I thank my God every time I mention you in my prayers. I’m thankful for all of you every time I pray, and it’s always a prayer full of joy. ~Philippians 1.3-4

This scripture is from a pastor to the people from whom he is separated. It has been on my heart since Sunday. My heart was so full of gratitude on Sunday afternoon. From the restoration of our Steeple of Light on Saturday night to the restoration of our in-person worship on Sunday morning. It was 24 hours of pure exhausting joy!

I know I didn’t get to greet all 135 of you who were in the sanctuary and I hope to have that opportunity over the next two Sundays! And for those of you who worshipped from your home sanctuary, you were not alone. We had over 80 of you joining with us online between YouTube and Facebook. That’s 40% of our Sunday worshippers, and that doesn’t count those of you who have worshipped since then!

We will definitely live into this experience. We know we had a few tech gremlins and the dismissal of our in-person folx was messier than we’d like. Thanks for your patience and your grace. I look forward to seeing many of your faces in person before I’m away for the summer.

Gratefully,

Rev. Shanna

PS. You can RSVP for this Sunday’s worship [here](#). And watch for a text message earlier on Sunday morning this week. It will give you an opportunity to check in online prior to your arrival if that’s easier for you. We know the check-in can be laborious but it’s an important step in contact tracing in case we need to respond. Thanks for your help in keeping us all safe!

One more thing: We are aware of the updated CDC guidelines about indoor mask-wearing that just came out an hour before sending this email. At this time, we are still requiring masks to be worn in the building during worship regardless of vaccination status. Thanks for your understanding and your patience.

What To Know For Sunday

Here’s what you need to know for in-person worship!

- **RSVP:** Click [here](#) to RSVP. This is not required, but will help our staff and leadership plan for the safety and success of that day!
- **Parking:** Parking will be available in the parking garage next door thanks to our partnership with Anthology of the Plaza. Street construction near the church is significant, so plan to allow plenty of time to arrive for worship!
- **What time?** The church building will open at 9:45 a.m. Worship will begin with a half hour piano prelude at 10 and the service will start at 10:30 in the sanctuary. If you’re running late, we invite you to enter through the 46th Street entrance. The Main Street doors will be locked after 10:45.
- **Communion:** Bring your own communion elements (we’ll have some individual
- **Masks:** Wear your mask while you’re inside the building and help us maintain social distancing protocols.
- **Hymns:** Prepare to become an expert at humming hymns! We will be humming along as our section leaders sing, instead of singing collectively.
- **Nursery:** The nursery will be open for children ages five and under. Please check your littles in to the nursery before worship. They will come up together for the children's moment during the service. We ask that children ages three and older wear a mask in the building.
- **Sunday School:** There will be no Sunday School during the month of May.
- **Order of Worship:** We will not have printed bulletins available, however, you can view this week's order of worship by clicking [here](#). You’re welcome to look at it ahead of time, have it on your phone, or print it before coming to church if that is meaningful to you.
- **What else?** If you were with us for in-person Easter worship and you kept your scarf, you are invited to bring that with you as a totem to wave as your joyful "noise" instead of singing.

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### Summer Sabbatical

The summer and sabbatical season is upon us. This last year has held so much for our church, and now as we move into this time I’ve heard many questions from folks:

- “What will we be doing while Rev. Shanna’s away?”
- “Now that in-person worship is restarting, what’s next?”
- “After all the experiences of the last year, how do we hold all of this?”

Wonderful and important questions. The “normal” assumption in many congregations is that sabbaticals are a time to “shift into neutral.” The last year has been anything but normal, and we won’t be able to just idle through the summer. The next three months will be a time of readjusting to life lived in safe physical connection to one another, of church life re-emerging from its pandemic manifestations, and of us actively asking, “Alright, God, what are you inviting us as a church to be right now?”

As we enter into the summer, we’re going to adopt a mantra that will take us through the next three months. Y’all are really good at call and response, so here we go. Repeat after me:

Little “c” communities equal Big “C” Community.
Little “c” communities equal Big “C” Community.
Little “c” communities equal Big “C” Community.

Your Sabbatical Team identified quickly that the top priority for our congregation is reconnecting us to one another and encouraging us to get together safely and regularly. The best way for us to do that right now is to invite one another to small in-person gatherings. While we will continue living into our new reality of in-person and online worship, we recognized that after a year of isolation and disconnection many of us want to be physically in the same spaces together again, and begin the process of knowing one another again. Going “small” will allow us to be “big,” to know greater connection to one another and to God.

