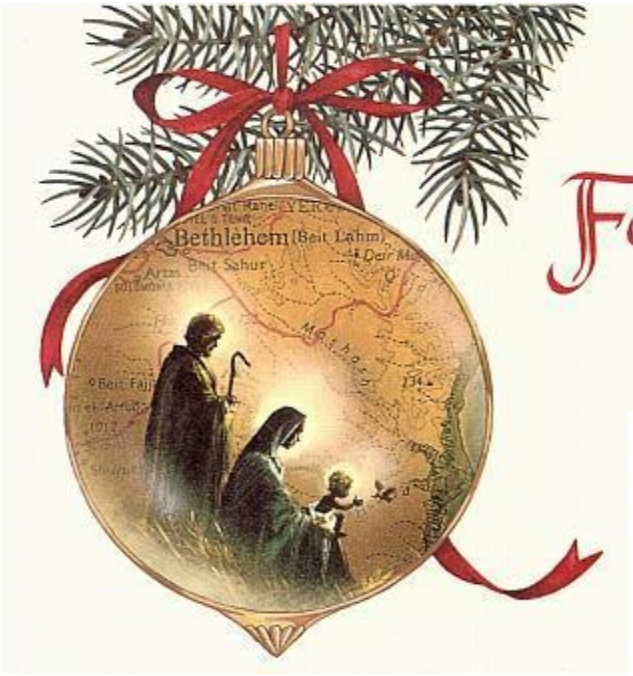
THE COMMUNITY Spirit
THE GOOD NEWS OF
CHRIST COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH - COLUMBIA, IL
DECEMBER 2017




For unto us a Child is born·
unto us a Son is given·

# CHRISTMAS
*AT*
*Christ Community*

## CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING

**10:30 a.m. | Lessons & Carols**

**It's the 4th Sunday of Advent AND Christmas Eve**

*We gather for regular Sunday morning worship filled with both Advent & Christmas Carols and the final lessons leading up to the celebration of Christmas Joy. Communion will be celebrated.*

## CHRISTMAS EVE

**5:00 p.m. | Family Christmas Service**

*This is for the whole family– Come enjoy the abundance of Christmas carols to be sung, and a special Christmas Eve message will delight young and old alike!! This service is a bit shorter so that families can move on to other commitments (and little ones can get to bed). Join us and don't forget to invite friends and family!*

**11:00 p.m. | Candlelight Service with Holy Communion**

*This quiet candlelit option is a great way to finish Christmas Eve with the true heart of the holiday...the Christ of Christmas. Filled with traditional carols and readings, this service literally ushers in Christmas Day as we welcome in the Christ Child with the dawning of a new day.*

PASTOR'S COLUMN

**Pastor Jared Parker**

# What does Christmas mean... ...THIS year?

It might seem strange at first, but Christmas is probably the hardest day to preach...rivaled very closely by Easter. Why? Simply put—it's the same story every year! I know. Just call me Captain Obvious. But it's true. Added to that is the exposure of such a night to more than the average number of visitors as well as those that may only come through our doors on that one night a year, period. That's a lot of pressure to retell or reorient people to the same story year in and year out, and yet somehow make it fresh, challenge us, compel us, and move us.

Enter...the Worship Team. This is a small but amazing group of people who meet with me monthly to speak of the worship of God in our particular church, reflect on past worship moments and particulars, and look ahead to future worship gatherings. We talk about the technical stuff...how is the sound system and projection, how is the flow of the morning, what might help people encounter God more deeply, and so on. We also get to think out loud together about the possible themes and direction of specific worship services and sermon series.

Well I met with this wonderful team in early November to look ahead to Advent and Christmas and I asked them this very question: "What does Christmas mean THIS year?" And what a wonderful conversation we had. The details of it will be revealed as we work our way through Advent, but I wanted to share the spirit of it with you now.

We acknowledged the obvious—the story is the same, but how does it meet us THIS year? We confessed to one another in our own way that we, as a community, as a country, as humanity are approaching Christmas filled with more stress, fear, anxiety, frustration, and division than at perhaps any time in recent memory. We wondered aloud how the message of Christmas can and should be present in the midst of such a reality. There is certainly the temptation to use it as an escape, and we admitted to our own temptation for this. "Let's just forget all the challenges and focus on angels and shepherds and cute barnyard animals and a precious little baby. Don't we deserve that after this year?" Very tempting and very understandable.

