

The Communicator

April 2025

From the Pastor's Keyboard . . .

"The Beauty of the Earth"

*For the Beauty of the Earth, For the glory of the skies;
For the love which from our birth, over and around us lies;
God of all to You we raise this, our hymn of grateful praise.*

The Lenten devotional we have been using as a collective family this season is titled, "For the Beauty of the Earth;" and each daily devotional focuses on how the beauty of the earth is emblematic of God's love for all God's creation. As the author points out in the introduction to the book, Jesus references God's Creation over 50 times in his discourses, and other New Testament authors, talking about Jesus, reference God's Creation more than 55 times. What is undeniable is that both Jesus and the Gospel writers saw God's Creation as a brilliant testimony to God's glory and provision; and as they reveal Jesus' life to be a continuation of God's Creation, it was important to them to make that parallel.

According to the Gospel attributed to John, Jesus was present with God at the time of Creation. While this narrative is certainly more parabolic than literal, it does point to the intimate connection between Jesus and Creation; an intimate relationship that Jesus reinforces with his Wisdom teachings. Lisa D. Schade, the author of our Lenten devotional, points out that, according to Gospel accounts, nature even echoes the Passion of Christ. We hear that darkness enveloped the land at the time of his crucifixion, as if nature was weeping along with his followers; and in the stories of his Resurrection, we hear about an earthquake, brilliant light, and the beauty of a garden, in which Jesus is mistaken as the gardener. The beauty of the earth is resplendent in the Passion narrative.

Rev. Schade encourages us to reflect on the beauty of the earth and ask ourselves, "If Creation is this important to Jesus and the Gospel writers, shouldn't we regard Creation with equal importance? As followers of Christ, we must include the voice of the Earth in our decisions about how we live, work, build, consume, and minister to others." In other words, if we are to truly walk with Jesus this Lenten season and Holy Week, we must also consider the beauty of the earth and our sacred role as stewards of it.

*For the wonder of each hour, of the day and of the night;
Hill and vale and tree and flower, sun and moon and stars of light;
Got of all to You we raise, this our hymn of grateful praise.*

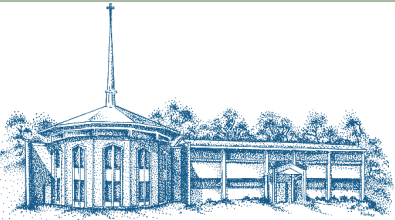
This time of year, the beauty of the earth is not hard to notice. All around us trees are budding, grass is greening, and flowers are blooming. The air is warmer, the days are longer, and everyone is out walking their dogs and riding their bicycles. The beauty of the earth is evident in the spring. It is not coincidental that Jesus' Resurrection coincides with the resurrection of the earth as well; This is a great time of year to celebrate new life.

But in reality, the wisdom of the Resurrection story is not just for springtime, Easter Sunday, or the Easter Season that follows. The wisdom of the Resurrection story is that God is always doing a new thing, even when things seem the most bleak. The prophets who wrote the narrative that we call the book of Isaiah lived in a time of existential national crisis; and in the midst of their tragedy, God did a new thing and gave new life to God's people. The Israelites in Egypt were living through a time of existential national crisis; and in the midst of their tragedy, God did a new thing and gave new life to God's people. We hear this same story in the narratives of Jacob, David, Elijah, Hosea, and other prophets. Just when things seem the most bleak, God's Resurrection miracle is at work in the world. *"In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree..."*

So no matter the season, no matter the circumstances, no matter what is going on in our world or in your life, know that God is doing a new thing. The wisdom of the Resurrection story is that God is never finished renewing God's World or God's people; and that every day, an Easter miracle is just around the corner.

-Pastor Rick





News & Updates

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 Maltsbarger
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:
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ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

The theme for the 2025 One Great Hour of Sharing offering we will observe on April 6, 2025 is "Be the Light."

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a vital special mission offering of the United Church of Christ. It connects you to disaster relief, refugee assistance, and development efforts around the globe. When disasters strike, or when individuals are displaced due to violence or poverty, OGHS ensures immediate response and ongoing recovery.

Through your support, OGHS funds comprehensive development programs in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, food security, microfinancing, and women's empowerment. By partnering with Global Ministries and international response networks, OGHS maximizes its impact. Your contributions help meet urgent needs while addressing the root causes of vulnerability, ensuring long-term, sustainable solutions for affected communities. Through Global Ministries, OGHS is the collection that also funds the work of our overseas missions in Chiapas! Special projects and missionary support for Chiapas (and other mission partners worldwide) are made possible by your gifts to this fund.

Thanks for your consideration in how you may Be the Light as we observe One Great Hour of Sharing on April 6!

