



The Vital Spark

A NEWSLETTER OF COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH ~ JULY 2023

MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR MINISTER, REV. JACOB THORNE

Dear Community,

This Sunday Beth and I (along with Laurie and Jeff Clifton) will be out of town, and in Louisville, Kentucky, attending the General Assembly. The General Assembly, which hasn't met in person since before Covid, provides an opportunity for disciples from around the nation to join together for worship, reunions, reconnecting, the business of the general church, and a sense of the church's future vision and goals. I'm looking forward to the trip and am grateful for the opportunity to attend.

In my absence, our own Betty Quicksall will be leading worship duties and preaching. I am so thankful for Betty's presence in the pulpit and know she will bring an excellent message.

In other news, the life of our church continues full speed ahead:

- The replacement of the parking lot should commence next week. We have worked with the paving company to ensure that parking will be available on Sunday morning.
- The final summer lunch for UrbanReachSTL was last Thursday. We will continue to provide a monthly evening meal throughout the fall.
- The garden is in full production. Soon, we will begin planting for fall vegetables. Overall, we have been able to share a wide variety of fresh produce for those facing food insecurities.
- The Stable Ministry is already prepping for the fall sale.

And as always, I continue to hold each of you in prayer.

Many blessings,

Jacob

THANK YOU!

Dear Church Friends,

Our entire family wants to thank everyone for all their kind words, cards, and Love!!!! Not just in our most recent need, the passing of Terry (Kevin's brother), but just being the awesome church family that you are. We know we can count on everyone whenever we need them to bolster our family in times of need or just on a daily level.

With Love and Blessings,

The entire Ledbetter family

Dear Community Christian Church,

I'm not sure if you're feeling the same way, but jeesh...summer is flying by! My summer began with a fast and furious course in learning how to translate German (Deutsch ist hart), followed by some time spent with family in Wisconsin, and a quick research trip to view some archives in Boston. The rest of my summer will mostly be consumed by studying for the qualifying exams that I have to take in August.

In the midst of all of this, I wanted to let you know that I have also been taking some time this summer to explore different denominations and worship styles. A former mentor and seminary professor once told me that our spiritual needs are likely to change in different moments of our lives, and I am finding that to be the case for me right now. Given the intensity of my doctoral program, I have recently been feeling drawn to more traditional, contemplative, and liturgical traditions, finding that it helps me to still my active mind, in addition to creating the quiet space that helps me to listen for inspiration and guidance from the Spirit.

While this exploration has been fruitful for my spiritual life, it also has come with some sadness, as it means stepping away from this wonderful congregation that has been my spiritual home for the past year and a half. This is an incredible church. I continue to be amazed by all of the extraordinary work that you do in the broader community, and how you have worked to create a safe space, opening your doors to all who seek the love of Christ.

Community Christian Church is a unique and special faith community, and it has been both a privilege and an honor to be able to preach and lead in worship, more than you know. I cannot thank you enough for how you all have welcomed me with open arms, and I am so grateful for all the love and support you have given me. You will continue to be in my prayers.

Blessings, grace, and peace to you all. May you prosper and grow in God's grace, by the power of the Spirit and the love of Christ.

Fondly,

Kelly Bratkowski

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CCC OPERATING RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

	6/30/23 YTD Actual	6/30/23 YTD Budget	Comments
Offering	\$166,316	\$173,710	Less giving than anticipated
WFLC Rental, other income	30,811	35,883	Use of gym off slightly from what was expected
Total Income	\$197,127	\$209,593	
Family and Adult Ministries	728	1,500	Less children and youth activities
Worship/Core Ministries	5,869	7,370	
Outreach/Mission	14,582	14,241	
Property	64,788	69,580	Snow removal and grounds maintenance less than ex- pected
Office/Administration	9,625	7,907	Increased copier use and search for office manager
Wages/Expenses/Benefits	110,063	114,270	AV and childcare were less than expected
Total Operating Expenses	\$205,655	\$214,868	
(Deficit)	(\$8,528)	(\$5,275)	

The first six months of the year have started pretty close to budget, with lower expenses nearly offsetting the decrease in offering and other income.

The library HVAC system went out a few weeks ago and new equipment is on order and should be installed in August.

The mission team has made donations to Caring Solutions, Circle of Concern, Alliance Q, Bethany Fellowship, Disciples Mission Fund, Mid America, National Benevolent Association, Isaiah 58 Ministries, Global Ministries, Sew Hope, Loaves and Fishes, Cool Down St. Louis and Manchester Cares so far this year.

Thank you for your contributions to Community and its ministry goals.

Community “on the go” Group

September 13th we will be taking a day trip down to the Missouri Botanical Garden to see not only the Chihuly in the garden exhibit but also the beauty of early fall in the garden. Be on the lookout for more information soon.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

[Livestream Worship from General Assembly](#)

You can join us in the General Assembly worship experience from Kentucky. Worship will livestream each night, Saturday July 29—Tuesday, August 1st at 7pm ET on <https://disciples.org/galivestream/>



Book Discussion Group

The CCC Book Discussion Group will be meeting on Monday, August 21st in the Narthex for a conversation about the book, *Abide with Me* by Elizabeth Strout.

Please contact Brenda Richardson for additional information about the group.

Parking Lot Update

The last week of July and the first week of August we will have the majority of the parking lot excavated and replaced. The row of parking spots closest to The Journey is the only portion of the lot that is not being replaced. In addition, a French drain will be installed in the back of the lot between WFLC and the garage to help eliminate underground water erosion issues. The cost of the project is \$118,100 and will be funded as follows: (1) \$70,100 from the building enhancement fund, (2) \$25,000 donation from a non-member who is part of an outside group that uses CCC as a meeting place and (3) \$23,000 from the capital fund which were donations designated by the donor to be used for capital purposes. The building enhancement fund is funded by our annual stewardship campaign and Stable Ministries. Over the last few years, Stable Ministries has contributed \$85,000 to the building enhancement fund.....WOW!!! Because of everyone's generous support and dedication, we can keep CCC looking great!

Circle of Concern

As we wrap up our month long cereal donation in memory of longtime church member, Carl Quicksall we want to express our thanks to your generosity. We have surpassed our goal of 250 boxes. We will continue to collect these special donations of cereal through this Sunday. There is a place in the Mission Corner of the Narthex to put the cereal.

Garden Updates

The garden produce is donated to Circle of Concern and also to families of Hanna Woods. In July, we gathered 153 pounds of produce. Currently, we are growing green beans, tomatoes, peppers, spinach and flowers. Come join us Wednesday evenings at 5:30 p.m.



**GIVE AND GET YOUR
CHOICE OF A GIFT CARD
OR A DONATION TO
SUPPORT LOCAL TEACHERS.**

Learn more at bloodcenter.org/teach.

#GoFullNewton

Please join our blood drive to support Jeremy Newton and others in our community who are in need of life saving blood donations!

Tuesday, August 15th 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Donor Bus 625 New Smizer Mill Road

Masks optional. Appointments required.
To schedule an appointment, scan QR code
call ImpactLife at 800.747.5401
or go to bloodcenter.org/group, grp #9341



SUMMER MEALS FOR URBAN REACH



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