

# The Communicator

December 2025

## From the Pastor's Keyboard . . .

“Advent Joy”

*“For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating, for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy and its people as a delight. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days or an old person who does not live out a lifetime, for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.” -Isaiah 65:17-20*

The prophet Isaiah, writing these words 600 years before Jesus, was living in a time of national turmoil. His country has been destroyed by a narcissistic tyrant and invading armies; his people had been enslaved and scattered to foreign lands, and the Temple, God's home on earth, had been destroyed. Things were about as bad as they could possibly be for the people of Israel living in that day and age.

Yet in this very circumstance, Isaiah relays this message of hope; that God is present in all things, no matter how difficult they get. But God is not just present; God is being active in Isaiah's world, creating newness in the midst of desolation. Even when human things were darker than imaginable, God was doing new things. Not just maintaining, but doing something new. God is creating new heavens and new earth, even when the people of Israel were wallowing in despair.

The prophet Isaiah is relaying this message to us as well. No matter how depressing things get in our own personal or communal lives, God is there; not just getting us by, but empowering us to do new things. God is not just about maintaining; God is about progressing. New things are always happening when God is in charge.

What keeps us from embracing God's new heavens and new earth? Usually, that boils down to fear. People in power are afraid of losing power, and people who are comfortable are afraid of losing their comfort. Fear builds walls, fear fortifies fences, and fear causes people to retreat into maintenance mode, rather than growing into God's vision of the future.

But not here at CUCC! We are joyful people, not fearful people; and joyful people grow into God's new heavens and new earth. Joyful people don't just maintain what is, they envision what will be; and then go for it! This is us. We are joyful people. We have vision. We have hope. We are God's new earth.

I see this in so many areas of CUCC. Our music program, which has grown greatly this year under Mike's incredible leadership, is an embodiment of joy. Our Confirmation Class is growing and learning and embracing new ways of faith expression. Our Quilters are growing in number. Our Sunday School has had incredible numbers this past year. Thirteen new members have joined our congregation this year, brought in by our inclusive identity and our expressive standards of welcome.

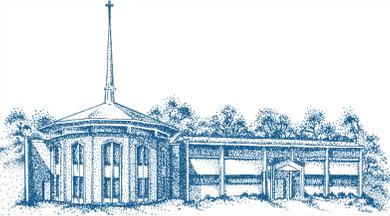
This is a congregation that embraces God's vision, expressed by Isaiah, about hope and joy. *“But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating, for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy and its people as a delight.”* In the midst of the hopelessness of the world, there is one thing that gives us hope- our faith. It is such a joy to share that faith together!

We are joyful people! As we look forward to gathering together this Advent Season and preparing ourselves for the birth of Christ in our midst once more, we look forward to expressing that joy in the world. Our world need joy right now, and we are joyful people. Moving into Advent and the Christmas Season that follows, let us all commit ourselves to sharing the joy of Jesus, and the joy of CUCC with everyone we meet!

**-Pastor Rick**

Happy Holidays from the staff of Columbia United Church of Christ!





# 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](mailto:office@columbiaucc.com)

Website:  
[www.columbiaucc.com](http://www.columbiaucc.com)



### WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women's Fellowship will meet Thursday, December 11, 9:30 a.m. in the gathering area. This month's program in *Finding Our Resilience* is "*The Prodigal Child, the Eldest Child, and the Devoted Parent.*" We will also have a Christmas celebration. Hope you can join us!

Please join in supporting Women's Fellowship sales of jams, jellies, honey, etc. Sales continue into December. This is a good time to get something to share with your family for your holiday celebrations. Proceeds from these sales are used to fund charitable gifts for local and national fundraising efforts. Thank you for helping us do good in the community.

### COOKIES BY THE POUND- DECEMBER 14

Bring your homemade cookies to church by 9:00 a.m. on December 14, and be prepared to purchase a variety of goodies! First come, first serve- and they do go quickly! This is our annual fundraiser for the Nurture & Education Designated Fund.

### SOLARIZE COLUMBIA UPDATE - CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ON DECEMBER 7

The CUCC Council, at its November meeting, unanimously approved a motion to proceed with installment of solar panels on the church. Many thanks to all who have studied, discussed, and prayed about this potential investment in our church's future.

There will be a congregational meeting immediately after worship on December 7 to consider the following motion:

*"The CUCC Council introduces a motion that the congregation of Columbia United Church of Christ enter into a contract with Dogwood Solar to purchase and install a solar power generating system at a net cost of \$100,533, and that the expense of this purchase be taken from the undesignated CUCC investment accounts with United Church Funds. We also direct that money received in federal direct pay IRS credits from this purchase (\$40,213) be reinvested into our United Church Funds accounts to replace the money used for the initial purchase. Furthermore, we direct that the Council enter into a loan agreement with the City of Columbia for up to \$30,000 at 3% interest for five years to offset the cost of this system, and that the money received from the city loan be reinvested into our United Church Funds accounts to replace the money used for the initial purchase."*

Please plan to attend the December 7 meeting if you can. A method for absentee voting will be provided for those who will be out of town. Questions are welcome. Please direct them to [Mahree Skala](#) or [Jerry Kiesling](#). Thank you!

