite this law, women continue to earn only about 83.6% of their white male counterparts. The numbers are even worse for women of color: black women earn about 70% as much as white males and Hispanic women earn only 65% for the same work of white male counterparts.
- ♣ It wasn't until 1974, when Congress passed the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, that women were able to have a bank account or credit card in their own name. Before, a divorced woman had little chance of getting a loan and if a couple applied for a mortgage, banks often excluded the women's income, thinking that she may get pregnant and lose her income. In cases where the couple wanted to include the woman's income, they often were required to submit a letter to the bank signed by the woman's doctor attesting that she had either had a hysterectomy, was on birth control, or otherwise committed to not getting pregnant.

Yes, there are asterisks behind each of these monumental shifts in equality for women, but they are still great shifts. Much of this work has been bolstered by trailblazing women who have led by example, including:

- ♣ **Shirley Chisholm** was the first Black woman elected to Congress (in 1968 - before she could even get a credit card in her own name) and the first Black woman to seek the nomination for U.S. President from a major political party. Ms. Chisholm famously said, "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair."
- ♣ **Katherine Meyer Graham**, one of the first female newspaper publishers in the U.S. and the first female CEO of a Fortune 500 company; Graham led the Washington Post from 1963 to 1991 and received many awards during her career, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Journalism.
- ♣ **Arabella Mansfield** was a lawyer, professor, feminist, and suffragette. She was the first female lawyer in the United States. Upon passage of the bar exam in Iowa, she challenged the law that barred her from practicing. She won and Iowa became the first state to allow women and minorities to practice as lawyers.
- ♣ **Marie Curie** was a French/Polish scientist and was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize. Curie discovered the elements polonium and radium by isolating radioactive isotopes, changing the field for scientists who came after her.
- ♣ **Sandra Day O'Connor** was an attorney, politician, and the first female justice confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court. She blazed the trail for the many fine women Supreme Court Justices that followed including our tenacious and beloved Ruth Bader Ginsburg.
- ♣ We've all seen the photograph of **Ruby Bridges**, then a small Black child, as she became the first to be integrated into an all-white school in Louisiana. That then-small girl grew to be a civil rights activist, running the Ruby Bridges Foundation, promoting respect and appreciation of differences.

These and so many other women - famous and obscure - have struggled for equality of all women. That struggle continues in many ways. Let's celebrate and remember them this month and give thanks for their commitment to equal rights and dignity for all.

LODO Ministry Team

February was full of love and learning at LODO! Our learning activities focused on The Five Senses, Valentine's Day/Friendship, Dental Health/Health & Nutrition, and Opposites and Prepositions.

In March our learning will focus on Community Helpers/Transportation and Noah's Ark/Rainbows/St. Patrick's Day.

Math & Science Night was held on Thursday February 6 and we had so much fun with a variety of activities: Balancing, Density, Patterning, Retrieving Dinosaurs from Ice, Creating Spinners, etc. We love offering these family engagement activities to connect parents with their child's learning and creating opportunities for families to connect with one another!

2025-2026 Enrollment (August 25, 2025-May 15, 2026)

Current families began enrollment for the 2025-2026 school year on Sunday February 23 and remaining spots in our classrooms will open to families new to LODO on Monday March 3. See the information below on classroom eligibility. Additional information regarding tuition pricing for the 2025-2026 school year is available on our website.

In Love and Laughter,
Erika Maltsbarger,
LODO Director



2025-2026 Enrollment **August 25, 2025-May 15, 2026**

Additional information about the LODO Program in available at www.columbiaucc.com/lodohome.

Lightning Bugs Class: 1 year old before Aug 1, 2025
(Only available 9am-1pm)

Lambs Class: 2 years old before Aug 1, 2025

Lions/Leopards Class: 3 years old before Aug 1, 2025

Leap Frogs/Leopards Class: 4 years old before Aug 1, 2025

*Our Leopards Classroom will be assigned and utilized as either a 3-4's class or 3,4,5's class.

Contact us for information, openings, to schedule a tour, or to enroll!

