



THE VITAL SPARK

Publication of Community Christian Church

May 2017

A Message from our Senior Pastor

Dear CCC Family:

In this month's newsletter, I want to draw your attention to two significant events in the life of our church.

First, **summer worship begins this Sunday**. From Memorial Day thru Labor Day we will have one service at 10:00 each Sunday. Adult Sunday School will take place at 9:00. One of the aspects I enjoy most about summer worship is the fact that we are able to worship as one community and one body of Christ, allowing us to experience worship in new and meaningful ways. This Sunday, Memorial Day, we will have an Armed Forces Medley to begin the service and a special "pick-up" choir (the invitation is open to anyone who has a voice) that will practice at 9:00 and participate in the service for special music. Then, the following Sunday, June 4th, we will celebrate our worship with "Pancakes for Pentecost" in the Wunderlich Center (the gym). Pancakes for Pentecost is a unique style of service that offers made-to-order pancakes from "Dr. Dan the Pancake Man," music, maple syrup, prayer, liturgy, and a message. This is a type of service where, if you ever thought about inviting a friend/neighbor/family member to worship, it is low pressure and non-threatening. So please, join us on each of these Sundays as we kick-off our summer worship.

Second, I am very pleased to share the news that the Core Leadership Team voted unanimously to continue in partnership over the next year with Agile Church. Beginning this summer, and continuing through the spring of 2018, we will work with Agile Church to focus on four primary areas: 1) Mission and Vision; 2) Worship and staffing; 3) Stewardship and creating a culture of generosity; and 4) Communication and evangelism.

I am excited about both the summer worship and the opportunity to work with Agile Church. Over the last eighteen months, we have worked hard to get to where we are. We now have a clear plan going forth, the needed resources to accomplish our goals, and the collective energy of each of you working together for the good of God and the good of our community. Lately, we have seen visitors come and, equally important, return. We have reached out to the neighborhood through our day of mission and, because of such intentionality, have formed new relationships. We are dreaming about the future, boldly yet humbly.

I hope to see you this Sunday, if not before.

Blessings,

Jacob

Coming up at CCC ...

Disciples Men Breakfast

The DMM will gather for breakfast in the WFLC on Saturday, June 3. Coffee and conversation will begin at 8:00 a.m., with a great breakfast spread ready for you at 8:30. Our program is being kept a secret right now, so you will just need to be there to hear it. If you need a ride to the breakfast, please contact Rich Dupuis, while any questions can be directed to Tim Vincent. See all y'all there.

CCC Book Group for June

In June, the CCC book group will be discussing *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* by Cheryl Strayed. All are welcome to participate in the discussion on June 19th at 1:30 p.m. in church library. Questions? call Brenda Richardson, 636.851.7155.

Senior Citizen Luncheon

Our final luncheon before a break for the summer will be held in the CCC Narthex on June 13th at 11:30 a.m. During our time together we will have some fun learning about the origination and development of crossword puzzles. Do you work on them each day or just every now and then? We'd love to hear your stories as we have lunch together, followed by Bingo and prizes. Please contact the church office if you need a ride or have additional questions.

Disciples Women Meeting, Potluck and Outreach

Priscilla Circle will have a final meeting before the summer break on June 13th at 7:00 p.m. in the CCC library.

To celebrate the end of the program year, all women are invited to the home of Beth Bean on June 15th at 6 p.m. to share a meal together, potluck style. We look forward to sharing time with one another and celebrating the many things Disciples Women has done this past year. There will be a sign up sheet in the Narthex in early June, along with directions to Beth's home.

For the June outreach project, items are being collected to benefit Circle Star Ranch, an organization who provides summer camp for special needs children. A wish list of items includes tall kitchen trash bags, baby wipes, honey nut cheerios, tiny twist or stick pretzels, creamy peanut butter, washable markers, dry erase markers, SPF 50 or more spray on sunscreen, dishwasher detergent, and pool toys. If you would like to make a donation, please leave it in the basket in the closet across from the CCC library marked "Max Kennington Eagle Scout Troop". Max is currently working on his Eagle Scout project of building three wheelchair accessible picnic tables for the camp.

Red Cross Summer Blood Drive ...

Our next church blood drive is Sunday **June 11th from 8:00 until 12:00**. With the beginning of summer coming, there is always a shortage of blood collections. Please consider signing up to donate a pint of blood, which will help up to 3 people in need of lifesaving blood products. Our goal this drive is to collect 23 pints. Sign-ups for appointments are now available on line or on the back of the attendance "tab". And, if you haven't been able to sign-up ahead of time, drop-ins are always welcomed. Specific questions regarding eligibility? Call the Red Cross at 1-800-GIVE LIFE or Liz Dupuis at 636-256-3686.

Thank you ...

CCC Family

Thank you so much for being there for us when our son Jason passed away. Your prayers, kind words of support, hugs, calls and cards has really touched our lives and helped us to begin to heal. Jess, our family and I don't have the words to express the love that you have shown us. We love you all and are blessed to be a part of this church family.