CLEAN UP COLUMBIA

April 12, 2025 | 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Join Columbia UCC and in the city wide Clean Up Columbia Event! We will meet at Columbia UCC at 9:00 a.m. and begin picking up trash as we move down I-70 Dr. NW. Trash bags and gloves will be provided, but feel free to bring your own or extras. If there is rain, we will move the date to April 26 at the same time. Sign up using the QR code, the link below or contact us at office@columbiaucc.com.



<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094CADAF2EA7FE3-clean>



Sunday Volunteer Schedule for April

Date	Greeter	Usher	Worship Leader	Tech Booth
04/06	Pat Forward	Jim Loveless	Kennedy Lucas	Sam Byerly Brent Marcks
04/13	Anne Heine	Brenda Muench John Muench	Pat Forward	Mike Pierson Gina Pierson
04/18	N/A	Mahree Skala	Tricia Soncasie	Doug Privitt
04/20	Donna Marsh	Pat Forward	Lydia Whitacre	Josh Muench Lorry Dreier
04/27	Mary Lorber	Charlie Marcks Llona Weiss	Jim Loveless	John Graves Carissa Graves

April Birthdays

Brent Marcks - 04/06

Linda Grotewiel - 04/07

Chantal Kibaro - 04/08

Chris Bach - 04/10

Evelyn Marcks - 04/13

Mary Lorber-Solt - 04/14

Vivian Scallion - 04/17

Jan Barry - 04/18

Connie Loveless - 04/18

Addison Melton - 04/18

Trenton Minor - 04/20

Brandon Lavelly - 04/21

Mark Eveler - 04/23

Mike Van Howe - 04/23

Devin Hall - 04/25

Amy Crousore - 04/28

Carolyn Malicoat - 04/30

Moderator's Moment

Good Friday is celebrated by Christians as a somber holiday. In Germany, there are laws against public dancing and celebration and horse racing on Good Friday! So, why is it called Good Friday if we are marking the death of Jesus? Wouldn't "Sad Friday" be more fitting? It is certainly a time of contradictions in the church. The leader of our very religion was crucified on Calvary hill with robbers and murderers, led to his end in a most savage and demeaning way. Yet we celebrate.

It does mark the end of lent, when Jesus broke bread with his disciples as they celebrated the Passover event. So, are we celebrating the fact that we can again eat sausage, sauerkraut and doughnuts!? I think that's much too short sighted.

Christians are of course celebrating the ultimate expression of love, that Jesus loved us so much that even when the going got tough, he stayed true to his message. This reminds me of the saying, "when one door closes, another one opens," except if Jesus' life is a standard door, he opened up a double garage!

Jesus' life may have ended, but in so doing he blazed the pathway to resurrection for everyone, and for that we celebrate, in quiet contemplation.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kurt Heine, Moderator



SUNDAY MORNING SAFETY

For the safety and security of our church, and the people present, a Church Council member will now be available in the Gathering Area each Sunday during worship. The Council Steward will be 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.

Pat Forward, Nurture & Education Ministry Team Chair, will be talking to our children and youth over the next several Sundays 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 worship guidelines.

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:	Edie Diel	edie@thedandegroup.com
Pastor:	Rev. Rick Oberle	rick@columbiaucc.com



Columbia UCC Council Minutes

The meeting was called to order on February 18 at 6:39 p.m. by Kurt Heine. Pastor Rick opened with a prayer. Present: Kurt Heine, Jerry Kiesling, Deborah Birkes, Christine Staelens, Ted Dachroeden, Tricia Price, Kristin Veteto, Judi Privitt, Jedd Schneider, Mark Duncan, Lena Muench, Rick Oberle, Alethea Tennill, and Shelly Adams. Ted Dachroeden made a motion to approve the agenda with a second from Mark Duncan. The motion passed. Mark Duncan made a motion to approve the minutes from January with a second from Lena Muench. The motion passed. Shelly made a motion to approve the minutes from December with a second from Kristin. The motion passed.

Tricia Price led the discussion on the next chapters in *A Real Good Church*, chapter 8, about being ONA. The author talks about how important being ONA is to showing that your church is, “compassionate, relevant and growth-minded.”

Unfinished Business

- ◆ Thanking the congregation: Finance and Stewardship will talk about how best to do this and then let council members know how we can help. It might be good to send notes out soon after Stewardship Sunday, while it’s fresh in people’s minds. January income was about \$31,000 under budget, but that’s not unusual for January.
- ◆ New Light for sign: no update.
- ◆ Conference Youth Event: Pastor Rick reported that there were 43 attendees. They arrived Friday evening around 7 p.m., slept on air mattresses in the Fellowship Hall, and went to mission agencies on Saturday. The church bus was used for the weekend, and worked out well.
- ◆ Bus Graphics: All done, and they turned out great! Thanks to the anonymous donor.
- ◆ Nominating Committee for 2025: Anne Heine, Dorothy Williams, Doug Privitt, and Jerry Kiesling so far. Waiting to hear back from potential youth members. Will meet March 2 before church.

