

THE COMMUNICATOR

February 2025

From the Pastor's Keyboard...

"Revelation"

As we gear up for our "loving month" my thoughts turn toward one of the most hope-filled, loving, inspirational, aspirational, books of the Bible. This particular book is saved for the last in our canon—the book of Revelation.

I am sure that many are taken aback by that statement. For many in our culture, the book of Revelation is a book to be feared. For them, it is a book of horror and shame, of fear and confusion. Many churches treat the book of Revelation as "that which must not be named." If we ignore it, we won't have to deal with it.

This is a travesty. For 1,800 years, Christians understood that the book of Revelation was a love letter to the church, a vision of what could be, a political protest against the excesses of Rome. For 1,800 years, Christians realized the book of Revelation was God's word of hope in a world that seemed hopeless. But two centuries ago, unscrupulous opportunists decided to pervert God's word for their gain; and they twisted that book into a book of fear. We know that unscrupulous leaders often utilize fear to dominate the masses; this is what happened with the book of Revelation. "Fear God's wrath that is to come" they cried, "It is all predicted in Revelation!"

The perversion of the book of Revelation began in the 1830s, picked up steam in the 1890s, and gained favor with select groups in the early 1900s. In the latter parts of the 20th century, unscrupulous opportunists such as Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye, Jerry Jenkins, Kirk Cameron (and others) took this perversion of the book of Revelation to the masses through media; and the "Hollywood version" of the book of Revelation became more authoritative to most than God's version, inspired by the Holy Spirit. As a result, we have lost the love letter that God has shared with us, replaced by a Hollywood Horror Show. What a travesty of God's Word.

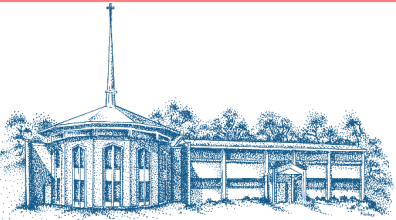
During the month of February, the Adult Bible Study class will intersect with a Sunday morning sermon series on the book of Revelation. Each Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. the Adult Bible Class will gather in the room at the end of the hall to discuss that day's reading from Revelation, and the book as a whole. Then, in worship, our liturgy and sermons will revolve around readings from Revelation as well. Shelly Adams and I will both offer sermons in February on the book of Revelation; the first one, February 2, is titled, "Revelation: A New Hope."

A few words about the book of Revelation:

- ♥ What we call a "book" was a letter that was written by a man, presumably named John, about a vision given to him by God. This man was not the "Beloved Disciple" who walked with Jesus, and not "John the Baptizer." He is referred to as "John of Patmos" because he was exiled to the prison island of Patmos. It was while in exile that he received this vision. It was written around 100 AD, seventy years after Jesus died.
 - ♥ The book is one long vision. It is "Revelation" not "*Revelations*." If you hear a preacher going on about the book of "*Revelations*," that is your first clue to question their integrity. This one long revelation has many elements to it, many signs, many symbolic references; but it is actually one long vision.
 - ♥ **The book of Revelation does not predict the future.** The signs and symbols detailed in the book of Revelation all represent the Roman Empire, the world leaders of the day, the context of the first century church, and people of those early, first century, Christian communities.
 - ♥ We don't really know to what all of these symbols are actually referring. Biblical scholars have some educated guesses, based on historical activity and known power dynamics; but in the end, every interpretation of this vision is one person's interpretation.
 - ♥ The book of Revelation is best read and interpreted in its entirety. This is what makes preaching on the book of Revelation so difficult. Pulling one vision, one phrase, one section out and guessing at its meaning, without being in conversation with the rest of the book, is futile. The message of Revelation is in the entirety of the vision, not one individual aspect.
 - ♥ **The book of Revelation is about having hope, even when all seems hopeless.** God's dream for humanity is possible, if we just have hope in God's promise and provision.
- See you in worship in February as we explore this together!



-Pastor Rick



News & Updates

SUNDAY MORNING SAFETY

For the safety and security of our church, and the people present, a Church Council member is available in the Gathering Area each Sunday during worship. The Council Steward is available to greet visitors who arrive after worship has begun, assist those who may not feel well, answer questions and give directions to people who need to step out of worship, and monitor the Gathering Area as needed.

The Nurture & Education Ministry Team has been talking to our children and youth about being safe at church, including walking - not running - inside our church building, and staying only in the Gathering Area or the sanctuary during Worship. We ask that parents and guardians help reinforce these safety standards and ensure that our children and youth follow these guidelines.

Columbia United Church of Christ

**3201 I-70 Drive NW
Columbia, MO 65202**

[Rev. Rick Oberle](#)

Pastor

[Rev. Fred Brandenburg](#)

Pastor Emeritus

[Shelly Adams](#)

Student Pastor

[Casey Wood](#)

Music Coordinator

[Steven Jannetti](#)

Organist/Accompanist

[Alexandra Roper](#)

Office Administrator

[Erika Maltzbarger](#)

Director, Little One's Day Out

[Caleb Berry](#)

Custodian

Sunday Schedule:

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation

10:00 a.m. Fellowship Time

10:30 a.m. Worship

Office Hours:

Monday through Friday

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Phone:

(573) 445-7931

Email:

office@columbiaucc.com

Website:

www.columbiaucc.com



Women's Fellowship Update

Ladies mark your calendars for our next monthly meeting to be held Thursday, February 13, 9:30 a.m. in The Gathering Area. You are invited to join us for good food, good fellowship and a good time. This month's topic is Climate Change; our program will be led by Linda Neale. For fun, we will be having a book exchange. Please bring any good books that you have read and would like to share - and be sure that your name is in any book that you want returned to you.