Peace and Grace,

Jess and Linda Newton

Julie and Matt Kennington and family

Pennie Anderson

Nicole, Samie and Austin Newton

Please accept my deep thanks to the members of CCC for the love and care that I have felt through the cards, meals, calls, and support received since my recent strokes.

Jan Strebler

CCC

Thank you so much for your donations of snacks this year! We really appreciate being able to provide an extra boost to those kids who can't afford the extras. Thank you so much!

Genevieve Betz and the rest of the Ballwin Elementary Staff and students!

The Manchester Parks, Recreation and Arts Department would like to thank you for volunteering in Park Clean up. We know everyone is very busy and we want to sincerely thank you for the time you all dedicated to helping the community.

God's Kids Choir Directors

On behalf of the entire congregation, "A Big Thanks to the wonderful leadership and ministry of our God's Kids Choir team: Mark Monroe, Stephanie Boone, Sandy Schluesner and Matt Mohr!" The "*Sermon on the Mound*" was excellent.

Newest Members of the Core Leadership Team ...

Ron Hollon and Matt Mohr

Ron Hollon has been married to Maribeth for over 43 years. They have two adult children (Jason and Amanda) and four grandchildren (Lisa, Maya, Audrey, and Kai). Ron is retired from the NBA—a general ministry office of the Christian Church (DOC)—where he served as corporate secretary and led the development of twenty-three apartment projects for low income elderly. Ron also served in the United States Army for four years, including one year in Vietnam where he was awarded a Bronze Star.



These days, Ron is an active volunteer at Mercy Hospital where he specializes in holding babies that are staying in the NICU and being with hospice patients as they near their end of life. He enjoys church activities, gardening, reading, travel, and trying new restaurants. Ron appreciates the members of CCC, their concern for each other, and the concern that is extended beyond the walls of the church. He looks forward to good things in the future.

Matt Mohr is a newer member to the CCC family. He's married to Lindsay (Keen) Mohr, daughter of Margo Keen and sister of Chelsea (Keen) Aaron, who has been a longtime member of our congregation. He has two active and vocal young daughters: Finley (7) and Cecelia (3). Matt celebrates all genres of music, loves good food, is a third generation Cardinals fan, and enjoys being around friends and family. While his Bachelor's degree is in commercial music, his career has led him to work for Eaton's Bussmann Division in Ellisville where he currently works as their Business Systems Development Program Manager. He grew up in the Missouri Synod Lutheran church, but found a more open and inviting home at Community Christian Church. Matt deeply feels called to use his skills to help our church continue to develop and progress into the best version of itself and make sure that our surrounding community knows the special gifts that we have to offer.



Pastoral Installation of Rev. La'Vetta Hall...

All are invited to the Installation Service of Rev. La'Vetta J. Ross-Hall on Sunday, June 4th at 2:00 p.m. The service will be held at Crossroads Christian Church (DOC) located at 2415 North 89th Street, Caseyville, IL 62232. The keynote speaker will be Rev. Dr. Robert Lee Hill. Please contact the church office if you would like to carpool to this special service for La'Vetta.



Class of 2017 High School Graduates...

Congratulations to our graduating seniors, including Anna Fairchild, Dylan Finch, Emma McDurmont, Jordan McGehee, Scott Meier, Jessica Schlueter, Allie Seymour, Rogie Boone, Justin Evans and Connor Pautz.

Each of these young people have had many successes during their time in high school and we wish them much luck as they continue their educational journey.



Children and Youth Updates ...

Vacation Bible School July 17-21

It's that time of year! Your preschool-5th grader is invited to a week of fun! Join members and friends of CCC at "Hero Central"

There will be a registration table at church on Sunday May 28th and June 4th and \$15 Early Bird Reservation good until June 11th

Follow this link to register your kiddos today!

<http://disciplesforchrist.org/vbs-registration-2017/>



Children and Youth Summer Sunday Mornings

We would love to encourage all of our families to worship together at 10:00 a.m. during the summer. Nursery care will still be provided from 9:00-11:00 as families might choose to participate in something during the 9:00 a.m. hour (i.e. Adult Sunday School classes, Pick-up Choir for Memorial Day, Pentecost Brunch set-up for June 4, VBS preparation projects in June and July, and participation in summer worship). Emails will be sent to families as opportunities arise. Otherwise, let us have a vibrant, engaging worship hour at 10:00 a.m. as a full and united congregation! The Elders will host a fellowship hour after services during the summer. Feel free to stick around and socialize with church friends.

Summer Camps for Children, Youth and Families

"Are you looking for a summer camp to help nurture your child's spirit and connect them to God?"

The Disciples of Christ offers a variety of summer programs and camps to facilitate the love and appreciation of God's creation. There are camps for the whole family. There are "Try-It" camps for parents or grandparents to accompany their younger children. There are camps for kids who have completed K—12th grades. The DOC has arranged programs throughout the state.

