

THE VITAL SPARK



Publication of Community Christian Church

May 2018

A Message from our Senior Pastor

Dear CCC Family and Friends,

This weekend, Memorial Day Weekend, I'll be worshipping in the church where I grew up—First Christian Church in St. Joseph, Missouri. It will be a special morning. My sister has asked me to lead the baby dedication for my newest niece—Violet Jane Wallington. She's a precious little baby—cute, a full head of hair, and a good sleeper (not that I would know what that's like).

As I prepared some words for the dedication this week, I started to think about what it all means. Violet is not the one choosing to be dedicated. We, her parents, family members, and faith community, are choosing the dedication for her. Why do we make this choice?

The answer: Because Jesus has already chosen us. For me, this is such a freeing thought. If I had to rely completely on my own discernment, I would always wonder: Did I make the right choice? Did I think it through enough? Do I have what it takes? But Jesus frees us from this burden.

Jesus says to us, just as he did to those first fishermen in Galilee, I have chosen you. And later in life should Violet decide to continue to follow Jesus, what will she discover? No one knows for sure. But I hope she discovers, and I hope that my own children do as well, that in choosing to follow Jesus you are willing to leave something else behind.

Over and over in the Bible, the leaving of something you once trusted in order to follow God more faithfully repeats itself. Abraham and Sarah have to leave their comfortable life in the Chaldeans. David had to leave his life as a shepherd. Paul had to leave his life as a Pharisee and everything that he thought he had ever known before about God and humanity.

If we don't move, if we remain static, then we risk settling for what we have always known. But the God we know, as disclosed through Jesus Christ, is always moving, creating, and working in the world. How can we follow this God, without being willing to renew our own ways of understanding and seeing?

We as a church are on the move. It's not always comfortable, but it is part of what God calls us to do and to be.

I'll be thinking of you this weekend.

Blessings,

Jacob

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



As we prepare for summer, volunteers and staff are making plans for Vacation Bible School. VBS is always an enjoyable time for our children, youth, adults, visitors, and friends. This white water rafting adventure will include exciting new music, amazing science, creative crafts, fun recreation and memorable Bible stories that will help children know God is always with them as they ride the rapids of life!

The adventure runs from July 9th - July 12th, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

There will be special water activities on July 12th from 12:00 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Children ages 3 1/2 (potty trained) to those who just finished 5th grade may enroll.

Early Bird Registration: \$15.00 fee for each child with registration form turned in to the church office by June 10th.

Regular Registration: \$20.00 fee for each child with registration form turned in to the church office by July 8th.

Registration forms are available in the Narthex and on the CCC website.



The Youth of CCC are hosting an evening of entertainment for the young children of CCC to allow their parents to have a relaxing evening out. Children can be dropped off at the church on June 1st at 6:30 p.m. for games, snacks, a movie with popcorn and maybe some crafts. Pick up time will be 10:30 p.m.

Please sign up on the back of the Sunday bulletin tab or contact the church office by May 30th if you would like to take advantage of this opportunity.

Class of
2018



Congratulations to our graduating seniors

Amanda Rawls

Madison Bumeter

Elvis Walters

on their recent high school graduations.

And a special recognition to Elvis who was named the Prom King at Parkway South High earlier this month.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Sweet Talk with Lisa Belue

If you have attended any event involving food at CCC during the past 16 years chances are you've tasted a homemade treat from the kitchen of Lisa Belue. During her time as a member here Lisa has graced most every CCC ministry with her culinary skills, including Gods Kids Choir, youth groups, VBS, stable sales, bereavement gatherings and member homes. The reason is simple. She loves to cook and bake and "it is nice to make someone's day with just a simple plate of cookies or a homemade casserole."

A consummate baker and cook extraordinaire, Lisa recently won first place for the "best looking and most unique" cookie in the Home Builders Association and STL Moms & Dads/Suburban Journals recipe contest. The judges loved her M & M cookies, a sweet indulgence she's been baking since her friend's mother gave her the recipe when she

was in youth group at her home church in Springfield, Missouri. Her favorite recipes are those handed down from her great-grandma, her grandma and her mom, many of which she's been following since she was a young girl. "I would help prepare meals for my family year round. In the summers I would also help my mom and grandma can tomatoes, pickles and green beans from the garden and make homemade applesauce from the apple trees in grandma's backyard."