TIME TO CELEBRATE THE BIG GAME CUCC-STYLE!



NOW THRU FEB 9

CAN you help?

**Bring canned soup
to church to
benefit the Food
Bank Market
Pantry**

OR

**Donate \$ to
benefit Loaves &
Fishes (cash,
check, Kindrid:
columbiaucc.com)**



columbiaucc.com

Sunday Volunteer Schedule for February

Date	Greeter	Usher	Worship Leader	Tech Booth
02/02	Jolene Kirchhoff	Keith Birkes Deborah Long-Birkes	Lydia Whitacre	Brent Marcks Lorry Dreier
02/09	Jessica Lucas	Charlies Marcks Pat Forward	Llona Weiss	Mike Pierson Josh Muench
02/16	Susan Dunham	Llona Weiss Phillip Neale	Conference Youth	Ted Dachroeden
02/23	Carol Duermeyer	Mark Duncan Jane Duncan	Jessica Lucas	Judi Privitt Doug Privitt

February Birthdays

Amanda Forward - 02/02	Lori Melton - 02/06	Joey Oberle - 02/07
Melba Shaffer - 02/07	Elias Nieman - 02/08	Zabibu Kibaro - 02/09
Sofia Marienfeld-Crenshaw - 02/09	Tricia Price - 02/09	Maia Marienfeld-Crenshaw - 02/11
Cindy Deegan - 02/14	Danielle Dreier - 02/14	Theodore Eveler - 02/14
Ed Rollins - 02/14	Debby Duermeyer - 02/15	Imani Kibaro - 02/15
Abigail Dennis - 02/16	Liz Fischer - 02/16	Devin Burrow - 02/17
Donna Wilmsmeyer - 02/17	Pat Forward - 02/18	Nancy Liang - 02/19
Mike Rapp - 02/20	Jane Klick - 02/21	Lorry Dreier - 02/23
Stefanie Zimny - 02/25	Gene Lavelly - 02/26	Samantha Hall - 02/27
Tim Grace - 02/28	Darla Privitt - 02/28	Camryn Woolford - 02/28

Moderator's Moment

As we move into February and celebrate Valentine's Day where candies and cards are abundant, I find myself asking, "where did this holiday come from?" I have heard some say that it was invented by card and candy companies to trick folks into spending their hard earned money on cards and candies. But if we look past the way that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the modern age and peel back many layers of history, we find at the center, a saint and his Christian love.

In early Roman times, Valentine was a popular last name and it is estimated that the title of the name "Saint Valentine" could have been many men's stories blended into one "Saint Valentine" over history. The most popular story comes from around 500 A.D., where St. Valentine would perform wedding ceremonies for Christians, which at the time was forbidden in Rome. St. Valentine was then imprisoned in a nobleman's home where he healed the nobleman's blind daughter. St. Valentine, before his death, wrote a note to the captors blind daughter, signing it "Your Valentine." For his practicing of Christianity and converting the nobleman's home into a Christian one, he faced capitol punishment. Source: <https://www.history.com/news/real-st-valentine-medieval>

Other versions of the story are similar, all of a man named Valentine who practiced Christianity under Roman rule and was martyred. Folks like Jesus and St. Valentine posed a threat to the rule of the Romans, a rule that rested on the fact that, to the Romans, the Emperor was divine or godlike.

We as Christians must continue to speak truth to power and find ways to make those that are being persecuted feel safe, secure, seen, and loved. It's with the power of love that Jesus and St. Valentine and all other Christians that have followed in their footsteps have carried on. So look for ways that you can show that love and acceptance with actions and it will accomplish more than any candy or card could ever dream of!



Happy February and Happy Valentine's Day!



Respectfully Submitted,
Kurt Heine, Moderator

COLUMBIA UCC CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderator:	Kurt Heine	heinekurt@gmail.com
Vice Moderator:	Jerry Kiesling	rollzierp50@gmail.com
Secretary:	Alethea Tennill	atennill108@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Deborah Long Birkes	dlong@elon.edu
Recording Treasurer:	Christine Staelens	tigersfour@gmail.com
Building & Grounds:	Ted Dachroeden	gpadoc4gd@gmail.com
Fellowship & Hospitality:	Mary Lorber-Solt	eldercow@gmail.com
Finance & Stewardship:	Shelly Adams	shellyraeadams@gmail.com
Inclusion & Affirmation:	Tricia Price	tricialprice@gmail.com
Little One's Day Out:	Kristin Veteto	kristinnoelveteto@gmail.com
Membership & Care:	Judi Privitt	judiprivitt811@gmail.com
Nurture & Education:	Lena Muench	cfg323@yahoo.com
Outreach & Advocacy:	Mark Duncan	markduncan2@mchsi.com
Worship & Music:	Jedd Schneider	elusive4thtenor@icloud.com
Pastor:	Rev. Rick Oberle	rick@columbiaucc.com



Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team

Stewardship: Time, Talent, and Treasure

Greetings from your Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team!

