

The Communicator

September 2026

From the Pastor's Keyboard . . .

"New Beginnings"

*Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. -Isaiah 43:18-19*

The second book of Isaiah talks about new beginnings. The first book of Isaiah (chapters 1-39) was written when the Israelites were in captivity in Babylon and was about courage in the face of oppression. But the second book (chapters 40-55) were written after they were freed, and is all about new beginnings, how to start over, how to discern God's call in their new way of living. This book reflects that God was with them through the challenging times, and continues to be with them in these new, uncertain, hopeful times. God is charting a new course for the people of Israel, and they are called to reflect on that new beginning.

This time of year always feels like New Year's Day for me. The time of late August/early September, when the new academic year is beginning and routine is returning to our lives, everything seems possible; all options are on the horizon. New beginnings are happening all around us. I know this is very nerdy, but I love walking through the "Back to School" aisles at the store. The shelves and stacks of binders, paper, markers, rulers and such, as well as the "dorm furniture" aisles, are a reminder of the cycle of life; a new day is beginning.

At church, August/September reminds me that a new day is beginning here, too. Back in 2020, we adopted our current "academic year" structure for our programming, instead of the old "calendar year" model; and that adoption has made for a much more seamless program year. Rather than stopping everything in January to recalibrate, we keep going, September thru June, full steam ahead. This provides us an opportunity to plan ahead, to adopt full programs, and to function more effectively as a church. As a result, this time of year is "New Year's Day" as we kick off another great year of fun and faith.

And what a kickoff! Rally Day was incredible, with 17 children and youth in Sunday School. Our Youth Group is being revitalized with new members and new leadership. A Young Adult group is forming with new leadership empowering that ministry. Our Choir came back from summer hiatus with a wonderful "wake up" song reminding us all that God calls us to be "woke." Our year is starting with incredible energy! Come join us!

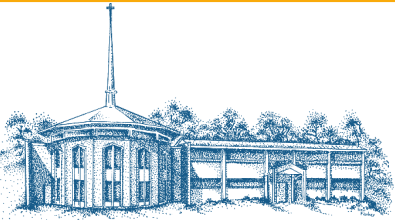
What are your goals for this program year? What Ministry Team would you like to work with? How can your vision of ministry intersect with the vision of CUCC? Plan out the year and set measurable goals. Come to worship, come to Sunday School. Think about how you are glorifying God; and make that your focus.

Another reason why this time of year seems like a new beginning is because this is the season when we began our ministry together. Our shared ministry here began on September 1, 2017; so as this Communicator is published, we will be starting our tenth year together. We have gone through much these past nine years. We have recognized God's call to love inclusively by committing ourselves to be more like Jesus than ever (adopting our Inclusion Covenant); we have endured the pandemic together; we have adopted new technology, including livestreaming our services and replacing all our tech equipment in the entire church; we have welcomed new ways of worshipping together and new musical adventures; we have welcomed new groups into the building and adopted new partnerships; we have renovated a large portion of our physical space; and we have adopted new by-laws and procedures. All of this has united us in a wonderful way, increasing our mutual ministry and furthering God's work in the world in an amazing way. This has been an incredible nine years! We have done so much together!



Which begs the question- where do we want to be nine years from now? What do we want this church to look like nine years from now? What ministries do we want to enable, what safeguards do we want to put in place? I think it would be fair to say that we want our church to be even stronger, healthier, and more connected to God on that day nine years from now. The only way to make that happen is if we begin the work now. Everything we do today is building on that nine years from now future; and if we remember this in all that we do, that future will be secure. Thank you for all you do to help make this church thrive!

-Pastor Rick



News & Updates

Columbia United Church of Christ

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

Rev. Rick Oberle
Pastor

Rev. Fred Brandenburg
Pastor Emeritus

Mike Pierson
Music Coordinator

Alexandra Roper
Office Administrator

Sara Koenig
Director, Little One's Day Out

Caleb Berry
Custodian

Sunday Schedule:

9:00 a.m. Faith Education
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



BUILDING UPDATES

You may have noticed our new floor downstairs. This beautiful dark grey concrete flooring was completed by The Concreterz. This type of flooring is much less upkeep, physically and financially. Some things to note about the floor: the floor can only be cleaned using water and a special ph neutral cleaner (our wonderful custodian, Caleb, will handle these deep cleanings), the floor may be slippery when wet, so use caution when it is raining or snowing outside, and there is a small ramp between the Fellowship Hall and the main part of the hallway, so use caution when passing through.

We also have switched around some rooms over the summer! The Youth Room is now upstairs at the very end of the hall, creating a cozy and fun vibe for our younger members.

The LODO Office has taken place of the old Youth Room, downstairs in the Fellowship Hall. This room has interior windows, allowing our LODO staff to keep an eye on everything going on during their school hours. This also provides more room for supplies like books, shelves, the laminator, the printer, and shelves full of crafting materials.

