



The Vital Spark

A NEWSLETTER OF COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH ~ FEBRUARY 2024

MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR MINISTER, REV. JACOB THORNE

Dear Community,

This past Sunday night, on the way to field hockey practice, Annabelle and I marveled at the bright orange color of the moon seemingly hanging over our heads. Have you ever gazed up at the night sky, marveling at the moon and stars, and wondered how such celestial movements impact our lives here on Earth? Such questions can lead us into a fascinating journey as we approach the season of Easter.

Easter, a cornerstone of our Christian faith, is determined by a dance of the cosmos. Easter falls on the first Sunday after the full moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox. This year, that celestial alignment places Easter earlier than usual. But the path to this calculation is a tale of history, astronomy, and theology intertwined.

This past Thursday marked Leap Day. The current method of adding leap years was designed around fixing Easter's date to coincide with the time that the early church celebrated Easter.

In 1582 Pope Gregory XIII determined that the calendar was out of sync with the spring equinox by ten days. This was significant to the church because the date of Easter was set by the Council of Nicea in 325 as the Sunday after the first full moon of spring, and the start of spring was fixed as March 21. Without adjustment, the date of Easter would eventually drift into the summer.

So, on Feb. 24, 1582, Pope Gregory issued an order, entitled "Inter gravissimas," to correct the error. The new calendar — which would be called the Gregorian calendar — added an extra day to February every four years, unless the year is divisible by 100.

The story of Easter's dating is a vibrant example of faith and science walking hand in hand. This partnership offers us a model for exploring the world, recognizing that faith enriches our understanding of scientific principles, just as science can deepen our awe and wonder at God's creation.

As we move through the season of Lent, I encourage us all to reflect on the intersections of science and faith in our own lives. Where do you see the divine dance of creation's laws and the Spirit's movement? How does this interplay shape your understanding of the sacred? The story of Easter's timing is but one example of the beautiful connection between the heavens and our spiritual practices.

I look forward to seeing you on Sunday if not before.

Blessings,

Jacob

CCC Operating Results for the Year End DECEMBER 31, 2023

	12/31/23 YTD Actual	12/31/23 YTD Budget	Comments
Offering	\$345,981	\$312,950	Donations higher than anticipated
WFLC Rental and Other Income	61,013	68,945	Use of gym off from what was expected
Total Income	\$406,994	\$381,895	
Family and Adult Ministries	2,173	3,480	Less children and youth activities
Worship/Fellowship Ministries	12,367	17,470	Fewer worship service supplies and guest preaching than anticipated.
Outreach/Mission	30,739	31,552	
Property	103,129	114,673	Snow removal less than expected and tree trimming was deferred.
Office/Administration	16,078	16,357	
Wages/Expenses/Benefits	223,661	227,943	Sound room tech and bass musician were less than expected
Total Operating Expenses	\$388,147	\$411,475	
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$18,847	(\$29,580)	

Thank you for your generous financial support of Community Christian Church during 2023. As you can see from our operating results, your financial support exceeded the budget and allowed CCC to finish the year with a \$18,847 surplus. The surplus will go in reserves to help fund future year operations or other needs as they arise. If you ever have a question about the financial results of CCC, please ask either Beth, Ministry Associate, or Bob Branstetter, Finance Chair.

2024 Offering Update

January Actual - \$30,741

January Budget - \$32,573

2024 Annual Budget - \$327,500

January offering was slightly below budget mainly due to timing. We are confident that we will still meet the 2024 annual offering budget.

Priscilla Women's Group

Priscilla Women's Group will meet on Tuesday, March 12 at 6:30 in the library. The study is Exodus 18:14-23. The lesson, on pp 23-25 of Just Women, was written by Dr. Toni Oredein; her biography is on p. 70. We looked at the same scripture last month with the lesson written by a different commentator. Does viewpoint influence our interpretation of scripture? Can interpretation change as we learn and age? Our service project will be donations to the Festival of Sharing to be used for Women's Prison Packs. Join us for study, prayer and fellowship.

Men's Breakfast

The Men's Breakfast group meets at Uncle Bill's on Manchester Road. We meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 9am. Come join us anytime you are able.

"Fun Bunch" Luncheon

The Fun Bunch luncheon this month is on March 13th at 11:30 am in the Narthex. We will be learning about different churches in the St. Louis area. A sign-up sheet is on the table in the Narthex for those who would like to make/bring an item for lunch. Hope to see you there!

NEW DATE

Volunteer Opportunity—Ronald McDonald House—



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
St. Louis

On Saturday, March 16th, we will be making breakfast for the Ronald McDonald House. A sign up sheet will be posted in the Narthex soon. The Ronald McDonald House provides a place to stay and resources to families of sick children receiving treatment at a hospital far from home.

Book Discussion Group

The CCC Book Discussion Group will be meeting on Monday, March 18th in the Narthex for a conversation about the book, *The History of Loneliness* by John Boyne. Please contact Brenda Richardson for additional information about the group.



Save the Date - Lenten Prayer Vigil

Please mark your calendars for a Good Friday Lenten Prayer Vigil slated for Friday, March 29th. Prayer opportunities in our sanctuary as well as at home will be available. Sign-up sheets for vigil time slots will be available in the narthex in the coming weeks. Please plan to join our church community in keeping a prayerful and reflective watch together on Good Friday.

