



Dear CCUMC Family,

May the peace of Christ be with all of you this day and always. Spring is in the air as I write this final pastoral letter to our church family. My heart is filled with gratitude to God for the last nine years we have spent together. Our time together has been a blessing, and I am deeply thankful to have had the opportunity to serve as your pastor.

When I first started here at Christ Community, I was young and had just graduated from seminary. You walked with me as I learned what it meant to serve in pastoral ministry. Later, when I met Jeff, you supported us both on our Christian journey together and celebrated with us when we were married in 2017. You were a wonderful church family to serve and I will always be grateful for our time in ministry together.

As a church family, you encouraged me as I worked through the lengthy ordination process and rejoiced with me when I became an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church. Elders are sworn to itinerancy, and we all knew that once I was ordained, there would come a day when I would have to honor my vows and move when the Holy Spirit says, "move!"

## What is Itinerary?

The United Methodist Church has a system of itinerary, which means that pastors are appointed by the Bishop and we all serve at the pleasure of the Bishop. The itinerary system is designed to help churches receive the leadership they need and to ensure that pastors can serve where they are most needed. While it can be difficult to say goodbye to a congregation we have grown to love, it is important to remember that this process is not about the individual pastor, but about the larger mission of the United Methodist Church.

The Bishops of the Susquehanna Conference have announced their intention to appoint me to a new church. On July 1, 2023, I will be serving Hawley United Methodist Church in the Scranton Wilkes-Barre District of the Susquehanna Conference. My last Sunday in the pulpit here at Christ Community United Methodist Church will be June 4, 2023. Jeff and I are taking some vacation time to give us breathing room so that we can get settled in our new parsonage and prepare for this next chapter in our life together as a clergy couple.

John Henderson has been kind enough to agree to preach and lead worship here at CCUMC on June 11, 18, and 25th. If there is a pastoral care emergency, you can contact me on my cell phone at 570-854-8006. Rev. Charles Baughman is also available to provide emergency pastoral care throughout the month of June. His number is 814-207-4941.

Please welcome your new pastor and continue to support the ministries of CCUMC.

It has been a privilege to be a part of your lives, to share in your joys and sorrows, and to walk with you on your spiritual journeys. I am grateful for the ways in which you have supported me and my family (Jeff, Grandma Clara, my Mom, and all of our furry babies included) during our time here. Your kindness, generosity, and love have made a lasting impact on our lives. If you would like to honor the nine years we have spent in ministry together, I request that you do so by continuing to support the ministries of Christ Community UMC through your prayers, your presence, your talents, and your monetary gifts. Your time, presence, prayers, and financial donations are all vital to the ongoing mission of this community of faith.

In Philippians 1:3-4, the apostle Paul writes, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy." I can say with certainty that this is true of my feelings for you. I thank God for the opportunity to have served as your pastor, and I will continue to pray for you and your ongoing ministry. May God bless you abundantly in all that you do.

With love and gratitude,

*Rev. Rebecca L. Holland*

---

## **A Solemn Celebration: Reflections on Christ Community UMC's Good Friday Service**

The Good Friday service at Christ Community UMC this year was a somber but also powerful way to remember Jesus's perfect sacrifice upon the cross. Our worship team joined with members of our sister church to create a contemporary worship experience that was both meaningful and inspiring.

The service was centered around a "Readers' Theatre" of the narrative of Jesus's Trial and Crucifixion from the Gospel of Matthew. Each part was read by a different person, giving a unique voice to the gospel reading. The service also included many different contemporary worship songs, as well as several hymns, that added a new depth of emotion to the story.

As the service progressed, there was a growing sense of solemnity and reverence. At the end of the service, we stripped the altar, extinguished the Christ candle, and left the church in darkness. These sorrowful actions helped to heighten the joy of Easter Morning when considered in contrast to the darkness of Good Friday.

The Good Friday service was a testament to the hard work and dedication of our worship team and musicians. We are grateful to all who participated in the service, including both the readers and musicians. Their hard work and practice helped to make this worship experience a moving and memorable event.