Often when we hear the word “stewardship,” we think of someone bequeathing financial assets to the church. But there are lots of other ways to live into Christian stewardship. And it’s not all about the amount of money one is able to give.

In Mark’s Gospel, in the story of the widow’s offering, wealthy folk approached and gave large amounts of money. The widow approached and tossed in two small copper coins. Jesus didn’t measure her gift by its amount. Instead, he told his disciples, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

Giving faithfully can start very small. Establishing a habit of regular giving, like setting up a small, automatically recurring gift, can plant a stewardship seed that can grow over time. Each year, one can reassess those gifts according to changing circumstances. Over years, this habit makes it easy to be a consistent steward. No gift is too small. Seeds of stewardship, once planted, do grow.

But financial gifts are not the only opportunities for stewardship. Perhaps you’ve heard stewardship discussed in terms of “time, talent, and treasure.”

Take time, for instance. Time is a finite resource. Once a moment passes, it is gone forever. We can show stewardship in the way we spend our time. We can give time to God in many ways, including:

- ♥ Taking time for daily prayer and Scripture reading
- ♥ Serving on a ministry team or committee, helping the church love our neighbors and heal the world
- ♥ Cook a dish or wash dishes at one of our many meals in fellowship hall
- ♥ Visiting people who are sick, who have experienced loss, and who are lonely

Talent is something we have an abundance of at CUCC. Our members express stewardship through talents or gifts every day, like:

- ♥ Preparing meals for Loaves & Fishes
- ♥ Knitting prayer shawls to warm and comfort others
- ♥ Teaching Sunday school
- ♥ Singing in the choir

And of course, there is treasure. In the parable of the talents (Matthew 25,) Jesus taught that we are to make good use of the material gifts God provides, not burying them as the third servant did, but building and multiplying talents through financial stewardship. This can look like:

- ♥ Contributing to the CUCC endowment
- ♥ Joyful giving

We all have God-given gifts of time, talent, and treasure that we can use to build beloved community. Faithful examples are all around us at CUCC. May we all be inspired by those examples and be an example that inspires others!

Peace to all of you, friends.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shelly Adams,

Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team Chair



ESTATE PLANNING? DON'T FORGET YOUR CHURCH!

Have you remembered CUCC in your Estate Planning? The good work of this congregation can continue through all of us, even after we are no longer here, through intentional estate planning. The CUCC Endowment Fund was created in 2024 to continue the work of the church for many years into the future. It is open to contributions from wills and estates, life insurance payouts, IRA and stock contributions, or any other donation. Church leadership hopes to grow this fund to the point where it can contribute greatly to God’s glory in this place. For more information, talk to [Shelly Adams](#), Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team Chair.

Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team

Financial Update

	Actual	Budget	Over/(Under)
December Income	\$53,852.45	\$86,753.00	(-\$32,900.55)
December Expenses	\$34,391.08	\$42,614.07	(-\$8,222.99)
YTD Income	\$386,117.02	\$418,953.00	(-\$32,835.98)
YTD Expenses	\$410,770.23	\$397,168.00	\$13,602.23
Surplus/(Deficit)	(-\$24,653.21)	\$21,785.00	(-\$46,438.21)
December Joyful Giving	\$51,302.45	\$84,653.00	(-\$33,350.55)
YTD Joyful Giving	\$369,927.90	\$404,153.00	(-\$34,225.10)

CUCC ONLINE GIVING

There are several ways to make a one time or recurring gift through our online giving partner, Kindrid!

- ♥ [CLICK HERE](#)
- ♥ Access the Kindrid giving site through our CUCC website: www.columbiaucc.com and click on the "Donate to CUCC" button.
- ♥ Text "GIVE" to 573-240-4041 and follow the prompts to set up your one time or recurring gift.

Worship Attendance

12/01	12/08	12/15	12/22	12/24 (7:00 p.m.)	12/24 (10:00 p.m.)	12/29
60	130	90	78	144	29	50

Fellowship & Hospitality Ministry Team

Greetings one and all! I, for one, am glad to see January in the rear view window. What a cold and inhospitable month it has been. Even the honey bees are in agreement, they have not had a chance to get out and take their cleansing flights this last month- just too cold. With that in mind, we did decide to postpone our 'game night' until the weather is a little more cooperative.

On the bright side of things, we are well on our way in the preparation and planning stages for our Fastnacht Festival. Thanks to Connie Loveless, we already have the Loehnig Family Band booked from Herman, MO and lots of brats have been purchased. The next step will be the sign-up sheets for all of our wonderful volunteers! So keep your eyes open for these sheets, they will be in The Gathering Area or coat room. Whatever your talent is, we can use it! From cooking and decorating to washing dishes and cleaning up- all help is appreciated.

Mark your calendars my friends, March 4 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., for our 41st annual Fastnacht Celebration! Until then, bee happy, bee healthy, but most of all, bee Blessed!

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Lorber-Solt
Ministry Team Chair



Inclusion and Affirmation Ministry Team

"It is not the style of clothes one wears, neither the kind of automobile one drives, nor the amount of money one has in the bank, that counts. These mean nothing. It is simply service that measures success."

~George Washington Carver

Born enslaved near Diamond Grove, MO, George Washington Carver was stolen by slave raiders shortly after his father's death. With the end of the Civil War, he grew up free, on the farm of his mother's former master. Talented in many areas, he initially entered college to study piano and art, but transferred to State Agricultural College (now Iowa State) in Ames, Iowa, where he earned his Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Agriculture. He then launched his lifelong career at Tuskegee Institute (now University) in Alabama.

