



# The Vital Spark

A NEWSLETTER OF COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH ~ MAY, 2021

MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR MINISTER, REV. JACOB THORNE

Dear Community:

I write this article on Tuesday morning, while the nourishing rain falls gently outside. The trees in my backyard are a dark vibrant green, full of new life for a new season. And as I think about the rhythms of nature, I look forward to a new season in my life as well.

This Sunday will be my final morning in the pulpit until Labor Day. I am eagerly anticipating my upcoming sabbatical and, at the same time, aware of the bitter-sweet feelings that accompany this new adventure. I love my role as pastor of Community and I will truly miss being in your presence and friendship—a statement that not all pastors can make. For this, I am extremely grateful.

At the same time I know that as a leader I need time to step away from the daily tasks of ministry in order to return refreshed and ready to go. In more than fifteen years of ministry I have only taken one other sabbatical, for a period of four weeks. So this summer's sabbatical is a new experience and I know that your prayers will sustain me and my family in our time away.

Every good minister knows that the church is not dependent on the pastor. I have complete confidence that Community will continue to thrive and flourish this summer. We have a talented list of leadership, elders and staff. And I am already looking forward to our reunion in September.

My prayers are with each of you and the church.

With gratitude and thankfulness,

Jacob

# A MESSAGE FROM CHERYL KINNEY, CHAIR of CLT

Dear Church,

In the last Vital Spark, Jacob announced his plans for a sabbatical from May 24 through August 30, 2021. As the chair of the Core Leadership Team (CLT), I wanted to follow up to provide a framework for the sabbatical, as well as encouragement to all of us as the time approaches.

A sabbatical is a time of special renewal for the pastor that will bring personal nourishment to his/her soul, a deeper relationship with the Lord, family renewal, and a clearer understanding of God's vision for the church. A sabbatical helps prevent ministry burnout and may give the pastor a fresh perspective for his/her ministry.

## BIBLICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The concept of sabbatical is deeply and indisputably rooted in Scripture. The term is derived from the Old Testament idea of "Sabbath." The Hebrew word means "rest." God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh (Genesis 2:1-3). As stated in Ecclesiastes (3:1), to everything, there is a season. Jesus himself would often take time to withdraw for prayer and spiritual solitude, to refresh and restore his soul. In the same way, we want to provide specific time for the rest and restoration to our spiritual leader.

## DENOMINATIONAL VALUE

The Core Leadership Team met with Jacob to discuss and approve his plans and ways in which his responsibilities will be covered during the sabbatical. We were reminded of our commitment to support the spiritual leaders of our church and concluded together that it was a good time to do it now and were excited to let him know this.

## WHAT WILL THIS BE LIKE FOR US?

As Jacob steps out for this period of sabbatical starting May 24<sup>th</sup>, we are confident that our staff and leaders are capable and ready to step in to fulfill his roles in many ways. We feel very positive about the core leadership team's planning and preparation for this time. The leadership and administrative responsibilities Jacob carries will be delegated to our elders and the interim pastoral leaders, John Yonkers and Jody Clegg. Office Manager Beth Bean will step in as needed, oversee the Bremer Community Garden, and serve as a point of contact. The Core Leadership Team, the Worship Committee, Finance Committee, Sunday School leaders, and our elders will continue in our roles.

## WHERE WILL JACOB BE AND WHAT WILL HE BE DOING?

Jacob has shared his plan for regeneration with God, self, family and church. While he will be available for funerals, he will not be present at the church during the three-month period and will disconnect from phone and email during that time as well.

He will return the beginning of September to his duties here, but with a gradual engagement over the first few weeks. This re-entry is very important to help solidify the learnings and benefits of the sabbatical. We ask that during his sabbatical, you respect Jacob's plan for complete focus on regeneration and renewal. Please reach out to Beth Bean with any questions or concerns. She will forward your requests to the appropriate party.

