



# The Vital Spark

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A NEWSLETTER OF COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH ~ MAY, 2022

## MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR MINISTER, REV. JACOB THORNE

Dear Community:

I want to share with you a number of exciting updates.

First, after interviewing several qualified candidates we are pleased to announce that Becky Sternitzky has accepted the position to be our next Office Manager.

Since 2000, Becky has worked in the field of healthcare management. We are excited that her exceptional interpersonal skills, with a passion for improving patient experience, physician engagement, operational improvement, and organizational effectiveness will all serve to make her a perfect match with Community. And, as an added bonus, Becky is already familiar with our church and ministries. Becky's sister is Laura McDurmont! Becky's official start date is July 5<sup>th</sup>. She will be in the office most days from 9:00-3:00, Monday thru Friday.

At the same time I am also excited to share that Beth will still remain on staff, but in a bit of a different role. Following her big birthday (I won't say the number, but it's a birthday that impacts the choice of health care insurance) Beth will continue to work at Community for approximately seven hours a week as a ministry associate, with a focus on financial projections/reconciliations, some pastoral care and special projects. Beth also plans to spend a significant amount of time volunteering in the garden. I cannot even begin to put into words how grateful I am for Beth's presence on our staff not only now, but also in the future. She is a wonderful colleague in ministry and I am grateful for her presence and friendship. And don't worry, plans are in the works, with upcoming details forthcoming, about how we will celebrate her birthday and semi-retirement.

Next, I am also pleased to share that one of our newer regular worship attendees at Community, Kelly Bratkowski, will begin spending time in both worship leadership and preaching at Community. Kelly recently graduated with a Master of Divinity from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and is now completing her first year as a doctoral candidate at St. Louis University in Theological Studies. While in seminary, Kelly served as the Mission Coordinator at Shepherd of the Hills Christian Church in Austin, Texas. I am excited, and grateful, to have Kelly's presence in the pulpit when I am either on vacation or visiting family.

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Message from our Senior Minister (from page 1)

Finally, I want to share some updates on the garden. We are thrilled that the garden expansion is on its way to completion. The new fencing has been installed and we are now in the process of building additional beds and pathways, along with a new system for watering and irrigation. The other news is that while our partnership with UrbanReachSTL (URSTL) remains strong, we have had to make some pivots and adjustments. Our original intent was to have the youth from URSTL join us one morning a week for gardening, lunch, and fellowship. Unfortunately, due to a shortage of both staffing and volunteers, URSTL has had to make significant adjustments and eliminations to their programming this summer, including not being able to bring youth to the garden. However, we are still planning to provide fresh produce for their weekly community meals, along with establishing a set time for volunteers from Community to serve, and hope to have all of the new details in place by the end of this week. And then, looking already to next summer, plan once again to have the youth from URSTL join us in the garden.

As you can see, we have a lot taking place this summer and my words cover only a small part of what is continually taking place. Other notable events over the next few weeks include: celebrations of our graduating seniors (this Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>); a special Memorial Day Celebration with a live twenty-piece band led by Jerry Hoover (May 29<sup>th</sup>); and the celebration and act of baptism on Pentecost Sunday (June 5<sup>th</sup>).

I am so grateful for this church and its many ministries and missions.

If you have any questions or concerns always feel free to reach out.

Many blessings,

Jacob

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## THANK YOU

Dear CCC,

Thank you so much for the cards and calls to offer comfort when Jan passed away. I am appreciative of the love and support I received from CCC during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

John Strebler

Hello CCC,

Thank you for the gift card. I really appreciate it. A little update from me, I will be graduating in the fall with a degree in psychology and an emphasis in HR. Thank you again for the gift card, it's great to know that you are still thinking of me. Hope everyone is doing well.

Anna Welker

Dear CCC Community,

Hello! I just wanted to email and thank you for the very thoughtful gift card. I love Target and can't wait to use it. Thank you for thinking of me!

Grace Welker

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## PENTECOST SPECIAL OFFERING

A poster for the 2022 Pentecost Offering. At the top, it reads "2022 PENTECOST OFFERING" in a light font, followed by "TURNING STRUGGLE INTO STEADFASTNESS" in large, bold, black letters. Below this is a decorative banner with a row of stars and the text "GROW + PRAY + DANCE + LOVE + SERVE". The central image shows a person in a dark robe with a white stole, seen from the back, looking out over a crowd of people. The scene is lit with warm, glowing lights, possibly from a stage or altar. Below the image is another decorative banner with stars and the text "SUNDAYS MAY 29 + JUNE 5". At the bottom, there is a quote: "THEREFORE, MY BELOVED, BE STEADFAST, IMMOVABLE, ALWAYS EXCELLING IN THE WORK OF GOD, BECAUSE YOU KNOW THAT IN GOD YOUR LABOR IS NEVER IN VAIN. + 1 CORINTHIANS 15:58". In the bottom left corner is the logo for "NEW CHURCH MINISTRY" and in the bottom right is a small text box that reads: "THE 2022 PENTECOST OFFERING IS A SPECIAL DAY OFFERING IN SUPPORT OF THE NEW CHURCH MOVEMENT IN YOUR REGION AND ACROSS THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)."