Working with formerly enslaved people, Dr. Carver hoped to improve the lives of those at the bottom of the economic ladder: typically poor, one-horse farmers at the mercy of the market, bound by geography and circumstance to land already depleted by cotton and tobacco crops. Dr. Carver saw the need to devise practical farming methods, discouraging cotton in favor of soil-enhancing, protein-rich crops such as soybeans, sweet potatoes and peanuts, with subsequent self-sufficiency and conservation as by-products. Dr. Carver's method was simple, yet genius. He wrote an innovative series of free, accessible brochures that included information on crops, cultivation techniques, and recipes. He collected samples of soil and water for analysis from individual farmers, and taught them livestock care and food preservation techniques.

In 1906, he invented the Jessup Wagon, a demonstration laboratory on wheels, which he felt was his most significant contribution toward educating farmers.

Dr. Carver established an agriculture extension in Alabama and founded an industrial research lab where he worked tirelessly on the development of hundreds of applications for new plants. He discovered more than 300 uses for peanuts (including peanut butter, soap, beverages, medicines, cosmetics and dyes) and hundreds more uses for soybeans, pecans and sweet potatoes.

Dr. Carver's approach to science was based on a deep religious faith to which he attributed all his accomplishments. He believed that faith and inquiry were not only compatible, but necessarily intertwined paths to knowledge and truth. Always humble despite considerable renown and success, he viewed himself as a means through which nature and God could be better understood and appreciated, for the benefit of all. His holistic approach to knowledge, accompanied by deep faith, led to a career serving human needs rather than powerful individual egos, with unwavering focus on the greater good.

Sources:

<https://www.tuskegee.edu/support-tu/george-washington-carver>

<https://agriculture.mo.gov/gwc.php>

www.sciencehistory.org

CUCC OPEN AND AFFIRMING/INCLUSION COVENANT

Columbia United Church of Christ celebrates God's boundless and unconditional love by intentionally welcoming and affirming all God's children.

- * No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey;
- * No matter where you are on your faith journey;
- * No matter your sexual orientation, gender expression or identity;
- * No matter your race, culture, ethnicity, nationality or politics;
- * No matter your age, ability, health, relationship status or family structure;
- * No matter your social, economic, educational, legal or life circumstances;
- * You are welcome here!



Called by Jesus to be an Open and Affirming, inclusive faith community, Columbia United Church of Christ commits to welcoming everyone into the full life of our congregation. Our paths and voices may differ, but we journey in faith together.

LODO Ministry Team

LODO had a delayed return from Christmas Break due to the winter weather brought to town the week of January 6. After one day back on January 9, we were very excited to have a full week back starting January 13. Students quickly settled back in to our school routines and were very excited to see their friends and enjoyed our fun learning activities.

LODO will host Math & Science Night for our families on Thursday, February 6 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. We would love to have volunteers from CUCC to help our staff run our stations. If you are interested in volunteering for this fun event, please let Erika know at littleonesdayout@yahoo.com.

In Love and Laughter,
Erika Maltsbarger



The LODO Ministry Team met in December where we heard from Director Erika regarding her decision to resign and began the discussion of the search process for a new Director. The LODO Ministry Team will meet the end of January to discuss the Director's job description and potential tuition increases for the 2025-26 school year. The official Search Committee has been appointed and includes: Susan Dunham, Kristin Veteto, Alethea Tennill, and Pastor Rick Oberle.

Other business addressed in December were staff bonuses and the staffing challenges that have seemed persistent this past year. The Assistant Director has stepped into a teaching role until a new qualified teacher can be found. Families continue to find comfort and quality learning opportunities here at LODO and while enrollment is still down, we ended the year near 72% serving a total of 52 students!

The COMO Gives fundraiser brought in just over \$1,800 by 14 donors for the LODO Designated Fund. We see this as a success for our first year and look forward to being involved again next year with a focus on spreading the news farther and wider into our community and beyond. Thank you to all who helped donate, shared the campaign with others, and your prayers for its success.

As we head into 2025 and all the challenges to come, please keep LODO and our Ministry Team in your prayers.

Blessings,
Kristin Veteto
LODO Ministry Team Chair



FEBRUARY LEARNING THEMES

5 SENSES/SENSORY

VALENTINE'S DAY
ACTS OF KINDNESS
BUCKET FILLING
FRIENDSHIP & LOVE

DENTAL HEALTH &
NUTRITION

OPPOSITES &
PREPOSITIONS

February Important Dates

Thu Feb 6
6:00-7:30pm Math & Science Night

Wed Feb 12 & Thu Feb 13
Classroom Valentine Celebrations

Fri Feb 14
LODO CLOSED

Mon Feb 17
LODO CLOSED
9:00am Staff Meeting

Fri Feb 28
LODO CLOSED

Nurture & Education Ministry Team

We need kids at Sunday School. We need Sunday School leaders.

Now that I have your full attention, time to get down to business. The Nurture and Education of the children and youth at CUCC has always been a priority, but has been even more so in the last few years. **We have to have the commitment of both families and our CUCC family to make this possible. It's a new year-let's make this even more of a priority!**

What does this look like?