# Moderator's Moment

As we enter the sacred season of Advent at Columbia United Church of Christ, the Advent wreath once again takes its place as part of our worship and spiritual preparation. I have always loved seeing each candle lit, taking us to the Christ Candle at Christmas. Each candle—Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love—invites us to slow down and make room for God's presence in our lives. In the soft glow of each flame, we remember that Christ's coming brings light into every shadowed corner of our world. This simple circle of evergreen reminds us that God's love has no beginning and no end.

Throughout the four weeks of Advent, our congregation will gather around the wreath as we reflect on the promises of God and the calling of Christ to be people of compassion, justice, and peace. Lighting these candles together is more than a tradition—it is an act of faith. It is a reminder that we are a community united in both longing and hope, trusting that God is still at work among us. In a world that often feels hurried and uncertain, the Advent wreath becomes a quiet invitation to breathe, to listen, and to let our hearts be renewed.

As your Moderator, I pray that the light of this Advent season will fill your homes and your spirits with expectation and joy. May the wreath we light in worship inspire each of us to shine God's love in our daily lives, offering kindness, patience, and generosity to all we encounter. Let us walk together toward the celebration of Christ's birth, carrying the light we share on Sunday mornings into the wider community throughout the week. Blessings to you and yours as we journey toward Christmas with hope.

In God's Love,  
Jerry Kiesling,  
Council Moderator



## VICE MODERATOR ELECTED

Corinne Remeika has stepped forward to serve as Vice Moderator of the Church Council! Corinne has been thinking and praying about this decision for a time, and has decided that this is where God is calling her at this time and place. She has much experience in leadership positions, and has been a member of this church for a long time. At the November 18 Council meeting, Corinne was approved unanimously by the Council to fill this unexpired position. Join us in welcoming Corinne to this new leadership position!

## COLUMBIA UCC CHURCH COUNCIL

<b>Moderator:</b>	Jerry Kiesling	<a href="mailto:rollzierp50@gmail.com">rollzierp50@gmail.com</a>
<b>Vice Moderator:</b>	Corinne Remeika	<a href="mailto:remeikas@tranquility.net">remeikas@tranquility.net</a>
<b>Secretary:</b>	Alethea Tennill	<a href="mailto:atennill108@gmail.com">atennill108@gmail.com</a>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Deborah Long Birkes	<a href="mailto:dlong@elon.edu">dlong@elon.edu</a>
<b>Recording Treasurer:</b>	Christine Staelens	<a href="mailto:tigersfour@gmail.com">tigersfour@gmail.com</a>
<b>Building &amp; Grounds:</b>	Ted Dachroeden	<a href="mailto:gpadoc4gd@gmail.com">gpadoc4gd@gmail.com</a>
<b>Fellowship &amp; Hospitality:</b>	Mary Lorber-Solt	<a href="mailto:eldercow@gmail.com">eldercow@gmail.com</a>
<b>Finance &amp; Stewardship:</b>	VACANT	
<b>Inclusion &amp; Affirmation:</b>	Ashley Ramirez	<a href="mailto:ashknight0628@gmail.com">ashknight0628@gmail.com</a>
<b>Little One's Day Out:</b>	Kristin Veteto	<a href="mailto:kristinnoelveteto@gmail.com">kristinnoelveteto@gmail.com</a>
<b>Membership &amp; Care:</b>	Judi Privitt	<a href="mailto:judiprivitt811@gmail.com">judiprivitt811@gmail.com</a>
<b>Nurture &amp; Education:</b>	Lena Muench	<a href="mailto:cfg323@yahoo.com">cfg323@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Outreach &amp; Advocacy:</b>	Mahree Skala	<a href="mailto:skalamahree@yahoo.com">skalamahree@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Worship &amp; Music:</b>	Edie Diel	<a href="mailto:edie@thedandegroup.com">edie@thedandegroup.com</a>
<b>Pastor:</b>	Rev. Rick Oberle	<a href="mailto:rick@columbiaucc.com">rick@columbiaucc.com</a>



# Sunday Volunteer Schedule for December

Date	Greeter	Ushers	Worship Leader	Tech Booth
12/07	Jolene Kirchhoff	Charlie Marcks Phillip Neale	Audrey Lasley	Brent Marcks Ted Dachroeden
12/14	Jessica Lucas	Llona Weiss Christine Staelens	Sue Ann Schaefer	Josh Muench Lorry Dreier
12/21	Carol Duermeyer	Pat Forward Mahree Skala	Tricia Soncasie	Carissa Graves John Graves
12/24 (7 p.m.)		Jim Loveless Josh Muench	Lena Muench	Doug Privitt
12/24 (10 p.m.)			Llona Weiss	John Graves
12/28			Mahree Skala	Judi Privitt Doug Privitt

## December Birthdays

Kelly Smith - 12/02	Josie Arms - 12/03	Diane Oerly - 12/03
Helen Schultz - 12/04	Elaine Trout - 12/04	Brad Marcks - 12/07
Aimee Dennis - 12/08	Molly Baker - 12/09	Ben Crenshaw - 12/10
Grace Devenney - 12/10	Carolyn Price - 12/10	Alethea Tennill - 12/10
Josh Muench - 12/11	Kristin Veteto - 12/11	Ramona Dachroeden - 12/12
Scott Rapp - 12/14	Ira Williams - 12/15	Axel Devenney - 12/16
Lindsey Oberle - 12/16	Paula Wilson - 12/16	August Williams - 12/23
Shayne Armstrong - 12/24	Tiffany Greene - 12/26	Darren Lasley - 12/26
Kelly Lavelly - 12/26	Jesse Lippincott - 12/26	Calvin Walker - 12/26
Joan Bentlage - 12/28	Chloe Eveler - 12/28	Tom Solt - 12/30
Jean Walker - 12/30		