New Business

- ◆ LODO Director Job Description: Kristin Veteto and Kurt Heine reviewed the proposed job description, which has been edited by the Personnel Committee. Council approved the job description and compensation recommendations.

Ministry Team Reports:

- ◆ Building & Grounds: We have some minor roof leaks. Once we get a couple days with better weather, Ted can get up on the roof and re-caulk it. He is also working on replacing door stops.
- ◆ Finance & Stewardship: We have over a year’s worth of cash on hand, which is healthy for a non-profit. We have a guest minister coming for Stewardship Sunday.
- ◆ Inclusion & Affirmation: Tricia Price: Our survey only got feedback from 3 people, but it was almost all positive.
- ◆ LODO: Enrollment was around 72% at the end of January. The assistant director is still having to teach a class. One of the aides stepped into a teaching role and is doing amazing. A couple new aides were hired and are doing great. Budget is in line because expenses have been down. Staff will be attending the Conference on the Young Years, and the LODO budget is able to cover all expenses for that. The daily tuition cost for LODO is increasing by \$2.00.
- ◆ Membership & Care: Bring a Friend Sunday is April 6.
- ◆ Nurture & Education: Sunday School will not be in session over Spring Break and this academic year will end May 18 to coincide with the end of school.
- ◆ Outreach & Advocacy: Thanks for filling the carts for AHL; they really appreciate it. Loaves and Fishes served 176 servings last night in 75 minutes. Great Lunch and Learn from Team Earth!
- ◆ Worship & Music: Working on a succession plan for the Music Coordinator position.

Pastor Rick closed us in prayer. Judi Privitt moved that we adjourn, and Lena Muench seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

-Respectfully submitted by Tricia Price, acting secretary

Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team

GIVING AND RECEIVING

Stewardship is an important part of our faith and our faith community. When each of us gives, it's not just CUCC that receives; all our ministries receive, too. That's true of our time, talents, and treasure.

But let's talk about treasure. I remember when I was a young adult. I knew what tithing meant, but there were times when we barely had enough money to pay the bills, let alone tithe 10 percent of our incomes. And I mistakenly thought of it as an all-or-nothing proposition.

The thing is, we can give at any level. When we embrace giving as a spiritual practice, we can give what the spirit moves us to give. And we don't have to wait until we can afford substantial giving to start.

What I learned is that just making a habit is a good way to get started- at any monetary level.

If you can afford \$1 a week, drop that \$1 in the offering plate each Sunday. The commitment to giving is just as important as the amount. Maybe next year you can give \$5, then \$10. Over time, keeping that commitment will become more important to you, and more meaningful to your faith.

At Columbia UCC, we can give through the offering plate, online, through text, or through an automatic debit from our bank account weekly or monthly. I opt for the latter. The money just comes out of my account each month regularly, requiring no action on my part.

I acknowledge financial stewardship can seem daunting at first. So, I offer this: if anyone would like to have a confidential conversation about getting started on that journey, please let me know. I'm very happy to help.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Adams,

Finance & Stewardship Ministry Chair



THREE WAYS TO GIVE ONLINE TO CUCC

1. Click on this link (or type into your web browser): <https://www.kindridgiving.com/app/giving/cucc>
2. Visit our CUCC website: www.columbiaucc.com and click on the "Donate to CUCC" button.
3. Text "GIVE" to 573-240-4041 and follow the prompts to set up your one time or recurring gift.

Financial Update

	Actual	Budget	Over/(Under)
February Income	\$ 19,688.54	\$44,976.00	(-\$25,287.46)
February Expenses	\$32,878.14	\$36,048.00	(-\$3,169.86)
YTD Income	\$37,586.26	\$94,163.00	(-\$56,576.74)
YTD Expenses	\$72,193.44	\$70,375.00	\$1,818.44
Surplus/(Deficit)	(-\$34,607.18)	\$23,788.00	(-\$58,395.18)
February Joyful Giving	\$20,798.54	\$41,909.00	(-\$21,110.46)
YTD Joyful Giving	\$37,536.26	\$90,030.00	(-\$52,493.74)

Worship Attendance

02/02	107
02/09	70
02/16	123
02/23	120

Bring a Friend Sunday

April 6, 2025 | Columbia UCC
3201 I-70 Dr. NW Columbia, MO 65201

Did you know that 82% of "new" church members join because they were personally invited? Invite your friends to our "Bring a Friend Sunday" where we will worship and celebrate fellowship. There will be goody bags for new friends and a taco bar for lunch!

