



# The Vital Spark

A NEWSLETTER OF COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH ~ FEBRUARY 2023

MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR MINISTER, REV. JACOB THORNE

Dear Community,

In today's article I want to offer a brief "State of the Union for Community Christian Church."

Overall, we are in a very good position in terms of worship, financial giving, ministry, and mission.

Our worship continues to be creative, engaging, and welcoming. We have new visitors on a regular basis and look forward to marking intentional times of the liturgical year, such as the upcoming season of lent. The challenge with worship, and this dovetails with mission as well, is to find ways to connect with those visiting and have them return on a regular basis.

A summary of the financial giving for 2022 is presented in this copy of the Vital Spark. We ended the year with a surplus of \$31,000. This is a call for celebration—especially when so many churches are struggling to meet their financial obligations—and more than enough to cover the expected budget deficit of \$29,500 for the 2023 fiscal year. However, an emphasis on financial giving, and the reasons for doing so, will need to be continued in the future. I will offer some sermons later this fall on the connection between faith and finances.

In terms of ministry and mission, I believe we are thriving. I am so proud of the work that each of you do every single week to make Community Christian Church a beacon light. You are truly, as Jesus says, the salt of the earth. This year will see a continued emphasis with The Stable, The Bremer Community Garden, UrbanReachSTL, community gatherings (both within and beyond the walls of our church), and partnerships with local non-profits and organizations. The challenge will be to make sure we include as many individuals as possible in these events - including the new faces seen at worship on Sunday morning.

As we enter our tenth year now as pastor and congregation, I am more grateful than ever to be in ministry here at Community. This past decade has no doubt seen changes and challenges, but I am just as excited now as I was so long ago.

Thank you, Community!

Blessings,

Jacob

# Week of Compassion

As the relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Week of Compassion works with partners to alleviate suffering in the U.S. and throughout the world. One of the primary purposes of the church is to reach out and help others who are hurting.

Please give generously to our Week of Compassion special offering on Feb. 17, and 26,.



## LENT



### Tuesday Evening Class

Join us again for our annual spring Lenten Bible study that will meet on Tuesday evenings, from 7:00-8:00 in the church library, beginning February 28<sup>th</sup>.

This five-week course will study the Gospel of Luke, using pastor and author Adam Hamilton's newest book, *Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts, and Outlaws*, as a guide. A copy of the book is helpful, but not necessary (we will be using a video presentation on Tuesday evenings).

### Ash Wednesday Service

Join us for a thirty-minute Ash Wednesday service on Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, from 7:00-7:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday marks the start of our Lenten journey. You will be invited to receive the imposition of the ashes, as a sign and symbol of one's mortality and ultimate trust in God. The service will also have special music and the sharing of communion.

## Chili Cook-Off

Despite the cold and icy weather, the chili cook-off at Community Christian Church on January 29<sup>th</sup> was a huge success. With nine different entries, and more than 125 people in attendance, tasters could choose which chili was best—from spicy to sweet, white chicken or sausage. The champion (Brian Degitz-Fries) and runner-up (Betty Rega) are pictured below. In addition to the wonderful time of fellowship, over \$1,600 (through ticket sales and a silent auction) was donated to UrbanReachSTL, CVPA (Central Vision Performing Arts High School), and the orchestra students of Parkway Central High School who helped serve the chili!





# Book Discussion Group



The CCC Book Discussion Group will be meeting on February 20th at 1:30pm in the Narthex for a conversation about the book *A Woman of No Importance* by Sonia Purnell.

Please contact Brenda Richardson for additional information about the group.

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## BLOOD DRIVE

Our next blood drive will be **February 28, 2023** and is open for appointments.

RedCrossBlood.org and enter: CommChristianCh.



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## Seniors Luncheon

Please join us on March 1 at 11:30 am in the CCC Narthex for a short program about church hymns followed by lunch and Bingo. Contact Lori Hoover or Beth Bean with questions or to bring a food item for lunch. You can also sign up on the back of the connection card for the food item.



## 2022 YEAR END FINANCIAL RESULTS

	12/31/22 Actual	12/31/22 Budget	Comments
Offering	\$342,620	\$323,800	Higher than expected giving
WFLC Rental, other income	68,376	68,945	Steady gym use during the year
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$410,996</b>	<b>\$392,745</b>	
Children / Youth / Adult Ministries	2,116	6,620	Less spending than anticipated for all programs.
Worship / Core Ministries	11,543	16,535	Less spending for choir and misc. expenses than
Outreach/Mission	32,949	32,550	
Property	97,708	112,738	Lower building repairs and grounds maintenance needed.
Office / Administration	18,264	17,016	Job search expense and CPR class needed.
Wages / Expenses / Benefits	217,403	226,536	Lower office manager and sound room expense than expected.
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$379,983</b>	<b>\$411,995</b>	
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>\$31,013</b>	<b>(\$19,250)</b>	



# Ash Wednesday

## — Lent Begins

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