



CHRISTIAN

Strength for the Journey. Grace for the Soul.

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We joyfully welcome and nurture all people by providing a vibrant Christ-centered community of faith, dedicated to spiritual growth through worship, study and service.

A Christmas Festival – for All Ages

Sun., Dec. 13

New this year! Where else can you find Santa, stories, and song, cookies, cocoa and caroling, all in one amazing evening? Come for all or part of the festivities. This event is sure to become a new holiday tradition for all ages.

5:00 p.m. – The whole church is invited to enjoy chili and cookies with Santa himself. Make some food for Santa's reindeer. Have your photo taken by the Sanctuary tree for a complimentary keepsake ornament.

6:00 p.m. – Christmas Story and Song, a program featuring seasonal music and readings, begins in the Sanctuary, including performances by the Sticks & Phones Orffestra, Chancel Choir, Jubilee Ringers, Children's Music and soloists.

7:00 p.m. – Bundle up and hop on the trolley for old-fashioned caroling as we spread cheer in our church neighborhood. Afterward, grab a warm cup of cider or cocoa.



Christmas Offering to Week of Compassion

By Lance Jessee

Each year at this time the Outreach Council of Country Club Christian Church chooses a recipient for our Christmas offering. This season's offering will be directed to

Week of Compassion's relief projects, the Syrian refugee crisis in the Middle East and Europe. The United Nations has said this is the largest refugee crisis since World War II. Hundreds of thousands of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq and Somalia are flooding into Greece, Serbia and Hungary.



The refugees arrive with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Families are sheltering on open beaches waiting for registration and help. Winter is coming and they need warm clothing, shelter and food.

Week of Compassion is working with the World Council of Churches and other partners to provide aid to not only the refugees arriving in Europe, but those arriving in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey as well.

Some of the items provided are:

- Water, sanitation facilities, and hygienic items for women and children
- Medical equipment, supplies and medicine

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Christmas offering, *continued from page 1*

- Psychological, emotional, spiritual, and social support for children and their mothers in refugee camps
- Clothes, blankets, and other non-food items in preparation for the coming winter
- Emergency shelters.

You may recall that last year we chose Week of Compassion's efforts to provide relief and emergency equipment to those fighting Ebola in East Africa. You generously gave over \$30,000 to help in that fight, and now I'm pleased to report that the last country of East Africa that had reported Ebola has had no new cases and is counting down the days until it is declared Ebola free.

Please help support Week of Compassion in this new humanitarian effort. Please help support Week of Compassion in this humanitarian effort. These refugees have lost everything. They must rely on the generosity, compassion and love of others. God has many children, and we as Christians are called to love them all. Please pray for the refugees struggling all over the world and generously give to this year's offering.

Mark your gift "Christmas Offering" and mail it to the church office, or drop it in the offering plate on Sunday.

Lance Jessee is chair of the Outreach Grants and Special Offering Team.

Join Us this Advent Season

Brass Christmas Concert

Mon., Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m.

The Kansas City Brass present a traditional concert featuring seasonal favorites at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

Music of the Season Concert

10:00 a.m., Dec. 20, Sanctuary.

Christmas music by Country Club Singers.

Christmas Eve Worship Services

Thur., Dec. 24

This holy evening begins with worship for children and families, followed by two traditional candlelight services.

5:30 p.m. – Children and families service.

8:00 and 11:00 p.m. – Traditional candlelight service featuring the Kansas City Brass. Communion at 11:00 p.m. service only.

One Service on December 27

We will have one worship service at 10:30 a.m. Child care will be available.

Grand Re-Opening of The Well

Come help us celebrate the opening of the "new" Well gift shop on Sun., Dec. 13 from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. We have a fresh

new space to show off on the main floor.

Hopefully a few things you will find to pamper yourself or to buy for someone on your Christmas list. Stop by and enter our drawing to win prizes!



