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THIS WEEK'S NEWS

FROM THE SENIOR MINISTER: Good Darkness



When I was a child, nothing brought me more joy than summer camp. I would beg my mother to let me stay more weeks. The rope swing over the river, the counselor skits at dinner, the girls' banter in the cabin, the massive games at night in the woods, and the campfire singing were all highlights. But the most magical moment was walking home in the dark and looking up at the sky to see more stars than I had ever seen in my life.

I thought of this when I read what the director of the Vatican Observatory said about the Winter solstice. Brother Guy Consolmagno said, "It is an interesting metaphysical as well as astronomical truth, that it is only when you have good darkness that you can see the faint lights, whether it is faint stars or the little points of light, the thousand points of light that bring us hope even in darkness." Of course the reason I could see that mesmerizing blanket of shimmering stars at summer camp was because we had "good darkness." The stars were always there but I couldn't see them from my home in the busy well-lit city.

This winter we have all been facing more darkness that we would have wanted. Maybe it is sickness, or economic despair, or longing for family and friends, or spiritual hunger for church or just a malaise and ever present worry. But we have also been noticing with increased clarity the radiant goodness of our lives: faith, family, community, solitude, health, friendship, kindness of strangers, the joy of service. The gospel of John tells the Christmas story without Mary and Joseph. Instead it reads: "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it...The true light, which enlightens everyone was coming into the world."

My prayer for you on this Christmas Eve, my prayer for all of us, is that in the darkness we will see the light of God's love, goodness, joy and new life.

Grace and Peace,

Carla Aday



CHRISTMAS EVE - In a year like no other and in an effort to keep everyone safe, this year's unique Christmas Eve services will stream at 5:30, 8:00 and 11:00 p.m.

The 5:30 p.m. service is designed for children and families, followed by traditional services at 8:00 and 11:00 p.m.

The beauty and wonder of the familiar carols, sacred scriptures and flickering candlelight will welcome the Christ child into our homes and lives, bringing a message of joy, peace, and hope for all the earth.

Christmas Eve Worship Services

ADVENT DEVOTIONS - If you missed any of the advent devotions, you can find them [HERE](#).

WORSHIP WITH US

Sun., Dec. 27 - "Prepared to Celebrate," Rev. Joe Walker preaching, based on Luke 2:22-24, 36-38. Click [HERE](#) to worship with us Sundays at 9:01, 10:00 or 11:00 a.m., or on demand anytime.

Do you ever have trouble accessing our live stream? Click [HERE](#) for some helpful hints.

Miss last Sunday's service? Watch it [HERE](#).

NOTE: The church will be closed December 25, 28 and January 1 in observance of the holidays. If you need immediate assistance regarding pastoral care during one of these days, please dial 816.381.9249.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING FOCUS: URBAN FARMING GUYS

This year's Christmas Offering will go to three local partner agencies who are supporting our neighbors who are experiencing hunger and homelessness: Micah Ministries, Cross-Lines Community Outreach, and The Urban Farming Guys. Jason and Candy Fields from the Urban Farming Guys, share about their organization:

Throughout this year we have been able to adapt to the needs of the pandemic and keep lines of communications going strong within the neighborhood. Since March, we have delivered hot meals to hundreds of neighbors on a weekly basis and we continue to give lettuce and produce to nearby neighbors in need.

In the spring we supported hundreds of first time gardeners by donating 400 bags of organic fertilizer and thousands of plant starts to help people grow their own food. This amounted to around \$30,000 worth of product that we used to empower others.

[READ MORE...](#)



Give to the Christmas Offering Today

LIVE NATIVITY ON DECEMBER 19

On a beautiful December afternoon, members, visitors and drivers-by enjoyed the sight of the live nativity on the church's front lawn. The Holy Family, Wise Men, shepherds and even a camel delighted all in attendance. Thank you to all our families who helped make this special afternoon happen, and a big thanks to Lance Jessee for designing and building the manger.



COMMEMORATIVE CENTENNIAL ORNAMENTS

If you would like to purchase additional ornaments as gifts for family members, they are available for \$9 each plus \$4 postage. Every member household received one complimentary ornament delivered on the doorstep. If you did not receive yours, or you would like to make arrangements for purchase, please call the office 816-333-4917.



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE AT 5:30 P.M.

The 5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service is designed with children and families in mind, so please join us as we welcome Baby Jesus with many of the familiar traditions you're used to from our in-person service, as well as some very special treats.

If you submitted a photo of your child dressed as an angel or shepherd, or they had their photos taken at Advent in Advance, be sure to watch for them in the service, as well as other folks you might know.

More updated from Children and Families Ministry [HERE](#).



YOUTH

SPRING CALENDAR

We're planning to host activities each Sunday night as possible next semester, with youth group at the church on the first and third Sundays, special socials every second Sunday, and service projects the last Sunday of every month. Download our [Spring Calendar](#) now for more information!

Lots more information about Youth Ministries happenings [HERE](#). Sign up for [email](#) and/or [texting](#) updates.

Below, celebrating Christmas covid-style with outdoor ice skating and masks.



FAITH AND GRIEF VIRTUAL SUPPORT GATHERING

For anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one. Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2021, Noon-1:00 p.m. Prayer and sharing with a guest reflection, "John: a life in three acts" by Jim Paulsen. Join us to hear Jim share memories of his son, John. You may also share your own experiences, if you are comfortable doing so, in our on-line conversation. Hosted by Kansas City area congregations. Everyone welcome, no charge. Register at www.faithandgrief.org or <https://conta.cc/2WTK7zf>. Info 816-381-9249.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

IN SYMPATHY

Our prayers are with the family and friends of **Lida Goodell** who died this past Sunday.

MEMORIAL GIFTS HONORING LOVED ONES are placed into the Church's Endowment Funds, which are used to support the church now and into the future. Gifts have recently been given in memory of:

Cora Louise "Cokie" Strafer
By Kansas City Young Matrons, *for Congregational Care*

Mary S. McDonald
Melinda Frenzen, the Endowment Fund

CONSIDER A YEAR-END FINANCIAL GIFT

During this season of giving, we are grateful for your ongoing generosity and invite you to consider making a year-end financial gift to the church. You may mail your gift to the church, or email Finance Director [Rachel Clement](#) for more information.

Did you see our year end video? Watch it below. You might see someone you know.

Thank you for all of the ways you support the ministries and mission of Country Club Christian Church.

[Give Now](#)