- ♥ Please bring your kids/youth to Sunday School as much as possible. Perfection is not necessary. We've made it even easier for your family by taking care of breakfast. We have a great time. Join us. The fun starts at 9:00 a.m.
- ♥ Help lead a class. It's not meant to be an "all the time" thing. Think "from time to time." We have worked hard to make it easy-peasy this year. Everything will be pre-planned and prepared for you. Just show up, do the activities, and love our sweet kids and youth! We would love to show you the ropes (although there's not much to it...promise!) Check out available dates: [CLICK HERE](#) (or scan the QR code)
- ♥ Is there something we could, should, or you-wish-we-would do to increase participation and involvement?
My ears are always ready to listen: cfg323@yahoo.com, 573-881-2571, or catch me at church!



C'mon CUCC Family, let's do this! Our kids and youth are counting on us!

Adult Bible Study: Sundays, 9:00-10:00 a.m. Upstairs in Education Wing, last room on the left. Meets weekly.

Sunday School: Sundays, 9:00-10:00 a.m., ages 3-12th grade. PreK-2nd Grade and 3rd-5th Grade classes upstairs in Education Wing, 6th-12th Grade downstairs in Youth Lounge.

With Love,
Lena Muench
Nurture & Education
Ministry Team Chair



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

JULY 28-30
5:15-8:15 PM



Outreach & Advocacy Ministry Team



The January 20 meal at Loaves & Fishes consisted of chili mac (made with leftover chili from the chili cookoff,) spaghetti, chicken alfredo (made by Mary Lorber,) salad (provided by Patty Beeson,) bread, and brownies. Brownie donations were provided by Lea Marienfeld, Connie Loveless, Llona Weiss, Lorry Dreier, Kim Oberle, Kitty Rogers, Kristin Veteto, Paula Wilson, Linda Neale, Susan Dunham, and Jane Duncan. PB&J's were made and provided by Mahree Skala. Thank you so much to everyone who donated food and their time. Servers for the evening were Doug & Judi Privitt, Jim Loveless, Tom & Mary Lorber-Solt, Debby (Mary's sister,) Patty Beeson, Mark Duncan, and Anne Heine. We had approximately 140 servings.

The Food Bank needs us! Don't miss the opportunity to serve at the Food Bank on Tuesday, February 25 at 5:30 p.m. It's fun and it's a good feeling to help feed our fellow Missourians. Check the Friday emails for more information and sign-up link.



It Was a Very Merry Christmas! Thanks to All VAC Christmas Sponsors and Donors. Your generosity shone bright this past Christmas. CUCC provided gifts and household items for 45 people this year and gave \$1,100 to help even more families with food and gifts. Thank you for making it a special time for so many who otherwise wouldn't have enjoyed the spirit of the season. What a wonderful way to commemorate the birth of Our Savior!



Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary (AHL) is doing wonderful this year. We at CUCC have had very few requests for needs assistance, and it appears more parents/family are involved in volunteer activities with the students and their PTA. I have delivered items that were placed in the AHL donation box in The Gathering Area to AHL, and AHL is always so thankful. The weather over the holiday break caused several snow days, but the 5th graders were able to go to Biz Town in St. Louis on January 15, 2025. I believe it is a wonderful experience for them and their family members who volunteer; they had so many volunteers that Pastor Rick and I were put on "standby" as volunteers, and not needed.

Pastor Rick and I are scheduled to meet with Principal Minear and staff on January 22 (after this report deadline) to see what the rest of the school year holds and how our partnership can help. We received a holiday card from Interim Superintendent Dr. Chris Belcher and CPS Community Relations staff, along with "save the date" notices about PIE Week (Partners in Education) during March 3-7, 2025 and the 41st Annual PIE Breakfast on March 7 at 7:15a.m. in the Holiday Inn Executive Center. Also, there was an article in the Columbia Missourian on December 26, 2024 about AHL partnering with the "Good Dads, Strong Schools" program, whereby they are working to increase interactions between young students and father figures by having a monthly program that facilitates before-school interaction. There are volunteer opportunities and I will be assisting at their early morning gathering on January 22, 2025. We previously met with D'Markus Thomas-Brown, regional director for Good Dads Columbia, through our Faith Advisory Council meetings with CPS Superintendent. I envision as time goes on there will be opportunities for CUCC, Scouts, AHL, Good Dads to be doing more ministry together for the betterment of our youth and our community.

Again, thank you CUCC members for your support and faith in this ministry!

Respectfully Submitted,
Llona Weiss
Liaison for CUCC to AHL



Worship & Music Ministry Team

Hello all. I had a great month of music-making in Utah over the Christmas break. My community choir, The Summit Singers performed in a festival of "Box Elder County Choral Music". We collaborated with the local middle school and high school as well as a local children's choir.

During this concert season, I was able to contribute four new pieces as a composer that the group premiered. Our group had eight rehearsals over the course of just two weeks to put together this set. Our focal piece was a new composition entitled "World O World" by Jacob Collier. Mr. Collier is a multi-time Grammy Award winner and is considered to be one of the leading innovators in contemporary vocal music. I also held some workshops with some small acapella groups as well as private lessons with younger students. I enjoy working with the younger singers as it gives me a way to help build a community of musicians. Being back in Missouri, we now set our sights on the joyful music-making of black history month coming up in February. We will be featuring pieces from black composers, including Columbia-based composer Dr. Brandon Boyd. I'm excited to be back and making music in Missouri.

