

Columbia United Church Of Christ

March 23, 2025

“For the Beauty of the Earth”



CUCC

Columbia United Church of Christ

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.

**Columbia
United Church
Of Christ**



March 23, 2025

10:30 a.m.

"Seeking God"

**indicates that all are invited to stand, if comfortably able*

*"... seek the LORD while he may be found;
Call upon God while They are near..."
-Isaiah 55:6*

Welcome and Greetings

Pastor Rick

Prelude Selections from "Five Sacred Songs" *Arr. Bragi Thor Valsson*
Connie Loveless: piano; Linda Neale and Lea Marienfeld: flute

Carrying in the Light of Christ

*Call to Worship

(based on Psalm 63)

Llona Weiss

We come to this place thirsty.
Our souls thirst for God as in a dry and weary land
Where there is no water.

**We search for God in God's Holy Place;
We behold God's Glory, God's Light, and God's Power.**

We come to this place longing for God's Love;
God's steadfast love is better than life.

**Our lips will shout God's praises;
Our souls are satisfied as with a rich feast.**

We will bless God as long as we live.
We lift up our hands and call upon God's name.

**In the shadow of God's wings we sing for joy;
Our souls cling to God; God's love upholds us.
Come, let us worship God!**

*Hymn

"Gather Us In"

(insert)

*Opening Prayer

Llona Weiss

God of joyful banquets and abundant grace, we come to this place today to hear Your wisdom and to seek Your presence. As we do, we realize that often You are right there in front of us, and we fail to see You. Forgive us for the times we fail to seek or let the ways of the world distract us from You. Help us to always be agents of Your grace and servants of Your abundance, welcoming in all who hunger and thirst. In Jesus' name we pray; Amen.

*Assurance of Blessing

Pastor Rick

The beauty of the earth and all that is on it is created by God and given to us to steward. But even when we forget this mandate, God loves us and forgives us. Through our repentance and God's grace we are forgiven, beloved, and blessed. Praise be to God!

*Prayer Response

“Jesus, Remember Me”

*Jesus, remember me,
when you come into your Kingdom;
Jesus, remember me,
when you come into your Kingdom.*

*Sharing God's Gift of Peace

May God's Peace be with you!

And also with you!

Children's Time

Pastor Rick

“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”
(Sung as children return to their seats)

*I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
No turning back, no turning back!*

Mission Moment

“Good Dads”

Llona Weiss

Old Testament Lesson

Isaiah 55:1-12

Llona Weiss

The prophet writes to a group of people returning from exile, stressing to them the importance of prioritizing God's Kingdom over the fickle nature of the world. The prophet talks about the majesty of Creation and how God's glory is seen in the beauty of the earth.

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Gospel Lesson

Luke 14:15-24

Llona Weiss

Jesus tells a parable about a great dinner thrown by a prominent person. The busy, overscheduled people have many good excuses to reject the invitation; so the host opens the door wide to all those who are hungry. The host welcomes those who have been rejected by others. As we reflect on the beauty of the earth, how does this parable inform our decision? Page #849

Anthem

“O Love That Will not Let Me Go”

Celebration Singers

Mark Hayes

Sermon

“Seeking God”

Pastor Rick

*Hymn

“Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer”

#18

Community Prayer & Silent Prayer

The LORD'S Prayer

In an effort to encourage inclusion, we suggest using the address "Creator God" in our unison recitation of The Lord's Prayer. You are certainly welcome to say "Our Father" instead of "Creator," "Trespases" instead of "debts," or "Thy" instead of "Your" if you prefer.

Creator God in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

*Meditation Hymn "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" #193

Sharing our Announcements of Community Life Pastor Rick

Invitation to the Offering

*To give online text "GIVE" to 573.240.4041
You can also give online by visiting our website:
www.columbiaucc.com*

Offertory "Sheep May Safely Graze" Connie Loveless
Arr. Sebastian Bach

*Prayer of Dedication Llona Weiss

God of love; take these gifts and let them be used to bring Your justice to all the world. Through them we serve You by serving one another. We thank You for this opportunity to give, and ask You to bless all who receive Your light of hope through the ministries enabled by these gifts. Amen.

