



# The Vital Spark

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A NEWSLETTER OF COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH ~ MAY, 2025

MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR MINISTER, REV. JACOB THORNE

Dear friends,

As we step into the month of June, I want to share a few updates—and a few reflections from the heart.

First, a note about the Sundays ahead: I'll be away from the pulpit on May 25, June 15, and June 22. I'm so grateful for the leaders within our congregation who are stepping forward to share the Word during this time. Penny Ross-Corona will be preaching on May 25, Betty Quicksall on June 15, and Doug Hoover on June 22. It is a gift to serve in a church where people are willing and able to share their voices and offer the congregation a fresh word. Their generosity also gives me time for rest and renewal—something I don't take for granted.

Before these Sundays away, we'll gather for Pentecost Sunday on June 8—a celebration of wind and fire, of courage and birth, of the Spirit descending on ordinary people and making something extraordinary. Pentecost reminds us that the church began not in silence or structure, but in holy chaos and connection. It's the perfect Sunday to wear red, sing boldly, and remember that the Spirit is still moving among us.

But even as we look forward, I want to acknowledge the heartbreak so many in our area are feeling after the tornadoes last Friday night. Two of our sister congregations were hit hard—Centennial Christian Church was completely destroyed, along with the loss of life, and Union Avenue Christian Church suffered extensive damage, including the loss of 47 windows. It is hard to see such devastation, especially in places we know and love.

Like many of you, I've struggled to make sense of it. I've returned to the writings of Rabbi Harold Kushner, who after losing his son to a rare illness, gave voice to a theology many of us carry deep inside. Kushner reminded us that God does not cause tragedy—but also doesn't always intervene to prevent it. There are natural laws at work in the world—storms form, winds gather, and sometimes destruction comes.

But God is not absent in those moments. As Kushner wrote, God gives us the grace to handle what life brings us, and surrounds us with people to carry the weight when we cannot. I believe that deeply. I see it in the way neighbors have responded, in the churches that have reached out, in the prayers being spoken and the hands being offered. God gave us each other.

Kushner's words don't answer every question, but they help us hold space for the hardest ones.

As we move through this season—Pentecost, rest, rebuilding—may we listen for the Spirit in the wind, and look for God's presence in the people who show up.

Blessings,

Jacob

# PENTECOST SPECIAL OFFERING

It's all about layers.

God breathing life into dust. Moses leading people out of slavery into freedom. Hagar calling on God to remember God's covenant.

Layer after layer.

Mary saying yes. Jesus breaking bread. **Young people seeing visions. Elders dreaming dreams.**

Our ancestors building a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. Going above and beyond church as it's always been. **Beyond borders and barriers. Beyond us and them.** Building layers of community and color, spirituality and vision, justice and joy. Proclaiming the good news that the Spirit is still breathing new life and breaking new bread, and God's people are still seeing visions and dreaming dreams.

**Your participation in the 2025 Pentecost Offering lays down another layer, going above and beyond what's been done to what God's spirit is doing next.**

Half of the gifts made to this Special Day Offering remain in the region in which they are collected to support its new church movement. The other half goes to support the efforts of New Church Ministry, which trains, equips, and assists emerging and affiliating communities of faith and their leaders across the U.S. and Canada so that they can become movement initiators. Make a gift on June 1 and June 8 to ensure that new places of worship are created, and God's word is spread far and wide.

**Be a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.**

**Please give generously to the Pentecost Offering.**

**Use the QR code to make your donation, give online using the Vanco mobile app, or use the special offering envelope that will be in the Sunday bulletin on June 1.**



## GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

2025 PENTECOST OFFERING  
SUNDAYS JUNE 1 & JUNE 8

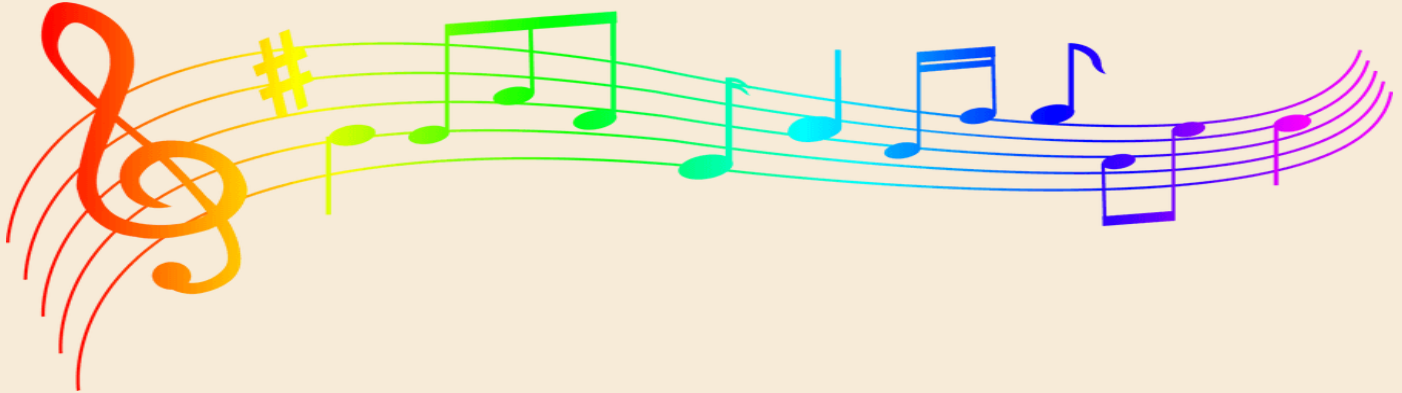
IMAGINATION FREEDOM INNOVATION UNITY CREATIVITY

COMMUNITY SPIRITUALITY JUSTICE TRAIN EQUIP ASSIST

THE 2025 PENTECOST OFFERING IS A SPECIAL OFFERING IN SUPPORT OF THE NEW CHURCH MOVEMENT  
IN YOUR REGION AND ACROSS THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

## Summer Music

We are looking for special music for the summer months. Special music could be singing, playing an instrument, interpretive dancing, reading a poem that speaks to you – any type of talent you would like to share with the church. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Scott Degitz-Fries at deg-dawg@gmail.com



## Summer Activities with UrbanReachSTL!

CCC will continue our participation in the programs of UrbanReachSTL this summer. Weekly lunches will begin the week of June 23rd and we will help with community dinners on June 25, August 21 and October 23. In addition, we are invited to volunteer at their annual Summer Kick-Off, as described below. We hope you will be able to join us for this time of building community with others.

Mark your calendars—the 9th annual **UrbanReachSTL Summer Kick-Off** is almost here! This exciting event brings the whole community together for an afternoon of fun, fellowship, and a chance to spread the word about **Summer Bible Club**.

**Date:** Saturday, June 14th  
**Time:** 12:00–3:00 PM  
**Location:** 1210 North 9th Street, St. Louis  
(Corner of 9th & O'Fallon)

**Follow the QR code on the image to sign up!**

Contact the church office if you have any questions.

Let's kick off the summer together— see you there!



The mission of Urban ReachSTL is to empower and encourage long-term change in St. Louis public housing communities and to bring forth a story of hope and victory by breaking systemic poverty and crime.

## Children's Sunday School Summer Break

Please note that Children's Sunday School is going on break for the summer. There will be no sessions during the months of June, July, and August. Classes will resume on Sunday, September 7th. We hope everyone has a safe and restful summer!



The DOC, MCC, Episcopal, and Gateway ONA are collaborating on a booth for this year's Pride celebration. Together, we represent a shared vision where all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, are welcomed and valued. To learn more about the partnership groups you can go to <https://disciplesforchrist.org/pride-booth-partnerships/>.

If you would like to volunteer as a booth worker for this year's event, please use the QR code to sign up.



SCAN ME



## Sunday Morning Fellowship—August Hosts Needed

Our summer fellowship gatherings are a great way to connect with both longtime and new CCC friends. June and July hosting slots are full—thank you to our volunteers! We're now seeking August hosts to provide light refreshments and a warm space for conversation. August 3, 17, 24, and 31 are still free. To sign up, please add your name to the sheet in the Narthex. Thanks for supporting this special tradition!