In place of the old LODO Office, is a new Conference Room! This will double as a "history room" of sorts. Here is where Ministry Team Meetings can take place and congregants can learn more about the Columbia UCC history through old scrapbooks, photo albums, and more!

We are so excited to see how our church flourishes with these changes! Thank you to everyone who helped over the summer with the maintenance and moving.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP - SEPTEMBER 10

It's time to begin another exciting year of fun gatherings for CUCC Women's Fellowship. We meet the second Thursday of the month in the gathering area. The festivities start with breakfast at 9:30 a.m. followed by a Biblically related lesson and a business meeting. This year's studies center around Paul's first letter to the Corinthians - United Through Christ, Bound to Each Other. You are cordially invited to come and be a part of the good time, good learning, and good works that this group does. Ladies, mark your calendars. See you September 10.

SAVE THE DATE - CROP WALK 2026

This year's CROP Hunger Walk will be held Sunday, September 20 at Stephens Lake Park at 1:00 p.m. Let's make a showing with several walkers and try to recapture the trophy for most funds collected and the trophy for most walkers! Good works done by good people. Don't be a bystander. **CLICK HERE** to Sign up to walk and/or donate. If you have any questions, talk to **Barry Kirchhoff**.



Moderator's Moment

As we begin a new church year this September, I am excited about our upcoming Ministry Teams Fair. This is a wonderful opportunity for all of us to learn more about the many ministries and activities that make our church community special- and to consider where we might share our own time, energy, and talents.

Jesus' parable of the talents (*Matthew 25:14-30*) reminds us that each of us has been entrusted with gifts. In the story, three servants are given different amounts to care for while their master is away. Two servants put what they had been given to work, while the third simply buried his talent. When the master returned, the servants were accountable for what they had done with what they had received. The lesson is not that everyone must do the same thing. Rather, we are called to recognize what God has given us and use those gifts faithfully.

That is what our Ministry Teams Fair is all about. Each team has its own purpose and gifts to share. Some teams work behind the scenes. Others welcome people, teach, prepare meals, care for our building, organize activities, serve our community, or help make worship and fellowship possible. There is something for everyone. Perhaps your gift is something you have never thought of as a "talent." Maybe you can prepare a meal for someone who needs encouragement. Maybe you can give a morning to a church workday. Perhaps you enjoy welcoming people, organizing, teaching, baking, gardening, visiting, listening, or working with children. Maybe you have the time and interest to become an active member of one of our ministry teams. And there is something beautiful about serving others: we are blessed by what we do for others. When we offer our time and talents, we often receive far more than we expected. We build relationships, discover new gifts, experience joy, and become more deeply connected to our church family. Our acts of service become blessings that move in both directions.

So, as you visit the Ministry Teams Fair, take some time to ask yourself: "What are my talents? What am I able to give? Where might God be calling me to serve?" You do not have to make a huge commitment. Start where you are and with what you can offer. One meal, one morning, one project, one act of kindness- or perhaps a commitment to serve regularly on a ministry team- can make a meaningful difference. Every gift matters. Every act of service matters. Every person matters. Let us not bury the talents we have been given. Instead, let us share them generously, knowing that what we do for others strengthens our church, blesses our neighbors, and blesses us as well.

I hope you will come to the Ministry Teams Fair, learn about the wonderful work happening throughout our congregation, and discover a place where your gifts can make a difference. Together, let us use what God has entrusted to us- and see how abundantly those gifts can bless others and ourselves.

Grace and Peace,
Jerry Kiesling,
Council Moderator



COLUMBIA UCC CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderator:	Jerry Kiesling	Finance & Stewardship:	Sue Ann Schaefer
Vice Moderator:	Corinne Remeika	Inclusion & Affirmation:	Ashley Ramirez
Secretary:	Tricia Soncasie	Little One's Day Out:	Darla Privitt
Treasurer:	Aimee Andersen	Membership & Care:	Judi Privitt
Recording Treasurer:	Christine Staelens	Nurture & Education:	Jessica Lucas
Building & Grounds:	Allen Posz	Outreach & Advocacy:	Mahree Skala
Fellowship & Hospitality:	Mary Lorber-Solt	Worship & Music:	Kitty Rogers
Pastor:	Rick Oberle		

September Sunday Volunteer Schedule

Date	Greeter	Ushers	Worship Leader	Tech Booth
09/06	Mary Lorber	Dorothy Williams Yvonne Williams	Tricia Soncasie	Brent Marcks Lorry Dreier
09/13	Carol Duermeyer		Llona Weiss	Ted Dachroeden Josh Muench
09/20	Pat Forward	Llona Weiss Christine Staelens	Lena Muench	Carissa Graves John Graves
09/27		Pat Forward Phillip Neale	Sue Ann Schaefer	Judi Privitt Doug Privitt