Respectfully Submitted,
Casey Wood
Music Coordinator

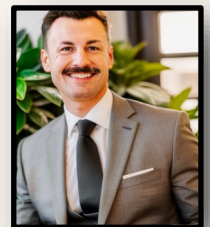


Why do we worship? This is perhaps the most fundamental question we as Christians must confront along our faith journeys. Yet I myself have seldom, if ever, reflected on its answer. As with so many profound theological queries, I began to seek an answer by turning to the venerable Clive Staples Lewis for guidance. Here's some of what he had to say on our Christian worship imperative:

- ♥ likened earthly worship to merely "tuning our instruments." That is, worship is an act of dutiful preparation for the coming "performance," i.e., the fulfillment of Creator God's promise of eternal life. So while tuning an orchestra may only elicit delight for those anticipating the symphony, that dutiful tuning serves to prepare for the promise of the coming performance itself: "the duty exists for the delight."
- ♥ Lewis described the performance of worship as key amongst our "religious duties," during engagement in which we become like people "digging channels in a waterless land, in order when at last the water comes, it may find them ready." He went on: "There are happy moments, even now, when a trickle creeps along the dry beds; and happy souls to whom this happens often."
- ♥ Finally, Lewis said of music in worship: "nothing should be done or sung or said in church which does not aim directly or indirectly either at glorifying God or edifying the people or both." He believed offering our multiplicity of talents fulfills this mandate: "anything the congregation can do may properly and profitably be offered to God in public worship."

Lewis' customarily wise, winsome words illustrate that worship is strictly necessary for our souls to prepare to receive the true fulfillment of all Creator God's promises; a fulfillment we cannot know until we leave this world and reach eternal life. In this way, our worship is a supreme act of faith. So let us all edify ourselves by tuning our instruments in worship to the greater glory of our Creator God!

Respectfully Submitted,
Jedd Schneider
Worship & Music
Ministry Team Chair



WELCOME TO QUORUS!

Columbia United Church of Christ is pleased to be in partnership with **Quorus, the LGBTQIAA Choral ensemble of Columbia!**

Quorus will be using our facility for rehearsals in the coming months, and we will have an opportunity to work with them for upcoming performances. We hope to have a Quorus fundraiser here next spring, as well.

Quorus would love to have CUCC members join their choir! To learn more about Quorus, **[CLICK HERE](#)**.



Team Earth

Why Should I Use Native Plants in my Gardens?

Greetings from Team Earth!

On January 19, in conjunction with the Men's Fellowship Chili Cook-off (congratulations to Jolene Kirchhoff for taking home the golden ladle) we held our January Team Earth Forum. Crystal and Rebecca from Columbia Center of Urban Agriculture shared tips for garden planning, planting, and lots more.

In her presentation, Crystal shared information on native plants. You might wonder why you would consider native plants in your gardens at home. Crystal shared a few reasons, and I'd like to share them with you - and add a couple more.

- ♥ As the name suggests, native plants are naturally adapted to local climate and local soils, which means they require less water and less maintenance.
- ♥ They provide food and habitat for native wildlife. For instance, the only place monarch butterflies lay eggs is on milkweed. And monarch caterpillars only eat milkweed leaves.
- ♥ They're tough! Gardener's don't need to fuss with them as much as non-native plants that often need to be protected from insects and other hazards.
- ♥ Native plants tend to have deep root systems that help prevent soil erosion.

So, what kinds of plants are native to Missouri? There are plenty, including milkweed, black-eyed Susan, Missouri primrose, columbine, and purple coneflower. And there are even native grasses and shrubs, including prairie dropseed, little bluestem, and the spicebush.

Where can you find more information about Missouri native plants?

- ♥ The [Missouri Department of Conservation's website](#) has lots of helpful information.
- ♥ The Missouri Conservationist is a monthly magazine (also from the Missouri Department of Conservation) with great stories and information about the great outdoors in our state. You can get a free subscription (print or electronic) at the [Missouri Conservationist website](#).

And we have great resources for purchasing native plants, including:

- ♥ [Missouri Wildflowers Nursery](#) in Jefferson City
- ♥ [Sugar Creek Gardens](#) in St. Louis
- ♥ [Missouri Perennial Wildflower Nursery](#) (that delivers to Columbia zip codes 65201, 65202, and 65203)
- ♥ [River City Natives](#) in St. Louis

Planting native plants is a great way to care for God's creation right in your own backyard. And I don't know about you, but I'm already dreaming of my spring garden.



Respectfully Submitted,
Shelly Adams

FEBRUARY LUNCH AND LEARN- GOING SOLAR!

Our February 16 Lunch and Learn will focus on going solar! Jay Hasheider, from City Water and Light, will be our guest speaker. He will offer a presentation on solar power, how it works, and how homeowners (and churches) can benefit from solar incentives to reduce their energy bills and live more sustainably. **Plan on sticking around for lunch on February 16** and learn more about how solar power is making your life better, even if you do not have a solar powered home! For more information about solar power and how our world is benefitting from its growth, [CLICK HERE](#).

Scouting America

SCOUTING AMERICA TROOP 4475

Some of the young women of Troop 4475 participated in the City of Columbia's MLK day of Service creating Kindness Crafts for the Community, gifts for community organizations from recycled materials. They made tug ropes for shelter pets out of old t-shirts, cards for Ronald McDonald House families from recycled books and calendars, and painted Kindness Rocks.

