This week was Ministers Week at Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University. It’s a continuing education opportunity that I have not participated in since I left Fort Worth over 15 years ago. This is yet another silver lining for which I’m giving thanks during this pandemic time. I was able to participate in this continuing education opportunity without the expense of travel or the absence from my family (however, this year I might have relished being in the Texas weather!).

I spent much of Tuesday and Wednesday in workshops and Zoom rooms. There are many things I’d love to share with you about this time but I want to focus on one particular panel discussion. It was titled “Confronting Whiteness in Our Churches.” It was specifically targeted around “nice white congregations” who don’t see themselves as actively racist yet aren’t really doing the work around recognizing and dismantling the white supremacy culture that influences our society. I knew I had to share it with you (the link should be available next week, I hope) when one of the presenters said something to challenge the room by saying, “Our clergy are required every year to complete anti-racism pro-reconciliation training but what’s required of our church members?” Hold that thought.

That workshop prompted in me a question about how I was honoring Black History Month. I looked at my book shelves and thought about how many of the books I bought in seminary were written by white men, and I’ve recommitted to buying and reading more books from non-white voices, women, and queer voices. I bought two new books recommended by the panelists. One of them I bought as an audio book and I’ve already started listening on my commute: *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church’s Complicity in Racism.* I reflected on how my January focus for so much of my sermon preparation was around reading the works of James Baldwin and so I intentionally thought about what might be next? Not for sermon preparation or for continuing education requirements but for me - personally.

Perhaps you are wondering why am I telling you all of this. What’s the point? Well, I’d like to challenge you. I’d like to extend an invitation. Given all that has unfolded in our country in the last year around race relations and a renewed focus on dismantling systems of white supremacy, I’m wondering how you might honor Black History Month this year? As mentioned above, the Revs. Motter and I all complete anti-racism continuing education hours and I’m wondering if during this month you’d commit to doing one thing for yourself in this area.

What might that be? Glad you asked. I know not everyone is a reader and we tend to point folks toward books, but some of you are more movie/visual folk. Perhaps you would join Mr. Steitz and me in watching the PBS documentary “The Black Church: This is our Story. This is our Song,” which will run February 16 and 17. Or as we finish our worship series from Eddie Glaude’s book, “Begin Again,” perhaps you might commit to watching the documentary based on James Baldwin’s writings, “I am Not Your Negro.” Is that something you can commit to?

If you need a book recommendation, I know Rev. Ryan or I would be glad to point you to something that would be meaningful to you. Both the KC Library and the Mid-Continent Public Library have helpful suggestions as well:
Perhaps later this month I’ll share something that I learned from the PBS documentary or something that challenged me from my audio book. And I’d love to know what commitments you make. I’d love to know what you learn that challenges, surprises, or inspires you. Will you join me? Will you step outside of your comfort zones to learn something new? Read something unfamiliar? Call someone from our church family and invite them to join you. Pray together about how you might understand more fully the human family in all its colors and complexity and diversity.

We don’t have to solve all the evils of the world in one day but we each can commit each day with our own actions and commitments to doing better and being better. And if you do that and I do that and we each do that - together we will make a more beloved community for all God’s children.

May it be so.

Rev. Shanna

---

**Lenten Journey: Rooted**

Next Wednesday, we begin our Lenten journey together. We’ll be exploring the poems of Wendell Berry alongside our stories of scripture to guide us as we seek to be “Rooted” in the Divine Presence. Here’s a brief outline of the Lenten opportunities for our Community:

**February 17 at 6 a.m.** - A prerecorded devotion to begin your day. This short service lasting 10-12 minutes will center you in a spirit of prayer that will echo throughout this season. You’ll find it on Youtube and Facebook.

**February 17 at 6:30 p.m.** - Our Lenten Vespers will close your day with a livestream available via YouTube and Facebook. We’ll premiere a beautiful new anthem - the lyrics are the words of Wendell Berry (our Lenten poet) set to the music of our own Jonathon Antle. Ashes will not be a part of either services, however, if you must have ashes for your own personal devotion that day, please let Rev. Shanna know and we can make some available.

**Every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.** - Lenten Vespers is a short time of prayer and music that offers a mid-week reset for our spirits.

**February 24 at 7 p.m.** - A special introduction to our Lenten series, “Rooted,” with Rev. Johnny Wray via Zoom. Johnny will share more about our Lenten poet, Wendell Berry. Both men understand their work of the land as holy and Johnny will help us think about the similarities between the important Soul Work that happens during Lent and the Soil Work he (and Wendell Berry) engages in through his ministry of sacred farming.

**Lenten Devotional** - There are two options available. First, a weekly devotional of scriptures and poems that correspond with the worship focus for each Sunday is available by contacting Rev. Ryan. Second, is a daily devotional, “*Sacred and Desecrated: Forty Days with Wendell Berry.*” You’ll have an opportunity to explore the discussion question with a small group on Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. If you are interested in forming a group at another time, please contact Rev. Shanna.

---

**Family Lent Boxes**

Community families will soon be receiving their Family Lent Boxes, which include a devotional and activities for the entire family! Boxes include items to create a family sacred space for the season (purple cloth, a candle, and more), devotionals to follow together, craft supplies to create a resurrection garden, prayer beads, coloring pages, and an Easter gift (don’t open until Easter!). We pray this engages you and your family in God’s story of love and transformation, and that your faith deepens and grows together as a
family. Check out Rev. Suzanne’s unboxing video below to see what you’ll receive as we begin this exciting season of Lent.

