



# The Vital Spark

A NEWSLETTER OF COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH ~ APRIL, 2021

MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR MINISTER, REV. JACOB THORNE

Dear Church:

This summer I will be taking a planned sabbatical for which I am truly grateful and appreciative.

A sabbatical is an intentional time for a pastor to rest, reflect, and renew. The theme of my sabbatical is regeneration, with a focus on four different areas:

- 1) Regeneration with God. In the words of the psalmist, I plan to be still and listen. While I participate in daily Biblical study and reflection for the weekly act of preaching, I am acutely aware that preparing to preach is not the same as daily devotion. During this sabbatical I intend to set aside specific time each day for prayer, journal writing, and Biblical reading. I am also planning to take an online course by a renowned theologian that focuses on centering prayer and two separate personal retreats at Vision of Peace Hermitages.
- 2) Regeneration of self: physical health. The movement of the body relates directly to the neurons of the brain, anchoring us deeper into our own grounded reality. Movement of the body leads to a deeper realization of the self. I plan to engage in a regular routine of fitness, learning along the way how, through physical well-being, humans are infinitely adaptable and malleable. Such recognition will, in turn, transform the composure of my heart and soul.
- 3) Regeneration of family. I look forward to spending time with my wife and children, along with visits to my parents and other relatives. The success of a pastor is strengthened (or weakened) by the relationship one has with others, especially family. I want to grow these relationships so that, in times of busyness and stress, I know that our love will remain strong.
- 4) Regeneration of church. I intend to use all of the above to help strengthen Community Christian Church for the future. Looking forward to the years ahead, I want to model, as a servant-leader, the disciplines of spiritual study, physical activity, and family relationships. In conjunction with all of this, I also want to focus on the future of our community garden—an act of regeneration in itself. I love seeing the smile on a person's face when they taste for the first time a home grown tomato right off the vine. And I know that as our community garden continues to expand, both in physical size and

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number of participants, I need to gain additional gardening/farming skills. I hope to do this through volunteering one day a week this summer at Loving Roots Urban Farm—a local business that focuses on growing fresh vegetables through organic processes for the health of the community.

My final Sunday before beginning the sabbatical is May 23<sup>rd</sup>, which happens to coincide with the Day of Pentecost. It should be a lovely day with special music and celebration. I will be back in the pulpit on the Sunday of Labor Day Weekend. And then, we will have a large “Fall Kickoff Sunday” on September 12<sup>th</sup>.

In my absence, John Yonker and Jody Clegg will cover preaching responsibilities on Sunday mornings, along with attendance at necessary committee meetings (Core Leadership Team, Finance, Elders and Worship). Jody will cover the final Sunday of May. John will cover the following six Sundays, and Jody will cover the remaining Sundays.

For non-emergency pastoral visits, such as prayer before or after surgery, the elders are available. For pastoral emergencies, such as a death or serious illness, John or Jody will be available.

I have also shared with the CLT and Elders that in the event of a funeral I would like to return and officiate. The desire to be present for a funeral is a bit of an anomaly for a pastoral sabbatical, but I feel strongly that as your pastor God has called me to be with you in times of death and it would not feel right to absent in such moments.

There will be, as always, lots of events taking place at Community throughout the summer. The children’s ministry is planning a special one day “VBS Olympics” on July 11<sup>th</sup>. The work in the garden, under the direction of Beth, will continue to flourish. And the many ways that Community is in the community will not pause.

I already look forward to returning in the fall and sharing with you some stories of my sabbatical.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact me.

In service,

Jacob

## BREMER COMMUNITY GARDEN OPPORTUNITIES

This crazy winter weather in April has made for some delays in garden planting, but it won’t be long before summer plantings can begin. We will continue to have weekly Wednesday evening gardening time from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Weekend opportunities will most likely include May 1, 8, 16 and 23, with times to be determined later. If these dates don’t work for you, please contact the church office, as there are often other things to be done in between planned work days. We look forward to your assistance as it fits into your schedule.

We had several crops that loved the cold of winter, as we have already shared spinach, parsley and chives with several families from Hanna Woods Elementary School and Circle of Concern.

# THANK YOU

Dear CCC,

Hope you all are doing well! Thank you so much for the gift card and for thinking of me! You know exactly what a college student needs!

Thank You All!

Max Kennington

Dear CCC Family,

Thank you so much for the cards, meals, phone calls and prayers during my recent hospitalization and at home recovery. Your kind gestures brought me much comfort.

Sincerely,

Mitzie Bryant

My church family, thank you for the gift card. It was very much appreciated. I will use the gift cards for books for my classes next year. I plan to graduate a year early so I am already down to my last year of college coming up in the fall. As of now I plan to go to graduate school for psychology. Thank you for your support over the years.

Anna Welker

## SUMMER CHURCH CAMP NEWS FROM MID-AMERICA

We are excited to see you this summer! We have missed you and we have been praying for you and planning ways to make sure this summer is safe, fun, and full of experiences to reconnect with friends, but more importantly to find ways to connect with God and creation!

There are some things you need to know. **Most of our camp sites have put a cap on the people we can have at camp.** So, if you are considering coming, do not wait! [Sign up now at http://www.mid-americadisciples.org/summer](http://www.mid-americadisciples.org/summer)



There will be some safety procedures we will ask of campers and families (you will get a more detailed list in your info packet once registered).