September Birthdays

Kaden Lucas - 09/01	Ashley Ramirez - 09/01	Kim Oberle - 09/03
Matthew Baker - 09/04	Lance Markway - 09/04	Bert Wrinkle - 09/07
Gail Marriott - 09/08	Beth Walker - 09/08	Diane Privitt - 09/09
Walter Schroeder - 09/09	Simon Jaberg - 09/11	Roselynn Lentz - 09/11
Ryan Schoeneberg - 09/11	Kieran Williams - 09/11	Ace Devenney - 09/14
Doug Privitt - 09/14	Ember Piersee - 09/15	Shelby Oberle - 09/18
Lily Santoro-Williams - 09/19	Glenn Duermeyer - 09/21	Becky Gordon - 09/23
Carol Williams - 09/23	Ted Dachroeden - 09/24	Don Privitt - 09/24
Yvonne Williams - 09/24	Dennis Froeschner - 09/25	Ally Jaberg - 09/25
Sue Beckman - 09/26	Melissa Bernhardt - 09/27	Lea Marienfeld - 09/29
Llona Weiss - 09/29	Lola Lee - 09/30	

Columbia UCC Council Minutes

Columbia UCC Council met on July 21, 2026 at 6:35 p.m. Pastor Rick opened with a prayer at 6:39 pm. The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Corinne Remeika. We went around the room and introduced ourselves. Present: Darla Privitt, Jessica Lucas, Corinne Remeika, Mahree Skala, Sue Ann Schaefer, Christine Staelens, Allen Posz, Ashley Ramirez, Judi Privitt, Christine Staelens, Tricia Soncasie, Mary Lorber-Solt, Pastor Rick Oberle, and Aimee Andersen. A motion was made (Allen) and seconded (Sue Ann) to approve the May Council minutes; motion passed unanimously.

One Read/Devotional:

Council reviewed *Recreating the Church*, pages 1-15. Corrine discussed how things have changed since 1968 (considered postmodern times). The absence of social consensus leads society toward chaos. How do we honor and incorporate the new voices that are emerging? How language shapes and leads... installment versus calling. Are churches machines to be maintained or organisms that should grow and change?

Unfinished Business:

- ♦ Sunday Volunteer Sign up.
- ♦ Ongoing building projects were reviewed by Allen.
 - ◇ New light for the sign on the front. Need to get bids.
 - ◇ Flooring has been done. See report and pictures.
 - ◇ Solar project: We are next on the list. They are working on the plan to submit to the City and expect to do that in the next 10 days.
- ♦ Organist update: There is a sophomore Mizzou student who has agreed to be the organist, similar to the Section Leaders. He will start in August (16 weeks in the fall, 16 weeks in the spring).
- ♦ Rally Day: August 23. Back to school kick-off. There will be a meal.
- ♦ Ministry Teams Fair: September 13. Each Team gives a three to five minute information session on your team, including a sign up sheet.
- ♦ COMO Mission Experience: There were 2 groups (June 27 & July 9).
- ♦ Budget requests are due to the Treasurer by September 1.

New Business:

- ♦ A motion was made by Mahree to accept the resignations of Deborah Birkes as Treasurer and Aimee Andersen as Secretary and approve the appointments of Aimee Andersen as Treasurer and Tricia Soncasie as Secretary and seconded (Ashley); motion passed unanimously.
- ♦ Annual Pastoral Evaluation: see report on the drive.
- ♦ Sabbatical Planning: see report on the drive. Every five years Pastor Rick gets three months off for time off and spiritual development. August, September, and October of 2027 is the next scheduled Sabbatical. There will be pastoral coverage and a congregational Sabbatical Team that will help with the other parts of the job.
- ♦ Caleb's vacation: next week; need cleaning help for 8/2.
- ♦ Pastor Rick on vacation 7/27-8/9.
- ♦ Time to register for the Western Association Meeting (September 19) and the Conference Annual Gathering (November 6-7).
- ♦ Pastor's Report, Financial Report, and Ministry Team Reports are attached.

Pastor Rick closed us in prayer. A motion was made (Allen) and seconded (Ashley) to adjourn; motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Aimee Anderson,
Church Council
Secretary



Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team

Financial Update

	Actual	Budget	Over/(Under)
July Income	\$23,650.40	\$31,765.68	(-\$8,115.28)
July Expenses	\$30,364.47	\$37,302.83	(-\$6,938.36)
YTD Income	\$187,155.51	\$200,387.29	(-\$13,231.78)
YTD Expenses	\$237,302.68	\$240,480.31	(-\$3,177.63)
Surplus/(Deficit)	(-\$50,147.17)	(-40,093.02)	(-10,054.15)
July Joyful Giving	\$22,761.43	\$30,825.68	(-\$8,064.25)
YTD Joyful Giving	\$179,684.55	\$188,807.29	(-\$9,122.74)

It is budget time again, which means we will be looking at the income we received from members and assessing the priorities which help us act out our vision for the world.

As we strive to make this world a better place, I encourage everyone to consider the services you feel the church should be prioritizing. If you have a suggestion or concern, talk to Sue Ann Schaffer or myself or send an email to someone on the Finance and Stewardship team.