Troop 4475 is welcoming new Scouts this Winter! When a Cub Scout has earned their highest award, the Arrow of Light, they move from being part of a Cub Scout Pack to a Scouts BSA Troop. We are happy to welcome the newest members of Troop 4475!

Troop 4475 will also be participating in Scouts Sunday at CUCC on February 2. We will help with worship, reading scripture and handing out bulletins and participating in the service. We look forward to seeing you there.

Are you interested in being a Scout? Come join us on Mondays, 7:00 p.m. at CUCC! Troop 4475 are girls from 6th through 12th grade. We would love to have you!



Pancake Breakfast

February 22, 2025

**Join us for a breakfast of
pancakes and sausage!
Breakfast will be set up
in the Fellowship Hall
from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**All proceeds go to
Habitat for Humanity
of Central Missouri.**

**Ticket Prices:
\$8.00 for adults
\$4.00 for those 6-12
Free for those 5 and under**



Show Me Central
Habitat for Humanity[®]

THANK YOU!

We sincerely thank you for your generous donation to Show-Me Central Habitat for Humanity. One of our future homeowners, Cedrick, shared, "I like to see the growing in our town and owning my own home will add my story to that! I am ready to make so many more memories with my children."



On January 29th, over 50 realtors will partner with Habitat for Humanity for a Realtor Build event. This event will help construct five homes, with volunteers from our community working alongside the future homeowners. It will emphasize the importance of affordable housing in Columbia and help families like Cedrick's secure quality, reasonably priced, homes.

As always, we want to remind you that events like this wouldn't be possible without the support of donations like yours. Thank you so much for your support! We look forward to the Pancake Breakfast in February! Happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Ashley Switzer

Director of Community Outreach of Show Me Central Habitat for Humanity

Thank you for your generous donation to Growing Hope Globally. We are grateful that you have joined us in growing lasting solutions to hunger. For more than 20 years we have worked alongside our partners, helping people around the world to improve their incomes and food security. Your gift means even more people will experience the dignity and hope of providing for themselves!



Thank you for loving your global neighbors!
Kaitlyn Slate
President and CEO of Growing Hope Globally

Thank you for your generous gift to the CWS Blankets program. As families and communities around the world recover from emergencies and struggle in the face of unprecedented challenges, you are standing with them. Now more than ever, we are so grateful for your generous support.

Your contribution provides warmth, comfort, and hope to neighbors near and far. It provides a tangible reminder to migrant families that they are not alone as they seek safety. It wraps refugees in warmth as they arrive in the United States to build a new future. It provides comfort to our neighbors who have lost homes or are struggling in the face of extreme challenges. Around the world, your support means relief and hope.

Because of you, Church World Service is able to respond when disasters occur and support is needed.

Thanks to your compassion, we can - and will - change lives.



Sincerely,
Rick Santos
President and CEO of Church World Service

Thank you for supporting Every Child's Hope this Christmas season with your donation of \$25.00 on 12/31/2024. The holiday season can be a difficult time of the year for the young people in our care, as well as for their families. It is through your support, though, that ECH can help these children experience joy, love, and support during the season. Together, we are able to help them discover the hope and strength needed to build a better life for themselves. So, thank you for being a part of the healing process for all the young people we work with. Your donation is truly appreciated.



Sincerely,
Julia Adami,
Chief Executive Officer of Every Child's Hope

International Missions

CUCC IS WORKING IN GHANA

The Evangelical Presbyterian (EP) Church's "Ghana's Girls Empowerment Project," is an initiative aimed at promoting the education, empowerment, and well-being of girls in Ghana, particularly in underserved and rural communities. The project focuses on addressing barriers to education, such as poverty, early marriage, and gender-based discrimination, while also encouraging the participation of girls in leadership and community development. Through this project, the EP Church in Ghana works to provide girls with access to quality education, life skills training, mentorship, and health education. It also seeks to raise awareness about the importance of girl's rights and gender equality. By empowering young women, the initiative helps create a more equitable and sustainable future for girls in Ghana, enabling them to become leaders in their communities and contribute to the nation's overall development.

Through [Global Ministries](#), CUCC is a partner in mission with the EP Church in Ghana and the "Ghana's Girls Empowerment Project." Keep them in your prayers this month!



MISSION WITH CHIAPAS– IMMERSION EXPERIENCE JUNE 18-25, 2025

Churches of the Missouri Mid-South Conference have travelled to Chiapas six times in the past twelve years, working alongside the [Institute for Intercultural Studies and Research](#), one of our Global Ministries Mission partners in Chiapas. We have worked alongside them in towns and villages, learning about the people of Chiapas and the ways of life in the communities of Chiapas. We have also helped construct a new facility on the grounds at [The Institute](#), a facility that has more than tripled their institutional capacity and ability to do ministry with the people of their communities.

[The Institute](#) is not the only Global Ministries Mission partner in Chiapas. On our last trip, we had the opportunity to work with another one of our Mission Partners, [Melel Xojobal](#), an agency that works solely with children in need. [Melel Xojobal](#) means "True Light" in the indigenous Tzotzil language, and they focus on being a light of hope for children whose only other alternative is the dark of hopelessness.

