



## Vital Spark January, 2017

### *Community Christian Church*



Dear CCC Family,

Happy New Year! Thank you to all of our dedicated staff and volunteers for making the services on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day both meaningful and memorable.

We are entering into the New Year at Community full steam ahead. In today's article, I want to share with you in detail information regarding the upcoming visit of Agile Church consultants.

First, the good news that needs to be abundantly dear. We are not in contact with church consultants because we are in a tough situation or facing insurmountable obstacles. In fact, it is very much the opposite. In a day and age where many mainline churches are struggling to stay open and/or closing their doors, we are holding steady. On average, we gain as many members/participants each year as we lose (through

death, moves, or leaving the church). We are financially sound and careful stewards of our resources. Yet, we recognize that one cannot remain continuously at status quo. With these thoughts in mind, I proposed to the Core Leadership Team that we hire Agile Church ([agilechurch.com](http://agilechurch.com)) to help guide us this New Year.

The purpose of their consulting, in part, is to identify and clarify our mission, vision, strategy, and action. The main areas of ministry that we will focus on with Agile Church (think of this as a comprehensive health assessment) are: marketing, branding, communication, structure, governance, stewardship, finance, worship, spiritual formation, and technology (positioning for growth).

Three individuals from Agile Church will join us February 23rd-26th. One of the main consultants, with whom I have talked with and remain in correspondence, is Michael Piazza. Michael, who serves as both a church pastor and consultant, is the author of numerous books including the book, "Liberating Hope."

In this newsletter, you will see an attached timeline mapping out the steps leading to the consultants' visit. You will also see opportunities for each of you to be engaged, including in the participation of book discussions on "Liberating Hope," ahead of time. Of course, an important piece of this information is cost. We are applying for a grant with the region in hopes of deferring some expenses.

The finance committee is aware that the consulting done by Agile Church is to be divided into two proposed phases. Phase One, the initial health assessment, is a set fee of \$3,000 (plus travel and per diem costs). After meeting with us for three days, which will include staff, leaders, and volunteers, Agile Consulting will then provide us with a comprehensive preliminary report that will eventually be shared with every member of the congregation. This initial report will share their findings and recommendations.

Then, based on what the report does or does not say, we will have the opportunity to enter into, if we wish, Phase Two of the consulting. Phase Two of the consulting calls for Agile Church to help implement the suggestions; depending on the complexity and time requirement of these suggestions, the total additional costs will have a range of expenses (as seen in the proposed church budget sent late last month).

In their proposal to Community, Agile Church wrote this: It has been our experience that by implementing our financial recommendations alone churches have more than recouped the cost to the congregation within a year. Our only goal is the health and vitality of your church, and if you are unhappy with the work we do we will gladly refund your money. Of course, that does not mean that you will always appreciate or agree with the feedback we provide, any more than you would appreciate your physician telling you that you need to exercise or lose weight. Still, we believe that, like us, what you want most is for your church to be strong and healthy and to live as long as possible.

I look forward to the New Year. And I hope/anticipate/desire that you will have questions regarding Agile Church and the process for moving forward and embracing the ministry God calls us to do. So please, please, contact me and let's get together. Again, Happy New Year.

Blessings,  
Jacob

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## Elder's Chili Cook-off

It's January, and you know what that means!

Yes-time to dust off that famous recipe of yours and make some chili!

You could win the beautiful trophy and bragging rights!



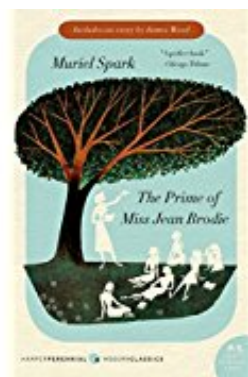
Mark the date-January 29 at 5:00pm at WFLC.

### Mission First Update

The Mission First team would like to thank everyone in the congregation for their generous response to our Christmas outreach. All six of the girls in the Epworth Knobel dorm were "adopted" so each girl had several gifts to upwrap that were chosen especially for them. We were also able to provide needed clothes as well as some special Christmas gifts for the extended family of one of our members that are going through a particularly rough time. Thank you so much to all that were able to help out!



Next, save the date: **April 23, 2017**, Earth Day, will be our next all church mission day! We have already begun making plans so if you have ideas for service projects or are interested in helping please call or email Tracey Hammack: [t.hammack@sbcglobal.net](mailto:t.hammack@sbcglobal.net) or 636-227-9835. The Mission First team meets the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. Feel free to come to a meeting and get involved with planning!



### CCC Book Club in January

Join us January 16 at 1:30pm for our next book discussion of "Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" by Muriel Spark.

Call Brenda with any questions at 636-851-7155.

Meet at the CCC Library.

### Core Leadership Team Highlights from the January 2nd Meeting:

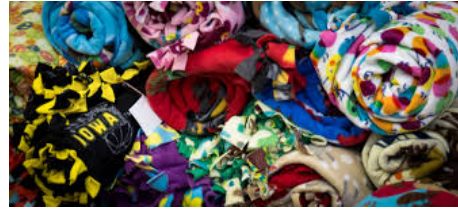
- Reviewed the book *Liberating Hope*, by M. Piazza and C. Trimble
- Each member provided a review of 2 chapters

- The team reviewed a timeline for the visit of the church consultant
- Prepared for the congregational meeting

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## Project Linus Workday

Join us January 14 at the WFLC for a fun service project!  
9:00am to Noon  
Call Liz Dupuis or Linda Newton with any questions.