The Well will offer books and Bibles, support materials and supplies for your Bible study group, fashion accessories including scarves, jewelry and handbags, trendy readers designed by a true optical company, greeting cards for every occasion, baby and children's gifts, books and toys, a few gift's for men, treats to tame your sweet tooth, seasonal décor, and many other unique gifts for any occasion.

The Well would like to become your "go to" place when you need a sympathy card or bereavement gift, or to pick up something to encourage a person who is struggling with cancer or an illness. You might be a new grandparent or need a shower gift for a precious newborn. Maybe you need gifts for your bunco group or a hostess gift. You might just need something for YOU.

All proceeds support Week of Compassion, the disaster relief agency of the Christian Church.



Let's Pray and Then Act

Dr. R. Glen Miles



“When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children...”

I've never preached a sermon on this verse at Christmas or any other time for that matter. It's part of the story though. You may recall when Joseph and Mary heard of Herod's intent to kill their baby boy, they packed up in the middle of the night and immigrated to Egypt. Herod had hoped the wise men would come back and tell him where Jesus was but they were warned that his intent was for violence. They went home by another way.

I love this story in Matthew's gospel. Joseph acts decisively and courageously to save his little family. The wise men do the right thing and instead of being intimidated by the powerful they listen to their hearts and do what they can to help the child survive.

I've preached on this part of the story. I've focused on Joseph's fortitude and the wise men's courageous willingness to take another road home. I've never preached on the rest of the story, though, the part about Herod and his execution of the baby boys of Bethlehem.

I cannot even begin to imagine the grief and sadness experienced in those families. I'm unable to wonder about their thoughts of revenge as they buried their tiny ones.

I'm sure though that there are parents today in San Bernardino who know these feelings. Husbands and wives and children, too. They can imagine the heartache, the tidal wave of sorrow, the desire for justice.

And they are not alone. The list of cities that have seen the mass murder of innocents includes not only Bethlehem and San Bernardino, but Charleston and Roseburg, Colorado Springs and Beirut, Paris and Baghdad, Columbine and Sandy Hook. There are many, many more. When will it stop?

I'd like to do something, anything, but what? Some say we need more gun control, while others say we need to arm everyone so they can defend themselves. Neither option seems very helpful at the moment.

When I don't know what to do, I fall on my knees in prayer. I prayed today for the victims and their families and friends. With tears on my face and anger in my heart, I prayed for our country, too. I asked God to shake us from our foolish partisan bickering. I prayed that we'd stop offering platitudes and instead get up off of our knees and give ourselves over to the power of God's love. I prayed that we would find a way to break down the walls of fear, tear

continued on right

Let's Pray and Act, *continued from left*
down the barriers of resentment, push aside our tendency to blame and find a way to say “this far and no further. The violence must end.”

In this season of joy we are invited to follow the star to the cradle of a tiny baby. That baby, according to our faith, is the hope of our world. I'm sure Joseph and Mary prayed for the child. And I'm just as sure that as soon as they said “Amen,” they got on to the work of doing all they could to help that little boy. It's time for us to do the same for the world that Jesus gave his life to save. It's time to say, “Amen,” and begin the work of turning our world toward the peace of God.

Grace and peace to you,

Worship with us!

**Service Times: 9:00, 10:00
and 11:00 a.m.**

**Advent Sermon Series:
Breath of Heaven**

Dec. 6

Part 2: You Have Nothing to Fear
– Mary
Luke 1:26-38

Dec. 13

Part 3: Glory to God – Shepherds
Luke 2:8-10

Dec. 20

Part 4: Another Road Home – Magi
Matthew 2:1-12

Adult Ministries at Country Club Christian Church

Socks for Micah Ministry Christmas

Make Christmas a little brighter for our friends at Independence Boulevard Christian Church's Micah Ministry! You, your family, Sunday school class or small group can purchase pairs of tube socks from the church at a cost of \$9/12 pack or .75 per pair, then purchase your own supplies to fill the stockings. To sign up your group and purchase socks, contact Mary Margaret House at marymargareth@cccckc.org or 816-333-4917. Each sock should be filled with the second sock in the pair and items that can be used by either men or women such as small sized toiletries including shower soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, skin lotion, lip balm, and washcloth. Please, no candy or food items. Tie the socks closed with ribbon. Filled socks should be delivered to church no later than Sun., Dec. 20.