LittleOnesDayOut@yahoo.com
573-445-2661

IMPORTANT MARCH DATES

Mar 3: New Family Enrollment
Begins for 2025-2026

Mar 7: LODO CLOSED
(LODO Staff Attending 2-Day
Conference on the Young Years)

Mar 12-21: Student Conferences

Mar 24-Mar 28: LODO CLOSED
(Spring Break)



LODO DIRECTOR SEARCH CONTINUES

The Search Committee for our new LODO Director was appointed by the Council Moderator in December; and since then, they have been hard at work. Susan Dunham, Alethea Tennill, Kristin Veteto and Pastor Rick have met several times with our current director, with the LODO Ministry Team, with the Nurture & Education Ministry Team Chair, and with the Church Council Personnel Committee. A revised Job Description was approved by the Church Council at their February meeting, upon recommendation by the Personnel Committee and the LODO Ministry Team. The position was advertised for several weeks, and quite a few resumes were received. The Search Committee will now be working with the Council Personnel Committee and the LODO Ministry Team to review resumes, bring in candidates for interviews, and select a candidate. If you have any questions, please contact [Kristin Veteto](#), LODO Ministry Team Chair, or [Kurt Heine](#), Council Moderator.

Nurture & Education Ministry Team

HERE'S THE SCOOP

Sunday Mornings 9:00-10:00 a.m.	Learning & Fellowship for All Ages! <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sunday School for ages 3-12th Grade. Breakfast provided!• Adult Education Classes
Sunday 3/23 & 3/30	HAPPY SPRING BREAK!!! No Sunday School for kids/youth (Adult classes will still meet)
Sunday 4/6	Sunday School Resumes LOTS of activities planned for the Lenten season!
Sunday 4/13 PALM SUNDAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special Sunday School activities planned!• Children/youth will process into sanctuary with palm branches during church
Sunday 4/20 EASTER SUNDAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easter activities for kids/youth, 9-10 a.m.• Easter Bake Sale (bakers and buyers needed!)• Balloon release during worship!
July 28-30 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL	Registration OPEN for attendees & volunteers cucc.mycokesburyvbs.com

Worship & Music Ministry Team

There is an exciting event happening in just a few weeks...

During the 3rd week of March, choral musicians around the country will be heading to Dallas, Texas for the national convention of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA.) This organization is the biggest professional organization for choral musicians in the country and there will be thousands of people in attendance, myself included.

At this conference, we will be attending many concerts featuring some of the best choirs in the country, including professional, community, collegiate, K-12, and children's choirs. Being able to see all these performances is inspiring in that you get to see the highest quality of performers. Furthermore, the conference is a hotspot for brand new compositions, as many composers premier new commissions at the conference.

In addition to performances there are many workshops and interest sessions. ACDA is a very progressive organization, so many of these interest sessions focus on the intersection of progressive social issues and choral music. Some past sessions have featured: the inclusion of transgender singers in traditional SATB choirs, showcasing the compositions of female and other under-represented composers, and how to teach social justice in the choral classroom.

I'm excited to learn from these presenters and to make connections with great musicians. I'm also looking forward to the new knowledge and perspectives I can bring back with me to the musical community at the Columbia United Church of Christ.

Respectfully Submitted,
Casey Wood,
Music Coordinator



ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP- MARCH 5

Join us for worship on Ash Wednesday, March 5 at 7:00 p.m. We will celebrate communion together, and observe the traditional imposition of ashes; a sign of penance, as the season of Lent begins.

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.

WELCOME TO QUORUS!

Columbia United Church of Christ is pleased to be in partnership with **Quorus, the LGBTQIAA Choral ensemble of Columbia!**

Quorus will be using our facility for rehearsals in the coming months, and we will have an opportunity to work with them for upcoming performances. We hope to have Quorus join us for worship next month, as well.

Quorus would love to have CUCC members join their choir! To learn more about Quorus, **CLICK HERE**.



Outreach & Advocacy Ministry Team



At our CUCC Outreach & Advocacy Ministry meeting on January 22, the group gave consensus to support the Good Dads organization with their pilot project at AHL. Good Dads provides "Strong Schools" events once a month for dads/family members and their students for a short breakfast with a lesson around topics of character building, gratitude, and kindness in order to increase engagement among fathers, their children, and the school. Llona volunteered at AHL for their first event on January 22 and we had 80 fathers/children participate! Future dates are Wednesday mornings from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. at AHL cafeteria on March 19, April 16, and May 14. This is another great partnership opportunity for AHL, our Scouts, Good Dads, and CUCC members.