The **CCC Disciples Women** thank everyone in our church family who helped fulfill the Christmas wishes of the Girls this year. Through your generosity we filled gift bags for each of the girls with not just their wish-list items, but new clothing, hand-knitted hats and scarves, socks, gloves and mittens, personal care and cosmetic items, devotional books and calendars, puzzles and games, and last but not least, a Target gift card.

Linda Ferber reported back that the Girls enjoyed a truly joyous Christmas party. Thank you again for your support of this mission outreach project!

## Core Leadership Team, Staff, and Church Working Timeline for Agile Church

### **Dec. 2016**

- \* CLT Assigned to read: "Liberating Hope: Daring to Renew the Mainline Church"
- \*Entered into a conversation with Michael Piazza and Coy James regarding consulting and next steps into the future.

### **January 2 (Monday)**

- \*CLT-Chapter Presentations of the book by the CLT to one another
- \*CLT-Watch video of Michael Piazza preaching at a former church he served
- \*CLT-Looking ahead at the next two months

### **Week of January 2nd**

- \*Vital Spark sent to congregation with Agile Church working timeline & explanation

### **January 8th (Sunday)**

- \*Congregational Meeting -follow up from the Vital Spark announcement of the consultant
- The "Why?" and "Why Now?" answered for the congregation

## **Week of January 8th**

\*CLT to ask/designate a 2 person team to coordinate the February 25th seminar.

\*CLT to ask/designate a 1-2 person team to act as the scheduler/host with Jacob and Amy for the meetings.

This person would need to work with Julie.

\*Books made available to congregation. Ask for a verbal commitment from members who would like to be part of the reading team in January. The commitment is to have the book read by February 5th.

## **January 15th (Sunday)**

\*In worship, CLT members begin sharing 2 chapters each week of "Liberating Hope"

\*CLT member: Michael Chapter 1 & 2

\*January 16th (CLT)

\*Finalize who CLT wants to be asking for appointments

\*Jacob & Amy to have the tentative flow of the weekend agenda

## **January 22nd**

\*In worship, CLT: Glenna Chapter 3 & 4

\*Email sent to all people who would most likely be part of a conversation or an appointment

## **January 29th**

\*In worship CLT: Linda Chapter 5 & 6

\*Sign-up genius sent to get people to make their reservation for conversation

## **February 5th**

\*CLT: Laura Chapter 7 & 8

\*Reminder sent for sign-ups for meeting times

\*Feb. 6th CLT invites worship staff to join CLT

\*Jacob & Amy along with any CLT members to be available for a Book Club Discussion

\*February 6th (Monday) Brown Bag Lunch to church

\*February 15th (Wednesday) Morning coffee or Breakfast at Bread Co. on Manchester

\*February 20th (Monday) Dinner @ church prior to a CLT meeting

## **February 12th**

\*CLT: Janet Chapters 9 & 10

\*All appointments finalized for meeting times

## **February 19th**

\*CLT: Doug 11th & Appendix

## **February 23rd (Thursday)**

\*Michael, David and Coy dinner with Core Leadership Team

### **February 24th (Friday)**

- \*All day conversations w/ members
- \*Dinner with Staff

### **February 25th (Saturday)**

- \*Multi church educational event
- \*Entire congregation asked to come to an "All Church Learning & Engagement Opportunity"

### **February 26th (Sunday)**

### **March 13th**

- \*Jacob should have preliminary report first

### **March 20th (Monday)**

- \*CLT should have report, discuss, and digest

### **April 3rd (Monday)**

- \*CLT create the timeline for next steps:
  - \*How to share information with congregation
  - \*How do we want feedback given
  - \*Next steps, if any, w/ Michael and Coy

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## **From the Director of Children, Youth, & Family Ministry, Amy O'Brien Chi Rho & CYF Updates**

**Sunday Morning Learning Hour for Chi Rho (6th-8th) & CYF (9th-12th) Our NOOMA Sunday School lessons are going really well. Join us at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings.**

### **Sunday Youth Fellowship for Chi Rho & CYF**

**January 8 4-6:15 p.m. Movie Night- "Freedom Writers" Join Heather Monroe and Vickie Minden in the Wunderlich Youth Room for popcorn and a movie. Hilary Swank plays Erin Gruwell, a teacher who tries to connect to her students by creating an environment for the youth to get their life stories onto paper. Come join us and be inspired!**

**January 15 4-6:00 p.m. Initial Gathering to discuss Youth Sunday. We will choose a scripture, decide on the date, and develop a list of working ideas. We'll order pizza and also have some gym time. WE WANT YOU!**

**January 22 4-6:00 p.m. CCC to host St. Louis Area Disciples of Christ youth from local congregations. We will engage in a mission project, have a baked potato bar dinner, and play a few big group games.**

**In November, 6 churches gathered together at Union Avenue Christian Church and made hygiene bags for Winter Outreach. We had a group of about 36 youth and 12 adults. It was excellent! Have your youth make this**



event a priority!

**January 29 Chili Cook-off 5 p.m. Check the Narthex at church for sign-ups. It would be great to have a few youth make chili or donate a pie for the auction. More details are coming.**

Offering envelopes for 2017 are currently available in the Narthex. Please pick them up on Sunday.



### Thank you card received

"Dear Amy and the Carolers,  
Thank you so much for coming to perform  
for our Meramec Bluffs Care Center  
residents on December 18th.  
They enjoyed your company very much  
and talked about it for a couple of days.  
We would love to have you back for

Christmas 2017-or sooner with an Easter program!"

-Katie Spink

Vital Spark articles for the February issue are due in the office by February 15th.