Stories of struggle are nothing new to the church. From the persecution faced by early Christians to civil rights movements led by faith leaders, the church has found its strength in times of unrest. The COVID-19 pandemic is yet another chapter in this long history, both nothing unique and yet entirely different. Through it all, Disciples have been steadfast. By launching emerging congregations, they have stepped up to care for communities in need. But they don't do it alone. With the help of regional and general ministries, these brave leaders have been provided with facilities to conduct their outreach activities and with online educational opportunities, such as Leadership Academy. By making a gift to the 2022 Pentecost Offering, received in most congregations on Sundays, May 29 and June 5, you can ensure that the new church movement continues to prosper in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Each year, half of these gifts 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 across the United States and Canada through programs such as coaching, New Church

Hacks, and Water the Plants. Planning, nurturing, and sustaining new places of worship is part of the Disciples' vision – participation in this Special Day Offering helps this vision come to life.

If you would like to make a donation to this special offering you can do that with cash or check placed in the offering tray at the back of the sanctuary on May 29 or June 5 or you may give online via our website or by using the Vanco Mobile app.

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## BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

The CCC Book Discussion Group will be meeting on June 20th at 1:30 p.m. in the CCC Narthex for a conversation about the book *Oh William!* by Elizabeth Strout. Please contact Brenda Richardson for additional information about the group.

# LADIES LUNCH OUTING

All ladies are invited to go to lunch on Wednesday, June 15 at The Barn at Historic Sappington House in Crestwood. There will also be an opportunity to take the 30 minute tour of the Thomas Sappington House and Museum.



To help with restaurant reservations, please RSVP to the church office or on the sign up sheet in the Narthex by Friday, June 3. Plan to meet at CCC at 10:30 a.m. on the 15th if you would like to carpool to the restaurant.

# JUNE BLOOD DRIVE

Every day, blood donors help patients of all ages: accident and burn victims, heart surgery and organ transplant patients, and those battling cancer. In fact, every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood. Your support of the next blood drive hosted by CCC on June 28<sup>th</sup> from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. will help many individuals. Sign up today at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org).



# PRIDEFEST STL RETURNS IN JUNE

St. Louis PrideFest will be returning to downtown St. Louis on June 25th and 26th and CCC will be hosting a booth with other Disciples churches in the area. Please mark your calendars. We hope you can help in hosting the booth. There will be more information available about how to sign up as the event gets closer. Save the date!!



# GARDEN UPDATES

This past week the fence for our garden expansion was installed—we have officially doubled our gardening space. We've added some new plantings this year, including sweet potatoes, to go along with garden some favorites such as peas, beans, lettuce, and a variety of colorful flowers to attract the garden pollinators.

We are thankful for the volunteers who have helped since we started our Wednesday evening 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. garden sessions. No experience needed to help and there is some inside work cleaning and packaging the harvest!!

This week we donated almost 5 pounds of produce to Circle of Concern, including lettuce, swiss chard, beet tops, snap peas and cilantro.



A group of the workers this past week.

## CCC OPERATING RESULTS FOR QUARTER ENDED MARCH 31, 2022

	3/31/22 YTD Actual	3/31/22 YTD Budget	Comments
Offering	\$103,058	\$89,905	Timing of donations differed from expectation
WFLC Rental/Other Income	15,137	20,259	Some past due rent for gym rental
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$118,195</b>	<b>\$110,164</b>	
Children/Youth/Adult Ministries	403	1,300	Limited activities for children and youth
Worship/Core Ministries	2,761	3,575	Less special musicians and misc expenses than expected
Outreach/Mission	6,431	6,971	
Property	36,618	41,663	No winter tree service as budgeted, delay in garden expenses
Office/Administration	3,716	4,167	
Wages/Expenses/Benefits	51,282	54,643	
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$101,211</b>	<b>\$112,319</b>	
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>\$16,984</b>	<b>(\$2,155)</b>	

The finances of CCC as of the 1st quarter of 2022 are doing well. We continue to have regular giving as part of Sunday morning in person worship and by online giving. Our operating expenses have been less than anticipated, in part because costly property expenses have not been needed.

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

# VBS

**Save the date - July 10 from 2 - 5 p.m.**

# STABLE WRAP UP SPRING SALE

Why is it called THE STABLE?

Many newcomers at CCC and many old timers too ask, "Why do you call it the Stable Sale?" In response, this is a repeat of the initial offering of our selected name:

In the Christmas Story, the Stable for the Inn's animals was where Joseph and Mary stopped to take shelter for the birth of Jesus. We chose this name for our ministry because our stable shelters what others have no room for in the main building of their lives. We give birth and re-birth there to material items, giving them second chances to re-energize Jesus' church and His mission. Some might call our stable sale a "garage sale," but it's much more than that. We invite you to stop in and browse during one of our sales. You'll always find someone to chat with and, who knows, you might also find an item or two whose second chance will be with you!

From the beginning, you can see our mission of service by helping our church, as well as numerous nonprofit charities thru the sale. Our present May event was very successful, our second best. Thank you for helping with donations, crew food and volunteer work hours to accomplish this journey. Our next sale venture is in October!

The Stable Ministry of CCC

CCC

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