Virginia Reed Food Drive

The next food drive is Sun., Dec. 13. We have three ways to share the bounty with the hungry in our community:

1. Bring canned goods to our donation points in the parlor and the chapel, and at the doors any time. Please do not bring anything in a glass container. Cans, boxes and plastic containers all work well and are not accidentally broken as easily as glass.
2. Make a financial contribution to the Virginia Reed Food Drive on the Harvesters Community Food Network website (christianchurch.harvestersvfd.org). We will have a computer in the parlor on Dec. 13 for you to make your online contribution.
3. Make a financial contribution to the church and mark your check or giving envelope "food drive." You may place these gifts in the offering plate during worship.

Your gifts support the five area food pantries that our church supports: Community Christian Church, Alta Vista Christian Church, First Christian Church, Della Lamb Community Services and Cross-Lines Community Outreach.

Mungeli, India, Hospital Presentation

During the Sunday School hour on Sun., Dec. 13, Steve and Alice Minson will present a program about Christian Hospital Mungeli to the Koinonia Class in Rm. 309, and all classes are invited. In January, 14 members of our congregation will be spending time at CHM in India. This is a chance to get to know more about the hospital, Rambo Memorial School and the nursing school. You can see more about CHM, including video, at chmungeli.org. If your class will attend, please contact Nancy Lear at nancylear@gmail.com.

Sign Up for 2016 Christian Community Camp

Sign up for a glorious week at the YMCA of the Rockies near Estes Park, CO. The 2016 camp will be July 30-Aug. 6. For many years, families and individuals from our congregation have gathered for a week of hiking, horseback riding, fishing, crafting, relaxing and fun at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colorado. A registration form and a \$250 non-refundable deposit will hold your place. Cost is \$1,700 for a private room; \$375 for the women's bunk room. Food and activity fee of \$85 per person. For more information, contact Rev. Monica Lewis at monical@cccckc.org or 816-333-4917.

**Note the 2017 camp dates are June 3-10.*

Prison Book Ministry

We are collecting books for our Lansing Correctional Facility Library Book Ministry. Volunteers from our church go to the prison to help the librarian catalog and stock donated books. Acceptable genres include mysteries, suspense, current best sellers, history, Westerns, science fiction, Spanish language books, and Spanish-English dictionaries. We cannot accept romance novels, *Reader's Digest*, Bibles (we have plenty), or product manuals. Paperback books are preferred though hardback volumes are accepted. New this year, we are also accepting manual and electric typewriters. Donations may be placed under the table in our east entrance. For more information or to learn about volunteering in this ministry call our church office or email care@cccckc.org.



Music: More Than Sound

By Dr. Paul Tucker, Co-Interim Director of Music



These past months at Country Club Christian Church have been a rush, to put it mildly. I have learned many wonderful things about the musicians, congregation, staff and ministers during this short time.

As we passed through the Thanksgiving season, I was reminded that my arrival here was because of several good people. Dina Pannabecker Evans was initially the influence for my coming to Country Club Christian Church, and for this I am thankful. My transition with the Chancel Choir has been smoother than anyone could have expected. This transition can be directly attributed to Rev. David Diebold, who not only prepared the choir to continue doing their best work, but also warmly and graciously welcomed me to the church. David is an easy person to like.

From the first rehearsal, the members of the Chancel Choir made me feel comfortable, although I am sure they did not know what to expect. At our break in the rehearsal, I asked them what I was expected to do during the break. They all turned, faced me, and immediately informed me of what David did during the breaks. I knew right away the shoes I had to fill.