Respectfully submitted,
Aimee Anderson,
Church Council
Secretary



Worship	07/05	07/12	07/19	07/26
Attendance	74	84	74	78

Have you remembered Columbia United Church of Christ in your will? What a great way to leave a legacy that keeps on making an impact in the world! If you have any questions about how to do this, contact [Aimee Andersen](#), [Paula Wilson](#), or another member of the CUCC Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team!

Inclusion and Affirmation Ministry Team

We know better. Let's do better.

Glendy Marisol Gonzales de la Cruz and Nixon Giovanni Perez Paz

Initially, the task seemed relatively straightforward: write about Hispanic Heritage Month, celebrated annually from September 15 through October 15. The possibilities were many and varied. Focus on history and perhaps feature a musician, baseball player or politician. Highlight culture and include a recipe for Dip de Frijoles Negros. Recommend that everyone attend the Greater St. Louis Hispanic Heritage Festival September 18-20 or the Midwest Mariachi Festival in Kansas City on September 26.

However, news broke in late July that a couple from suburban St. Louis was found bound and shot to death in a sugar cane field in Guatemala. The couple's 14-month-old daughter, Giovanni, was found alive next to her mother's body. Nixon Giovanni Perez Paz worked as a roofer and was picked up by ICE on his way to work in April 2025. After he was detained in Rolla and then deported, his wife, Glendy Marisol Gonzalez de la Cruz, seven months pregnant with Giovanni, remained behind with their two older daughters. Glendy was pursuing citizenship through legal channels, and her youngest daughter, born later that spring, is a legal citizen of the United States. Glendy worked two jobs over the past year but decided to self-deport this past June to reunite with her husband, fearing her own citizenship process to be stalled. Nixon did get to meet his baby girl and see his older daughters, ages five and eleven, again. In early August, a vigil was held in Overland, MO, to honor Nixon and Glendy, with full support from the mayor, local police, Ritenour School District, and nearby churches.

Beyond mourning this shattered family, what can we do? Remember and say their names: Glendy Marisol Gonzales de la Cruz: wife, mother, daughter, friend; Nixon Giovanni Perez Paz: husband, father, brother, son, friend. Talk about this completely unnecessary tragedy, how a family sought safety, hope and refuge in our state, only to find themselves sent back to the country they rightfully needed to flee. Pray for the three daughters left behind. Most importantly, contact your representatives and let them know your thoughts, and vote accordingly in November.

Here are a few resources for people immigrating:

- ♦ [Mobile Pathways](#) helps connect immigrants to services and advocates.
- ♦ MMLS, Mid-Missouri Legal Services, helps with documentation and legal guidance.
- ♦ ACLU of Missouri monitors 287(g) agreements between law enforcement agencies and ICE.



Sources:

- ♦ [Overland couple killed in Guatemala after being deported by ICE | STLPR](#)
- ♦ [Overland mayor weighs in on killing of couple in Guatemala after deportation | STLPR](#)
- ♦ [Hundreds gather to mourn Overland parents murdered after deportation to Guatemala](#)



Respectfully Submitted,
Tricia Soncasie,
Inclusion and Affirmation Team Member

LODO Ministry Team

The LODO school year is off to a fantastic start! The school year started on Monday, August 24 with our enrollment at 70%. As many of you may know, this year we expanded out hours to better accommodate our LODO Families. Our LODO+ hours are now from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. for children two and older and 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for children one and under. The enrollment for LODO+ for our youngest students is at 90%! The normal hours are still at 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. With this expansion of hours, we have seen a boost in LODO+ enrollment.

As of the start of the school year, we only have one spot left in our new Lemurs room, the class for six weeks to one year of age, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If you need childcare on these days for your little one, contact Sara immediately. We still have spots open for all of our classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and select spots open on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If you or anyone you know is wanting compassionate and faith based childcare, have them contact us at 573-445-2661 or at lodo.sara.koenig@gmail.com.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sara Koenig,
LODO Director



Now Enrolling!

New Hours for LODO Plus (2+)
7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Email
LODO.Sara.Koenig@gmail.com
to schedule your tour today!



Ages
Infants
Toddlers
Twos
Threes
Pre-K



SUPPORT LODO THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a key part in expanding our outreach in the modern era. Sharing our social media posts means more people get to learn about LODO and will be more inclined to join!

Social media uses algorithms to determine what to show users. When people like, comment, save, or share a post, this creates “engagement” and can make the post pop up on other peoples feeds.

When you “like” a post it has a small chance of popping up on a friends feed. Commenting on a post is even better. Commenting on LODO posts will help boost it to other people. This tells the algorithm “this is an interesting post and more people would probably want to see it.”

But “sharing” our posts are by far the best thing you can do! “Sharing” a post on your page allows others to directly see our content. This allows new people to discover who we are. So be sure to “share” our LODO social media posts to help support our LODO program!