In February, we collected boxes of Valentine Cards for AHL students to share with their fellow students on February 14, 2025. We also did "Stock the Lounge," where we provide food items for the teachers during the week of February 24 for Parent-Teacher Conferences. AHL is having an all-school "One Read" this year from February 22 through the end of March. AHL received a grant from the CPS Foundation to purchase a book for each AHL family entitled "Adventures by Humphrey" for students and families to read. AHL will also be participating in "Read Across America" the first week of March, with volunteers reading to the students throughout the week. CPS Partners in Education (PIE) Week is March 3-7, with the 41st Annual PIE Breakfast on March 7 at 7:15 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Expo Center. On April 10, AHL will be celebrating Multi-Cultural Day with music, food, and more. CUCC also plans to assist AHL during student MAP testing during late April and early May by providing snack donations for the students (Goldfish, granola, mints, etc.) The AHL Carnival this year is Friday, April 25 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and CUCC has a chance to send volunteers again to this fun event!



CUCC members, we could not do this wonderful outreach ministry without your support. THANK YOU for all you do! Please ask [Llona Weiss](#) if you have any questions about our support and/or wish to volunteer for an AHL activity.

The February 17 meal at Loaves & Fishes consisted of ham, hash brown potato casserole, coleslaw, and dessert bars- which were items leftover from John Adams' funeral luncheon. The food was graciously donated in honor of John's loyalty to always giving a monthly donation to a local food bank. Thank you, Shelly, for sharing this with me. In addition to the delicious leftovers, we served spaghetti (prepared by Mary Lorber,) lettuce salad (provided by Patty Beeson,) bread, and a variety of desserts. Guests also enjoyed apples and oranges as well as milk and lemonade which were left from the youth conference event last weekend. PB&J's were made and provided by Mahree Skala. The servers for the evening were Doug & Judi Privitt, Tom & Mary Lorber-Solt, Patty Beeson, Anne Heine, Jim Loveless, and Mark Duncan. We served approximately 178 servings. It was a busy evening and I am so glad that we can provide some kind of comfort for these people who are having to endure the brutal temperatures. Thank you so much to everyone!!



Our next Food Bank shift will be on Tuesday, March 25 at 5:30 p.m. Watch the weekly emails for the signup link. We had a big crew in January when we scooped and packaged 1,200 pounds of Cheerios (with a lot of help from the Columbia College softball team.) Columbia United Church of Christ participants were Ted & Mona Dachroeden, Rita Grace, Brenda, John & Landon Muench, Carolyn & Emily Malicoat, Mahree Skala, Tricia Soncasie, Troy, and Emma & Olivia Leewright (from Scout Troop #4475.) Come join the fun on March 25!



COLUMBIA CROP HUNGER WALK - 2024 -

Celebrating 29 years of Columbia CROP Hunger Walks,
we raised the most ever! **\$26,442.67**

*Heartfelt thanks to all our participating groups and donors who
believe in, and work toward "Building Resilient Communities!"*

In 2024, we surpassed all of our goals together!

- Goal: Participation of 125 walkers; we had **131 walkers**
- Goal: Collect \$25,000; we have gifted more than **\$26,000**
- Goal: Walk 800 solidarity miles during the CROP Walk week; Walkers reported **1,198 miles**
- Goal: Collect 250 cans of high-protein food for our pantries; we had a mountain of **542 cans**
- Goal: Complete a Cross Missouri CROP Hike & Bike; Don Harter and friends **walked 200+** miles between Columbia and the St. Louis Metro CROP Walk **and biked more than 350 miles** between St. Louis and Kansas City's Heart of America Walk
- Goal: **Concert following our Walk event**; local vocalist Meredith Shaw did a mini-concert of 5 songs about family and home, Laya Anand from the Helping Hands Center performed Bharatanatyam Dance, and the Destiny Worship Center Kingdom Kids Dance and Flag Worship Team and a Broadway Christian Church Youth Music Ensemble performed music and dance

Congratulations!

BROADWAY CHRISTIAN CHURCH receives the **Top Fundraiser Trophy** with a total of \$5,028.12 raised.

Second Top Fundraiser: **Olivet Christian Church**, raising \$4,611.35.

Third Top Fundraiser: **Columbia United Church of Christ**, raising \$3,073.76.

COLUMBIA UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST receives the **"Greatest Growth" Award** with an increase of 106%.