# Columbia UCC Council Minutes

The Columbia UCC Council meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. on October 21, 2025 by Jerry Kiesling. Pastor Rick opened with a prayer. Present: Jerry Kiesling, Ted Dachroeden, Mary Lorber, Ashley Ramirez, Judi Privitt, Mahree Skala, Edie Diel, Rick Oberle, Deborah Birkes, Christine Staelens, Kristin Veteto and guest Corinne Remeika. Ted Dachroeden made a motion to approve the agenda with a second from Edie Diel. The motion passed. Christine Staelens made a motion to approve the September minutes. Second by Mahree Skala. Motion passed.

## Unfinished Business

- \* New Light for Sign: No updates.
- \* Nominating Committee for 2025: Considering Corinne Remeika for Vice Moderator. No developments on Finance and Stewardship chair.
- \* Solar Columbia Update: Installing company will have a site visit on 10/30 at 4:30 to get measurements and to refine the preliminary plan. 11/04 the company will come to have a proposal meeting with us. On 11/16, Team Earth will sponsor a Lunch & Learn to focus on Solarize Columbia. Feedback will be shared and brought back to Council during the November meeting for an official decision. Would be more financially feasible to submit our decision to Solarize Columbia by 12/31. Potential congregational meeting date would be 12/07 to finalize the council's decision on this.
- \* Historical Documents/Photos: Alexandra and church members working diligently to scan photos to scan photos/documents so we can have them all digitally.
- \* Accompanist Update: Working on next steps to hire an organist, adding this request to the prayer list. Lots of advertisements online but no responses thus far.
- \* Congregational Budget Meeting: Scheduled for 10/26 after church alongside the Halloween potluck. An overview of the budget will be presented at the meeting. The budget will not be raised for 2026.

## New Business

- \* All Saints Day: 11/02 during church. We will honor all friends and family members of the church, as well as members, that have passed this year.
- \* Putting Congressional Redistricting on the Ballot: Mahree would like to have a petition available in The Gathering Area to sign for getting the new congressional districts created by the legislature onto the November 2026 ballot.

## Ministry Team Reports

- \* Building & Grounds: Fixed toilet in the nursery.
- \* Fellowship & Hospitality: Halloween Potluck on 10/26. Council and team will be responsible for main dishes. Veteran's Day Appreciation breakfast will be on 11/09 before church service at 9:00 a.m.
- \* Finance & Stewardship: report submitted
- \* Inclusion & Affirmation: MidMo Pride went great! We had several pages full of folks who gave us their information to enter the giveaway. So many folks were delighted to have a glitter blessing from Pastor Rick and Lauren, and just to see our church's presence at Pride. Next meeting will be 11/09 at 12 p.m.
- \* LODO: Staff breakfast will be provided from LODO staff, and notes of appreciation. A member of the LODO board will be stepping down and we will be looking for another to fill their place.
- \* Membership & Care: Working on contacting inactive members to approve to removing them from our membership rolls. Next meeting will be on 11/03.
- \* Nurture & Education: Report is attached.
- \* Outreach & Advocacy: VAC Christmas will be starting 11/09. Deadline for turning gifts in will be 12/07 and will be delivered 12/08. Food Bank will be closed during our November and December shifts so Mahree will reach out to our regular volunteers to see if another shift in those months would work.
- \* Worship & Music: Next meeting will be 10/23. Keep praying for an organist!

Pastor Rick closed us in prayer. Motion to adjourn by Judi Privitt, second by Edie Diel. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

# Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team

## Financial Update

	Actual	Budget	Over/(Under)
October Income	\$55,149.12	\$26,004.00	+\$29,145.12
October Expenses	\$37,657.91	\$31,325.00	+\$6,332.91
YTD Income	\$326,293.21	\$332,430.00	(-\$6,136.79)
YTD Expenses	\$352,206.98	\$349,827.00	+\$2,379.98
Surplus/(Deficit)	(-\$25,913.77)	(-\$17,397.00)	(-\$8,516.00)
October Joyful Giving	\$52,324.12	\$24,937.00	+\$22,387.12
YTD Joyful Giving	\$314,941.30	\$319,764.00	(-\$3,822.70)

## Worship Attendance

10/05	72
10/12	105
10/19	105
10/26	105

### THREE WAYS TO GIVE ONLINE TO CUCC

1. Click on this link (or type into your web browser): <https://www.kindridgiving.com/app/giving/cucc>
2. Visit our CUCC website: [www.columbiaucc.com](http://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.

As the Advent season approaches, it's a good time to reflect on our personal blessings and the church blessings that we share with others locally and globally.