*Benediction Pastor Rick

*Response: "God, Dismiss Us With Your Blessing"

***God, dismiss us with Your blessing;
Fill our hearts with joy and peace;
Let us each, Your love possessing,
Triumph in redeeming grace.***

***O refresh us, O refresh us,
Travelling through this wilderness.***

*Postlude "For the Beauty of the Earth" Connie Loveless
Arr. Kocher

CUCC STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2025 (and beyond)

CARING FOR EACH OTHER

- Advocate for policies that provide support for others
- Incorporate everyone's talents into the work and life of the church
- Formulate support & education classes for parents and children
- Improve staff training and professional development
- Ensure that our staff are paid just wages
- Discern and address the needs of our older members
- Strive to meet the needs of our members where they are

ESTABLISHING OUR IDENTITY

- Increase public awareness of our mission and location
- Increase our advertising/marketing efforts
- Consistently canvass the neighborhood north of the church
- Attract more members, focusing on youth and diversity
- Strive for intentionality incorporating youth and young adults into the life of the church
- Strive for intentionality incorporating a diverse community into the life of the church

DEVELOPING OUR FACILITY

- Continue to modernize and maintain our building and grounds
- Develop a comprehensive maintenance manual with records, goals and strategies for modernization and maintenance
- Seek out new ways to utilize our building to enhance our ministry and generate income
- Establish financial security for our ongoing ministry programs
- Establish our facility as a host site for music groups, choirs, concerts, lecturer series, and other public events

SERVING GOD'S WORLD

- Partner with other agencies that share our goals & interests
- Create a fulfilling, engaging, inclusive Sunday morning experience
- Develop partnerships with others to share our facility
- Strive for intentionality in connecting children, youth and adults to outreach and service opportunities
- Look for ways to reach out to other UCC congregations and work together for justice
- Strive to identify ways that we can be socially responsible and educated in areas of ecological justice, international mission, and other justice issues at home and abroad



Columbia United Church of Christ

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Organist/Accompanist: Steve Jannetti	steve.jannetti@yahoo.com
LODO Director: Erika Maltsbarger	littleonesdayout@yahoo.com
Custodian: Caleb Berry	calebprenticeberry@gmail.com
Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Fred Brandenburg	

TODAY IN WORSHIP:

Worship Leader:	Llona Weiss
Ushers:	Jim Loveless & Phillip Neale
Greeters:	Susan Dunham
Technology:	John Graves & Brent Marcks
Council Stewards:	Shelly Adams

NEXT SUNDAY IN WORSHIP:

Worship Leader:	Mahree Skala
Ushers:	John Muench & Brenda Muench
Greeters:	Carol Duermeyer
Technology:	Carissa Graves & John Graves
Council Stewards:	Kurt Heine



Online giving

COLUMBIA UCC CHURCH COUNCIL

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Worship & Music:	vacant	
Pastor:	Rev. Rick Oberle	rick@columbiaucc.com

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NURSERY CARE is available for children in kindergarten and younger in room #201 in the educational wing. If you need help finding it, ask an usher!

TAIZÉ WORSHIP RESUMES DURING LENT 3/12-4/16

Wednesdays during Lent, Steve Jannetti will be leading us in Taizé worship. Each Wednesday thru April 16 we will gather at 5:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary for a half hour of meditation and reflection. All are invited!

FOOD BANK FUN 3/25

Our next opportunity for fun, fellowship and service at the Food Bank will be this Tuesday, 3/25. If you are interested, talk to Mahree Skala.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE 4/1

Scholarship applications for active members pursuing higher education are available in the church office for the 2025-2026 academic year. All applications are due by April 1. Copies of the application are available in the church office.