Congratulations and Thank you notes

Dear CCC -

I would like to thank the CCC members and friends who reached out to us over the past few weeks to offer love and support after the death of my father, John Lamke. We appreciate you all.

Beckie Jacobsmeyer

Congratulations to Gail Holstein on Gail's 25th anniversary of ordination this February!

Thanks to all who donated this past Tuesday at our Red Cross Blood Drive that was held in the Narthex of the church. The total number of products collected was 15. The Red Cross had set our goal higher than ever before so we did fall short. However, we will work even harder at the next drive on June 4.

Special thanks to Randy McLain, Katie Zimmer for help with set-up and to Cherie Ledbetter and Jim Bube for closing down.

Again, thanks to all.

Brenda Richardson

2024 Chili Cook-off - Thank you!!

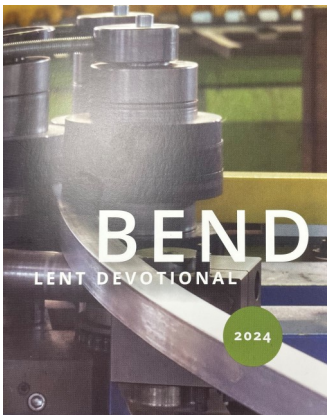
A big thank you from the Elders to all of the members of our CCC community who entered chili in the Cook-Off competition, donated items for the silent auction, volunteered to assist in the event and most importantly, bought tickets and bid on auction items! The Cook-Off was a great success and funds raised from the event covered the cost of Lenten Devotion booklets, provided an offering to the Parkway Central High School Orchestra in gratitude for their volunteers who assisted with the event, and will allow us to make a contribution to our local BackStoppers. A big congratulations to Joyce Doup who entered the winning chili in the Cook-Off! Keep those chili ladles busy trying out new recipes to enter in next year's Cook-Off!



Join us for Easter Breakfast

The DMM (Disciples Men’s Ministry) will host an Easter breakfast on March 31st (Easter Morning) at 8:30am at WFLC. Please call the church office or email Katie@disciplesforchrist.org if you would like to attend.

Remember to pick up your Lenten devotional from the table in the Narthex. Need one mailed to you? Call the office or email Katie@disciplesforchrist.org



2024 Easter Flower Orders

Orders are now being taken for spring flowers to decorate our sanctuary on Easter Sunday. This year we are offering tulips, hyacinths, daffodils, and Easter lilies. Substitutions may occur due to supply and demand.

Place your order form and payment by cash or check (made payable to Community Christian Church) in the offering plate or return it to the church office by **March 4th**.

	Quantity	Cost per flower	Total Cost
Blue hyacinth	_____	\$6.00	_____
Pink hyacinth	_____	\$6.00	_____
White hyacinth	_____	\$6.00	_____
Hot pink tulip	_____	\$6.00	_____
Pink/white tulip	_____	\$6.00	_____
Yellow tulip	_____	\$6.00	_____
Easter lily	_____	\$8.00	_____
Daffodil	_____	\$6.00	_____

Circle one: In Honor of: In Memory of:

Message:

Given by: _____

Flowers can be taken home following worship on Easter morning.

Future Vital Spark Articles

Do you have information about an upcoming church event you would like to have in the Vital Spark? Please send the information to Katie Zimmer, office manager by the 15th of the month. Articles for the next Vital Spark would be due on March 15th. You can email the information to Katie@disciplesforchrist.org, leave the information on her desk in the office, or call the office at 636-394-2772.



Helping Families at Hanna Woods

This school year CCC is going to support thirteen food insecure families from Hanna Woods Elementary on a weekly basis. We have baskets in the Narthex that you can put your donations in.

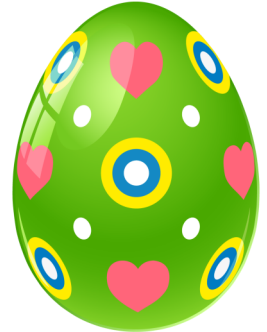


We are currently in need of:

- Applesauce Cups
- Cereal, such a Rice Chex or Cheerios
- Peanut Butter or Jelly
- Nutri-Grain Fruit Bars

List of Upcoming Events

- March 10 - Stable Easter Sale
- March 12 - Men's Breakfast at Uncle Bill's
- March 12 - Priscilla Women's Group
- March 13 - Fun Bunch Luncheon
- March 16 - Ronald McDonald House Breakfast
- March 18—Book Discussion Group
- March 24 - Palm Sunday
- March 28 - Maundy Thursday Service
- March 29 - Lenten Prayer Vigil
- March 31 - 8:30 am Easter Breakfast provided by Disciple Men's Ministry
- March 31 - 9:30 am Easter Egg Hunt
- March 31 - Easter Service



CCC
623 Meramec Station Road
Manchester, MO 63021

Rev. Jacob Thorne, Senior Minister
Katie Zimmer, Office Manager
Beth Bean, Ministry Associate
636.394.2772
office@disciplesforchrist.org
www.disciplesforchrist.org