Russell Chapel CME placed second with an increase of 38% over 2023.

DESTINY WORSHIP CENTER receives the **"Most Walkers" Award** with a team of 23 walkers.

Olivet Christian Church had 20 walkers.

Columbia's commitment to our food program partners is strong!

Our sponsor partner, Church World Service, will receive 75% of the Walk proceeds, which were being designated for recovery efforts from Hurricane Helene in southeastern United States.

Our Boone County partners receive 25% of the Walk proceeds as they continue to reduce hunger by providing immediate and long term assistance through food pantries and community meals. Our 2024 grant recipients are: Destiny Worship Center Food Pantry, Fifth Street Christian Church Feed the Community Meal and Pantry, Loaves & Fishes Soup Kitchen, and Russell Chapel Community Food Pantry.

Columbia CROP Hunger WALK Planning Team for 2024: **Coordinator** Letitia DenHartog (Rock Bridge Christian); **Secretary** Marilyn Bettenhausen (Olivet Christian); **Treasurer** Linda Reed Brown (Olivet Christian); Jessica Jenks (Columbia United Church of Christ); Greg Thackery (Missouri United Methodist); Don Harter (Broadway Christian); Ruth O'Neill, (Loaves & Fishes); Edith Prince (Russell Chapel); Helen Robinson (Destiny Worship Center); and Amir Khan (Church World Service).

*Accompanying this letter are a certificate and donation report for your organization and the Walk as a whole.
If you have questions, please contact our treasurer at email: lreedbrown@hotmail.com*



Scouting America

TROOP 4475

Troop 4475 has been busy the past few weeks. In late January, they held their Scout Skills Campout where they earned one purple bead for camping in weather below 32 degrees. The Scouts practiced cooking, fire building, and dish sanitation in the cold. They also worked on their knife skills and completed many of the requirements for the Wood Carving merit badge. This campout ended up being somewhat of a backyard campout, but that worked out well because our brand-new Scouts who just crossed over from Cub Scouts were able to join us for the activities and were able to sleep inside instead of in the cold.



The first weekend in February, the Scouts traveled to Hartsburg, where they camped on the grounds of the Peace Church of Christ for our Junior Leadership Training & Campout. Our older patrol lead the younger patrols in learning about good communication, the EDGE method (teaching skills to others,) thoughts about what makes a good leader, and more. After a productive day of learning, the troop relaxed by heading to Jefferson City to go roller skating at Sk8 Zone. This campout ended up being one of our coldest yet at 20.3 degrees and the campers earned two purple beads!



Finally, the bi-annual troop elections occurred. On February 24, the Scouts will install a brand new Senior Patrol Leader and new leaders for each patrol. Thank you to all the Scouts who just finished their term and we look forward to what our new youth leaders will accomplish.

TROOP 708

Troop 708 has been on the move! In late January, several of our Scouts represented the troop at the annual Klondike Derby. The derby is a scouting skills competition where troops from all over the council come to compete in challenges such as fire building, first aid, and orienteering. 708 scouts did some great team building and represented the troop well.

For February we had our annual Junior Leadership Training campout at Camp Takimina. Older scouts gave presentations and led games on topics such as servant leadership, effective communication, and conflict resolution. We also celebrated scouting's 115th Birthday!



THANK YOU!

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Thank YOU to all our top donors and volunteers. With your gracious and caring support in 2024, we produced 2,070 Mobility Carts / 40 a week. 24 shipments went out to partners around the world. We celebrated the 100th birthday of our founder, Rev. Mel West. In his writings these days, he is focusing on compassion.

We are planning on 50 carts a week in 2025 to start and ramp up as funding allows. With that comes a lot of supplies being ordered and volunteer manpower to build and ship carts. Although our shop needs helpers in all areas, metal workers are in greater need at the moment. We look forward to your great partnership again this year.



www.GiftOfMobility.org
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In recognition of your sponsorship of *part of our row* in the 2025 growing season. Your generosity grows food for those in need and provides hands-on learning opportunities, from seed to plate.

Thank you for planting the seed for a healthier tomorrow!

International Missions

CUCC IS WORKING IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Caminante, in the Dominican Republic, focuses on improving the lives of vulnerable children, adolescents, and their families, particularly in the marginalized areas of the country. Founded in 1995, Caminante provides a range of services, including educational support, healthcare, psychological counseling, and vocational training. The organization works to protect children's rights, and promote opportunities for young people to thrive in a safe and supportive environment. Caminante's holistic approach aims to empower communities, offering resources that help break the cycle of poverty and improve the long-term prospects for children and their families.