# Palm Sunday Puppet Show

On April 2, 2023, we had a special Palm Sunday Puppet Show to celebrate Christ's Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem on the back of a humble donkey. Mr. Timothy Van Scoyoc served as our master puppeteer and Rev. Rebecca helped him to write the script. The puppet show was recorded and is available to watch on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/8ukjP0rH5uw> You can also read the script here in our church newsletter!

## The Wise Owl of Palm Sunday

Sunday! That's why they have palm branches!

Narrator: Once upon a time, there was a church in the valley by the wild wood. It was the loveliest church in the dale. No place is as dear to my childhood, as that little brown church in the vale.

And by that little church, there was a tree.

And in that tree, there was an owl.

Owl: Woo-hoo! What a wonderful and lovely morning. Spring will be here soon. I can feel it in my feathers.

(Another bird enters)

Bird: Hello there, Mr. Owl! I couldn't help but notice you sitting up there in the tree. What brings you to our neck of the woods?

Owl: Whoooo is that? My old eyes aren't what they used to be.

Bird: It's me! Mr. Bird. It's been a long time since I've seen you. How are you doing?

Owl: Whooo can complain? Not I. God has blessed me with plenty of mice to eat and good strong wings to fly. I also always enjoy nesting here by that little church over yonder. I enjoy listening to the music.

Bird: I'm glad you mentioned that! Do you happen to know why those humans are carrying around those big branches today? I've been curious about it all morning. Do you think they are going to try to build a nest?

Owl: Ah, my dear friend! Humans don't use palm branches for building nests. Today is Palm



Palm Sunday Puppet Show

Bird: What is Palm Sunday?

Owl: A long time ago, when Jesus came to visit Jerusalem, riding on a donkey, the people were so excited to see him that they waved palm branches and welcomed him like a king. They took their coats and cloaks and laid them on the ground for Jesus to ride over.

Nowadays, we remember that special day and celebrate Jesus as our king by carrying palm branches, too. Some churches even have parades around the church. It's lots of fun, and a great way of showing our love and respect for him.

Bird: Tweet-tweetly doo that is pretty cool. Thank you so much! That makes a lot more sense than humans building a nest. Have a wonderful day!

Owl: I'm always happy to share my wisdom! If you have more questions, feel free to stop by. I plan on nesting here until Easter.

(Bird exits. A squirrel enters.)

Squirrel: Hello, Mr. Owl! It's great to see you. I thought I heard your hoots!

Mr. Owl: Well, hello there, Mr. Squirrel. What a surprise!

Squirrel: I didn't mean to eavesdrop, but I couldn't help overhearing you talking about Palm Sunday. It was very interesting, and I would like to know more.

Mr. Owl: Well of course! I would be happy to help. Owls are known for being wise. I love it when people ask me questions.

Squirrel: Did I hear you say that people took off their coats and spread them on the ground for Jesus to ride over?

Mr. Owl: Yes,

Squirrel: But I just don't understand, why would people spread their coats on their ground? That's nuts!.

Mr. Owl: In those days, people showed respect to important people by laying down cloaks or branches on the ground for them to walk or ride on. People laid their cloaks on the ground for Jesus to ride on as a way of showing him respect and honor.

Squirrel: Wow! That's really fascinating.

Mr. Owl: It is! It was kind of like rolling out a red carpet. It was a way of saying, "We know you are important and we are glad you are here."

Squirrel: Thanks, Mr. Owl. That explains a lot! I must be on my way now. Goodbye!

(SQUIRREL exits. A cat enters.)

Cat: Me-ow! What is going on here? Those humans are making such a ruckus!

Owl: Whooo is there? Is that you, Ms. Kitty?

Cat: Meow-zers, those humans are making so much noise! Do you have any idea what is going on? They are all singing and shouting Hosanna! Why do they shout Hosanna?

Owl: Hello, my curious friend! People are shouting 'Hosanna' because it's Palm Sunday. Today is a special day when we remember Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Back then, people welcomed Jesus with palm branches and called out 'Hosanna.' So, On Palm Sunday, we shout 'Hosanna' too! We do this to show our love for Jesus and to remember that special day.