This is a special opportunity to share God's love as exemplified in the ministries of this church.

We cannot wait to meet the new friends!

Schedule:

9:00 a.m. Faith Education
10:30 a.m. Worship Service

10:00 a.m. Fellowship
12:00 p.m. Taco Bar Lunch



Inclusion and Affirmation Ministry Team

April 7 was established in 1949 as Global Health Day by the World Health Organization (WHO.) This day is set aside to remind people that health and access to healthcare are human rights. Since its conception, the WHO has picked a theme, each year, to focus attention on important public health issues that affect the international community.

The WHO approved the General Program of Work for 2025-2028, which centers around the escalating threat to health posed by climate change. This strategic focus of prioritizing climate change and health is a decisive step towards ensuring healthier populations and a healthier planet, reinforcing the organization's commitment to addressing the most pressing challenges of our time.

We are all affected by climate change, but vulnerable individuals and populations are most affected. The info below is chilling, considering the disastrous defunding of environmental protections initiated by the current administration. This involves our children in the USA:

- 1) Children's bodies are developing physically, making them more vulnerable to climate-related hazards like heat and poor air quality. They breathe at a faster rate, increasing their exposure to pollutants.
- 2) Children drink more water than adults per pound of body weight. They swallow about twice as much water as adults while swimming. This can increase their exposure to contaminants in water sources.
- 3) Children are developing emotionally, as their brains continue to grow throughout adolescence. Children can experience mental health impacts from major storms, fires, and other extreme events which are only expected to increase with a changing climate.
- 4) Young children depend on adults for their safety and well-being. This dependence can put children at greater risk during extreme events. For example, without adult help, children may not be able to keep their heads above flood waters or get to safety during a storm. They are also at a greater mental and emotional developmental risk when exposed to environmental disasters.

Now, imagine the threat to children in poor countries that don't have reliable weather information about heat, intense rain, or wildfires, children who may not have stable housing, water, or food, children who may not have strong support systems or anyone who can physically and mentally protect them.

The WHO has multiple plans for bolstering climate-resilient systems including promoting lower-carbon emissions and increasing renewable energy sources. More information can be found on their website.

What can we do? We can use less water; waste less food; buy less items that are brand new; recycle; donate to conservation causes; plant a garden; refrain from using lawn and public chemicals; get a smart thermostat; walk four blocks instead of driving them; vote for elected officials that will promote positive climate legislation. This is just to name a few... *"Do everything in love" -1 Corinthians 16:14*

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

We are so excited to say goodbye to winter and jump into spring. January and February brought many days of indoor play and our staff did a great job finding new ways to get kids moving when we are unable to use the playground. With the return of pleasant weather, the children are greatly enjoying their playground time and our older classes have had the opportunity to visit the shelter house for a few picnic lunches.

Student Conferences were held in March, allowing our families and teachers time to discuss their child's growth and progress throughout the year. Spring is always a great time to truly notice and appreciate just how much each child grows during a school year.

Our staff continue to provide a wonderful program for children in our community to focus on building skills in all developmental areas through a balance of child-led play and teacher-led activities. Our Administrators and Classroom Teachers attended the 52nd Conference on the Young Years on Friday, March 7 and Saturday, March 8. We are grateful for the support of the LODO Ministry Team and Church Council for investing financial resources to allow LODO staff to attend this conference for the professional development necessary to continue our learning and development as educators. We always come back rejuvenated with new ideas to help our students blossom.

On March 16, The Rock Bridge High School Heart to Heart Club provided volunteer hours and completed many deep cleaning projects throughout our classrooms and in the Fellowship Hall where LODO shares space for snack, lunch, and indoor play. We are very grateful for the time they provided to assist in our Spring cleaning!

In Love and Laughter,
Erika Maltsbarger,
LODO Director



On March 18, after an extensive search and interview process, the CUCC Church Council voted unanimously to hire Sara Koenig as our next Little One's Day Out Preschool Director. Sara will be starting with the LODO program on April 1, working and training with Erika for the remaining seven weeks of the school year.

Sara comes to us with many years of preschool experience. She has been directing preschool programs since 2019, and was a preschool teacher for a decade before that. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Columbia College, where she graduated cum laude. We are blessed to have Sara on deck to lead our preschool ministry program.

Erika Maltsbarger will continue to lead the program through the end of the academic year, aiding Sara in her transition. We have been blessed by Erika's faithful and loving ministry over the past 17 years, and are sad to see her leave; but we are confident the program will be in good hands with Sara. Look for more information in weeks to come about how we will be celebrating Erika's ministry with us, and how we will celebrate the beginning of Sara's tenure. This is the beginning of a new era for our preschool ministry; praise God, from whom all blessings flow!



