

November  
2018

# The Vital Spark

NEWSLETTER OF COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR MINISTER

Dear Community Family and Friends,

As I write this article and look out the window of my home office, I can see snow blanketing the yard. It's cold... cold enough that even my children, who love snow, stayed outside for just a short while. There is no doubt that we have moved into a new season—the leaves on the trees are no longer full of bright colors and the promise of a cold winter lingers in the air. The Christmas tree in our house, minus the lights that seem to have quit working, stands decorated and waiting. When putting the finishing touches on the tree, two-year-old Ella proclaimed, "Santa will be very happy."

I feel the changing of the seasons in the church as well. We are working now to recruit new leaders for the 2019 calendar year. New individuals will join as servants of the church in the roles of deacon, elders, committee members and the Core Leadership Team. And now also, I feel that we can take a bit of a breather, a metaphorical deep breath, and celebrate all that has been accomplished this year. We can now live into our new vision and mission statements. We can also celebrate that we are an official Open and Affirming Congregation, with a circle that grows wider and wider every day. We can rejoice that on church this past Sunday morning our God's Children's Choir sang so beautifully. And this Sunday evening, we will gather as a community, filling almost the entirety of the gym, as we celebrate a meal of Thanksgiving.

In a world that is forever changing and full of turbulent times, I am thankful to be a minister, and serve in ministry, with each of you. You are my friends, my church family, and my reminder of God's steadfast love that will never change—even if the mountains shall shake or the seas shall roar. May we all continue to be God's shining light, bringing hope in a world full of despair.

I look forward to also celebrating with you the season of Advent. In December, over the four Sundays of Advent leading up to Christmas morning, we will look at each verse of "Silent Night" as we rejoice in the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this sacred song sung faithfully by so many generations of faith.

Blessings to you during this new season of life,

Jacob

# Fellowship Opportunities

## Women's Lunch at Josephine's

All ladies are invited to meet at CCC on Monday, December 3rd at 10:30 a.m. and carpool together to Josephine's Tea Room in Godfrey, IL. Come enjoy time together and maybe get some early Christmas shopping done in the Tea Room Gift Shop. There will be a sign up sheet in the Narthex.

## CCC Fellowship Followers

(formerly Friends R Us)

Ding Dong!! The Christmas Spirit for adults of CCC will be celebrated at Karl and Joyce Doup's home, 1813 Chara Street in Arnold, on December 8th starting at 5:30 p.m. For those whose name ends A-M bring your favorite appetizer, adults ending in N-Z, a festive dessert. Marie Kemp is challenging us to fun holiday games. Maps to the Doup's home will be available in the Narthex. Carpools will leave from CCC at 5 p.m. due to limited street parking.

Come first-timers! Come old-timers! Come "Deck the Halls" in your holiday colors!

## Senior Citizen's Lunch

All Seniors!

Please join us on Thursday, December 6th for a short Christmas-themed program, lunch and Bingo.

Contact the church office if you need a ride.

## Men's Group Hosting Breakfast



Please join us on December 8th (8:00 a.m. for coffee, breakfast at 8:30 a.m.) in the Wunderlich Center, as the CCC Disciples Men's Group holds a special breakfast (**for both men and women**) featuring guest speaker, Dave Reed. Dave, a close friend of Julie and Les Swaney, is a two-time survivor of stage four cancer. He brings a message of how to find hope, optimism, and the trust of God, even in the depths of despair.

To learn more about Dave, check out his website: [itswhatyoucando.com](http://itswhatyoucando.com)

We look forward to seeing everyone at this engaging breakfast!

# Christmas Outreach

## Columbia Elementary School

As you may know, a group of CCC members have been volunteering at Columbia Elementary School, part of the St. Louis Public School District. The Mission team has decided to partner with the school for Christmas and provide some small gift items to the 200 students there. We have a couple of ways that members of the congregation can help out:

1. Donating any of the following items: books, character books, activity/sticker books, journals/diaries, cards, small game, toy, baseball cards, little jewelry, puzzles, something for their age. Bring these to the church unwrapped with tag for the age/grade (Kindergarten-5<sup>th</sup> grade).
2. Volunteer to help wrap gifts after church on December 16th and/or attend the Christmas party at the school (date to be determined).

All gifts need to be dropped off in the collection box in the Narthex by December 16th.

## Ring the Bell for the Salvation Army



In 1947 the St. Louis Division of the Salvation Army started the Tree of Lights Campaign collecting for those in need in the St. Louis area. This Campaign has since spread to hundreds of communities across the nation.

Every December for over 30 years, Community Christian Church has participated in the Campaign by ringing the bell. This year we are once again scheduled to “man the kettle” **at the Dierbergs located in the Lafayette Center** from Friday, December 14 through Saturday, December 22.