Fellowship & Hospitality Ministry Team

Hello my friends, well, another Rally Day, end of summer, back to school event is over. I sincerely hope that everyone enjoyed the best fish fry ever. A huge shout out to Fred Malicoat, Ron Tennill, and others, I'm sure; please thank them the next time you see them. Thanks to everyone who brought a dish to the potluck; so many good things to eat. We are truly blessed with all of the wonderful cooks/bakers in our church family!

Since Fall is just around the corner, our Ministry Team has been busy planning things to do. September 13 is our Ministry Teams trade fair; you know, where we set up booths, and entice you to sign up... LOL! We truly do want and need your time and talent. For example, Fred and Ron, they take their time and talent for catching fish and turn it into a memorable event for all. Not everybody is an angler but we all have gifts that we can share to help our church family/community grow better and stronger. Please check out all of the Ministry Teams booths on September 13 and see where you might fit in. Driving someone to their doctors appointment, making posters, reading to a group of children, making a meal for someone sick, mowing someone's yard, decorating for a special event- so many things that are done by volunteers! Think of what you can do with your talent!

Our next big scheduled event is the Halloween Party, scheduled for October 25, after church. There will be bingo, games, costume contests, and, of course, the potluck luncheon like last year. It doesn't get any better than that.

As always, be blessed, be thankful, be healthy, and always, be yourself!

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Lorber-Solt
Fellowship and Hospitality
Ministry Team Chair



Membership & Care Ministry Team

*"In the hazy days at summers end,
when the air's still warm and the green near spent
when the days grow short and the evenings tall
then you feel in a whisper, fall."*

-Laura Jaworski

We have been busy this in past month, especially the prayer team. They have prayed for victims of war, numerous natural disasters, immigration policies, and unwarranted hatred. They continue to pray for those who have submitted a request. We have given rides to church and other places. The old van has ben used. The bus was used for a trip. We had multiple meal trains set up with many volunteer cooks from the team and the congregation. The card senders keep busy. Prayer Shawl Group took a break during the hot summer months. They will met September 9 at 6:00 p.m. Feel free to join in.

Membership and Care team would welcome your participation. Ask Judi Privitt how you can help. Ask Melba Shaffer or Tricia Soncasie to have prayers said for you or those you care about. Contact the office to be put on the prayer list printed in the bulletin.

Respectfully Submitted,
Helen Schulz
Membership & Care
Ministry Team Member



Nurture & Education Ministry Team

Join Us!

WELCOME TO
OUR FRIENDS
NEW AND
RETURNING!

What's Happening on Sunday Mornings

- Sunday School- 9:00-10:00 a.m., ages 3-12th grade. Meets weekly upstairs. WE'LL TAKE CARE OF BREAKFAST! So much fun planned for our kiddos and youth!
- Adult Bible Study- 9:00-10:00 a.m. (upstairs in Education Wing, last room on the left). Meets weekly.
- Fellowship Time from 10:00-10:30 weekly with coffee, snacks, & beverages.
- Nursery for kiddos ages Kindergarten and younger during 10:30 Worship.

SOMETHING NEW!

Our new **CUCC Young Adult/College Ministry** faith formation program has started! All young adults/college students are welcome; spread the word! For more information, talk to Ashley or Kasper Ramirez, Rev. Lauren or Jesse Lippincott, or Rev. Mike or Lilly Santoro-Williams!

STAY TUNED!

Our **Youth Group for Grades 6-12** is already making lots of plans for the fall! Be on the lookout for e-mails from Pastor Rick-- if you're not getting them or know of someone to add to the list, please let the church office know.

Outreach & Advocacy Ministry Team



Columbia Public Schools (CPS) started August 25, and Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary School (AHL) is in full swing. Several CUCC members helped Principal Minear kick off the year with teachers and staff on August 17 with an ice cream social. Thank you Pastor Rick, Jolene Kirchhoff, Tricia Soncasie, Mahree Scala, Judi Privitt, and anyone else who joined, in scooping ice cream and bringing toppings/cookies, etc. Pastor Rick and Llona will be meeting with Dr. Minear and staff on September 9 to discuss where our partnership can help during the first semester of the school year. CUCC will also be collecting snack donations throughout the semester to help those students who have very early lunch and very late lunch keep their energy going. Please bring your donations to the boxes labeled AHL in the Gathering Area closet, and Llona will be sure they get to school for the students. CUCC, thank you for all you do!



CUCC members and friends are taking advantage of two volunteer opportunities that help feed hungry people. So many in our community are stretching their budgets to the breaking point and need help to access healthy food. Every 4th Tuesday at 5:30 p.m., we work at the Food Bank of Central and Northeast Missouri, repackaging bulk food into family-sized packages. To can sign up for the September 22 shift [CLICK HERE](#). If you'd like to be added to the email reminder group, or have questions, please contact [Mahree Skala](#).

Several CUCC folks have also started volunteering at the Food Bank Market, where people can come once a month to select their supplemental food. If you're interested in learning more about this opportunity, contact [Pastor Rick](#), [Jolene Kirchhoff](#), or [Mahree Skala](#).