So many in our church give of their time and talents and financial support. The musical talent that is shared in our church services, the delicious meals we get to share with each other, Sunday School for our youth and the youth programs where they learn the meaning of giving their time to worthy causes, and members volunteering at the Food Bank, just to name a few. CUCC shines when it comes to sharing blessings. Do you have blessings you want to share?

There are different ways to share a financial blessing with the church. If you haven't taken your required IRA distribution (RMD), disbursing the distribution directly to church could positively affect your tax position, but be sure to check with your financial advisor. You can give towards something that is important to you such as the building fund, the music program, scholarships and the transportation fund. You can help the church meet the Joyful Giving goal.

It's exciting to announce that once again, COMO Gives is available for online donations to LODO. The website is: <https://www.comogives.com> and will be available from December 1 to December 31, 2025. Check it out, and share this news with your community. What a great way to share our financial blessings!

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Ann Schaefer  
Finance & Stewardship  
Ministry Team Member



# Inclusion and Affirmation Ministry Team

## NATIONAL SPECIAL EDUCATION DAY

On December 2 each year, the nation comes together to celebrate National Special Education Day. This day celebrates the anniversary of the signing of the Individuals with Disabilities Act. This act was signed by President Ford on December 2, 1975, and was made into a law that guarantees a free and appropriate public education to children who are eligible. This also guarantees students with disabilities inclusive and non-restrictive classrooms in order to learn alongside their non-disabled peers, gives them the accommodations they need, and helps special education programs further develop.

As you may or may not know, the current administration has recently laid off 466 employees in the Department of Education, due to the government shutdown. This means only *three* people are left to take charge of the Office of Special Education to oversee the services of over 8 million children. While this news is certainly disheartening, here's what we can do to help:

- \* Contact your local representatives to encourage them to reverse these firings!
- \* Contact the Presidential Administration to restore the Office of Special Education's staff who protect students' rights and make sure that the states follow the special education laws.
- \* Thank a special education teacher! While the government is trying to harm a vulnerable population, special education teachers are going to continue to do the hard work for their students whom they love.

(Sources: <https://bridgingapps.org/what-is-national-special-education-day/> and [Council for Exceptional Children](#))



## COMO VALUES DIVERSITY BREAKFAST- JANUARY 28, 2026

The annual COMO Values Diversity Breakfast will be January 28, 2026 at the Wyndham (formerly Holiday Inn) Expo Center at 7:00 a.m. and, as usual, CUCC has sponsored a table! We have ten seats available; if you would like one, talk to Ashley Ramirez or Pastor Rick. Also- Pastor Rick has been nominated for a Diversity Award! This award recognizes those in our community who have made a significant impact in promoting appreciation for diversity and cultural understanding. The city is inviting community members to offer testimonials for candidates; if you would like to offer a testimonial for Pastor Rick and his equity work, [CLICK HERE](#). These testimonials will influence who is selected for this award!

## CUCC OPEN AND AFFIRMING/INCLUSION COVENANT

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

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



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

# LODO Ministry Team

As November comes to a close, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude for the incredible support shown toward our Food Drive. This has truly been a community-wide effort, and we are thankful for the participation of both our congregation and our LODO families. As we enter the Christmas season, we are excited for more opportunities to serve our community. We've already seen a wonderful response to our Giving Tree benefiting the Voluntary Action Center- thank you for your generosity!

Little One's Day Out is also offering a Cyber Monday special: families who tour during the month of December will receive 50% off their enrollment fee. If you know someone searching for high-quality, affordable childcare, we would love for you to send them our way.

We're thrilled to host our first-ever LODO Family Movie Night, featuring "The Star." Tickets are limited and are just \$5 per person. Bring your comfortable seating and enjoy a fun, family-friendly evening together! The Star is an animated Christmas film following a small but courageous donkey named Bo. Dreaming of a life beyond the village mill, Bo joins a cast of lovable animal friends and unexpectedly becomes part of the very first Christmas- helping Mary and Joseph on their journey and discovering the true meaning of courage, friendship, and faith. Tickets will go fast, and we would love to have you here; so email me at [lodo.sara.koenig@gmail.com](mailto:lodo.sara.koenig@gmail.com) to get your tickets today!

We are also looking forward to our upcoming Christmas program on December 18 and the joy it brings each year. We would love to have you join us for the Christmas program! It will be at 6:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary on that day. We will also have a cookie reception afterward.

Little One's Day Out wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sara Koenig,  
LODO Director



## CoMoGives

CUCC is participating in the popular "COMO Gives" local Holiday Campaign again this year! Our Little One's Day Out Preschool Ministry will be a featured recipient of [COMO Gives](#). The idea behind COMO Gives is to provide opportunities for community members to support vetted non-profit agencies in the Columbia community; so tell your friends! We are easy to find; visit [www.comogives.com](http://www.comogives.com) and search "preschools" - we are the first one to pop up! We are raising money for classroom items, playground equipment, and other services we can provide for our this important ministry. Check us out on [COMO Gives](#) starting December 1 and tell your friends!