Lisa holds an interior design degree from Missouri State University, another testament to her creative gifts, and currently works full time for a wire and cable distribution company. She and her husband Dave, an IT professional with Wells Fargo, moved to St. Louis in 1993. They live in Fenton with their son Alec, when he is home during college breaks from Missouri S & T, where he just completed his sophomore year as a computer science major with a minor in computer engineering and math. The Belue family began their journey at CCC when Alec was 5 years old—almost 16 years ago—because they liked the minister, there were kids Alec's age and they felt at home. According to Lisa, "even though the ministers have changed over the 16 years and some people have moved on, we stay here because of the people—they are like family to us. Many have become my extra parents and Alec's extra sets of grandparents – which is very comforting since my family is 200 miles away."

Lisa shares more than just her cooking and baking skills with her church family and community. She promotes the stable ministry on social media and sells the larger, more unique and valuable items. She has also served on the Mission Team and helped sponsor the girls' dorm at Epworth, planning and preparing a monthly activity or craft and snack for the girls. "I have enjoyed all of these ministries, mainly because they allowed me to help others while having fun doing the things I love!"

When asked if she had any advice for the novice in the kitchen, Lisa did not hesitate to respond—patience! Lisa went on to say, "start out simple, recipes with few ingredients and not a lot of complicated instructions, and build from there. Just keep practicing and don't give up!" Good advice for the kitchen and for a Christian life. Our church family is blessed by Lisa's presence, her family, her servant's heart and her delicious dishes!



OPEN AND AFFIRMING TEAM UPDATE

Thank you to those of you who attended the listening sessions hosted by the Open and Affirming Group. We appreciated the conversation and questions.

Coming events:

Community Christian Church will be co-hosting a booth at St. Louis Pridefest June 23-24, with several other St. Louis Disciples churches. We are seeking volunteers to staff the booth and walk in the parade. We hope to have a strong representation from CCC for this event so please sign up today!!

SignUpGenius link is: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090448a8ad2da7fe3-stlouis>

The Open and Affirming Group will be offering several education/learning sessions in the coming months. We are planning to offer these sessions during the Adult Sunday school hour, so watch for more information!

The Open and Affirming Group will present a “welcoming statement” to the congregation for an informal “pulse” survey in September, 2018. Our next steps will be determined after this pulse survey is taken.



You might not realize how important the letters A, B and O are until they're gone. But, for a patient in need of lifesaving blood, those letters mean everything.

A, B, and O are our blood types. And when they are missing from the hospital shelves, patients cannot receive the lifesaving care they need.

Please sign up to donate blood at our June 10th blood drive in the WFLC from 8:00 a.m. to noon on the back of this Sunday's bulletin tab.

MISSION FIRST TEAM UPDATES

ALL CHURCH MISSION DAY

A BIG THANK YOU to everyone who participated in the Spring All Church Mission/Service Sunday. And special Shout Out to the CCC YOUTH GROUP and Steve Staicoff for their “*Help*” in getting the word out!! When all was said and done, over 140 volunteer hours were clocked that day!! Also, CCC received several nice notes of appreciation from our partner organizations.

CCC RECEIVES STELLAR AWARD FOR WORK AT COLUMBIA ELEMENTARY

On April 26th, ten members of Community Christian Church were in attendance at the 2018 Saint Louis Public Schools (SLPS) Volunteer Celebration as Rev. Thorne received the **Stellar Congregation Award** on behalf of Community Christian Church. The Stellar Award is presented by the SLPS Office of Volunteers to recognize congregations that have done exemplary work in their volunteer efforts with the city schools. Community Christian Church was honored to receive the award for their work at Columbia Elementary. Thank you to those special volunteers who gave their time, energy and love to the children of Columbia Elementary on a regular basis this past school year: Diane and Dick Hall, Linda Helm, Nick and Betty Rega, Rev. Jacob Thorne, Beth and Ed Bean and Cindy Burchfield. If you feel called to become a part of this important ministry of CCC please contact Diane Hall or Rev. Jacob Thorne.

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE BLANKET SUNDAY

Thank You to everyone who participated in our first Mother’s Day Church World Service Blanket Drive. As of this writing, you raised funds to purchase over 60 blankets which will be used to provide warmth to those needing assistance due to disasters. Hopefully, we can make this an annual event!

HANNA WOODS ELEMENTARY WEEKEND FOOD FOR KIDS. WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!