But we realized how important the Christmas message is in the midst of the very challenges we find ourselves in. A message of hope. A message that proclaims directly to us, "Do Not Fear!" A message about God being truly with us in the messiness of life. A message about peace—a peace that truly does surpass all human understanding.

So while tempted to sweep aside the muckiness of life right now, we realized that in this season, through our worship (and other ways as well) we must be reminded that we have a God who humbled himself, took on flesh, stooped down to earth to be WITH us...in the muck & mire, in the hatred and the bigotry, in the intolerant and the overly tolerant...GOD WITH US...EMMANUEL.

What will Christmas mean THIS year? Hopefully a GREAT DEAL.

Pastor Jared

## Church Council Leadership—2017

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Paul Albers** | **618.281.2758** | **masseyman55@yahoo.com** | **Suzanne Castleman** | **618.978.9922** | **suzannecastleman54@gmail.com** |
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| **Chris Browne** | **618.210.2942** | **cbrowne@kaskaskia.edu** | | | |

These are people of the church just like you. People who have families and jobs and lives outside of this place. As members of council they are committed to giving their all to serve God's mission in this church and represent you all. If you have thoughts, questions, or concerns, they would love to hear from you directly and get to know you more. Feel free to reach out to them personally as you're able. For your convenience two members of council host "Fireside Chats" monthly on the first Sunday of the month immediately following worship to be available to simply listen.

Prepare Ye, the Way of the Lord!

# Come to the Quiet

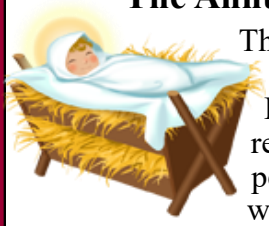
## Step away from the busy-ness of the season and into Advent supper & service nights

This year, as the bustle of the season sets in, you are invited to "come to the quiet" each Wednesday in Advent (December 6th, 13th & 20th). Each week we'll prepare for the Christ child by quieting our hearts and souls with a time of worship featuring Holden Evening Prayer. This year we will also focus our attention on a different Christmas Carol each week, reflecting on the meaning of some of our most beloved Christmas songs.

Each Wednesday begins with a nice hot meal (no cooking, no cleaning) at 6:15 p.m., worship service at 7:00 p.m. Childcare for children up through Kindergarten is available (and encouraged to foster a quiet, contemplative mood for worship). These services have become an annual tradition that many look forward to each year. Make it part of YOUR holiday tradition this year.

## "And a Little Child Shall Lead Them…"

### The Annual Christmas Program



This year's Christmas program will be held on Sunday, December 17th, during regular worship. Young people 3 years of age and up will share in the joy of telling this timeless story to the congregation.

Of course some preparation and rehearsal are necessary to give our best to the Lord! Rehearsals are during Sunday school as well as in the midst of worship on December 3rd & December 10th as well as a full dress rehearsal on Saturday, Dec. 16th, 9-11 a.m. Plus, there are practice CDs with lyrics if any want to catch up and/or learn the music at home. Please contact Suzanne Haubein if you have questions (mhaubein@htc.net).

## Parent's Day Out!

### December 9th

**11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

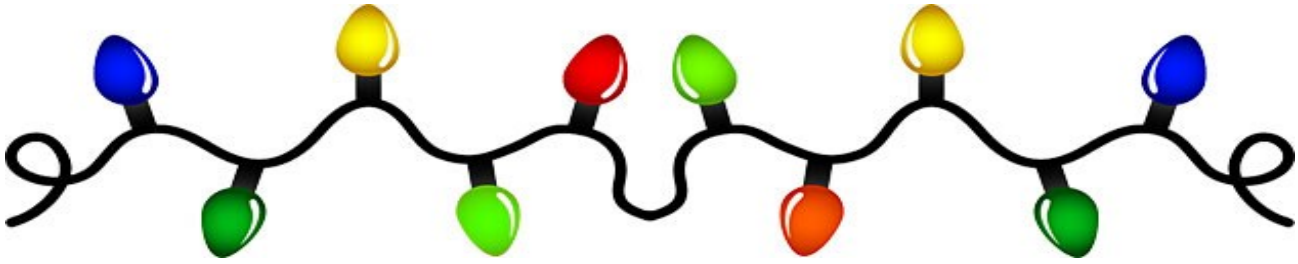
Bring your kids 5th grade and under to be watched by Ignite and Amplify Youth and some caring adults. We are equipped and excited to watch children of all ages while you finish your Christmas Shopping, wrap presents, or just have some adult time.