In this holiday season I want to highlight 2 ways you can *benefit from* and *add benefit* to our LODO program:

1. **Attend the LODO Christmas Program (Dec. 18th @6pm)!** This is sure to be a fun and enjoyable night and will be full to the brim of opportunities to see the light and joy of the season in the eyes of the little children we serve! You don't want to miss it!
2. **Consider giving to LODO through their Amazon Wish List!** As a church we have been intentional about reducing expenses and the LODO program has, as well. With that, if you can, please consider purchasing items from this wish list for our LODO Program. You can find the wish list on the CUCC website under the LODO Preschool tab. It is on the second line in the color blue titled "Amazon Wishlist." Amazon Wish List Link: [CLICK HERE](#)

From all of us here at LODO we wish you a joyful holiday season.

Happy Holidays,  
Kristin Veteto,  
LODO Ministry Team Chair



# Membership & Care Ministry Team

Season's Greetings! Advent season is upon us. Christians all over the world will be celebrating. Of course, other countries may not celebrate Christmas the same way we do, or may not celebrate it at all. They may just celebrate the winter holidays. But you can hear the same kind of greetings and well wishes expressed.

At CUCC you can hear "Merry Christmas/Happy New Year!" In Hawaii, you might hear "Mele Kalikimaka." You might hear "Feliz Navidad" (Spanish), "Nollaig Shona" (Ireland), "Joyeux Noel/Joyeuses Fetes" (French), "Frohe Weihnacten/Shoene Feiertage" (German), "Meri kirisumasu kyuka o" (Japan), or "Felix Nativitas/Felix Dies Festos" (Latin). For all you sci-fi fans, in Klingon you would hear QISMAS DAT IVJ AJ" (thank you Google).

As we greet each other during these next weeks, think of our connection to those around the world, speaking another language, but sharing a similar sentiment. Membership and Care Ministry Team wishes you a Merry Christmas, happy New Year, and a blessed Advent season.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Judi Privitt  
Membership & Care  
Ministry Team Chair



## NEW NAMETAGS

The Inclusion & Affirmation and Membership & Care Ministry Teams are working together to bring us new name tags! We are also using this opportunity to update info in our church membership database.

Our new nametags were distributed in church on June 29, for everyone who filled out an information update form. If you did not receive a nametag, or you need your nametag changed in any way, fill out an update form! There are forms available in the coatroom, as well as online. Please fill out a paper form, found to the right of the nametags in the coatroom, and drop it in the wicker basket; or [CLICK HERE](#) to do it online

# Fellowship & Hospitality Ministry Team

Greetings and salutations, one and all! I sincerely hope this finds everyone happy, healthy, and wise.

First of all, a big shout out to all the people who made the Halloween potluck and Veterans Appreciation Breakfast a huge success- thank you! You are appreciated!

For most people, December is a very busy month, unlike my honey bees, whose only job is to keep the Queen warm and fed during the winter months. There is Christmas preparation, baking, decorating, Christmas parties, volunteer work, practices to go to, programs to attend, it's almost enough to make your head spin. The Fellowship and Hospitality team are also busy as we prepare for the Advent Banquet, held December 14, after the Advent Cantata. We will be decorating the Fellowship Hall and fixing the side dishes and desserts for the event; so much to do. The Advent Banquet is a catered meal, so we do need an accurate count. Please RSVP today! To RSVP for the Advent Banquet, [CLICK HERE](#) or sign up in church.

As we prepare for this busy season, let's not forget the 'quiet' of the manger; the still, starry night, the magic and miracle of Christmas! Maybe that's what my bees are doing, settling in for the winter, enjoying the stillness and blessings of the season.

As always, Bee Blessed, Bee Kind, Bee Grateful, but most of all, Bee Yourself!

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Lorber  
Fellowship and Hospitality  
Ministry Team Chair



# Nurture & Education Ministry Team



## WE ARE SHINING BRIGHT!

### CHRISTMAS PROGRAM "A SUPERHERO CHRISTMAS"



PRESENTED BY OUR  
KIDS/YOUTH- SUNDAY  
12/7 DURING WORSHIP

### Cookies by the Pound

- Sunday, December 14
- Our "big" fundraiser of the year, supporting the Nurture/Education Ministry Team.
- Bakers- please bring homemade goodies by 9:00 a.m. on December 14
- Buyers- be ready to purchase delicious treats!!!



### SCHOOL BREAK

No Sunday School  
(kids/youth)  
12/21, 12/28, and 1/4  
See you on Jan 11th!

#### "SHINE BRIGHT" on Sundays!

- Adult Bible Study- 9:00-10:00 a.m. (upstairs in Education Wing, last room on the left). Meets weekly.
- Sunday School- 9:00-10:00 a.m., ages 3-12th grade. Meets weekly. WE'LL TAKE CARE OF BREAKFAST! So much fun planned for our kiddos and youth! Ages 3-5th grade meet upstairs in Education Wing, grades 6-12 meet downstairs in Youth Lounge.

#### Our Kids **NEED YOU**

- Sunday School Teachers- 3 age groups: preK-2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade, 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>; help as much as you'd like or as your availability allows (we'll show you the ropes!)
- Sunday School Greeters/Floaters
- Youth Group Leaders- the more the merrier!