Last year, CCC members/friends began partnering with a local Jewish congregation to provide weekend food for 10-12 Hanna Woods Elementary School families. These families are not served by Circle of Concern and have been identified by their school counselor to be food insecure. Every other month, CCC members/friends shop and pack and grocery bags of non-perishable food for the families. Please consider committing to help this summer in one (or more) of the following ways:

BRING FOOD: While doing your weekly grocery shopping pick up a few extra healthful, non-perishable food items and place in the designated Hanna Woods baskets located in the Narthex (see flyer insert for suggested foods)

GROCERY SHOP: Join the Shopping Team! Shop during the week for the odds and ends needed to ‘round out’ the bags.

PACK BAGS: Join the Packing Team! Pack the grocery bags on Sunday before or after church (this fun, hands on activity takes less than 30 minutes and is a great way to include kids of all ages in making a difference in the lives of other kids)

PICK UP BREAD: Join the Bread Team! Pick up Loaves of fresh Bread & deliver to church on Wednesday afternoon.

For questions, more information or to offer your assistance, sign up on the back of your attendance tab this coming Sunday at church or contact Beth Eckelkamp (314)591-4167, Janet Staicoff (314)807-2589 or Tracey Hammack (636)579-0675.

THANK YOU NOTES

Dear Church Family,

I would like to thank you all for the gift card you sent me. I appreciate you thinking of me while I am away at school. I have had a good first year and I cannot wait to come back home.

Sincerely,

Jordan McGehee

Thank you for the generous gift card in the mail! It means so much to know people at church are still thinking about me while I am away at school. I truly appreciate it!

Yours truly,

Torie Allen

I just wanted to send a note to thank you and your congregation for providing backpacks of food to our families in need. It is such an amazing way to give back to our families and help them provide for their families. We know that it takes dedication, care, and of course, financial help to put these together, and we cannot thank you enough for helping in this way. We are very, very grateful for all that you do to give to those in need.

Dr. Kristy J. Roberts, Principal

Hanna Woods Elementary School

Parkway School District

Thank you so much for taking the time to clean up our outdoor classroom. We cannot wait to use it!

Thanks Again,

Hanna Woods Staff

Dear Church family,

When I was given my medical diagnosis in January, I boldly and blindly said I could handle it because I had my faith, family and friends. I didn't realize at that time how true that statement actually was. Doug and I want to thank you for all your prayers, cards, food, and support during these past challenging months. Our church family was a constant reminder of our many blessings and that God is watching over us.

Many thanks,

Lori Hoover

CCC BOOK GROUP

Discussion of the book *Wonder* by R.J. Palacia will take place on Monday, June 18th at 1:30 p.m. in the CCC library. Please contact Brenda Richardson if you would like more information.



LADIES SMALL GROUPS

Priscilla Group will meet at 6:00 p.m. on June 5th at the home of Kristina Houghton for their June meeting.

Rebecca Group will enjoy a potluck dinner on June 14th at 6:00 p.m. at the home of Molly Duncan for an evening of fun and fellowship. Everyone is asked to bring a food dish to share. All ladies are welcome.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

The Men's Ministry Breakfast will be on June 2nd at 8:00 a.m. in WFLC. The guest speaker will be Jim Donahoe a volunteer for Fisher House at Jefferson Barracks. At Fisher House, veterans and their families stay at little or no cost while receiving active treatment. Join us and bring a friend.

SENIOR CITIZEN'S LUNCH

Our remaining Senior Citizen lunch before a summer break will be on Tuesday, June 19th beginning at 11:30 a.m. in the CCC Narthex.

We will have interactive learning about the 100th Anniversary of the Muny Opera. Please join us!

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children and Youth Sunday school will be taking a break during the summer months when so many families are busy with vacations and summer activities. The break will begin on June 3rd and end in August when school resumes.

SUMMER MISSION TRIP

Please contact Don Miller or the church office if you would like to participate in our summer mission trip to Southern Missouri from June 24th to June 30th. Volunteer information forms are in the Narthex and need to be filled out and returned to the church office ASAP.

NO CLASS THIS SUNDAY

Rev. Thorne's Sunday school class will not meet this Sunday, May 27th.

Pancakes for Pentecost



Highlights from the pancake breakfast held in the WFLC on Pentecost Sunday.

Community Christian Church
623 Meramec Station Road
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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

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Rev. Jacob Thorne, Sr. Minister

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