2025-2026 Enrollment

August 25, 2025-May 15, 2026

Lightning Bugs Class: 1 year old before 8/1/25
(Only available 9am-1pm)

Lambs Class: 2 years old before 8/1/25

Lions/Leopards Class: 3 years old before 8/1/25

Leap Frogs/Leopards Class: 4 years old before 8/1/25






Additional information about the LODO Program in available at www.columbiaucc.com/lodohome.

*Our Leopards Classroom will be assigned and utilized as either a 3-4's class or 3,4,5's class.

Contact us for information, openings, to schedule a tour, or to enroll!

Nurture & Education Ministry Team

HERE'S THE SCOOP

<p>Sundays 9:00-10:00 a.m.</p> 	<p>Learning & Fellowship for All Ages!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sunday School for ages 3-12th Grade.• Breakfast provided!• Adult Education Classes 
<p>Sunday 4/6</p> 	<p>Sunday School Resumes LOTS of activities planned for the Lenten season!</p>
<p>Sunday 4/13 PALM SUNDAY</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special Sunday School activities planned!• Children/youth will process into sanctuary with palm branches during church
<p>Sunday 4/20 EASTER SUNDAY</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easter activities for kids/youth, 9-10 a.m.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ PreK-4th: meet in Sunday School classrooms◦ 5th-12th grade: meet at Shelter House• Balloon release during worship! <p>(There will NOT be a Bake Sale as previously communicated)</p>
<p>July 28-30 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL</p>	<p>Registration OPEN for attendees & volunteers cucc.mycokesburyvbs.com</p>



Worship & Music Ministry Team

ERIC MOELLER IN CONCERT AT CUCC APRIL 4



Join us for a fun way to make a joyful noise to God! Rev. Eric Moeller, a CUCC Pastor and rock musician, will be in the CUCC Sanctuary on Friday, April 4 for a **FREE** concert to God's glory.

Eric's style of music is somewhat like Bruce Springsteen, Frank Turner and Jason Isbell with a classic rock and roll presence. His songs are about social justice and standing up for God's Word in a world that has strayed very far from it. He calls his music, "Soulful Rock and Roll with a Conscience."

The event is **FREE** and open to the public; there will be an opportunity to make a donation to Eric's music ministry and to purchase his music. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m., and the show will begin at 7:00 p.m. All are invited; and bring a friend!

The Rev. Eric Moeller is the son of two UCC pastors; his sister is also a UCC pastor. Eric attended Eden Seminary to earn his Master's of Divinity degree, and has served several churches in Missouri since then. He currently serves as the pastor of St. Thomas UCC in Chesterfield, as well as "All-In UCC," a new church start in the St. Louis area. Eric and his wife, Jorie, are very active at Camp MoVal, leading summer camps and special events. Eric worked on staff at MoVal for several years.

HOLY WEEK AT CUCC

As we continue our walk with Jesus to the cross and beyond, we come to the holiest time of year for a Christian—Holy Week. This week starts with Palm Sunday and concludes with Easter Sunday; but there is much more in between as we experience Jesus' Passion. The following services will be offered Holy Week at CUCC:

- Palm/Passion Sunday 4/13: We will celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and reflect on the fate that he will encounter there. Our children will process in waving palm branches and shouting, "Hosanna!" The service will conclude with a foreshadowing of the week that is to come.
- Good Friday 4/18: We will remember Jesus dying on the cross, an event that illustrated the extent of his love. In memoriam, we will celebrate the service of shadows (Tenebrae) as Jesus' followers desert him one by one.
- Sunrise Easter Service 4/20 at 6:30 a.m.: We will gather at the Shelter House to celebrate the resurrected Christ, reflecting on his emergence from the grave as we watch the sun rise together.
- Easter Worship 4/20 at 10:30 a.m.: We will gather in the Sanctuary to celebrate Jesus' resurrection together as a church family with communion, balloons, and the flowered cross.

We hope you will join us Holy Week as we celebrate the resurrected Christ together!

WELCOME TO QUORUS!

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

Quorus uses our facility for rehearsals, and we will the opportunity to work with them as they schedule performances around the area. We are also always thrilled to have Quorus join us for worship, praising God with their inclusive repertoire.

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



Outreach & Advocacy Ministry Team



We made it, CUCC!!! We are not just Partnership Friends with Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary School (AHL,) but we are now full-fledged Partners in Education (PIE.) When we started our work with AHL in December 2019/January 2020, we were in the category of Partnership Friends- a somewhat smaller commitment category. But, because of your dedication, hard work and devotion to AHL, Molly Delgado, the Community Relations Manager at Columbia Public Schools (CPS,) said, "let's change from friendship to partnership, it's what's already occurring." Molly also noted after the Annual PIE Celebration breakfast on March 7, 2025, that Columbia UCC has been with

the program for five years, and we will work to find a time when CUCC and AHL can celebrate this achievement before the school year ends.