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#### OUR LEARNING TOO

We all have a role in the learning process while Jacob is away. Our leaders will take on new roles and responsibilities that will assist us not only now, but going forward. God wants to do work in each of us during this time. There are many opportunities for you to move forward in personal growth and in service too: Attend church regularly, and invite others to join our services; Give faithfully and generously; Volunteer and serve consistently; Pray for Jacob, and for Community Christian Church, and each other. God is going to do something in all of us - even while apart - that will work beautifully as we come back together. Be part of that work.

We encourage you to send in advance or bring cards of support for Jacob to the May 23<sup>rd</sup> worship service. A basket for cards will be available in the Narthex. We will have a special prayer for him on that day. Pocket size or stand up prayer stones you can put on night stands, kitchen window sills, etc. will be available for you to take with you as a reminder to be in prayer for Jacob throughout this period.

Thank you for your support, encouragement, and engagement in this process as we honor Jacob through this gift of time, rest and renewal. Thank you too for your prayers and ongoing ministry here at Community Christian Church! The best is yet to come.

Cheryl Kinney  
Chair, Core Leadership Team  
314-608-2527

## MASK POLICY UPDATE

In accordance with the recommendations of the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), along with the recommendations of the St. Louis County Department of Public Health, Community Christian Church no longer requires the use of masks in worship, meetings, or any areas/activities of the church campus. However, we welcome fully any individual(s) who decide to continue wearing masks for whatever the reason may be. Together, masked or unmasked, we are a community of faith dedicated to serving God and one another.

## IN PERSON ADULT FAITH LEARNING

Starting this Sunday, Norm Pereira's adult faith learning class will meet at 8:45 am in the Upper Packwood classroom. The Inquirer's Class plans to resume in person as well starting on June 6th. That class will meet in Office Suite B.

# STABLE MINISTRY THANK YOU

CCCs have been meeting every Monday/Thursday to pull this off. Regulars are the following: Joan Tichacek, Maribeth Hollon, Karl/Joyce Doup, Ted/Cindy Herman, Floss Haniford, Brenda Richardson, Linda Helm, Denise Stewart, Karen Kelly, Betty Quicksall, Sharon/Bill Turnbough, Margaret Pereira, Sybil Wasson, Nick/Betty Rega.

Helping on the side were Molly Duncan, Wanda Morgenthaler, Anita Gamble, Liz Dupuis, Beth Bean, Ed/Merne Earl, Tanya Pereira, Paula Hartman, and three regular non-members who joined the team.

During Covid you might not have seen these folks but they were Busy! Appreciation goes to them for their dedication. Thanks to all the CCCs who donated food for hearty work lunches. And gratitude also goes to those who donated items to sell. Others gave us extra help during the actual setup, sale, and clean up.

Money earned helps needed church projects and also funds non-profit charity gifts to local community agencies. Now that Covid is ending please tell these folks how much you appreciate their hard work. The next sale will be in October but donations will be accepted anytime.

Thank you for helping to nurture these CCCs and this Stable Ministry.

## THANK YOU...

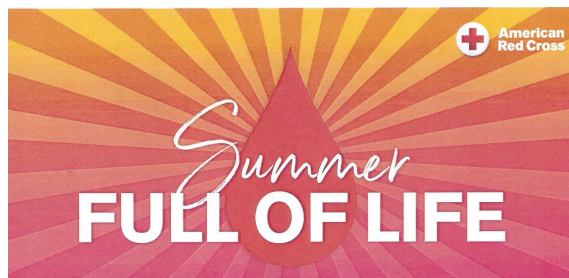
Dear CCC,

Thank you for your cards, telephone calls and emails. I was so happy to have CCCs help me celebrate my 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. You added joy to the occasion.