ERIC MOELLER IN CONCERT 4/4

Eric Moeller, an up and coming “Springsteen-like” pastor/musician will be offering a FREE concert here at CUCC on Friday, April 4 at 7:00 p.m. His genre is Progressive Christian Rock, and his songs highlight the social justice challenges and imperatives that face our world today. All are invited!

WORK DAY AT BLUE SPRINGS TERRACE 4/5

The Western Association is hosting a work day at Blue Springs Terrace on April 5, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This is the annual Western Association fellowship gathering. All are invited to attend! We will be taking the church bus. To register, talk to Pastor Rick.

BRING A FRIEND SUNDAY 4/6

Did you know that 82% of “new” church members began attending because they were invited by a friend? All the marketing and advertising in the world can not make up for a personal invitation. Start thinking now about who you will bring to worship on 4/6. There will be lunch afterward– a Taco Bar hosted by the Membership & Care Ministry Team. Bring a friend on April 6!

THIS WEEK’S CALENDAR

Sun	3/23	Sunday School	9:00 a.m.
		Fellowship Time	10:00 a.m.
		Worship (in person and livestream)	10:30 a.m.
Tue	3/25	Quilters	10:00 a.m.
		Staff Meeting	10:30 a.m.
		Food Bank	5:30 p.m.
Wed	3/26	Taizé Service	5:30 p.m.
		Chapel Ringers/Celebration Singers	6:00/7:00 p.m.
Sun	3/30	Sunday School	9:00 a.m.
		Fellowship Time	10:00 a.m.
		Worship (in person and livestream)	10:30 a.m.
		Inclusion & Affirmation Ministry Team	12:00 p.m.

Columbia UCC Prayer List

Please keep in your prayers this week . . .

Sharon Elliott... on hospice
Cheryl Cobb... on hospice (Carole Barner's sister)
Cas Burluson...health issues (Mahree's cousin)
Mahree Skala... health issues
Lauren Helmreich... health issues

Students and staff at Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary . . . our partnership friend
The people of Palestine, Israel, and Ukraine

Health Issues:

Edie Diel, Lloyd Mickelson, Jim Elliott,
Mark Fairley & Connie Hackman Fairley
Kristan Whelihan (Russell Eveler's teacher)
Ann Wilke (Alethea's mother)
Stephanie Porter (Phillip Neale's niece), Jennifer (Edie Diel's niece),
Julia Marsh (Donna Marsh's Daughter), Joanne Good (Sue Beckman's friend),
Marilyn Coronado (Corinne Remeika's friend)

Challenges in Life:

Sheila, The Koerkenmeier & Malicoat Families

Living in Care Facilities:

Gary Ehrhardt, Vernie Blank, Helen Graves, Sharon Elliott

Living in Independent Living Facilities:

Don Privitt, Alice Moon

Serving us in the military:

Christopher Tennill, Dane Wilson, Aaron Dachroeden

Did you know we have a Prayer Team here at CUCC, lifting up the prayer concerns of our congregation? If you are interested in joining our Prayer Team or have a prayer request for our team to lift up please contact

*Melba Shaffer (573) 474-2997 melbamaes@google.com
Or Tricia Soncasie (314) 374-7477 tsoncasie@aol.com*

CUCC celebrates God's boundless love by:

Welcoming all God's Children;

Nurturing Faith and Spiritual Growth;

Challenging and inspiring everyone with vibrant worship;

Building a supportive church family;

***Transforming both the congregation and community
through service and outreach***

Gather Us In

Unison D A C G Gm/B \flat Dm

1. Here in this place, the new light is stream-ing, sha-dows of doubt are
 2. We are the young—our lives are a mys-tery; we are the old, who
 3. Here we re-ceive new life in the wa-ters; here we re-ceive the
 4. Not just in build-ings, small and con-fin-ing, not in some heav-en,

C G D A C G

van-ished a-way. See in this space our fears and our dream-ings,
 yearn for your face. We have been sung through-out all of his-tory,
 bread of new birth; here you shall call your sons and your daugh-ters,
 light years a-way, here in this place the new light is shin-ing;

Gm/B \flat Dm C Am7 D

brought here to you in the light of this day.
 called to be light to the whole hu-man race.
 call us a-new to be salt for the earth.
 now is God pres-ent, and now is the day.