---

MORE2 Leadership Training

Hello Community Friends,

The Metro Organization for Racial and Economic Equity (MORE2) is holding an online leadership training this Saturday, February 13, that all Community Christian Church leaders are invited to participate in. The training will be led by local organizers as well as national Gamaliel trainers. The focus will be on bias/anti-racism training as well as relationship building and general leadership training. The hope is that through this training people will be better equipped to work for justice and also more equipped to focus on growth and justice within their church ministries.

On a personal note, I believe that I have benefitted from this type of training as I have learned how to build relationships and have become more assertive in asking for what I want on a professional level. I have become more assertive and driven to work for justice and equity in Kansas City.

I would like invited Community leaders to attend. Please click here to confirm your spot and to receive the Zoom link for the training.

Jennifer Gwinner, Community member

---

Join Community’s Book Group!

You’re invited to join the Sunday Afternoon Community Book Group, starting on February 21 at 2 p.m. The book for this go-round is The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate by Peter Wohlleben. Already folks have been watching documentaries and discovering that this book is a translation from the original German, as Peter Wohlleben works for the return of primeval forests there and writes about it! If you’re interested in joining us, please email Rev. Ryan and he’ll share the Zoom Link with you: revryan@community-christian.org.
Souper Bowl of Caring Update

Thanks to everyone who has supported our Souper Bowl of Caring efforts to raise money and collect donations for our partners at The Micah Ministry. Our goal was to raise $2,000 by the game last Sunday, and by kickoff we raised $2,720! Amazing job, Community! You'll also soon see how many donations we've collected in the past week.

If you'd still like to support the work of Micah Ministry, you can make a monetary donation this week by going to bit.ly/c4kcqive and selecting the "Souper Bowl Special Offering" fund. We will also be collecting any last physical donations at the church this Sunday, February 14, from 12-1:30 p.m. through the 46th Street entrance. Needed items include: toilet paper, shampoo, conditioner, soap, toothpaste, razors, feminine products, and deodorant. Tead the article below to learn about other ways you can support Micah Ministry's work.

Serving Micah Ministry

The Justice and Mercy team encourages you to begin saving empty pill bottles (with the label removed or soaked off) to collect for Micah Ministry. Pill bottles are used as individual containers to give to clients for some of the larger items they receive, like shampoo or lotion. New or clean gently used blankets are also needed. Micah Ministry can also use volunteers to serve meals, sort clothes, etc. If you are interested in volunteering, you can sign up here. To learn more about Micah Ministry click here.

Tall Oaks Camp Dates

As we're looking ahead to warmer months, we now have the 2021 Tall Oaks camp dates for you to pencil in on your calendar if you would like to participate! Community participates in summer camps for our youth and children by joining with other Disciples churches from around the Kansas City Metro. Tall Oaks is located just outside Linwood Kansas. We'll share more camp details as we get them but if you have questions, don't hesitate to ask!

Grandparents Camp (grandparents and kids grades K-6): July 2-July 4; July 25-July 27
Day Camp (grades K-1): June 12; July 17 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Primary Camp (grades 2-3): July 25-July 27
Junior Camp (grades 4-5): June 22-June 25; July 6-July 9
Chi Rho Fine Art (grades 6-7): June 21-June 25
Chi Rho Classic (grades 6-7): July 25-July 29
Eighter's Camp (grade 8): July 5-July 11
CYF Camp (grades 9-12): June 20-June 25
This Sunday at Community

This Sunday, February 14, we will celebrate Valentine's Day together in worship as Rev. Ryan preaches on Revelation 21:1-7.

Online Giving

If you'd like to give offering donations to the church during this time, you can mail donations to the church. Mail is still being checked daily and your gifts are gratefully received. If you'd like to give online, you may do so in one of two ways:

- Visit bit.ly/c4kcgive
- Text the word "Give" to 816-484-3433 and follow the instructions that are sent to you. The first time you text to give you'll have to set up an account, but from there on out your information will be stored so you can easily text to give.

There will also be a QR code shown during livestreamed worship that will take you directly to the website listed above to donate. Links can also be found in the livestreamed worship comments and on our website.

Connect with us online throughout the week!

Sunday
- 9 a.m. Sunday School for all ages on Zoom
  - bit.ly/steitzss
- 10 a.m. Piano prelude with Jonathon Antle on Facebook and YouTube
- 10:30 a.m. Worship on Facebook and YouTube

Thursday
- Newsletter email sent

Friday
- Happy Hour with Tim Whitmer on Facebook and YouTube

Saturday
- 8 a.m. Saturday Sit with Shanna on Zoom
  - bit.ly/saturdaysit

Prayers of Sorrow and Thanksgiving

Please hold the following members of our Community in your prayers:

Donna Birts-Butler;
Nan Borden;
Equilla Ross;
Lucille Clark-Autry;
Marce Ireland;
David Anderson;
Peter Voss, great-nephew of Donna and Scott Duschen

Congratulations to Mollie and Aaron Blackburn on the birth of their daughter, Eden Jayne Blackburn, on February 1!

Kara Strickler
Communications Coordinator | Community Christian Church
kara@community-christian.org | www.community-christian.org
4601 Main Street, KCMO 64112 | (816) 561 - 6531