Pastor Rick and Llona participated in "Read Across America- AHL 2025" during the week of March 3, and we read books to several classes, which is always so much fun for the students and for us! The questions that were asked and the comments made, about the books and us, were so enjoyable. CUCC still has members who volunteer their time in AHL's library. CUCC plans to assist AHL during student MAP testing during late April and early May by providing snacks. The AHL Carnival is Friday, April 25 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and CUCC has the opportunity to send volunteers again to this fun event. Teacher Appreciation Week is May 5-9, 2025, and CUCC plans to collect teacher snacks and gift cards, send handwritten thank you notes, etc.

The PTA and Principal at AHL asked if CUCC would be able to provide a volunteer to be with the younger AHL Trusty Huskies for one hour during the last two PTA meetings on Tuesday, April 8 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and/or on Thursday, May 1 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Please see Llona if you can help.

GOOD DADS AND CUCC

On Sunday, March 16, D'Markus Thomas-Brown, the regional director for the Good Dads program, was in worship with us, speaking about their work at Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary School. Good Dads is a state-wide program, based in Springfield, MO, that tries to encourage fathers taking active involvement in the lives of their elementary school students. Meeting monthly, they use simple discussion activities and food to encourage fathers and their children to do active work together and build a family bond.

Llona Weiss and Pastor Rick have been participating in the program, which meets with fathers and children the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 a.m. If you would like to participate, upcoming events are 4/16 and 5/21. Talk to [Pastor Rick](#) or [Llona Weiss](#) if you want to come be a part of this wonderful program!

The March 17 meal at Loaves and Fishes consisted of spaghetti (made by Mary and Audrey,) lettuce salad, bread (provided by Brenda Muench,) and cookies and brownies. Some of the brownies were made by the youth that were here for the conference in February and Connie Loveless and Jo Ellen Grace also made brownies. PB&J's were made by Mahree Skala. Servers and helpers for the evening were Judi Privitt, Mary & Tom Solt, Anne Heine, Jim Loveless, Debby (Mary's sister,) Jo Ellen Grace, and Mark Duncan. We had approximately 120 servings. Thanks to all for another successful evening! The next Loaves and Fishes date is April 21 at 4:30 p.m.



A small but mighty group packaged Cheerios on February 25, including Anne Heine, Connie Loveless, John and Brenda Muench, Ted and Mona Dachroeden, Mahree Skala, and Tricia Soncasie. More people than ever need help to be able to eat, and changes in federal policy are reducing the resources available to the Food Bank. Our next Food Bank shift will be on Tuesday, April 22 at 5:30 p.m. To sign up [CLICK HERE](#) or talk to [Mahree Skala](#). Let's come out in force on April 22 to help our fellow Missourians!

Team Earth

Earth Day and Reducing our Carbon Footprint

Earth Day, an annual event celebrated on April 22, originated in 1970 as a nationwide demonstration to raise awareness about environmental issues, spearheaded by Senator Gaylord Nelson, and has grown into a global movement with a billion people in nearly 200 countries participating.

One of the things we can focus on for Earth Day is reducing our personal carbon footprint.

So what is our carbon footprint? According to the Nature Conservancy, a carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gases (including carbon dioxide and methane) that are generated by our actions. The average carbon footprint for a person in the United States is 16 tons, one of the highest rates in the world.

So what can we do to reduce our carbon footprint and live more sustainably?

- 🌱 We can reduce single-use plastics by avoiding using plastic bags, straws, and bottles. Instead, we can use cloth bags, metal straws, and refillable water bottles.
- 🌱 We can minimize food waste by planning our meals, storing food properly, and composting our food waste to significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- 🌱 We can reduce our consumption of meat by incorporating more plant-based meals into our diet. Livestock farming is a major contributor to the world's methane emissions, contributing an estimated 11% to 17% of all global greenhouse emissions.
- 🌱 We can use energy efficiently by turning off lights when not in use, unplugging devices, and switching to energy-efficient appliances and LED light bulbs.
- 🌱 We can choose sustainable transportation by walking, biking, carpooling, or using public transportation instead of driving alone. This both reduces carbon emission and improves air quality. The fashion industry generates an estimated 80 million tons of textile waste each year, with only 15-20% being recycled or upcycled. A truckload of abandoned textiles is dumped in landfills or incinerated every second!
- 🌱 We can support renewable energy by choosing a green energy plan from our utility provider (if available) and investing in solar panels for our homes.