Cat: Me-Wow! That's great. But you know I'm always curious. What language is Hosanna? What does it mean?

Owl: "Hosanna" is actually a Hebrew word that means "Save us, we pray". It's a word that people have used for many centuries to express

their hope for salvation and deliverance. It's a beautiful word with a powerful meaning, and it's one that we continue to use today to honor Jesus and express our faith that he will save us.

Cat: Me-Wow! That's great. But I'm still curious. What does Jesus save us from? Why do we need saving?

Owl: Wooo-hoo that's a great question, Cat! Jesus saves us from our sins. Sin is when we do things that hurt others or ourselves, or when we don't do what we know we should do. Sin is anything that separates us from God. Jesus came to earth to show us how to live a good and loving life, and he sacrificed himself on the cross to pay for our sins. When we believe in him and follow his teachings, we can be saved from our sins and have eternal life with him in heaven.

Cat: Me-Wow... that's wonderful! I'm so glad that Jesus came to save. But there's just one problem.

Owl: What's that?

Cat: I'm a cat. I don't sin... and I never repent! (looks sassy, because cats have attitude)

Owl: (laughs) Who-who-who! I guess you're right, Cat! I didn't think of that. As animals, we don't sin. But we can still rejoice on Palm Sunday because Jesus loves all creatures, Great and Small. He is the king of all Creation!

Cat: Me-wow! That is pretty great! Happy Palm Sunday, Mr. Owl.

Owl: Happy, Palm Sunday, Mr. Cat.

Cat Exits

Owl: (to congregation) And thanks so much to all of you as well, for stopping by to visit me. Whooo hopes you have a great Palm Sunday? I do! Happy Palm Sunday, everyone! Hosanna to the King of All Creatures, Great and Small!

The End

## Honoring our Church Sexton: Thank You, Patty Piper!



On Sunday, April 23, 2023, we took time during our church service to honor our church sexton, Patty Piper! You can watch a clip from the service on YouTube here:

<https://youtu.be/vQllsLnoNSE>

We prayed for Patty during our worship service and presented her with a Certificate of Appreciation. We also gave her the gift of a small crystal purple cross (her favorite color) that shines brightly and reflects the light of Christ. Every time she sees this cross, we hope that she remembers how we are grateful to her for shining the light of Christ into all the corners of our church home.

Patty has donated her services since September of 2018. She has worked diligently behind the scenes to make sure that our church home is clean, tidy, warm, and welcoming. She has accepted no monetary compensation for her hard work, and so, we took time to acknowledge her and pray for her on the Third Sunday of Easter (April 23, 2023).

Jesus taught us that true greatness looks like love, service, and self-sacrifice. We give thanks to God for Patty and the example of God's love she displays quietly each and every day of her life. Her example of giving without seeking anything in return is a testament to her faith and devotion. May her kindness and generosity inspire us to follow her example and serve others with the same spirit of love and compassion. May God bless her and keep her.



## Nourishing the Body and Soul: CCUMC Lenten Luncheon



Christ Community United Methodist Church hosted a Lenten Luncheon on Wednesday of Holy Week, and it was a wonderful event for all who attended. The gathering was organized by Gloria Frederick, with much help from the Sew Pray group and other volunteers from the church..

The Lenten Luncheon was a time of fellowship and community, as members of our church came together to share a delicious variety of soup and sandwiches. It was a joy to be able to take a break from our busy schedules and to connect with each other over a meal.

Our guest speaker was Rev. Dr. Michelle Bodle from Juniata UMC. She delivered a passionate homily that was both thought-provoking and inspiring. Her message centered on the importance of the Lenten season and how it provides an opportunity for us to reflect on our faith and to grow closer to God. After the message, the attendees enjoyed delicious desserts, which were a perfect way to conclude the luncheon.