We will ask that campers bring a mask (you will get a list of what masks we prefer once you have signed up).

We will also ask that you be wise about the mixed groups of 10 or more that you are in prior to coming to camp. We would prefer during that approximately 2 week time that you keep safe space around people and wear mask when you cannot. We know there are mixed views in our varied communities, schools, and families but we are asking for your help in providing the safest environment we can before even getting to camp.

Please do up to date monitoring for symptoms at home before coming to camp.

Finally and most importantly - Pray for our campers, staff, camp sites, churches, and families that this year is a great, life-giving, wonderful, impactful camp year!

We feel with the guidelines we have in place, we will have great summer of Outdoor Ministries!

If you have any questions, please email Zane Whorton at [zanew78@gmail.com](mailto:zanew78@gmail.com)

**Scholarships for partial camp registration fees are available from CCC.** Contact the church office for additional information on how to apply.

# CCC FIRST QUARTER OPERATING RESULTS

	3/31/21 YTD Actual	3/31/21 YTD Budget	Comments
Offering	\$82,152	\$88,087	Timing of giving
WFLC Rental, other income	24,124	11,679	Increased use of gym by basketball groups.
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$106,276</b>	<b>\$99,766</b>	
Children/Youth/Adult Ministries	117	685	Children/youth not meet- ing due to Covid.
Worship/Core Ministries	2,769	3,545	
Outreach/Mission	6,146	7,068	
Property	26,605	36,838	Less snow removal and building repairs
Office/Administration	3,511	3,532	
Wages/Expenses/ Benefits	50,580	51,978	
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$89,728</b>	<b>\$103,646</b>	
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>\$16,548</b>	<b>(\$3,880)</b>	

The finances of CCC as of the 1st quarter of 2021 are doing well. We continue to have regular giving as part of Sunday morning in person worship and online. Our operating expenses have been less than anticipated, in part because we have not resumed regular meetings for children and youth. In addition, we had very little need for snow removal this past winter and no major building repairs have been required.

We are grateful for recent painting by Marlan Graham and Karl Doup to freshen several of the Upper Packwood rooms.

Some warm temperatures in late March gave our roofing company three great days to install our new roof. Several large pine trees were removed along the south side of our property earlier this month.

Outreach giving during the quarter went to Pastor's Discretionary Fund, Caring Solutions, Circle of Concern, Christian Church of Mid-America, Bethany Fellowship, National Benevolent Association and Isaiah 58 Ministries.

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

## Antonette Pereira Will Be 100 On May 2nd!!

Barely 5 feet tall, she is a force of a woman. The sparkle in her eyes is matched by her sharp memory, and excellent health. She straightens with pride when reminded of her coming birthday. “Me? 100? Imagine that”. The nearly 36,500 days she has lived, to us is quite a phenomenon, but to Mom “it’s just life”; she attributes it to the 100+ rope jumps she did everyday after school and continued well into her 40s.

Antonette D’Cunha was born in Goa, India at the end of WWI, when Goa was a Portuguese colony and the rest of India was a British colony. In the US, Warren Harding was in the White House. Although born in Goa, she lived much of her life in Bombay where she later married (Francis Pereira, 1942) in the middle of WW2, subsequently bore 2 sons, and saw the transition of India from a British colony to an independent nation.



Francis passed away in 1990 and Antonette moved to St. Louis that year. She started attending CCC with us and, except for Covid, could be seen in her pew every Sunday. In 1995 she became a US citizen and in 1997 she moved to Gambrill Gardens Retirement Community where at a mere 76 years old she was called “baby” by her new friends there. She is known as the “Rose Lady” at Gambrill because of the gorgeous roses she plants and grows outside her apartment window. Besides having the greenest of thumbs, Mom is also a terrific cook (Goan dishes of course) and loved to sew, knit, crochet and embroider. I say “loved to” because her hands and fingers just aren’t as deft anymore (except with the TV remote!). Furthermore, at 76, “because in America you can do anything”, she decided to take her first paying job ever. She worked at K-Mart up the street from Gambrill, retiring at 87.

Mom loves her family deeply and especially her 3 grandkids and 3 great grandkids. She has a 3 month-old great granddaughter she has yet to meet. And last year she danced with her grandson at his wedding in Houston; she wasn’t quite as snappy as I remember as a little boy when she and my Dad used to jitterbug to Glen Miller’s “In The Mood”, but then she was 99 last year.

We wish all of CCC could be celebrating her day with us but due to Covid we will have to defer that to a more appropriate time.

We love you Mom! And wish you a Happy and Blessed 100<sup>th</sup> birthday!!

Norman Pereira

Note from CCC: Cards to celebrate this special day may be sent to Norman’s and Margaret’s home at 14620 Mill Spring Court in Chesterfield—63017.

# PRISCILLA LADIES GROUP MONTHLY MEETING

Priscilla Ladies Group will continue meeting using Zoom on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. All women are welcome for a time of study, prayer, service and fellowship. Our May service project will be collecting personal care products and/or diapers (size 6 is preferred) for the Circle of Concern. Please contact Betty Quicksall by phone/text/email for more information. 636-484-0791 or [bettyquic@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bettyquic@sbcglobal.net).

## BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

The CCC Book Discussion Group will be meeting on May 17<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. in the CCC Narthex for conversation about the book *The Splendid and the Vile* by Eric Lawson . Please contact Brenda Richardson for additional information about the group.

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