Now as we enter the Christmas season, I look forward to the great familiar hymns, carols and songs of the season. I look forward to exploring music of other cultures and countries as a means of learning more about people who, by their physical appearance, may seem to be so different or even foreign to my way of thinking. Music by its very nature is an avenue into sharing our thoughts and beliefs with others.

It is through music that I have come to understand more about David, the members of the Chancel Choir, the Jubilee Ringers, the ministerial staff, and the congregation at Country Club Christian Church.

Sincerely,
Paul Tucker

Columbarium, Advance Planning

Brightly colored leaves enflame our trees, then gently drift to our lawns. The days grow cooler and shorter. The earth invites to be mindful of our own seasons. If you would like information on a niche in our columbarium or other advance planning materials, please call Rev. Joe Walker, 816-333-4917.

Mission Experience Opportunity

Join us for a life-changing spiritual experience as we journey to Nicaragua to meet and serve alongside our sisters and brothers in Central America. There is still room for you on our mission Feb. 20-28, 2016. Your cost is about \$1,650 all-inclusive. The opportunity to experience first-hand this vibrant culture and the church-in-service will reward you with memories to last a lifetime. To sign up, call or email Rev. Joe Walker, joew@cccckc.org. If you cannot join us in February, please consider a financial gift to help fund our high school student trip in Summer 2016.

Save the Date! 2016 Dinner and Auction

Mark your calendar for the 7th Annual Celebration Dinner and Auction, Fri., Mar. 4, 2016 at Boulevard Brewery.

Auction – It's really not too soon! The committee will be looking for Live Auction items, Super Silent items and items by category, such as sports, electronics, jewelry, restaurants, gift packages, for the event. Creative ideas for donated items by individuals, groups working together or by Sunday School class are welcome!

Student Ministries News

Middle School Ice Skating Christmas Party

Sat., Dec. 5, 12:00-3:00 p.m. This is a FREE event for all 6th-8th grade students. Lunch will be provided. Meet at church for pizza and then we will ride the bus to Crown Plaza for ice skating. RSVP to Elizabeth Pfalzgraf via phone or text 402-415-9414 or email at youth@cccckc.org.

High School Christmas Party

Sun., Dec. 6, 12:00-3:00 p.m. This is a FREE event for 9th-12th grade students. Meet at church for Chipotle then together we will go to Target to shop for Christmas presents for Della Lamb Community Services teens. We will return to church to wrap the presents and have dessert. Bring \$10 to go toward the presents. Lunch is provided! (There will be a raffle drawing for those in attendance!) Please RSVP to Elizabeth Pfalzgraf via phone or text 402-415-9414 or email at youth@cccckc.org.

Improv Workshop for Students Grades 6-12

Get your funny on! Save the date – Sun., Feb. 21, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Middle School Mission Trip

June 17-19, 2016

Middle School students will engage in mission in Northeast Kansas City in cooperation with Country Club Christian Church's PartNERShip. This will be an opportunity to learn about the needs of our own city, build memories and lasting relationships with other students, and invest in our community. They will learn about the Northeast's rich cultural diversity, share meals at small area restaurants, and finish up the nights enjoying fellowship in our church building. For more information, contact Monica Lewis at monical@cccckc.org.

Sunday School Schedule

9:55-10:55 a.m.: Middle School Sunday School, Youth Center

12:00-12:45 p.m.: High School Sunday School, Youth Center

High School Nicaragua Trip

High school students who are interested participating in our 2016 Nicara-

Pick Up Your Poinsettia

If you purchased a poinsettia from Country Club Christian Church youth, your plant will be available for pick up from 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. on Sun., Dec. 6, in the parlor. Thanks for supporting the student mission trip scholarship fund.

Lunch and Learn: Holiday Music

Join us Tues., Dec. 8, as the Shawnee Mission East High School Chamber Singers present a program of holiday

music. 11:30 a.m. in the Social Hall. \$10 includes lunch. Everyone welcome. RSVP to Mary Margaret House at marymargareth@cccckc.org or 816-333-4917.