The August 17 meal at Loaves & Fishes consisted of spaghetti (prepared by Mary, Judi and Audrey), applesauce, garlic bread, and brownies. Our wonderful brownie bakers were Linda Neale, Jolene Kirchhoff, Sue Ann Schaefer, Deb Meers, Pat Forward, Jim Loveless, Darla Privitt, and Paula Wilson. The peanut butter and jellies were made and donated by Mahree Skala and Brenda Muench. Servers/dishwashers for the evening were Wendy Vandegriffe, Tim & Tricia Soncasie, Doug & Judi Privitt, Tom & Mary Lorber-Solt, Debby (Mary's Sister), Darla Privitt, and Jim Loveless. We had approximately 184 servings with 155 of those being firsts. Thanks to everyone!!



Team Earth is hosting a trip to the Endangered Wolf Center just outside of St. Louis off of I-44 on October 10. Did you know that every Mexican Wolf in the wild today can trace their roots back to the Endangered Wolf Center? This is a conservation hub right in our back yard. Up to 20 people can be on this private tour. Contact [Pastor Rick](#) or the church office to join this event. We also are on our way to being a [Creation Justice Church](#)! This covenant was vetted and approved by Team Earth as well as the Church Council. Read more about what happens next, and the copy of the document, on the next page.

In August the CUCC Council unanimously approved the Creation Justice Covenant developed by Team Earth. The congregation will vote on it at the Fall Budget/Visioning Congregational Meeting (date TBA). The full text is below. Many thanks to the Team Earth members who have worked diligently on this, to all who made comments and suggestions, and especially to Mike Williams for his able leadership.

CUCC CREATION JUSTICE COVENANT

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof” (Psalm 24:1)

We, the members of Columbia United Church of Christ, are eternally grateful for the extravagant love we have experienced through God’s bountiful blessing of creation and acknowledge our calling to be faithful stewards of these divine gifts.

As Christ’s disciples, we seek to love our neighbors as ourselves, recognizing that the scriptures teach that all creatures, stars, and planets proclaim the glory of God, and are therefore included in that divine covenant. This concern for all our neighbors also calls us to acknowledge those who are unfairly impacted by environmental injustices.

Living into the joy of being stewards of God’s creation and viewing the scriptures of our tradition through the lenses of compassion and dignity of all creation, we seek the Spirit’s guidance to pursue a life of worship and service that celebrates and supports the divinity of creation and a theology of abundance.

We care for God’s world and our relation to all God’s children, creatures, and other life by being responsible for our impact on nature. We covenant to educate and inspire CUCC ministry teams, church members, families, and friends to adopt environmentally sustainable practices where possible at church, home, and in our personal lives, and to evaluate and update CUCC goals for continued progress.

Columbia UCC covenants to connect to the broader movement of creation justice as an advocate for all, regardless of who they are or where they are on life’s journey- by supporting legislation and public policies that benefit the environment, by building partnerships with environmental justice allies to advocate for initiatives that address local and global threats to our environment.

Guided by this covenant, we desire that a passion for creation justice be manifested in every dimension of our congregation’s life as we seek to take this commitment beyond the walls of this church to make good on our promises to God our Creator, to Jesus the Redeemer of Creation, and to the Holy Spirit the Sustainer of Creation.



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.



Worship & Music Ministry Team

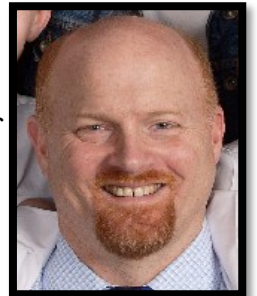
During the summer, when I got the chance to stand in front of you all to lead singing almost every Sunday, I pondered the questions: "Why does this person or that person not sing?" "Why doesn't the congregation sing more confidently on this song?" "What could I do to foster more lively singing during services from the congregation, not just the choir?" In my pondering, I came across an article that talked about this very issue. Here are some thoughts from "Cultivating Congregational Singing in Corporate Worship" by Felix Carey Pakki on thegospelcoalition.org. "Scripture offers a grand vision for corporate worship. Paul writes to the Colossians: *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God"* (Col. 3:16). This command is directed at the entire local church, not only its worship leaders. Singing is a communal act where we declare, believe, and apply the gospel. It transforms us from consumers to conduits of the gospel, promoting mutual edification.

Some of the most profound worship experiences I have experienced were when the congregation's voices overshadowed the musicians. It enabled the word of Christ to dwell in me richly. As worship leaders, we also need to sense the uplifting power of the congregation's singing. Ultimately, we follow a singing Savior who rejoices over us with loud singing (*Zeph. 3:17, Matt. 26:30*). When we sing, we join in his song of salvation, growing into his likeness (*2 Cor. 3:18*). Congregational singing is not just a tradition but a transformative practice. It binds us together in worship and reflects the heart of our faith (*Eph. 5:19-20*)."