Cost: A Donation of your choice to benefit our Summer 2018 trip to the National Gathering in Houston!

**SAVE THE DATES FOR MORE WAYS to SUPPORT OUR YOUTH!**

January 13, 2018
**TRIVIA & SILENT AUCTION**

February 10, 2018
***PARENT'S NIGHT OUT***



## COLUMBIA CHRISTMAS PARADE OF LIGHTS

CCLC will once again join in the festivities of the 6th Annual Columbia Christmas Parade "Bright Night Christmas" on Saturday, December 2nd kicking off at 5:00 p.m. at City Park. All are welcome. Want to help with the float or ride/walk with the float? Let's make a great showing at this parade and have a whole lot of fun doing it. What a wonderful chance to witness the REAL (and ONLY) reason for Christmas – Jesus, the Light of the World.

*For more information, contact Paul Albers at 618-281-2758. Stay tuned to the weekly bulletin and e-mail updates for more information!*

# Mission & Outreach at CCLC

***Offering the Heart of Christ with our Hands***

## THANK YOU!!

Another successful sack lunch mission! Thanks to all who donated time to assemble lunches for the hungry on Veteran's Day. We are blessed to be a blessing!

## ADOPT A FAMILY CHRISTMAS MISSION

We have 45 needy individuals of all ages who need our help with some basic needs this holiday season. Choose an ornament from the Christmas Trees on the M & O bulletin boards near the entry of church, as well as an instruction sheet from the stocking on the mantel. The instruction sheet details how to return your donations (December 7th) as well as the many ways your gifts will make a difference.

## HELPING...IT'S ALWAYS IN SEASON

During the Christmas season we are almost bombarded with ways to help others who are less fortunate than ourselves. This "season of giving" is the only time of year many non-profits are not begging for help. Most of us are blessed to be able to share what we have and we do so as much as possible this time of year.

As this joyous season and this year end, let's look within ourselves and ask how we can keep this momentum and good spirit alive throughout the rest of the year. Whether in big ways or small, within the church or on our own, how can we create a season of giving that lasts year round?

## SERVANTS GARDEN IN THE NEWS

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch did an article about the Servants Garden and its chief gardener, Mark Hendershot profiling his amazing volunteer efforts to feed the hungry. What a wonderful tribute to Mark and the whole garden ministry!! Year to date produce production is now 22,525 pounds! Praise the Lord!!

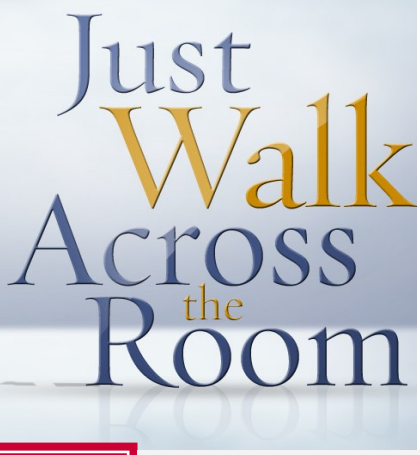
## SSALT

**Sisters Sharing and Learning Together**

***"You are the salt of the earth."***
**Matthew 5:13**

**A very heartfelt thank you to everyone for making the "Baby Shower" a great success. Please join us for our next gathering on Sunday, Dec. 10th at Karen Walker's home. Contact Mike Schmidt for more information.**

**To kick off 2018, you will have a unique and exciting opportunity to participate in a Bible study alongside fellow members of CCLC. This "Just Walk Across the Room" study was developed by Pastor Bill Hybels. Please don't be scared off by the word "study". This gathering is an exciting opportunity for seasoned Bible scholars and rookies alike to learn and grow together in God's word. We hope you will sign up for one of the studies conducted at various host sites within the area. Signup sheets are located at the Welcome Center.**




# PLEDGING:

## AN ACT OF LOVE...A LEAP OF FAITH

Few things match the joy of giving to others. At Christ Community that giving spirit has always been present in the many households who give of themselves week in and week out to help further God's work in the world. Last month, the people of Christ Community responded again—pledging part of themselves for the year ahead! A pledge is simply a promise, but in the church it's more than that. It's an act of love that arises from your appreciation of God's blessings in your life, and an act of faith in God's ultimate provision. Thank you to all who have stepped out in faith for our church. Together we will be doing great things for God's Kingdom in 2018...and beyond.

