



The Vital Spark

A NEWSLETTER OF COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH ~ JULY, 2021

MESSAGE FROM OUR JULY SABBATICAL MINISTER, REV. JOSEPH CLEGG

I didn't plan to say the phrase "you are no longer strangers" from the pulpit this past Sunday as I began my time with you supplying for Jacob during his sabbatical. The words from Ephesians 2 talk about the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles and about a division that was healed. I chuckled as I looked back over the passage today from this past Sunday, because I could also say that "you are no longer strangers" to me. I feel acclimated to Community Christian from my times with you over the past few months. I'm still learning many of your names, of course, and meeting many of you for the first time. I may not meet some of you, as you continue to worship with us from home. However, I am glad to be able to mingle with and talk to others now in ways that were harder and less safe in the previous months. I feel a little less like your guest pastor swooping in and a little more like your companions.

Have you thought more about companionship during the past year than you ever have? I know that I've thought about it more. Some of us are born extroverts, some natural introverts, some ambiverts who seem to need company one day and solitude the next. Our times of isolation and virtual meetings during the past year have shown us again that God gives us companionship as a gift. After all, God desires OUR companionship. What else is the work of the church but believing and working as God's companions? But in that work, we become companions of each other as well. We can't be otherwise, in fact.

"In [Christ], the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21), we're told. What's joined together? You and me. As I mentioned on Sunday, "fitted together" may be a better translation, and Paul is using a term masons used to describe the whole process of fitting stones together. We are companions, but that doesn't mean everything automatically comes together smoothly. Sometimes, we need to be fitted a little more. Sometimes, the surfaces make the building process more difficult.

In some ways, this summer's surfaces merely have a different roughness than last summer's. We wait for the inevitable rise of Delta-variant COVID cases; children return to a school that's unrecognizable to them, and a safety that's uncertain to them. Our political discourse isn't getting any better. And- as God has for two millennia, God keeps building with us, fitting us together for good works. I look forward to being "joined together" with you and being your companions through the next weeks, as I learn more about you, hear your stories, see your calling and ministry in action- and God keeps doing its building with us.

-Jody

VBS SUNDAY WRAP-UP

We had 10 children, 2 youth helpers and 5 adults enjoy an afternoon of VBS fun on July 11th. The focus was 1 Corinthians 15:57 - "thanks be to God who gives us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ". We used the Olympic theme to support this verse. Many crafts projects were completed including a wooden cross. For snack we made graham cracker flags with icing and M and M's for the Olympic rings. As an outreach project we decorated bags, filled them with snacks and crafts and delivered them to the families at Hanna Woods. The afternoon concluded with pizza and ice cream for the kids and their families.

Special thanks to Wendy Finch, Susan McGehee, Beth Bean, Rich and Luz Dupuis and Norman Pereira for their assistance in making the afternoon a success.



The kids always love the science experiments demonstrated by Norman Pereira.

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

The CCC Book Discussion Group will be meeting on August 16th at 1:30 p.m. in the CCC Narthex for a conversation about the book *Hillbilly Elegy* by J. D. Vance. Please contact Brenda Richardson for additional information about the group.

MIDEAST CONFLICT PRESENTATION

John and Kristina Houghton will be making one additional presentation during the Sunday school hour this Sunday, July 25th related to the Mideast conflict involving Israel, Palestine and Arab countries. With the recent fighting and other changes in this region, this presentation will continue to increase our understanding of the situation. The class begins at 9 a.m. in the CCC Library.



THANK YOU...

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your cards and words of comfort at the time of Wilbur's death. He is at last at peace with God after his long struggle with Alzheimer's disease.

We both loved Community Christian Church and our friends there.

Bless you as you move on in your ministry.

Jane Gearhart

ISAIAH 58 MINISTRIES DONATIONS

The recent request for donations of socks and underwear for Isaiah 58 Ministries was a tremendous success. Your donations provided 29 children/youth a weekly supply of underwear and 18 children/youth a weekly supply of socks.

Thank you for helping these children with items needed on a daily basis.



HELPING FEED KIDS AND FAMILIES

Your donations on a regular basis to support the food insecure families of Hanna Woods and the clients of Circle of Concern are always appreciated. We love to see the cereal, pasta, peanut butter and jelly, dish soap and more in the baskets and grocery cart in the Narthex or in the green tub by the front doors of the church.

Current needs for Circle of Concern include rice, bean, potato sides, canned chicken, beef stew, chicken and dumplings, peanut butter, jelly, cake mixes, muffin mixes, canned vegetables, dinner helpers, 4+ blade razors, feminine hygiene pads, laundry detergent, dish soap and pull-ups (sizes 3T and 4T),



CCC OPERATING RESULTS THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021

	6/30/21 YTD Actual	6/30/21 YTD Budget	Comments
Offering	\$183,058	\$167,409	Timing of giving
WFLC Rental, other income	32,972	21,188	Increased use of gym by basketball groups
Total Income	\$216,030	\$188,597	
Children/Youth/Adult Ministries	551	1,475	Limited activities due to Covid
Worship/Core Ministries	4,814	6,375	Less special service and misc expenses than ex- pected
Outreach/Mission	13,169	15,111	Discretionary funds availa- ble not yet spent
Property	45,614	60,199	Less lawn, snow removal and building repairs than anticipated
Office/Administration	6,322	7,232	
Wages/Expenses/ Benefits	100,929	104,385	Sr Pastor expenses and some staff wages less than anticipated
Total Operating Expenses	\$171,399	\$194,777	
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$44,631	(\$6,180)	

The financial results for the first half of 2021 are going well. We are on target with respect to offering donations and use of the gym continues on a nearly daily basis which has led to higher gym rental income than anticipated.

We continue to watch expenses and have had few unexpected items pop up so far this year. When the recent HVAC inspection was done, we learned of a need for some new replacement parts, but that work has not been done yet due to supply shortages.

Outreach giving during this past quarter went to Disciples Mission Fund, Christian Church of Mid America, Caring Solutions, Circle of Concern, AllianceQ, Global Ministries and the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.

If you are planning to make an IRA withdrawal and have it sent directly to the church, please contact the church office so that we can be looking for your donation. Year to date giving statements will be sent out in early August. We are grateful for your financial giving in support of CCC and its ministries throughout the year.

ABUNDANT GARDEN HARVEST

Summer's heat is helping our garden grow. We have had a busy past few weeks sharing zucchini, cucumbers, green beans, peas, lettuce, beets, potatoes, peppers, lettuce, arugula and basil with Circle of Concern, families of Hanna Woods Elementary School, people in the church neighborhood, garden volunteers and church friends.

We will continue our Wednesday evening work nights starting at 6 pm through August. No experience is needed to help, so please come join us.



A productive and colorful summer garden

PLANNING COMMITTEE NEEDED

If you would like to be involved with planning festivities for Rev. Thorne's September 12th return from his sabbatical please contact the church office or Loyalty Miller.

CCC

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