For me, singing in church was never a choice as a child. It was demonstrated to me by my mom and grandparents that it was part of who I am as a worshipper to not only sing, but sing confidently. I discovered through that practice that I had an ability to not only sing, but lead others to it. After 30 years of teaching singing, it is not lost on me that some people don't grow up with the expectation or mentoring to let them feel comfortable to even make a sound, much less a joyful sound from their God-given instrument. Therefore, I do understand why some people don't share their singing voice during service or even sing at a level that can be heard across the congregation. I will, however, continue to encourage everyone to contribute what they can, whether or not their pew neighbors like it!

We do "follow a singing Savior," and I do believe in the immense spiritual power of combining your voice with others. If you've only stood during hymns and never even attempted to make a sound, give it a try next Sunday, and the next, and the next! That simple act will be powerful enough to draw us all even closer as a congregation.

In Harmony,
Mike Pierson,
Music Coordinator



The Worship and Music committee recently held its second meeting of the year. While this is a busy season for all of us, we would love to welcome new members to our group. Our next meeting is scheduled for October 8, and anyone interested is welcome to join us. We are currently working on several upcoming events and initiatives, and we would appreciate your help with two in particular:

Mizzou Homecoming is coming up on Saturday, October 3. If you know of anyone traveling to town for the game, please invite them to join us for worship at church on Sunday, especially if they are former members of our congregation. Also, we have an exciting new project to consider for the upcoming season. Instead of purchasing a Lenten devotional booklet this year, we are planning to create our own. We are looking for approximately 40 volunteers from the congregation to participate. Each volunteer would choose a Psalm (with the exception of Psalm 23) and write a brief reflection on what it means to them. To ensure we have enough time to assemble the booklet, all submissions must be turned in by December 1. A sign-up sheet will be available at the back of the church. Please consider sharing your thoughts and participating in this special project- we can absolutely make this happen together!

Respectfully submitted,
Kitty Rogers
Music and Worship
Ministry Team Chair



Scouting America

Troop 4475-

Troop 4475 has been on Summer Break, but we'll be ramping up Troop activities as the school year begins! If you are a female in fifth grade or above (ages 11 through 17) and interested in joining our Troop come check us out at CUCC in The Sanctuary on September 14 or October 5 at 7 p.m.

Additionally, we'll have a Recruitment Campout on Oct. 10, email Scoutmaster Rachel Redburn at 4475Scoutmaster@gmail.com for more details!



Troop 4475

Females age 11-17 interested in Scouting

Location: CUCC Sanctuary

Date: Sept. 14 or Oct. 5

Time: 7pm

Scouting America
Great Rivers Council

THANK YOU!



At Ronald McDonald House Mid-Missouri, we put families at the heart of care. We are more than just a place to stay. We are a play to stay strong - together. Thank you for your gift of \$500.00. Your thoughtful donation helps provide both free and essential services for families with ill or injured children via the Ronald McDonald House, the Ronald McDonald Family Room, and Lunch on the House. Serving thousands each year, our mission programs remove barriers, strengthen families, and promote healing when children need healthcare. Your help provides the comforts of home, and we are so grateful to you.

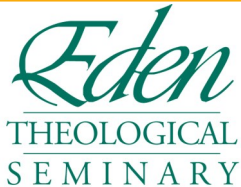
Sincerely,
Ashlee Smith,

Senior Director of Philanthropy for Ronald McDonald House Mid-Missouri



Thank you for supporting Mobility Worldwide MO - Columbia. Your generosity helps provide Mobility Carts that bring freedom, independence, and hope to people around the world. Because of donors like you, lives are being transformed every day. Thank you for making this mission possible. Your generosity has been put to work to lift lower limb mobility-impaired people up out of the dirt and on their way to a better life. Thank you for the continued support!

Tom Nullmeyer,
Board of Directors at Mobility World Wide MO - Columbia



On behalf of everyone at Eden Theological Seminary, I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your support of the seminary. Your financial contribution to the Annual Fund on July 16 is incredibly meaningful. It allows us to continue Eden's mission as called to strengthen the life of the church by educating leaders with theological imagination and faithful resilience to join God's loving and liberating work in the world. Thanks to your generosity, we are engaging people in a seminary education to meet the moment. Our Network Model for Theological Education facilitates collaboration among seminaries, colleges and denominations to equip and support leaders wherever they are in their journey. A new Momentum for Ministry Initiative coordinates learning among congregations, seminaries, students, and alumni to thrive in the current and future digital age. We are grateful that you belong to this community of supporters and are eager to keep you updated on the impact of your gift. Once again, thank you for your kindness and support.