### FAQ about Pledging at CCLC

**Can I still turn in a pledge card?** A card can be turned in at any time to the attention of the church bookkeeper. Pledges are especially helpful in the budgeting process before year end.

**Can I change my pledge mid-year?** Remember it is a faith-filled estimate of your desire and potential, but economic circumstances can change suddenly both positively and negatively. When you share those changes with us, it helps to navigate the shortfalls and windfalls that happen.

**Why can't I just give?** Giving in every variety is wonderful. But the reason Christ Community encourages pledging is the beautiful discipline it creates for your own generous living. It commits you to sharing more than your leftovers. Equally important, it's the way you help your church plan its ministry. We shape our ministry on the upfront generosity of member pledges. These pledge commitments help form the budget that allows us to live faithfully and joyously all year long and frees us from turning to repetitive and unwelcome appeals for giving.

## 2018 Pledging By the Numbers*

**46**
*Total Pledges*

**10**
*New Pledges*

**22**
*Increased Pledges*

**2**
*Decreased Pledges*

**$151,468**
*Total Pledged, 2016*

**$274**
*Avg Monthly Pledge*

**-as of printing date*

# Children, Youth, & Family Ministry

***Raising Young People to Know God and be Transformed by Christ***

# DECEMBER YOUTH EVENTS

**Sunday, December 3rd**
**ROCK in December**
Youth from the Rock are encouraged to attend the Advent Afternoon Adventure with their family following worship.

**IGNITE 6:00—7:30p.m.**
Lynn continues to lead the way. What will she have in store for our middle schoolers this time?

**Saturday, December 9th**
**Parents Day Out—11 a.m. - 4 p.m.**
This is one of the annual fund raisers for Ignite/ Amplify summer missions & adventures. All youth in these groups need to make plans to attend and help make this a successful event.

**Sunday, December 17th**
**Amplify and Ignite**
**Christmas Gathering**
With Jesus' birth at the heart of Christmas, we'll go on a journey exploring this all important event in a very unique way you won't want to miss. Make sure you dress for the weather. We'll close our time with some cocoa and cookies at the church. Don't miss out on this final youth event of 2017.

## December 3rd

12—2 p.m.
The Family Advent Night has been a favorite for a long time, but this year will take on a whole new look & feel.

### Presenting...

...the same fantastic gathering for families with children preparing for Christmas…
...at a GREAT, NEW, CONVENIENT time...
*...right after church!!*

Filled with food, a special Advent calendar craft the whole family can create, and some great family togetherness, we turn our hearts towards Christmas.

**All Sunday School classes will be in recess following the Christmas Program on December 17th to give our awesome teachers a well deserved break. Sunday School will resume for the new semester on January 14, 2018. See you then for a New Year of learning in the Lord!**

# December Birthdays

2 Marty Hunsucker
3 Susan Bolen
Lauren Gilbert
Kara Hunsucker
4 Brenda Nellums
5 Mason McConachie
7 Tara Luhr
10 Madeline Frein
14 Ava Rau
15 Eva Spoljaric
16 Glenna Etheridge
Jonah Velnosky
17 Bill Groennert
Emily Buss
23 Zoe Bryant
26 Lori Vogt
29 John Schoentag
30 Nadia Spoljaric

# Finishing the Year Strong

As we close out 2017, please do your best to fulfill your pledged or planned giving to your church. The ministry of Christ Community depends on the generosity of its members. Because of your part in giving to your church we can do amazing things in the name of Christ for a hurting world. Help us finish strong and responsibly in 2017. If God has blessed you with unexpected resource this year and you can do even more, know that your gift will multiply in many amazing ways!