Antonette Pereira

## SUMMER BLOOD DRIVE

It's time for sunshine vibes and saving lives: Come to give blood at the CCC June blood drive on June 22 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the CCC Narthex. In thanks, the Red Cross will email you a \$5 Gift Card, thanks to Amazon. Details: [rcblood.org/together](http://rcblood.org/together)



## BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

The CCC Book Discussion Group will be meeting on June 21<sup>st</sup> at 1:30 p.m. in the CCC Narthex for a conversation about the book *Before We Were Yours* by Lisa Wingate. Please contact Brenda Richardson for additional information about the group.



# MEET OUR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS – CLASS OF 2021

This past Sunday we presented 3 scholarships, each for \$250 and funded by the Stable and Disciples Men Ministries. Those receiving a scholarship are pictured below. In addition, each of the graduates received a Beulah Nelson Memorial Fund scholarship .



Brooke Branstetter



Erica Schlueter



Grace Welker

Brooke will be graduating from Marquette High School and plans to continue her education at the University of Memphis

Erica will be graduating from Parkway South High School and will study at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville.

Grace will be graduating from Parkway Central High School and plans to attend Missouri State University.

Please join us in wishing all of the graduates much success in their future academic endeavors.



# PENTECOST SUNDAY SPECIAL OFFERING

## Be the New Church

For the past thirteen months, many Disciples living across the United States and Canada have been struggling with social isolation. They've stayed away from their various places of worship to protect the health and safety of themselves and others. It has been hard. How have new church leaders responded? By launching communities of faith in creative and innovative ways. It's looked like spreading the word about the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through Door Dash food deliveries, meeting with folks every week on Zoom to discuss anxiety, and making sure that the spiritual needs of transitioning out of correctional facilities are met. From hospital and prison chaplains to tri-vocational pastors, courageous new church leaders have answered the call to be the new church. To support them and their efforts to continue the new church movement, please contribute to the 2021 Pentecost Offering, collected in most congregations on Sundays, May 16 and May 23. Each year, half of the gifts made go to your own Region to support local new church development. The other half goes to New Church Ministry, which trains, equips, assists, and multiplies new church leaders. Through programs such as Leadership Academy, New Church Hacks, and Water the Plants, your gifts make a difference across the life of the Church. By participating in this Special Day Offering, you ensure the viability, vitality and sustainability of unique new church plants in your area and in states, provinces, and territories far away. Please give generously. Let's all be the new church, together.

Special offering envelopes will be available in the Narthex on Sunday or you can make a donation online.



## An Invitation to Celebrate from General Minister + President Rev. Terri Hord Owens: Pentecost Sunday

"Let's let the fire fall once again. Let's let the Spirit reenergize us as we remember our call to not only love God but to love one another... We say that we welcome all to the Lord's table as God has welcomed us. If we want to affirm the limitless love of God then surely we want to breathe life into this work."

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) General Minister and President Rev. Terri Hord Owens invites you to [celebrate the 30th anniversary of the ordination of Rev. Allen V. Harris](#) and his life-giving ministry; she invites you to [give to the Allen V. Harris Open & Affirming Ministries Endowment Fund](#) to breathe life into the work and ministry of AllianceQ, building a more just and inclusive church. Learn more at: <http://disciplesallianceq.org/glad-news/an-invitation-to-celebrate-from-general-minister-president-rev-terri-hord-owens-pentecost-sunday/>



## SAVE THE DATE!

VBS Sunday Coming July 11!

All children and their friends are invited to our **one day** VBS event!

Hope you can come!

Signups will begin June 6!

## COME GARDEN WITH US

We plan to continue our Wednesday evening garden work events throughout the summer. We begin at 5:30 and generally have enough to keep us busy until 7 or 7:30.

No experience with gardening is required. We'd love to see soon.



## MEN'S BREAKFAST—SAVE THE DATE!

Disciples Men's Ministry is planning to host a men's breakfast on June 12th. Coffee and fellowship will begin at 8 and breakfast at 8:30. Program topic is in development. Contact Jess Newton or Rich Dupuis to learn more.

CCC

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