In Gratitude,
Rev. Dr. Mary Schaller Blaufuss,
Vice President for Advancement at Eden Theological Seminary



Thank you for your generous gift to the Church World Service Blankets and Tools program. As families and communities around the world recover from emergencies and struggle in the face of unprecedented challenges, you are standing with them. Now more than ever, we are so grateful for your generous support. Your contribution provides warmth, comfort, and hope to neighbors near and far. It provides a tangible reminder to migrant families that they are not alone as they seek safety. It wraps refugees in warmth as they arrive in the United States to build a new future. It provides comfort to our neighbors who have lost homes or are struggling in the face of extreme challenges. Around the world, your support means relief and hope. Because of you, Church World Service is able to respond when disasters occur and support is needed. Thanks to your compassion, we can - and will - change lives.

Sincerely,
Rick Santos
President and CEO of Church World Services

International Missions

CUCC IS WORKING IN INDONESIA

The Christian Church in West Sulawesi (GKSB) serves communities in remote rural and mountainous areas, where most members live modestly as farmers. Despite daily challenges and the pressures of rapidly changing technology and information, GKSB seeks to be a spiritual refuge and source of guidance for its people. The church focuses on equipping communities through education youth development, and the strengthening of its ministers, including initiatives in counseling and economic empowerment. GKSB attributes its growth and impact to its members' dedication and the support and fellowship of partner churches in Indonesia and abroad, including through its collaboration with Global Ministries. In partnership, GKSB works to bless, heal, and proclaim God's presence in West Sulawesi.

Through Global Ministries, CUCC is a partner in mission with over 200 mission partners around the world, including the GKSB in Indonesia. Keep Global Ministries and the people of West Sulawesi in your prayers this month as they do God's work on our behalf!



CUCC IS WORKING IN MEXICO

(condensed from www.globalministries.org)

The Round Table for Mission Development in Mexico, a Global Ministries partner, consists of three UCC/DOC partner congregations united in service. Since 2006, the Round Table has been a space for the three churches to do God's mission and live out God's reconciliation in a united way within the volatile context of Mexican churches and society.

Projects that the Round Table for Mission Development in Mexico have developed include projects by women of the three member churches. These projects are micro-credit efforts through which women take out loans at a low interest rate for family income-generation projects. Then, they pay back the loans from the proceeds of their project in order to benefit additional women with loans.

One project included a couple who has purchased 32 goats with a loan provided by the project. From these goats they will sell the goat's milk and meat as they reproduce. Another micro-credit project is of pig-raising. Pastor Claudia and her husband have adult and baby pigs. They will keep some to reproduce and others will be sold for meat. Another project involves Karen and her husband. They purchased 15 sheep that were expecting and 20 young males. They are fattening the sheep and selling the lambs for meat. Other micro-credit projects include a woman who sells items at a bazaar, two women who cook and sell food from their home, and another woman who makes tamales using the church's kitchen and sells them.

Looking towards the future, The Round Table hopes to increase and develop its capacity for more projects and conferences, in order to enrich, empower, and sow solidarity between women and their communities around the world.



On the Church Calendar in September

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		01 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:00 a.m. - Staff Meeting 5:00 p.m. - Outreach & Advocacy Meeting	02 10:00 a.m. - Membership & Care Meeting 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers 7:15 p.m. - Confirmation Class	03 6:30 p.m. - Troop 4475	04	05
06 9:00 a.m. - Bible Study & Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship	07 - LABOR DAY OFFICE CLOSED 12:00 p.m. - Open House at Pastor Rick's	08 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:00 a.m. - Staff Meeting 5:30 p.m. - Finance & Stewardship Meeting 6:30 p.m. - Troop 708 Meeting	09 6:00 p.m. - Prayer Shawl Group 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers 7:15 p.m. - Confirmation Class	10 9:30 a.m. - Women's Fellowship	11	12 10:45 a.m. - Women's Fellowship Field Trip
13 - Ministry Team Fair 7:30 a.m. - Men's Fellowship 9:00 a.m. - Bible Study & Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship	14 5:15 p.m. - Inclusion & Affirmation Meeting 6:00 p.m. - LODO Ministry Team Meeting	15 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:00 a.m. - Staff Meeting 1:00 p.m. - Pause to Color 6:30 p.m. - Council Meeting	16 10:00 a.m. - Pastor Rick leads worship at The Bluffs 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers 7:15 p.m. - Confirmation Class	17	18	19 9:30 a.m. - Western Association Fall Meeting in Springfield
20 9:00 a.m. - Bible Study & Sunday School 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship 12:00 p.m. - CRQP Walk	21 4:30 p.m. - Loaves & Fishes 6:30 p.m. - Clergy Personnel Committee 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	22 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:00 a.m. - Staff Meeting 5:30 p.m. - Food Bank	23 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers	24	25	26 12:00 p.m. - Mid-MO PrideFest
27 9:00 a.m. - Bible Study & Sunday School 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship 12:00 p.m. - Mid-MO PrideFest	28 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	29 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:00 a.m. - Staff Meeting	30 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers			

The Communicator

Columbia United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation ONA #1575

3201 I-70 Dr. NW
Columbia, MO 65202-3296
573-445-7931



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.



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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!