Overall, the Lenten Luncheon at Christ Community UMC was a wonderful success and we are grateful to Gloria, the Sew Pray Group, and everyone who helped make this gathering happen. It was a blessing to break bread together and give thanks for the perfect sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



## A Safe and Fun Easter Egg Hunt at Christ Community UMC

On Saturday, April 8, children from the church and the local community gathered together to participate in the annual Easter Egg Hunt, organized by Priscilla Walk. We are so grateful to Priscilla for putting this event together. We are also grateful for everyone in our church family who donated candy, snacks, desserts, and other treats to help make this event a success!

We were delighted to have a total of seventeen children in attendance. The Easter Egg Hunt was held inside the church, which provided a safe space where the kids could search for eggs away from traffic. Priscilla and her family prepared hundreds of eggs and hid them throughout the church, ensuring that the kids had a fun and exciting time looking for them.

As the kids searched for eggs, there was a sense of excitement and joy in the air. The event was filled with laughter and the sound of children's voices as they ran around the church, trying to find as many eggs as possible. After the Easter Egg Hunt, the children and their families enjoyed some delicious snacks together.

The Easter Egg Hunt was not only a fun event for the kids, but it was also a way to connect with the community. It provided an opportunity for children from the church and the local community to meet and play together.

Overall, the our Easter Egg Hunt was a wonderful event that brought joy and happiness to all who attended. It was a testament to the hard work of Priscilla Walk and her family, who organized and prepared the event, as well as the members of our church who came together to support it. We hope that everyone had a very hop-pay Easter!



## Celebrating the Resurrection: Easter Sunday at CCUMC



Worship Team practice for Holy Week

On April 9, 2023, Christ Community UMC celebrated Easter Sunday at 11AM in a worship service filled with flowers, joyful music, and Holy Communion. The blending of both contemporary praise music and traditional hymns helped to create a worship experience that was received well by all generations.

Rev. Rebecca's sermon focused on the tenacity of Mary Magdalene, who remained at the tomb after discovering it was empty. Despite the fact that the disciples had left, Mary remained weeping. She was a faithful follower of Jesus who had journeyed with him throughout his ministry, had been present

at the cross, and now stood outside the tomb.

Mary's unwavering faith and devotion were rewarded when she heard Jesus call her name, and she was the first to witness his resurrection. Rev. Rebecca reminded us that we too are called to be faithful, and to carry the Good News of Jesus's resurrection to others, just like Mary Magdalene.

The service was designed to be a reminder of the power of Christ's resurrection and the hope it brings to us all. As we celebrated this joyous occasion, we were reminded of our own call to be disciples of Christ, to remain steadfast in our faith, and to spread the Good News to those around us.

We are grateful to all who contributed to making this Easter service a beautiful and meaningful experience for everyone who attended. May the joy of the resurrection continue to fill our hearts and minds throughout the year ahead. Happy Easter!



## Thank You to Our “Behind the Scene” Saints

This Easter, we wanted to take time to say a sincere thank you to some of our church members who work so hard to make our church family a safe and special place where everyone can grow closer to God. We wanted to lift up these names because these people are often hidden “behind the scenes,” working quietly and diligently for the Kingdom.



**Patty Piper:** Patty accepts no payment for all the services she lovingly donates to our church. Patty serves as our church sexton and keeps everything neat, tidy, and welcoming. Thank you, Patty, we appreciate you and we are praying for you!

**Peggy Mitchell:** Peggy is the leader of our Children’s Ministry program. She teaches children’s Sunday School, plans special holiday programs for the children to share with us during worship, and shares a special Children’s Message each week. She also teaches Vacation Bible School. Thank you, Peggy, we appreciate you and we are praying for you!



**Tim Van Scoyoc:** Tim teaches our adult Sunday School class, serves as our church lay leader, and is the head of our puppet ministry. He always makes sure our worship space is appropriate for the liturgical season, switches out the paraments, and chairs the worship committee.

We are so grateful for Tim’s continued service. Thank you, Tim, we appreciate you and we are praying for you!



