

THE VITAL SPARK



Publication of Community Christian Church

August 2017

A Message from our Senior Pastor

Dear CCC Family,

This Sunday we are kicking off a new sermon series that focuses on the promises of God. One of the promises of God is the promise of a new identity, a new identity that embraces us with the gift of the Holy Spirit the moment we are baptized.

In reflecting on what it means to have a new identity, and the work that is taking place at CCC as we move forth with Agile Church, I spent time this week thinking about mission and vision statements. I found myself googling mission statements of successful businesses. And I discovered that the mission statement very rarely focuses solely on what the company is trying to sell or make a profit on. For example, Starbucks says its mission is “to inspire and nurture the human spirit—one person, one cup, and one neighborhood at a time.” So when you walk into your local Starbucks the goal is not to sell you the most coffee, or the most expensive coffee, but rather to nurture and inspire the human spirit in everything that you experience at a Starbucks café.

When we think of our mission in our own faith journeys, individually and collectively, what is most important?

A lawyer asked Jesus, “Rabbi, what is the greatest commandment.”

The Jews had 613 commandments to follow. But Jesus answers right away, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” And then, says Jesus, “The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment than these.”

In other words, our mission, my mission, your mission, the core of who we are and how we define our lives is to love Jesus and love one another. Over the past few days I have witnessed this love as sixteen people have stepped forth and volunteered to partner with us in serving Columbia Elementary in North St. Louis. This is in addition to the many thousands of acts of love that already take place at CCC.

As we move into the future, it is my hope, and my prayer, that what we will unconditionally and completely love one another, just as God loves us.

May our identity, as followers of Christ, be rooted in the love of God always and forever.

See you Sunday!

Blessings,

Jacob

CCC Book Discussion Group

On September 18th at 1:30 p.m., all are welcome to meet in the CCC library for a discussion of the book *"Everything Everything"* by Nicola Yoon. Please contact Brenda Richardson if you have questions.



Blood Drive in September

Please plan to donate blood at our upcoming blood drive. It is happening Sunday, September 10th from 8:00a.m. until 12:00 p.m. in the WFLC.

If you book online at redcrossblood.org before the 10th, you will receive an email with a FREE haircut coupon from Sport Clips (offer valid at participating locations while supplies last).

The need for blood is always great, especially as summer comes to a close. Help us reach our goal of 20 pints. Questions? Call Liz Dupuis.

Congregational Meeting

There will be a congregational meeting on September 17th immediately following worship. The purpose of the meeting is to vote on the proposed revisions to the church constitution and bylaws.

Senior Citizen Luncheons

We will resume our schedule of lunch meetings for the Senior Citizen's group on Tuesday, September 12th at 11:30 a.m. in the CCC Narthex. If you would like to provide a food item for any of the lunches between September and June of 2018, please contact Beth Bean in the church office.

Open and Affirming Group Task Force

Back in the Fall of 2016 (compelled by the Pulse Nightclub shootings in Orlando) two church members attended an ecumenical workshop entitled "Building An Inclusive Church". After the workshop, they began having conversations with CCC members and over several months discovered that others in the congregation also felt the spirit moving in the direction of widening the welcome of our church. Earlier this summer, the OAG (Open and Affirming Group) Task Force met for the first time.

The OAG is made up of persons in our congregation who have a heart and passion for the full inclusion of our LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning) children, teens and adults into the life of our congregation.

The task force will shepherd an intentional time of prayer, Bible study, sharing of our stories, community building and reflection to discern if this is where God is calling our congregation. This process may take as few as six months or as long as several years.

What does it mean to be an Open and Affirming congregation?

A Disciples of Christ congregation that declares itself Open and Affirming welcomes persons of all gender expressions and sexual orientations to the table of Christ's communion and to the full life and leadership of the Church **AND** makes a public witness to the Mission of the Open and Affirming Ministry Program.*

The task force plans to provide periodic updates to the congregation through newsletter articles and email updates. In addition, the notes from all task force meetings are available in the church office. If you have questions or would like to discuss, please talk to one of the members of the task force. Task force members are (in alphabetical order): Jeff Clifton, Chris Fairchild, Brian Degitz-Fries, Cindy Herman, Ted Herman, Ron Hollon, Laura McDurmont, Don Miller, Loyalty Miller, Matt Mohr, Norm Pereira, Cathy Schlueter, Janet Staicoff, Steve Staicoff and Betty Quicksall.

*from the LGBTQ+ website www.disciplesallianceq.org

Volunteer Opportunities with a St. Louis City Public School

Do you have an hour or two (or more) a month during the week to help a student in reading or math? For those that haven't heard, Community Christian Church has partnered with Columbia Elementary School, a St. Louis Public School that is located in North St. Louis. To learn a little more about the school we encourage you to take a look at their website at <https://www.slps.org/columbia>.

Tutoring is one opportunity and there will be other opportunities as well. If you are motivated to help kids and interested in being a part of this new and exciting partnership, fill out a Volunteer Application, a Volunteer Reference Check (which may be completed by Jacob), and a background check form. Training is provided. Please turn in completed forms to the church office by this Sunday, August 27th. If you have questions or want to explore whether or not this opportunity may be right for you, please talk to Beth Bean, Diane or Dick Hall, Linda Helm, Janet Staicoff or Jacob Thorne.