Most of these things are easy, no-cost or low-cost changes that we can incorporate into our lives to honor God's creation. Happy Earth Day!

TEAM EARTH PRESENTATION ON SUSTAINABILITY

Team Earth's presentation on March 16, 2025 was lead by Dr. Michael Chippendale, speaking on "Understanding Our Ecological Footprint: Steps Towards a Sustainable Future." There were around 43 attendees for the Lunch and Learn. Dr. Chippendale talked about the decline of the monarch butterflies. There is also a decline in the global insect populations, with a total decline of insects from 2009-2019 being 41%. The loss of bird populations is recorded from 1970-2019 being one out of four birds, with loss of habitat being one of the reasons.

Dr. Chippendale encouraged all of us to "think globally, act locally," especially as it relates to our sustainability and the earth. The human population in 1750 was around 630 million, and at the present time around 8.2 billion. The global consumption of natural resources is of great concern. Natural resources are presently being consumed more rapidly than they are being replaced. Over the long term, the current rate of human consumption of natural resources is not sustainable. In 2024, for the first time solar and wind power slightly overtook coal use in the United States. China is one of the leaders in solar power. It is a monumental challenge for us to wean ourselves off fossil fuels.

Long-term weather records exist for historical data, but climate involves the physics of earth's range of weather patterns. We, as humans, need to think about how long it takes to change public opinion as it relates to climate issues, and continue work in that regard. Dr. Chippendale related this thought to how long it took the public to stop smoking in public areas for health reasons, from 1960s to 2010s- 50 years!

Scouting America

Cub Scout Pack 5183

Cub Scout Pack 5183 had a tremendous turnout at their annual Pinewood Derby event this month. Through the Pinewood Derby, Scouts get to learn the basics of woodworking and the thrill of competition. This year we had 20 participants and a crowd of around 75 attendees. Thank you to Columbia UCC for allowing us the use of your space!



Scouting America Troops 708 and 4475

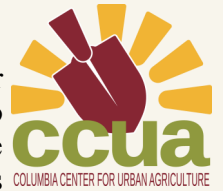
On Wednesday, March 19, CUCC troops 708 and 4475 participated in a combined Court of Honor at CUCC to celebrate awards and achievements earned by Scouts in the past few months. The Court of Honor is a significant time in the life of a Scout, as their achievements are recognized and they advance in rank. The Scout's parents are also recognized for working with their Scout to make these achievements possible.



THANK YOU!

Columbia United Church of Christ Men's Fellowship,

I would like to personally thank you for making our work possible at Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture. We are deeply humbled and privileged to be part of connecting people to agriculture and the land here in Columbia. Last year, we were able to grow and donate 50,000 pounds of fresh produce to families in need! Thank you again for your generous donation of \$850.00 to "Sponsor A Row" on January 21, 2025.



In health,
Rebecca Kerns, CCUA Development Manager



Show Me Central
Habitat
for Humanity®

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 growth in our town and owning my home will add my story to that! I am ready to make so many more memories with my children."

As always, we want to remind you that our program wouldn't be possible without the support of donations like yours. Thank you for your continued partnership!

Sincerely,
Ashely Switzer, Director of Community Outreach of Show Me Central Habitat for Humanity

Thank you for standing with us against hunger with your recent donation of \$419.00. Support like yours makes it possible for The Food Bank to make a lasting difference for thousands of individuals and families each month across our 32-county service area. It is sobering to know that one in seven adults and one in five children in Missouri struggle with hunger regularly. Many of these individuals are facing difficult trade-offs, balancing essential costs like grocery trips and utility bills as temperatures remain frigid. Thanks to the support like yours, we are able to share food and bring hope to folks like these who need it most.



Gratefully,
Lindsay Young, President and CEO of The Central and Northeast Missouri Food Bank

Thank you for your donation of \$500.00 to Columbia Older Adult Ministry that we received recently. We appreciate your support in this new year. As we look forward to what 2025 may have in store for all of us we will continue to support those in long-term care and retirement communities here in Columbia.



As we continue to share compassion, love, and care of God with Older Adults we do so in various ways. Sometimes I visit someone one-on-one during a difficult time. In the memory care communities at Lenoir Woods, The Neighborhoods, The Bluffs, and Arbors by Bluff Creek Terrace, I sing hymns with them, and we talk about how God takes care of us. They also share with me how meaningful the hymns are to them. I lead devotions, currently we are learning from the Proverbs at Tiger Place, Colony Pointe, and The Bluffs. And at Westbury Senior Living and The Terrace, I lead a vespers service twice a month. They always thank me for coming and bringing them a good message.