A C/G D/F# G A C/G



Gath-er us in, the lost and for-sak-en; gath-er us in; our
 Gath-er us in— the rich and the haugh-ty; gath-er us in— the
 Give us to drink the wine of com-pass-ion, give us to eat the
 Gath-er us in and hold us for-ev-er; gath-er us in and



D/F# G A D A C G



spir-its in-flame. Call to us now, and we shall a-wak-en;
 proud and the strong; give us a heart so meek and so low-ly;
 bread that is you; nour-ish us well, and teach us to fash-ion
 make us your own; gath-er us in, all peo-ples to-geth-er,



Gm/Bb Dm C Am7 D C/D Gm/D D



we shall a-rise at the sound of our name.
 give us the cour-age to en-ter the song.
 lives that are ho-ly and hearts that are true.
 fire of love in our flesh and our bone.



Isaiah 55:1-12

1 Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

3 Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

4 See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.

5 See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

6 Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near;

7 let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

12 For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Luke 14:15-24

15 One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, “Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!”

16 Then Jesus said to him, “Someone gave a great dinner and invited many.

17 At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’

18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.’

19 Another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.’

20 Another said, ‘I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.’

21 So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’

22 And the slave said, ‘Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.’

23 Then the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled.

24 For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.’ ”

Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer

Exod. 13:21; 16:4; 17:6; Ps. 105:39-44; Rev. 22:1-2

William Williams, 1745

St. 1, transl. Peter Williams, 1771; alt.

St. 2-3, transl. William Williams, 1772; alt.

1 Guide me, O my great Re - deem - er, pil - grim through this
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, where the heal - ing
 3 When I reach the Riv - er Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land; I am weak, but you are might - y;
 wa - ters flow. Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar
 fears sub - side. Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion,

hold me with your power - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
 lead me all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,
 land me safe on heav - en's side. Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es

feed me till I want no more, feed me till I want no more.
 ev - er be my strength and shield, ev - er be my strength and shield.
 I will ev - er sing to you, I will ev - er sing to you.

John Hughes, a railroad official by trade, composed this tune for the 1907 anniversary of Capel Rhondda, Pontypridd, Wales. Cwm Rhondda refers to the "low valley" area surrounding the urban district of Rhondda in southern Wales.

Tune: CWM RHONDDA 8.7.8.7.8.7.7.

John Hughes, 1907

Alternate setting: ZION

In the Cross of Christ I Glory

Gal. 6:14

John Bowring, 1825

1 In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, tower - ing
 2 When the woes of life o'er - take me, hopes de -
 3 When the sun of bliss is beam - ing light and
 4 Bane and bless - ing, pain and plea - sure, by the
 5 In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, tower - ing

o'er the wrecks of time; All the light of
 ceive, and fears an - noy, Nev - er shall the
 love up - on my way, From the cross the
 cross are sanc - ti - fied; Peace is there that
 o'er the wrecks of time; All the light of

sa - cred sto - ry gath - ers 'round its head sub - lime.
 cross for - sake me: Lo! it glows with peace and joy.
 ra - diance stream - ing adds more lus - ter to the day.
 knows no mea - sure, joys that through all time a - bide.
 sa - cred sto - ry gath - ers 'round its head sub - lime.

John Bowring's goal "to do something which may connect my work with the literature of the age" was attained with this enduring hymn. The gifted Bowring studied 200 languages and wrote extensively in many fields.

Tune: RATHBUN 8.7.8.7.
 Ithamar Conkey, 1849
 Alternate setting: TOMTER