### John Henderson:

John Henderson is our congregation’s Delegate to Annual Conference. This means that he takes several days a year out of his busy schedule to travel out of town to spend time in Holy Conferencing so that our congregation can be appropriately represented. He is also our Lay Speaker. He works diligently to make sure that he takes all the appropriate courses to allow him to keep up with his lay speaking certification. John is a gifted preacher, serves with the Altoona Volunteers in Mission, and also allows Rev. Rebecca and Jeff to take vacation time! John will be preaching the last three Sundays in June to allow Rev. Rebecca to get settled in her new charge. Thank you so much, John, we appreciate you and we are praying for you!

**Gloria Frederick** Thank you to Gloria Frederick, who leads our Sew Pray group and serves as our church’s representative to the HUB. Gloria’s generous spirit, talent for sewing, and giftedness for planning events such as the Lenten Luncheon, are a blessing to our congregation. Gloria has a heart for helping people in need and a gift for mission. We are so grateful for Gloria!



There are **so many** in our church family who do **so much**. It would be impossible to list everyone by name. We are grateful to those who serve on the trustees, the finance team, the Sew Pray Group, the administrative council, the SPRC, our church secretary (Doris Good), our newsletter editor (Bev Motsic), our technology department (Nate. Nate Ross-Schnaubelt is the entire technology department), our musicians, and those who volunteer their time to count money on Sundays after church. We are grateful to the parents who bring their children to Sunday School, to the grandparents who bring their little ones, and the parents and guardians of our youth. We thank God for every one of you!

## Welcome, New Church Members!

On Easter Sunday, it will be our joy to welcome five new church members! We are happy to welcome Sally Barry and Joe and Vicki Bilka into our church family! It is such a joy to have Sally, Joe, and Vicki worship with us on Sunday mornings. We are excited to take this next step with them on their faith journey and welcome them into our church. We thank God for them and their presence in our lives.

We Appreciate You and We are Praying for You!



Sally Barry



Joe and Vicki Bilka



**Jackie and Ronald Clabaugh.**

Jackie is a lay speaker currently serving Lakemont and Broad Ave. UMC. After her home church left the denomination, we were happy to welcome her into our church family so that she can continue serving as a lay speaker in the UMC.

## Altoona District Pastor Introduction, 2023

I was born and raised in a very devout Christian home in Bangalore, India. My father worked for a company run by the Government of India where they manufactured aircraft. My mother is a home maker. My father retired when he turned fifty-eight and was ordained as a pastor. He ministered to the Hindu people of India and led them to Christ. I lost my dad when he was just sixty-five years old, and my mother took over the church he had planted. She continues to minister among the Hindus and Muslims to this day, despite her many health ailments and the death of two of her three children. Her life is a true model of faithful service to the Lord.

My two older brothers owned travel agencies. Both of them had devoted their lives to taking people to the Holy Land, Turkey, Egypt and Rome to help people understand and appreciate the origins and development of the Christian faith. To show how Christianity developed in the little province of Judea out of Jewish tradition in the first century and spread through the Roman Empire, and eventually became its official religion. My brothers would explain, how Christianity was influenced by the historical contexts in which it developed. And how it was influenced by both Judaism and Roman cultural institutions. They loved to make clear how we can't fully understand the development of Christianity without putting it into these contexts. Tragically, both my brothers died in very sudden and unexpected circumstances just recently. This catastrophic blow only strengthens my faith and my desire to serve my Lord more wholeheartedly.

God has been my constant refuge, strength and ever-present help through the darkness. God's Word in Hebrews 13:5 is proven true in my life, "God has never left me, nor has He forsaken me". My mother was my first Sunday School teacher who taught me God's Word. I committed my life to Jesus as a teenager. Right from when I was in my teens I desired to be a missionary to Africa, but God had other plans for me. God opened incredible doors upon my graduation from college with bachelor's degree in commerce. I was selected to work in Aptech (the Indian chapter of Apple Computers). Though I held high positions in each of these well-paying jobs, I found a deep inner urge to give my life completely to God's service. I have experienced God to be an on-time God. He called me at the right time and brought people into my life who trained and mentored me and sharpened my skills in ministry. I worked among different people groups and led them to the Lord and helped them grow in the Lord. I also trained many young people to serve as servant leaders. I initiated Sunday School and Youth Fellowship in my church.