Pick Up a Christmas Eve Yard Sign

Share your love of Country Club Christian Church by inviting your neighbors to

worship with us on the holiest night of the year. Yard signs with our Christmas Eve service times are available in the Parlor this Sunday. Take one home to put in your yard!





Making the Season Meaningful

by Rev. Monica Lewis, Minister to Children, Students and Families



I read this blog post the other day from *Christian Century*. It's a couple of years old now but was very timely for me. It's about the Elf on the Shelf phenomenon that's recently swept across the country. If you're not sure what I'm talking about, here's the idea: sometime after Thanksgiving, elves begin appearing in homes. Each night, they fly back to the North Pole to report to Santa about how naughty and/or nice the children in each home are being. When they return they're sitting in a different location

than they were the day before and, depending on your house, some of them show back up posing in elaborate scenes (picture marshmallow snowball fights with flour thrown everywhere). Every elf has a name and you can even buy cute little outfits and accessories for your elf.

If you know me, you know I love the holidays. All of it. I love the cultural traditions/parties/annual keepsakes/family/cards/music/cars that look like Rudolph/lights/shopping. I. Love. It. All. We start listening to Christmas music around late July. (As I think about Christian Community Camp next summer, my mind shifts to Christmas music on the drive back from Colorado!) Seriously. I'm constantly hearing this little voice in my head that reminds me time passes quicker every year; that my daughter is almost 4 years old which means I only have 14 more holiday seasons with her at home; that I need to do more! But at some point, we all have to stop. We have to help each other remember why we do what we do. At some point, you have to tell me that it's okay to not have an Elf on My Shelf and that I shouldn't feel guilty about it.

What do I really want to be doing over the next 14 Christmases? I don't have an answer yet. But I know I want these seasons to be meaningful. I want to teach my daughter that it's not only about creating moments in our own lives to celebrate the birth of Jesus but helping others to see God's love alive in our world.

This year, our children and students will be collecting items for welcome kits to be given to Syrian refugee families. When I take Ellie Kate with me to purchase items for the kits, I will tell her the story about a mommy and daddy who sought shelter; who fled to protect their own baby from violence; who lovingly raised a child who continues to change our world. I'll tell her the story of Jesus.

I hope you'll do the same.

Monica

**Syrian Refugee Welcome Kits can be dropped off at the Collection Connection kiosk on the 2nd floor. Both kits and contents will be accepted. Each kit consists of: 1 backpack, 2 notebooks, 100 sheets paper, 2 bottles glue, 2 packages crayons, 2 pair scissors, 4 pencils, 4 pens.*

Children and Families

Club Kids (3rd-5th Grade)

Dec. 6 – Christmas Party. Join us at the home of Elizabeth Pfalzgraf for mission, fun, and food. We will have dinner, wrap gifts for Della Lamb Community Services families, make gifts and exchange a small gift. Every child can bring one small gift (no more than \$10) to exchange.

MOPs Group

Mothers of Preschoolers (birth-K) will meet the second Wednesday of each month from 9:00-11:00 a.m. in the Social Hall. The next meeting is Dec. 9. For more information on MOPs, check out www.mops.org.

A Christmas Festival

Dec. 13 - 5:00 p.m.

Enjoy chili and cookies with Santa himself. Have your photo taken by the Sanctuary tree for a complimentary keepsake ornament. Followed by Christmas Story and Song in the sanctuary with music by the children, Chancel Choir, soloists, Sticks & Phones Orffestra and more. We will conclude with cocoa and trolley caroling.

Deep Blue

Deep Blue is inspired by the verse, "In the depths of who I am, I rejoice in God my Savior". (Luke 1:47 CEB). The children will discover what it means to be a disciple of Christ today through science experiments, art and crafts, animated videos and active games; making the Bible stories, characters and verses part of their lives.

Parents, please check out the site, www.deepbluekids.com for resources and to download the new app!

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Our Church Family Sympathy

Our prayers and condolences are with the families and friends of:

Janet (Taylor) Ludwigs

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Co-interim Director of Music

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