This is your chance to become part of a wonderful old Christmas tradition. You can personally have a part in feeding thousands of homeless people, providing toys to children, and/or restoring heat in the home of a neighbor whose social security check doesn't stretch far enough.

Don't miss your opportunity to stand and ring bells at the Salvation Army kettle. Sign-up will begin on November 25 in the Narthex. If you have any questions, please call Ted Herman.

## Circle of Concern Giving Tree

It's once again time to help a family served by Circle of Concern by purchasing Christmas gifts for their family. On Sunday, November 25, please take a tag from the tree in the Narthex, follow the instructions on the back of the tag, and return the gift to church by 10:00am December 9. If you have any questions please contact Cindy Herman.

THANKS FOR MAKING A FAMILY'S CHRISTMAS BRIGHTER.



# 2019 Stewardship Campaign

On Sunday, November 4th, we participated in our semi-annual day of service and mission. We made breakfast at the Ronald-McDonald house for families who are staying with children that are critically ill, painted rooms at the Valentine House for clients of Caring Solutions, and worked here at Community where we expanded our butterfly garden, colored placemats for a local nursing home, packed hygiene kits for the Festival of Sharing and penned cards of thanks to those who serve in the military. After a day of service, we then gathered back in the Wunderlich Center for a meal and fellowship. It was a wonderful day as we embodied the lyrics of the worship song, "Go Make A Difference."

We recently sent 2019 pledge cards (see below for a copy if you still need one). Your returned pledge card will help us plan for how we will make a difference in 2019. Every dollar counts. Sometimes, like this past weekend while serving others, the giving is very visible. Other times, the giving is not as obvious, but equally powerful. For example, as we celebrated the lives of our beloved this fall it has been a wonderful gift of giving to gather in the gym where we can come together as one celebrating, and mourning, as a community. And this summer, it was a blessing to have new air conditioning systems keeping the sanctuary cool for three beautiful weddings.

In an effort to be as transparent as possible, and show how every single dollar counts, we have shared with you the proposed 2019 budget (see page 5). The leaders of the church have attempted to craft a budget that reflects, through surveys and conversations, the hopes and dreams of our community. Please note that in this budget the percentage designated for outreach is approximately 7% and the remaining balance for the Wunderlich Center is \$257,496. With the monthly payment of \$4,454 per month, only the interest payment (<\$1,000 per month in 2019) is part of the operating budget, the principal payment comes from members contributing to the Wunderlich debt reduction fund.

Our goal is to have all pledge cards returned by this Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, when we celebrate as a community, our Thanksgiving meal. Thank you for making a difference and participating in the life of our Community.

CCC Core Leadership and Finance Teams

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I/We want to join together with other members and regular attendees of Community Christian Church to support the operating budget and/or debt reduction of the Wunderlich Family Life Center (WFLC) mortgage.

Please complete the area below to indicate how you would like to allocate your 2019 Financial Support.

**Complete and keep this section as a reminder of your 2019 Financial Support**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Amount per (circle one) week/month/quarter/year for the 2019 Operating Budget

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Amount per (circle one) week/month/quarter/year for WFLC Debt Reduction Fund

**Please return this section in any of the following ways: mail to the church office, send by email to [beth@disciplesforchrist.org](mailto:beth@disciplesforchrist.org), drop it in the offering plate on November 18th or contact the church office by phone.**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Amount per (circle one) week/month/quarter/year for the 2019 Operating Budget

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Amount per (circle one) week/month/quarter/year for WFLC Debt Reduction Fund

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# 2019 Stewardship Campaign

Line Item	2019 Proposed Budget
Offering	\$340,458
WFLC Rental, other income	32,036
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$372,494</b>
Christian Education	7,350
Worship	16,980
Fellowship	2,060
Property	95,034
Outreach and Mission	27,425
Office/Administration	14,955
Mortgage Interest	10,946
Staff Wages and Benefits	214,113
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$388,863</b>
<b>Surplus (Shortfall)</b>	<b>(\$16,369)</b>

## THANKSGIVING OFFERING

### NOV 2018

[www.DisciplesMissionFund.org](http://www.DisciplesMissionFund.org)

Colleges & Universities

of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Seminaries & Divinity Houses

of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Higher Education & Leadership Ministries

of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



This Sunday's bulletin will have a special insert to learn more and an offering envelope for your financial support.

# Help Us Decorate For Christmas

On November 25th, following worship, we will get the Christmas decorations out of storage and decorate the Sanctuary and Narthex for Christmas. Please help make this task get done quickly by staying after worship to help.

## Christmas Poinsettia Orders

In anticipation of the Advent season, now is the time to order poinsettias that will be a colorful part of our sanctuary decorations. Each plant has 5-6 blooms in a 6 ½" pot wrapped in gold foil. Order forms will be in this Sunday's bulletin and must be turned in to the church office by November 25.