Caminante, meaning "One Who Walks the Path," is a grassroots organization made up of people who have first-hand knowledge of the struggles that face the kids and teens in their community. The project is providing a safe space where hundreds of youth and their families will receive counseling and participate in recreational and formation programs. Additionally, in coordination with local government and non-governmental agencies, victims of sexual abuse and exploitation are receiving special attention and services. Many of the staff of Caminante are former participants in the program who lived on the streets or had little support from a family.

Through Global Ministries, CUCC is a partner in mission with Caminante in the Dominican Republic. Keep them in your prayers this month!



MISSION WITH CHIAPAS- IMMERSION EXPERIENCE JUNE 18-25, 2025

Churches of the Missouri Mid-South Conference have travelled to Chiapas six times in the past twelve years, working alongside the Institute for Intercultural Studies and Research, one of our Global Ministries Mission partners in Chiapas. We have worked alongside them in towns and villages, learning about the people of Chiapas and the ways of life in the communities of Chiapas. We have also helped construct a new facility on the grounds at The Institute, a facility that has more than tripled their institutional capacity and ability to do ministry with the people of their communities.

Our next "Mission Trip" to Chiapas will be the summer of 2025! We will leave St. Louis on June 18 and return on June 25. While we are in Chiapas, we will spend most of our time in the city of San Cristobal working with The Institute and Melel Xojabal. We will have the opportunity to see several indigenous museums, including the Chocolate Museum, and immerse ourselves in the culture of Chiapas. We will spend time in the marketplaces and worship at an indigenous church. We will learn about the life and context of the Indigenous Mayan communities that make up Chiapas, and we will even do some work, but work is not the focus of the trip. Education and relationship are the focus. The work will be suited for all abilities; all are welcome to come along, from age 16 up to age 90+! (Due to the nature of the trip, we are not encouraging anyone under 16 to participate.) The cost for this trip is \$1,500. This includes airfare, lodging for seven days and six nights, food for that timeframe, transportation to and from the airport in Tuxtla Gutierrez and other transportation, and other incidentals.

All expenses are included in that price except souvenirs you may wish to buy. For a week-long mission trip, it is very economical. **Everyone who participates must have a current passport. It is also highly recommended that you have a current COVID vaccination.** We will schedule a forum in early March to discuss more details about the trip, for anyone who has questions.

There is a limit of ten people for this trip – so make your commitment early! Due to transportation issues, we cannot have more than this number. If you would like to go, talk to me (Pastor Rick). I have packets with detailed information and registration materials. Registrations and deposits must be turned in by April 1. Registration will include the completed registration form and a copy of your passport.

On the Church Calendar in March

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 ONA Convocation in St. Louis
2 - STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship	3 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	4 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:30 a.m. - Staff Meeting 5:00 p.m. - Fastnacht	5 - ASH WEDNESDAY 7:00 p.m. - Ash Wednesday Service	6 6:30 p.m. - Troop 4475 meeting	7	8
9 - DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship 12:00 p.m. - Nurture &	10 5:00 p.m. - Membership & Care Ministry Team Meeting 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	11 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:30 a.m. - Staff Meeting 6:30 p.m. - Worship & Music Ministry Team Meeting 6:30 p.m. - Troop 708	12 5:30 p.m. - Taizé Service 6:00 p.m. - Prayer Shawl Group 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers	13 9:30 a.m. - Women's Fellowship	14	15
16 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship 12:00 p.m. - Team Earth	17 4:30 p.m. - Loaves & Fishes 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	18 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:30 a.m. - Staff Meeting 6:30 p.m. - Council Meeting	19 5:30 p.m. - Taizé Service 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers	20 6:30 p.m. - Clergy Personnel Committee Meeting	21	22
23 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship	24 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	25 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:30 a.m. - Staff Meeting 5:30 p.m. - Food Bank	26 5:30 p.m. - Taizé Service 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers	27	28	29
30 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship 12:00 p.m. - Inclusion & Affirmation Team	31 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America					

The Communicator

Columbia United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation
#1575



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rick@columbiaucc.com

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Part of
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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!