Scan QR Code to sign up or contact  
Lena Muench:  
cfg323@yahoo.com,  
call/text 573-881-2571



# Outreach & Advocacy Ministry Team



CUCC, you are the best! We provided a lunch of deli meats, cheeses, condiments, buns, fruit, chips, cookies, and brownies on November 12 for teachers and folks at AHL for their Parent-Teacher Conference Week, and the teachers were so thankful. They always love the homemade cookies that Jolene Kirchhoff ("the cookie lady") makes and they want recipes. Thank you to CUCC members who contribute other snack foods into the AHL Donation bins in The Gathering Area closet; they were also delivered to the Teachers' Lounge to provide support. And, thanks to Pastor Rick, Jolene Kirchhoff and Llona Weiss for assisting with Good Dads - Strong Schools early that morning with approximately 42 attendees.



On Wednesday December 10, we will again be providing assistance with AHL's Good Dads program at 7:00 a.m. and babysitting at their PTA meeting at 6:00 p.m. AHL's Holiday Parties for the various grades are during the week of December 16-18; let Llona know if you are interested in attending. CUCC is also on alert for any additional needs by AHL with the recent cuts in federal programs/food so desperately needed by our students and families. Thank you, CUCC!



We have a great opportunity to help with the Food Bank's annual "One for One" food- and fundraising event on December 17, to make sure our neighbors have the food they need to thrive during the holiday season. This special event will be held at the Columbia Mall on December 17 in partnership with firefighters and local media. CUCC folks are volunteering during the 10:00 a.m.-noon and noon-2:00 p.m. shifts inside the mall. If you'd like to help, please sign up for any shift you can at Columbia One for One. [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up or talk to Mahree Skala.



The November 17 meal at Loaves & Fishes consisted of ham, potato & broccoli casserole (leftover from the Team Earth luncheon), spaghetti, chicken alfredo (made by Mary Lorber), lettuce salad (donated by Patty Beeson), bread, and a variety of desserts. Servers and helpers for the evening were Jim Loveless, Tom & Mary Lorber, Debby (Mary's sister), Keith Birkes, Tim & Tricia Soncasie, and Patty Beeson. Peanut butter and jellies were made and provided by Jessica Jenks. We had approximately 138 servings. Thank goodness our guests were inside when the hail storm hit. That was quite a surprise! God bless these people as they go through the challenges of the winter.

## VAC CHRISTMAS DRIVE ENDS DECEMBER 7

Many thanks to all who have generously sponsored gifts and necessities for 45 people in 12 households this Christmas. Please bring unwrapped gifts to church by Sunday, December 7. They should be packed together in a box, bag, or laundry basket and clearly labeled with the recipient's name and family number. Monetary gifts are important too- VAC uses donated funds to provide gift cards for families that did not get sponsored. At this writing there are 450 qualified families still awaiting sponsorship, and your generosity can help them have a Merry Christmas. Please make all donations by Dec. 7. [CLICK HERE](#) to donate online via Kindrid or send a check made out to CUCC with VAC Christmas on the memo line. Please see the Sponsor Checklist or contact [Mahree Skala](#) with any questions.

# Worship & Music Ministry Team

We are still praying for God to send us an organist. We hope you are praying, too!

Many thanks to Connie Loveless, who is sharing her musical talents with us and further delighting us with adding other talented musicians to the piano pieces. Also to Gina Pierson for her selfless contribution. We knew Gina was special, but I didn't realize she was so musically talented. Mike Pierson has managed a computer trick to make it seem like we have a ghost organist. CUCC is really gifted in the music department and I am so grateful. Please offer your thanks to these folks for stepping in until we have a permanent solution.

You won't want to miss Communion on December 7, it promises to be special!

Our next Music & Worship Ministry Team meeting is December 4 at 6:30 p.m. and all are welcome to join us in the fun and fellowship, doing God's work.

Christmas Eve worship will be at 7:00 & 10:00 p.m.  
Both services will feature "Silent Night" sung by candlelight.

Looking forward to the Holidays!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Edie Diel,  
Worship & Music  
Ministry Team Chair



Welcome to Advent, CUCC! Celebrating the coming Christ is always an exciting, and busy, time in the life of the church. With the cantata coming up on December 14, the Celebration Singers have been dedicating some extra time to prepare some additional songs for that service.

The Chapel Ringers are preparing two songs for the weeks ahead- one for the Cantata on December 14 and one for the 7 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Many of our musicians also dedicate themselves to other opportunities throughout the year and those performances seem to all happen at this time of year as well. I'm including a list of those performances below in case you are interested in getting some more music in your life.

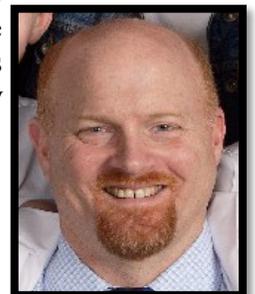
December 14 - [Columbia Chorale Concert with Missouri Symphony](#) (Missouri Theatre)

December 18-20 - [Merry Ol' Missouri Performances](#) (Missouri Theatre)

The Advent Cantata this year will feature four songs that celebrate the time leading up to and including the birth of Christ. The four songs vary widely in style and feature percussion, flute, and oboe. I hope that you have the opportunity to be in church with us on December 14 and enjoy the selections!



In Harmony,  
Mike Pierson,  
Music Coordinator



## WELCOME TO QUORUS!

Columbia United Church of Christ is pleased to be in partnership with [Quorus, the LGBTQIAA Choral ensemble of Columbia!](#)

Quorus uses our facility for rehearsals, and we will the opportunity to work with them as they schedule performances around the area. We are also always thrilled to have Quorus join us for worship, praising God with their inclusive repertoire.