## “Fun Bunch” Senior Citizen Lunch

Come join us in the CCC Narthex on Wednesday, June 11th at 11:30 for lunch and community. This month's theme is "Fun and Games". We will be reminiscing about and perhaps playing an array of timeless games.

If you would like to provide a food item for the meal that follows the program, please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex.



## Priscilla Women's Group

The Priscilla Women's Group will be meeting on June 10th in the library before it takes a summer break. Please be on the lookout for more details in upcoming bulletin announcements and weekly Enews articles concerning the scripture and monthly service project.



## Red Cross Blood Drive

Our next blood drive on Tuesday, June 3rd is open for scheduling! Go to [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter CommChristianCh to schedule an appointment time or sign up on the back of the Connection Card in the Sunday bulletin.



## Book Discussion Group

The CCC Book Discussion Group will be meeting on Monday, June 16th in the Narthex for a conversation about the book, *The Women*, by Kristin Hannah.

Please contact Brenda Richardson for additional information about the group.



## News from the Mission Team

Over the last two summers, we donated cereal to Circle of Concern and to Feed My People. This summer, we are introducing a new giving opportunity for the months of June and July.

We will be participating in Isaiah 58's "Bag of Blessings" project. Isaiah 58 has provided a list of items divided into four categories: food, pantry items, personal care items, and cleaning supplies. The list reflects the highest identified needs of the ministry.



**Items needed for June are the following:**

- tuna
- canned ravioli with meat
- coffee
- tea
- diapers (sizes 5, 6, 4T, 5T)
- baby wipes
- multi/all-purpose cleaner

thank  you  
FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Starting in June, please choose the items on the list that you would like to provide and place your bag of blessings in the marked basket in the Mission Corner of the Narthex. A printed list of requested items will also be available there.

## Tornado Disaster Recovery

We are all aware of the destructive EF-3 tornado that made its way through the St. Louis area on the afternoon of May 16th. The loss of life and devastation to area homes and businesses, including two Disciples congregations, is heartbreaking.

We are collecting monetary donation to help with the recovery for those impacted by the tornado. You may write a check to CCC that is marked "tornado relief assistance" or make an online donation using the Vanco Mobile App (select the Week of Compassion Disaster Relief option). All funds received will be sent to Week of Compassion and will be used exclusively for recovery efforts in the St. Louis Region.

Your support will make a difference for those in our community.

## CCC Operating Results

### Period Ended April 30, 2025

	<b>4/30/25 YTD Actual</b>	<b>4/30/25 YTD Budget</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Offering	\$98,285	\$100,762	
Investment earnings	6,501	5,220	
WFLC Rental and Other Income	41,842	35,804	Gym use a little higher than anticipated
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$146,628</b>	<b>\$141,786</b>	
Family and Adult Ministries	794	925	
Worship/Fellowship Ministries	3,776	4,425	
Outreach/Mission	6,363	6,122	
Property	53,307	57,148	Fewer repair needs so far this year.
Office/Administration	5,062	5,722	
Wages/Expenses/Benefits	77,478	79,315	Slight variation in wages due to staffing changes.
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$146,780</b>	<b>\$153,657</b>	
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>(\$152)</b>	<b>(\$11,871)</b>	

As reflected in the above table, our church operations through April 30th are very close to break even, and better than the budgeted deficit.

Mission donations so far this year have been sent to National Benevolent Association, Mid America, Memorial Boulevard Christian Church Hike for Hunger, Bethany Fellows, Isaiah 58 Ministries and Sweet Babies.

We are happy to report that the flat roof portion of our main building was replaced last week, funded by stable ministry and your building enhancement donations. Thank you!

Your ongoing financial support of CCC helps us maintain our campus, church operations and continued service to others throughout our city, region and world.

## From the Garden

Our garden is really looking good after recent rains and plenty of sunshine in the past week. We have shared over 10 pounds of strawberries with Circle of Concern in the past 10 days and a nice amount of kale and swiss chard as well. In addition, we have recently planted tomatoes, peppers, basil, thyme, rosemary, parsley, eggplant, lettuce and green beans. And there will be cucumbers, okra and more to plant next week.

We hope you will join us for a garden session on Monday's at 10:00 am or Thursday's at 5:00 pm.



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