Explore the link below to see your options.

<http://www.mid-america-disciples.org/summer/>

Update from our director of Children and Youth...

Dear Members of Community Christian Church,

As you may be aware, I entered into a conversation and relationship with CCC last August. The Core Leadership Team was faced with Darla's move, an engagement of a new leadership model, and cultural shifts of the next generation. There was a desire to hire a person on a temporary basis, while the year unfolded. This allowed for me to use some time to figure out if congregational ministry or youth ministry was still my passion after 25 years, while your congregation took steps for assessing and planning for the future. This opportunity served both of our purposes, for which I am grateful.

On a personal note, as the year has unfolded, my husband's job has shifted. He is now on a 12 month contract at Bradley University and he has less flexibility to his work week. Additionally, I will need to be in Peoria, IL on more weekends in order to accompany him to events. Professionally, I am still trying to discern what this next chapter holds. I have been prayerfully considering a few avenues and look forward with some hope and anticipation.

So, my job with CCC will come to a close on July 23rd. I will take the youth group to General Assembly (July 8-12) and be part of Vacation Bible School (July 17-21). Bringing my ministry to a close on July 23rd will allow for us to take a family vacation at the end of July and then send Hannah off to college in the beginning of August.

In June and July, I would love to meet with any of you who might join in conversation and leadership in the following areas with some of our members:

Chi Rho & CYF Youth Fellowship: Heather Monroe, Vickie Minden, Don Miller, & YOU!
Christian Education for Children & Youth: Susan McGhee, Michael Richardson, & YOU!
Family Fellowship Experiences: Lindsay Mohr, Nicole Barclay, Paulette Thorne, & YOU!

Looking back over this school year, it has been my pleasure to partner with you in the following events:

Within Children, Youth and Families:

- *Continued Youth Fellowship Meetings 3 Sundays a month (Highlights include: Pumpkin Patch, Bowling, Castlewood Park Hike, Praying through Tasting, Gingerbread House Party, Epic 6)
- *Established a connection with the local Disciples of Christ Youth Groups. Traveled to 3 of DOC churches for youth events and hosted the group at our church. Each event incorporated a mission service element, eating together, and games
- *Incorporated guests and friends into the life of fellowship groups
- *Continued offering Sunday School to elementary children
- *Youth Sunday School explored Rob Bell's NOOMA series
- *Hosted 2 Lock-Ins with our largest attendance of youth and guests

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Update from our director of Children and Youth...

- *Sold soda for chili supper
 - *Assisted youth in creating a Youth Service about listening and communicating
 - *Shared in Children's Moments and Liturgist roles
 - *Updated a significant number of emails and phone number. Created a group texting for youth
 - *Celebrated Infant Dedication
 - *Youth Hosted 2 God's Kids Choir parties: Halloween party & Baseball party.
- Outside of Children, Youth, & Families
- *Led CLT Bible study on Esther and coordinated worship while Jacob was out for surgery
 - *Presented "My Theological Journey and Life" to the Men's Breakfast
 - *Wrote for the Advent booklet
 - *Coordinated worship services for Christmas Day and New Year's Day
 - *Hosted an Intergenerational Christmas Caroling party
 - *Coordinated the calendar for the Agile church visit
 - *Worked with Worship Committee with Maundy Thursday and Summer Schedule

Growing Edges and Places I would suggest to focus:

- *Realize that the Sunday morning Sunday School hour is not a priority for the majority of our families. Few families participate in the separate hour. A small number of families have voiced a commitment of one hour to church life on Sunday morning. There is an interest for the children to be in worship but then exit for the sermon moment.
- *If Fellowship groups are to remain, split the Chi Rho and CYF immediately, ask for 4 families of Chi Rho and 4 families of CYF to commit to the splitting.
- *Possibly develop a Lock-In ministry. Hire a person to be the Lock-In Coordinator, Content Developer, and Primary Chaperone. This position would need a team of congregational members who are willing to serve as chaperones on the night of the event. But the staff person would be in charge of the logistics, content, and leading.

I will have a more in-depth conversation with the CLT and Personnel Committee. It has been my pleasure to serve your congregation. You have a strong base of members who love and care for this church. You have beautiful church grounds which are lovingly cared for by a host of members. You have a handful of young families who are willing to dream how the church might serve into the future. I will continue my prayers for Community Christian Church as you embrace this next chapter of life together.

Grace 'n Peace,

Amy O'Brien

General Assembly Voting Representatives...

CCC will have several members and youth attending the General Assembly this summer, along with Rev. Thorne and Amy O'Brien. During the resolution and business session CCC will be entitled to 4 voting representatives. If you are attending and would like to be a voting representative, please contact the church office.

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STAMP
HERE

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Rev. Jacob Thorne, Sr. Pastor

Amy O'Brien, Director of Children
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Visit us on the web at
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The next Vital Spark deadline is June 16, 2017.