Our next "Mission Trip" to Chiapas will be the summer of 2025! We will leave St. Louis on June 18 and return on June 25. While we are in Chiapas, we will spend most of our time in the city of [San Cristobal](#) working with [The Institute](#) and Melel Xojobal. We will have the opportunity to see several indigenous museums, including the Chocolate Museum, and immerse ourselves in the culture of Chiapas. We will spend time in the marketplaces and worship at an indigenous church. We will learn about the life and context of the Indigenous Mayan communities that make up Chiapas, and we will even do some work, but work is not the focus of the trip. Education and relationship are the focus. The work will be suited for all abilities; all are welcome to come along, from age 16 up to age 90+! (Due to the nature of the trip, we are not encouraging anyone under 16 to participate.)

The cost for this trip is \$1,500. This includes airfare, lodging for seven days and six nights, food for that timeframe, transportation to and from the airport in Tuxtla Gutierrez and other transportation, and other incidentals. All expenses are included in that price except souvenirs you may wish to buy. For a week-long mission trip, it is very economical. **Everyone who participates must have a current passport. It is also highly recommended that you have a current COVID vaccination.** We will schedule a forum in early February to discuss more details about the trip, for anyone who has questions.

There is a limit of ten people for this trip – so make your commitment early! Due to transportation issues, we cannot have more than this number. If you would like to go, talk to me ([Pastor Rick](#)). I have packets with detailed information and registration materials. Registrations and deposits must be turned in by April 1. Registration will include the completed registration form and a copy of your passport.

On the Church Calendar in February

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>2 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship</p>	<p>3 2:00 p.m. - Coffee at Toasty Goat 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America</p>	<p>4 - PASTOR RICK ON VACATION 10:00 a.m. - Quilters</p>	<p>5 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers</p>	<p>6 6:00 p.m. - LODO Math & Science Night 6:30 p.m. - Troop 4475 meeting</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8 1</p>
<p>9 7:30 a.m. - Men's Fellowship Breakfast 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship</p>	<p>10 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America</p>	<p>11 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 6:30 p.m. - Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team Meeting 6:30 p.m. - Troop 708</p>	<p>12 - PASTOR RICK BACK FROM VACATION 6:00 p.m. - Prayer Shawl Group 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers</p>	<p>13 9:30 a.m. - Women's Fellowship</p>	<p>14 - VALENTINES DAY 9:00 a.m. - LODO Staff Meeting CONFERENCE YOUTH EVENT</p>	<p>15 - CONFERENCE YOUTH EVENT</p>
<p>16 - CONFERENCE YOUTH EVENT 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship 12:00 p.m. - Team Earth's Lunch & Learn: Going Solar</p>	<p>17 4:30 p.m. - Loaves & Fishes 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America</p>	<p>18 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:30 a.m. - Staff Meeting 6:30 p.m. - Council Meeting</p>	<p>19 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22 7:00 a.m. - Habitatat for Humanity Pancake Breakfast</p>
<p>23 - Seminary Sunday 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship</p>	<p>24 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America</p>	<p>25 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:30 a.m. - Staff Meeting 5:30 p.m. - Food Bank</p>	<p>26 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	

The Communicator

Columbia United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation - ONA #1575
3201 I-70 Dr. NW
Columbia, MO 65202-3296
573-445-7931



Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Columbia, MO
Permit No. 74

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

The Communicator is a publication of Columbia United Church of Christ. The stated purpose is to communicate with the congregation and our friends concerning the organizations and events of the church. It is published once each month. The deadline for articles is the 20th of each month.



Columbia United Church of Christ is home to four Scouting America Units, chartered through our congregation:

Cub Scout Pack 5183
(Kindergarten through fifth grade)
Scouting America Troop 4475
(Girls Troop)
Scouting America Troop 708
(Boys Troop)
Venture Crew 5334 (older youth)



Interested in Church Membership?

If you are interested in joining, please contact [Rev. Rick Oberle](mailto:rick@columbiaucc.com).
rick@columbiaucc.com

**Become
Part of
Our
Church
Family**

**Columbia
United Church
of Christ is a proud
sponsor and
supporter of Quorus!**



Columbia United Church of Christ Open and Affirming/Inclusion Covenant

Columbia United Church of Christ celebrates God's boundless and unconditional love by intentionally welcoming and affirming all God's children.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey;
No matter where you are on your faith journey;
No matter your sexual orientation, gender expression or identity;
No matter your race, culture, ethnicity, nationality or politics;
No matter your age, ability, health, relationship status or family structure;
No matter your social, economic, educational, legal or life circumstances;
You are welcome here!

Called by Jesus to be an Open and Affirming, inclusive faith community, Columbia United Church of Christ commits to welcoming everyone into the full life of our congregation. Our paths and voices may differ, but we journey in faith together.

LODO PLAYGROUND RESPECT

Please help us keep our playground safe for all children by following these guidelines:

- ◆ The CUCC playground is designed for, and should be used by, *only children ages 8 and younger*.
- ◆ Adult supervision is required while children are on the playground.
- ◆ Mulch must stay on the ground. When children dig up mulch it creates holes that are tripping hazards. Children should only dig in the sandbox.
- ◆ Sand should stay in the sandbox. Please do not allow sand to be carried and dumped in the playhouse or on play structures.
- ◆ Use playground equipment in the manner it is intended.