Quorus would love to have CUCC members join their choir! To learn more about Quorus, [CLICK HERE](#).



# Scouting America

## Pack 5183-

We had our first award ceremony of the year Monday 11/10 where we handed out the awards and achievements our Cub Scouts have earned so far. In all, they earned 103 awards! These Cub Scouts have been working very hard and it shows! Our Arrow of Light Scouts have all earned their rank and will be crossing over into Troop 4475 in December.

## Troop 4475-

Our November campout was all about dusting off our cold weather gear and diving into learning new backpacking skills. The Scouts took a trip to the Alpine Shop for a brief class taught by a female Philmont Ranger and Eagle Scout. They also got to handle the necessary gear and be fitted for packs.

Later, they decorated hiking sticks before breaking into three different groups. One group went hiking, one did geocaching, and one completed some orienteering. They finished up the day by preparing their meals in Dutch ovens. It was great practice and expanded their cooking skills.

On Nov 4, CPS was out of school and Troop 4475 sent Scouts to the VA Hospital to hand out cards with retired flag stars to veterans and thank them for their service. It was an early service project in honor of Veterans Day. We also had several Scouts cleaning up honeysuckle around CUCC.

In December, we are gearing up to wrap presents for donations from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on December 13 and 20 at Valhalla's Gate for our annual fundraiser.



## Troop 708-

Troop 708's November campout was hiking and backpacking at Thousand Hills State Park. One group enjoyed a day hike, while more experienced scouts had the option to backpack into a remote campsite for Saturday night. A bit of rain and temps in the upper 20's gave scouts a good opportunity to "Be Prepared!"

We've had scouts and scouters working on honeysuckle removal at the church nearly every weekend. This gives the scouts opportunities to earn conservation service hours to put towards their rank advancements.



STEVEN YEUN GINA RODRIGUEZ ZACHARY LEVI KEEGAN-MICHAEL KEY KELLY CLARKSON  
PATRICIA HEATON KRISTIN CHENOWETH AND TRACY MORGAN TYLER PERRY OPRAH WINFREY

# THE STAR

THE STORY OF THE FIRST CHRISTMAS



© Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc.

IT TAKES MANY TAILS TO TELL THE GREATEST STORY EVER



Little One's Day Out

Presents: The Star

Date: December 9th

Time: 6:00 PM

Entry Fee: \$5 per person  
(limited to 50 people)

Snacks and drinks will be available for purchase. Bring your comfortable seating, blankets, and pillows for a cozy evening as we enjoy this family-friendly film together!



**SWANK**  
MOVIE LICENSING USA

# THANK YOU!

Thank you for your donation to Columbia Older Adult Ministry and your continued support over the years. COAM is celebrating 20 years of ministry this year. The time has flown by. We have grown over the past 20 years from just serving at Lenoir Woods to serving in 7 other communities in Columbia.



On Mondays I go to three memory care communities, Greenwood at Lenoir Woods, The Neighborhoods by Tiger Place's Smithton Village, and The Arbors by Bluff Creek Terrace. At each of the communities we sing hymns and talk about what they mean to us, what God means to us, and how Jesus comforts us and is a friend to us. As I walk into the room their eyes light up and someone will say, "you have to come sing with us." They look forward to our time together as I do. Sometimes this is my most worshipful time of the week because they appreciate this worship time together.

In several of the communities we do a Bible study. Currently at Tiger Place, The Bluffs and Colony Pointe we are studying Proverbs. The residents have commented several times that we humans haven't changed much in attitude in all these centuries. At Westbury and Unbridled Living, I lead a vespers service twice a month. They also appreciate the time we spend together in worshipping God.

I am so appreciative of all the support donors like you have given us over the years.

Blessings,  
Rev. Sally A. Robinson

We, the congregation of Pilgrim Congregational Church United Church of Christ, offer our sincere thanks to you for your recent donation of \$525.00 to support our recovery from the May 16<sup>th</sup> tornado. We cannot express our gratitude enough for your generosity.

Although, the tornado created devastation to our church and neighbors, your generous gift will allow us to reclaim our service of justice and compassion in our community.

In fact, we are elated that the congregations of Columbia United Church of Christ exemplified the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 9:11:

*"You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."*

Therefore, in a posture of gratitude, we offer our thanks for your generosity. May God continue to bless you in your endeavors to build beloved communities.

Sincerely,  
Mr. Hardy Ware, Church Council Moderator  
and Rev. Kevin D. Anthony, M. Div., Senior Pastor

## POINTSETTIAS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Would you like to designate a poinsettia in the Sanctuary this Advent/Christmas Season in honor or memory of a loved one? Perhaps someone who has died, or to honor family or friends? You can do so using the envelopes in the bulletins on 11/30, 12/7, and 12/14; you can mail a check to the church; or you can email Alexandra in the church office and she will make sure you are on the list.

Whatever method you use, please be sure to let us know who you the poinsettia is recognizing, and if it is in honor or memory of your loved one. Poinsettias are \$10 each. Designations will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletins. Poinsettias will be ready for pick up after the 10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service, or the following Sunday, December 28. Thank you for helping us adorn the Sanctuary with this beautiful symbol of the season!