Blessings,
Sally A. Robinson, Director of Columbia Older Adult Ministry

International Missions

CUCC IS WORKING IN JAPAN

The Bazaar Café in Japan is a unique, community-focused care and social space known for its warm, inviting atmosphere and its focus on supporting cultural exchange and providing group counseling. Located in Kyoto, the Bazaar Café offers a diverse environment for people to connect, share ideas, and enjoy a variety of food and drinks. It provides a safe and accepting space for challenging conversations. The café also serves as a venue for events, including art exhibitions, live performances, and cultural workshops, further contributing to the sense of community. A project supported by the Kyoto district of the United Church of Christ in Japan, the Bazaar Café has become a beloved space where people of different backgrounds come together to experience great food, meaningful conversations, and cross-cultural engagement.

Through [Global Ministries](#), CUCC is a partner in mission with The Bazaar Cafe in Kyoto, Japan. Keep them in your prayers this month!



THE UCC CONTINUES TO SUPPORT EMBATTLED UKRAINIANS

by Donna Jackson, UCC News published on Mar 18, 2025

There's a Ukrainian proverb that goes, "To see a friend, no road is too long." For [Global Ministries](#), a joint mission between the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, there is no road too long to see - and help - the 6.9 million Ukrainians who have been displaced since Russia's invasion.

"As the war in Ukraine continues, our hearts remain heavy with the suffering of so many. Yet, even amid the devastation, we at Global Ministries remain steadfast in our commitment to walking alongside the Ukrainian people and all who are impacted by this conflict," said the Rev. Dr. LaMarco Antonio Cable, Executive Minister of Global Ministries. With the fighting entering its fourth year, Cable stressed the continuing need to stand with our partners in the region; the Reformed Church in Hungary, ACT Alliance, and Church World Service, to name a few; as well as to support their tireless efforts in providing life-saving aid; a need that has taken on a new urgency considering the current administration's stance on military and humanitarian aid.

According to the latest report from the UN Refugee Agency, there are about 12.7 million Ukrainians-including nearly two million children- in need of humanitarian assistance in 2025. *"Now more than ever, we must not grow weary,"* Cable said. *"The need is great, and our call as followers of Jesus is clear."*

The outpouring of love and support for Ukraine within both the UCC and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) over the past three years has been extraordinary, says Cable. *"We have witnessed churches and individuals come to together in solidarity to offer resources for food, shelter, medical care, and hope,"* he said. But as the needs of the Ukrainian people continue, so does the work of meeting those needs.

Since Russia's invasion the UCC and Disciples have raised millions of dollars for Ukrainian aid through special appeals, as well as offerings, including the UCC's [One Great Hour of Sharing \(OGHS\)](#), a special offering that will be received in local churches on April 4. According to Andrew Long-Higgins, [the UCC's Ukrainian Appeal](#) has raised a little over \$3.3 million over the past two years, disbursed in support of the immediate needs of humanitarian efforts across Ukraine.

Long-Higgins also stressed the importance of supporting the long-term needs that will exist for Ukrainians long after the much-hoped-for and still-awaiting prospect of peace comes. *"When we engage in humanitarian response, one of our commitments is accompanying the people long-term. Even if there is a peace agreement tomorrow, the needs are going to persist for quite some time."*

On the Church Calendar in April

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
6 - BRING A FRIEND SUNDAY 7:30 a.m. - Men's Fellowship 9:00 a.m. - Faith Education 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship 12:00 p.m. - Taco Bar	7 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	8 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:30 a.m. - Staff Mtg. 6:30 p.m. - Troop 708 6:30 p.m. - Finance & Stewardship Ministry Team	9 5:30 p.m. - Taizé Service 6:00 p.m. - Prayer Shawl 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers	10 9:30 a.m. - Women's Fellowship	11 9:00 a.m. - LODO Staff Meeting	12 9:00 a.m. - Clean Up Columbia
13 - PALM SUNDAY 9:00 a.m. - Faith Education 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship	14 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	15 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 10:30 a.m. - Staff Meeting 6:30 p.m. - Council	16 5:30 p.m. - Taizé Service 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers	17	18 - GOOD FRIDAY 7:00 p.m. - Worship	19
20 - EASTER 6:30 a.m. - Worship 7:00 a.m. - Breakfast 9:00 a.m. - Faith Education 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship	21 4:30 p.m. - Loaves and Fishes 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	22 10:00 a.m. - Quilters 5:30 p.m. - Food Bank	23 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers	24	25	26
27 - EARTH DAY 9:00 a.m. - Faith Education 10:00 a.m. - Fellowship 10:30 a.m. - Worship	28 7:00 p.m. - Scouting America	29 10:00 a.m. - Quilters	30 6:00 p.m. - Chapel Ringers 7:00 p.m. - Celebration Singers			

The Communicator

Columbia United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation ONA #1575

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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.



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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**

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.

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!