Pictures taken during our visit to Columbia School earlier this month.

Dinner for 8 (or more)

Please set aside the evening of September 9th at 6:00 p.m. to gather with friends from CCC and share a meal together at the home of Molly Duncan in Kirkwood. Molly will provide the main course and all others are asked to bring a side dish or dessert to share with the group. Please contact Linda Medlock with questions.

Core Leadership Team Listening Session

The Core Leadership Team (CLT) will host the final congregational listening session to share, listen, and receive feedback on the proposed revisions to the church constitution and bylaws this Sunday at 11:15 a.m. in the CCC library. If you will not be able to attend this session (or a previous session), please contact any member of the CLT to share your feedback.

Thank you notes

Thank you so much for the \$250 scholarship and the \$500 scholarship in Beulah's name. It's made more special knowing my church family is behind me. Thank you again for the support.

Emma McDurmont

Words cannot truly convey our appreciation for all your cards, calls, and most especially prayers that have sustained and encouraged me and Kristina during my health crisis over the past several months. We are so blessed to be part of such a caring and supportive church family. Thank you so very much!

John Houghton

Thank you for contributing to Epworth's school supply drive. By sending children and youth to school with new supplies you are reinforcing the growing self esteem that our programs are designed to build. Your gifts will allow them to be proud and hopeful as they begin a new school year. You are making a difference in the lives of our children and helping to ensure their chance for the future.

Sincerely,
Epworth

Thank you to all of the individuals who helped in some way with the Hanna Woods food project this summer. Your donations provided much needed healthy food for the children of 10 different families during the summer months when school is not in session.

Circle of Concern critical food needs

Many CCC members and friends bring items to church on a regular basis to support Circle of Concern, the area food pantry serving families in west St. Louis County.

Current food pantry needs include:

Canned Pasta - CRITICAL

Dry dinners (such as Hamburger Helper)

Peanut Butter

Jelly

Canned Chicken

Razors

Dish Soap

Laundry Soap



Your support of Circle to help area families is appreciated.

For the runners and walkers in the congregation, another way you can support Circle of Concern is by participating in their **4th Annual Run Circles Around Hunger 5K Run/Walk** on Saturday, September 16th at 8:30 a.m. along the Meramec River in Valley Park. Please use the following link to learn more.

<http://www.circleofconcern.org/events/run-circles-around-hunger-5k-runwalk/>

Children's Programs for the Fall

Child Care during Adult Sunday School

All children from newborn through 3rd grade are welcome to be in the Nursery during the Adult Sunday School hour.

During Worship

All children newborn to preschool are welcome in the Nursery at any time.

Those children in kindergarten to 3rd grade, should sit with their family during the start of worship. They are welcome to come forward for the Children's Moment, then after the Children's Moment they may choose to sit with their family for the rest of worship or be dismissed to go downstairs for a short Sunday School lesson. The children who choose to go to Sunday School will return to worship at Communion time.

Children in 4th and 5th grades are welcome to come up front for the Children's Moment and should then return to sit with their family for the rest of worship.

Adult and Youth Help is Needed

To make Sunday School time possible for children, we need adult volunteers to teach a 30 minute lesson (using curriculum provided) to children during worship once every six weeks. We also need youth volunteers (6th to 12th grad) to be helpers during the children's Sunday school time. We would need them once a month/every six weeks.

If you have questions or want to volunteer, please contact the church office, Susan McGehee or Michael Richardson. You can also sign up on the back of the church bulletin tab this Sunday.

Youth Programs for the Fall

Youth will have their Faith Learning time during evening youth activities and youth lock-ins.

Plans are being developed for a lock-in on September 22nd starting at 7:00 p.m. and ending at 8:00 a.m. on September 23rd. Please contact Vickie Minden or Heather Monroe if you would like to volunteer during the lock in for a 2 to 4 hour shift.

Save the date for a youth event on October 22nd to help with *Feed My Starving Children*. We have 15 slots reserved to help with this project.

God's Kids Choir

God's Kids Choir (GKC), a faith based children's choir for children in grades K-5th this school year, has started their weekly Sunday practices. If your child/grandchild has an interest in singing or acting, they are welcome to join GKC at 4:00 p.m. here at CCC in the choir room. Please contact Mark Monroe or call the church office if you have any questions. Friends are also welcome!



GKC performing "Sermon on the Mound" in May, 2017.

Women's Study and Fellowship

Here are a few dates to put on the calendar:

2nd Tuesday of the month (September to May)—
Priscilla Group—meets in the CCC library at 7:00
p.m. for study and fellowship. Questions may be
directed to Mitzie Bryant.

3rd Tuesday of the month (September to May) - Re-
becca Group—meets in the CCC library at 9:30 a.m.
for study and fellowship. Contact the church office
with questions.

Tuesday evenings (other than 2nd Tuesday) -
Women's Bible Study - meets in the CCC library at
7:00 p.m. To learn more, please contact Liz Dupuis.

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Rev. Jacob Thorne, Sr. Pastor

Visit us on the web at
www.disciplesforchrist.org

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Community Christian Church
Manchester

Disciples Men Breakfast

On September 16th, all men are welcome to
attend the quarterly men's breakfast. Coffee
and fellowship begins at 8:00 a.m. followed by a
hearty breakfast at 8:30. The program for the
morning will be shared very soon.

PLACE
STAMP
HERE