*If you need additional information about the current status of your giving or pledge, please contact the Penny Madlinger, Church Office Manager, at pmadlinger@christclc.org or 281-4646, ext. 109.*

# LIFE PASSAGES

**BAPTISM**
*Brought into the Family of God*
**Logan Michael Stapf**
Son of
Matt & Amanda Stapf
November 19, 2017

**FUNERAL**
*We grieve with hope in Christ*
**Ruthmarie Polansky**
Died—Oct 21, 2017,
Service—Nov 4, 2017

## Congregational Offerings

*We give thanks to God for all who generously support the mission and ministry of Christ Community. We can't do God's work without your support!*

**Budgeted Year-to-date Offering Target $ 162,080**
**Actual Year-to-date Offerings $ 154,012**

*Amounts as of the end of **October***

# Christmas Poinsettias

**Help brighten the church this year by donating a Poinsettia plant!**
**The donation is $15 per plant and can be given in honor or memory of loved ones or simply to God's glory. Look for a sign up sheet at the Welcome Center.**
**Thank you for helping to brighten our Christmas worship!**

# Grow in God's Word for Your Life Every Week

## *Dig into God's Word each week*

**Week of December 3rd—1st Sunday of Advent**
*Isaiah 6:4-9;Psalm 80:1-19;1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 12:24-37*

**Week of December 10th –2nd Sunday of Advent**
*Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15; Mark 1:1-8*

**Week of December 17th—3rd Sunday of Advent**
*Isaiah 6:1-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-28*

**Week of December 24th– 4th Sunday of Advent**
*2 Samuel 7:1-16; Psalm 89:1-26; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-28*

**Week of December 31st—Nativity of Our Lord**
*Isaiah 62:6-12; Psalm 97; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:1-20*

*Use these scriptures as one way to read God's Word as a regular discipline. Draw close to God's Word and you draw close to God...*

## *Join in on Sunday Morning*

***9 a.m.—Sunday School***

***10 a.m.—Fellowship Time***

***10:30 a.m.—Worship***

## *Dive in Deeper*

Join a ministry team or volunteer in a myriad of ways. Make your faith come alive! Fill out a Ministry Opportunity Form located at the Welcome Center or talk to Pastor Jared.

# December @ CCLC

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nov 26<br>9a Sunday School<br>10a Fellowship<br>10:30a Worship<br>Deck the Halls | Nov 27<br>7p Boy Scouts | Nov 28<br>7:45 Prayer Breakfast @ Aunt Maggie's | NOV 29<br>9:15a WCM Chapel<br>9:45a Staff<br>4:30p Confirmation | NOV 30 | 1 | 2<br>5p-Columbia Christmas Parade |
| 3<br>9a Adult Ed/Xmas Reh.<br>10a Fellowship<br>10:30a Worship<br>**12:00p Family Advent Adventure**<br>12:00p Top of the Hill Gang—Waterloo Country Club<br>6p-Ignite | 4<br>5pm WCM Board<br>7p Boy Scouts | 5<br>7:45 Prayer Brkfst @ Aunt Maggie's<br>7p Worship Team | 6<br>9:15a WCM Chapel<br>9:45a Staff<br>6:15p Advent Meal<br>7p Advent Midweek Worship | 7<br>10a CCC Worship | 8 | 9<br>11a—4p Parent's Day Out |
| 10<br>9a Adult Ed/Xmas Reh.<br>10a Fellowship<br>10:30a Worship<br>7:30p SSALT@ Karen Walker's home | 11<br>6p Finance<br>7p Boy Scouts | 12<br>7:45 Prayer Brkfst @ Aunt Maggie's | 13<br>9:15a Chapel<br>9:45a Staff<br>4:30p Confirmation<br>6:15p Advent Meal<br>7p Advent Midweek Worship | 14<br>**Newsletter Submission Deadline**<br>7p Council | 15<br>4:30p WCM Christmas Program | 16<br>9-11a-Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal |
| 17<br>9a Adult Ed/Xmas Reh.<br>10a Fellowship<br>10:30a Worship<br>**Christmas Program**<br>6:00 Amplify/Ignite Christmas<br>8:00p Group 133 @ Bully's | 18<br>7p Boy Scouts | 19<br>7:45 Prayer Brkfst @ Aunt Maggie's | 20<br>9:15a WCM Chapel<br>9:45 Staff<br>6:15p Advent Meal<br>7p Advent Midweek Worship | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 CHRISTMAS EVE<br>10a Fellowship<br>10:30a Worship<br>**5:00p Christmas Eve Festival Worship**<br>**11:00p Candlelight Service**<br>31<br>10a Fellowship<br>10:30a Worship | 25<br>CHRISTMAS DAY<br> <br>Programs & Offices Closed | 26<br>7:45 Prayer Brkfst @ Aunt Maggie's | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

# CCLC Staff Directory

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