# International Missions

## CUCC IS WORKING IN ZIMBABWE

Children in the Bulawayo District of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa– Zimbabwe Synod are an important focus of the church’s community work, with efforts centered on their spiritual, educational, and social well-being. The UCCSA-Zimbabwe Synod seeks to support children through various programs including Sunday schools, youth empowerment initiatives, and outreach activities. These programs aim to nurture children’s spiritual growth, provide educational support, and ensure their protection from societal challenges. The church’s work in Bulawayo also emphasizes the importance of family and community involvement in creating a safe and nurturing environment for children, helping them thrive in both faith and life.

Through [Global Ministries](#), CUCC is a partner in mission with over 200 mission partners around the world, including the UCCSA. Keep Global Ministries and the people of Zimbabwe in your prayers this month as they do God’s work on our behalf!



## GLOBAL MINISTRIES CHILD AND ELDER SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Supporting children and elders with the love and services they deserve is one of the greatest gifts of kindness you can share. Through your support, the [Global Ministries](#) Child and Elder Sponsorship Program partners with churches and agencies all over the world to provide services that create opportunities and affirm dignity.

### *Child Sponsorship Opportunities*

Your gifts through [Global Ministries](#) Child Sponsorship make a difference! The Child Sponsorship program works closely with partner organizations that have long-established links with the UCC and Disciples. Collaborating with partners, your gifts to Child Sponsorship provide food, basic health care, clothing, and in some cases housing, school fees, uniforms, books, and training.

### *Elder Sponsorship Opportunities*

In many countries, an individual is not entitled to government assistance after retirement unless they have worked for the government. Global Ministries Elder Sponsorship centers assist elders who have no place to live and no family to care for them. Your sponsorship of an elder helps provide shelter, medicine, and meals. Elders are given the opportunity to live out their lives in dignity and solace in an environment where they feel loved and cared for.

Sponsorship gifts can be given as [holiday gifts](#), [in honor or memory of someone](#), or a [one-time gift to use where most needed](#). **100 percent** of your sponsorship gift will be designated for the use of the child or elder you sponsor and is not used to support the Child and Elder Sponsorship program costs. To make a general gift in support of the Child and Elder Sponsorship program, you may do so online or by check. For more information visit the [Global Ministries Sponsorship Page](#) on their website.

This is a great Christmas gift in honor of someone, and this gift continues all year long. Consider this sponsorship program for your gift giving!



# On the Church Calendar in December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><b>7 - Advent II</b>  <b>Children's Program</b>            7:30 a.m. - Men's Fellowship            9:00 a.m. - Faith Education            10:00 a.m. - Fellowship            10:30 a.m. - Worship            3:00 p.m. - Private Event in Sanctuary</p>	<p><b>8</b>            7:00 p.m. - Scouting America</p>	<p><b>9</b>            10:00 a.m. - Quilters            10:30 a.m. - Staff Meeting            6:00 p.m. - LODO            Movie Night            6:30 p.m. - Troop 708 Meeting</p>	<p><b>10</b>            6:00 a.m. - Good Dads            6:00 p.m. - Prayer Shawl Knitters            6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers            7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers            7:15 p.m. - Confirmation Class</p>	<p><b>11</b>            9:30 a.m. - Women's Fellowship</p>	<p><b>12</b>            9:30 a.m. - Private Event in Sanctuary            4:30 p.m. - Private Event in Sanctuary</p>	<p><b>13</b>            9:00 a.m. - Cantata Rehearsal</p>
<p><b>14 - Advent III</b>  <b>Cantata and Cookies by the Pound</b>            9:00 a.m. - Faith Education            10:00 a.m. - Fellowship            10:30 a.m. - Worship            12:00 p.m. - Advent Banquet</p>	<p><b>15</b>            4:30 p.m. - Loaves &amp; Fishes            7:00 p.m. - Scouting America</p>	<p><b>16</b>            10:00 a.m. - Quilters            10:30 a.m. - Staff            1:00 p.m. - Pause to Color            6:30 p.m. - Council Meeting</p>	<p><b>17</b>            10:00 a.m. - Pastor Rick leads worship at The Bluffs            7:15 p.m. - Confirmation Class</p>	<p><b>18</b>            6:00 p.m. - LODO Christmas Program</p>		
<p><b>21 - Advent IV</b>            9:00 a.m. - Faith Education            10:00 a.m. - Fellowship            10:30 a.m. - Worship</p>	<p><b>22</b>            7:00 p.m. - Scouting America</p>	<p><b>23</b>            10:00 a.m. - Quilters</p>	<p><b>24 - Christmas Eve</b>            7:00 p.m. - Worship            10:00 p.m. - Worship</p>	<p><b>25 - Christmas Day</b></p>	<p><b>26</b></p>	<p><b>27</b></p>
<p><b>28 - Christmas Sunday</b>            9:00 a.m. - Faith Education            10:00 a.m. - Fellowship            10:30 a.m. - Worship</p>	<p><b>29</b>            5:00 p.m. - Membership &amp; Care Ministry            Team Meeting</p>	<p><b>30</b>            10:00 a.m. - Quilters</p>	<p><b>31 - New Year's Eve</b></p>			

# The Communicator

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

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



## Interested in Church Membership?

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