## Mission Sunday Highlights

Thank you to all of the CCC community members who took part in our Mission Day projects in any way – in preparing for projects, donating hygiene kit items, taking part in projects on November 4, praying for the success of the day and for the people that were assisted by our outreach, and serving our church family by preparing the meal at the end of the day. It was truly a pleasure and a privilege to join together to serve courageously! We look forward to taking part in a variety of opportunities to serve our local and global communities in the coming months and to our next Mission Sunday in the spring!



## Deacon Opportunity

We are in need of 8-10 additional individuals interested in serving as a deacon. If you'd like to volunteer, please let us know by contacting the church office or signing up on the back of Sunday's attendance tab. This is generally a two year commitment to serve on a monthly basis once every 3 months. Please contact the office if you have additional questions.

## December Blood Drive

Right now, the American Red Cross is facing a severe blood shortage and has issued an urgent call for eligible individuals of all blood types to #GiveNow and help save patient lives! Blood donations are currently being distributed faster than they are coming in. You can help by registering to give blood at our next CCC Blood Drive on Sunday, December 9th between 8 a.m. and noon. Sign up on the back of this Sunday's bulletin tab, contact Liz Dupuis or book an appointment online at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) and enter sponsor code: CommChristianCh.

# Thank you from...

Thank you all for your kind thoughts and prayers with the passing of my brother. All the beautiful cards and messages are so appreciated and help so much. Thank you for being our family and being there for us, we love you all.

In God's love,  
Sandy Schleusner, Hannah Donsky, Noah Donsky and Zoe Donsky

Dear Friends,

Our family would like to thank all our wonderful Community Christian Friends for their acts of kindness shown to us during Grace's recovery from her bicycle accident. Grace was greatly touched by the cards and gifts she received from you. Your love and prayers sustained us all through those first few difficult days after the accident. Your continued thoughts and prayer most certainly must account for her quicker than predicted recovery. Grace got back to school just a week or so late, but is on course to having a successful semester, and ultimately graduating on time. Our family is truly blessed by her recovery and most certainly your love and friendship!

Grace Hartman and Family

Thank you—thank you—thank you!

During our October set up and the actual October Stable Sale, over 2,000 hours were volunteered! And that doesn't even count the hours you all spent scouring closets for donations or the time in the kitchen making food for the workers! We appreciate everything you have done to make 2018 another successful year for the Stable!

After the sale was over on Saturday, October 13th, 335 clients of Circle Of Concern came and got items that will make their life a little easier and more fun! After the sale remaining items have been donated to: St. Cro-nin Parish, South Kings Highway, Isaiah 58 at Compton Heights Christian Church, Church on the Street in St. Louis City, Herbert Hoover Boys and Girls Club, Mathews-Dickey Boys' & Girls' Club, Memorial Boulevard Christian Church and Pilgrim United Church of Christ.

In addition to the Stable budget this year, we recently gave \$17,000 to be used to light the cross on the front of the church and for new dimmable LED lights in the Wunderlich Family Life Center gym, as the lighting in there has been very poor. In addition to the \$36,000 that was given from our budget earlier this year to pay down the balance of the loan on WFLC, an additional \$38,000 was given in October to be applied to the loan.

Thanks again for all your help in 2018!

Now it's time to start cleaning out those closets for 2019 sale!

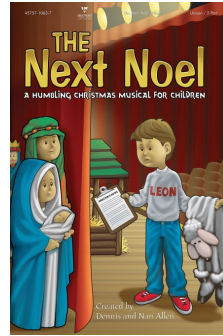
Stable Ministry Team

## Walk to End Alzheimer's



CCC group "Disciples for Hope" participated in the "Walk to End Alzheimer's" on October 28th. Thank you to everyone who helped us raise \$660 to benefit research aimed at finding a cure for this disease.

## God's Kids Choir



Please mark your calendar for this year's Christmas musical which will be shared with us by the God's Kids Choir on Sunday, December 2nd at 4:00 p.m. in the CCC Sanctuary. The show, *The Next Noel*, is sure to fill us with Christmas spirit. There will be a reception in the Narthex following the performance.

## Auction Items for Elder's Chili Cook-off

This year the Pie Auction at the Chili Cook-off will be a little different! Instead of just pies, we will be auctioning off other items! Handmade items, restaurant gift cards, sporting event tickets, and anything else you would be WILLING TO DONATE! We know that making handmade items takes some time, so we are asking you now if you would be willing to help with our effort to raise money for a worthwhile charity. Please sign up on the back of your Sunday bulletin tab or on the sign in the Narthex. Thanks for your generosity!

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