God brought an amazing man of God, Wesley Jacob into my life in 1999. He currently serves in the Wisconsin Conference. He has a background in Astrophysics and Ante-Nicene Patristics. I have also been serving God as a pastor with the Wisconsin Annual Conference for the last 10 years. We have a daughter, Prarthana Charis Jacob who is a sophomore in UW-La Crosse majoring in Neuropsychology.

I did my Master's in Biblical Studies (to be completed) at the Southern California Seminary (SCS). I am currently doing, the Course of Study at the Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (GETS) and am planning to transfer my credits from SCS and GETS to a Seminary in Pennsylvania and take the Elder route. I love reading and sharing God's Word, travelling around the world and hosting people for delicious Indian cuisine (LOL). We as a family love to pull each other's legs. We also have a little black Yorkie Poodle named Obadiah (Obi).



**ALTOONA DISTRICT PASTOR INTRODUCTION 2023**

## **Special Pentecost and Memorial Day Service: Honoring our Past and Building Our Future**

As we approach the end of May, Christ Community UMC is preparing for a special service to celebrate two important events: Pentecost and Memorial Day. The service, which will be held on May 28th at 11am, will honor those who have gone before us and left legacies in our church community.

As part of this special service, we will be dedicating several items that have been purchased in memory of beloved church members who have passed away. One of these items is a set of altar cloths, which have been donated in honor of La Rue Kehoe. Altar cloths are an important part of worship as they symbolize the sacredness of the altar and remind us of the holiness of God's presence.

In addition, a Communion Set and aspergillum will be dedicated in honor of Phil Wilt. These items represent the two sacraments of the United Methodist Church: holy communion and baptism. The chalice and paten are used during communion to hold the body and the blood of Christ and the aspergillum is used to sprinkle holy water during certain parts of the service. These items remind us of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us and the importance of the sacraments in our faith.

Another item that will be dedicated is a music stand in honor of Margaret Van Scoyoc. This stand will be used by our musicians to lead us in worship and praise. Margaret was a gifted musician and music has always been an important part of Christian worship. This stand will serve as a reminder of Margaret's love for music and her contributions to our church.

Finally, we will be adding the name of Richard Moore to our memory plaque and giving thanks for the donation that was made in his name to our sound system. The memory plaque serves as a permanent reminder of those who have left us, but whose contributions to our church will never be forgotten. When I first started here in 2014, we began adding names to the Memory Plaque and the custom has continued. We have completed one memory plaque and have started adding names to a second memory Plaque. These

names will continue to live on in our hearts and in the life of our church.

During this upcoming special service, the chancel area will also be beautified by geraniums purchased in memory or in honor of beloved siblings in Christ who have gone home to be with God. These beautiful flowers serve as a symbol of the new life that we have in Christ and remind us of the hope that we have in the resurrection.

---

### **Please consider leaving a legacy to Christ Community UMC**

As we gather to remember those who have left a lasting legacy for our church, we also invite you to consider leaving a lasting legacy of your own. By remembering Christ Community UMC in your will or estate planning, you can help ensure that our ministry will continue for generations to come.

Leaving a gift to the church in your will can provide much-needed support for our ministries, help fund necessary repairs and renovations, and allow us to continue to spread the love of Christ to our community and beyond. Even a small gift can make a big difference in the lives of those we serve.

Undesignated gifts can be especially impactful, as they allow us to direct funds to the areas of greatest need. By leaving an undesignated gift to the church in your will, you can help fund ministries that may not even exist yet, but that will help future generations experience the love and grace of God.

We understand that your decision to leave a gift to the church in your will is a deeply personal one, and we respect and appreciate any support you are able to give. We invite you to speak with your financial advisor, attorney, or estate planner about how you can include Christ Community UMC in your estate plans. Thank you for considering this important opportunity to leave a lasting legacy of faith and love. May you have a happy Pentecost and blessed Memorial Day