We’ve all experienced the last year differently, and not having the common touchpoint of Sunday mornings has caused us to miss processing those different experiences together. Some folks have experienced major health crises in the last year, while others have birthed new ways of life, new professions, and new relationships in quarantine. Creating opportunities for relationship building and community connection will help all of us remember the church and draw closer together.

So, how will we “DO” that? Well, there are a few ways, and this article is the first in a series that will lay out our plans.

This week, we’re thrilled to introduce to you Rev. Cara Gilger. You’ll find her headshot and bio below so you can start to get to know her. From June 10 through August 10, Cara will join us to help Community through an intentional process of learning about and
developing small groups for connection. Cara is an expert in small group development—she was part of the first multi-site Disciples congregation in Indianapolis and led them in the development of the small group ministry, which they still practice today. Cara’s goal is to help us identify and train folks who are willing to take the next step in their spiritual journey by leading a small group. Our hope is to start five of these groups this summer. To help us start those groups, Cara will also lead us through a congregational survey process to identify the spiritual needs that exist in our congregation right now. She’ll join us twice in worship, preaching on June 13 and July 11. Our hope is that Cara will help us evaluate our existing small groups structures and create new ways of gathering that I (Rev. Ryan) will pick up and lead after Rev. Shanna returns.

I’ve got a lot more but we’ll save some of that for next week. Just know that this summer our congregation will be firmly in “drive,” as we move forward into the coming days with excitement and new connection. Get ready because this summer, repeat after me: Little “c” communities equal Big “C” Community!

With excitement for the journey,

Rev. Ryan

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**Meet Rev. Cara Gilger**

Rev. Cara Gilger is ordained in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and her 15 year ministry has spanned from congregational ministry, to small group and campus ministries focusing on spiritual formation and congregational connection. She serves as a preacher and congregational consultant helping churches align their practices and structures with their vision for how God is calling them to serve their community. Cara is trained as a small group facilitator for anti white supremacy conversation with adults, youth and children in the white church context. In her personal time Cara is an uncoordinated fitness enthusiast, enjoys reading and traveling with her partner, Tim, and their two daughters as they work on their goal of hiking every National Park. The Gilgers live in North Texas. Rev. Gilger received her bachelor's degree from Texas Christian University and Masters of Divinity from Vanderbilt University. You can read more of Cara’s work at www.caragilger.com/blog.

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**Steeple of Light**

Our Steeple of Light is once again illuminating the night sky! The lights will be on every night for the this week from about 8:45 p.m. until midnight, and will continue to be lit every weekend. Call the church office if you would like to make a dedication for the Steeple of Light in honor or memory of a loved one. Special thanks to everyone who donated their time or their money to help this restoration become a reality. We are especially grateful for the diligence of our sister organization, Wright on Main, and their board, made up of both members of our congregation and external citizens: Ingrid Busch, Judy Robinette, Ken Mohler, Jan Marcason, Shelly Bolling-Strickland, Elizabeth Rosin, Paul Stark, Anne Manning, and Sheila Vemmer.

Check out the links to see the Steeple of Light in the news on Fox4 and Channel 41!

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**Volunteers Needed**

As we restart so much of our congregational life, Community’s church office has accumulated a few volunteer projects that we could really use some volunteers to help with. The majority of these jobs are small and involve tidying, organizing, cleaning up, and delivering supplies. The projects range from small tasks like tidying the restroom, to organizing the church office and community room, to cleaning up the community garden. If you are interested in helping out, please contact the church office at (555) 555-5555. We would love to have you on board and make our community a more welcoming space for all!
data entry. There is no heavy lifting or heavy manual labor involved. If you'd be willing to offer a few hours of your time for some of these jobs, please email Rev. Ryan and/or Levon Weaver.

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**Property Department Upgrades**

As we move into a hybrid model for worship, we have a greater need for technology upgrades. The Property Department is requesting approval from the Administrative Council at their next meeting on May 18 to use money in the Major Improvement Fund to complete this task. This necessary upgrade will help both our in-person and online worship services tremendously. A second mounted camera will be added and the projection room will be turned into a studio to run the livestream and slides in the sanctuary. Stark Raving Solutions will complete the installation once approved. We anticipate technology upgrades to cost $20,000. The Major Improvement Fund currently has a balance of $80,000. Reach out to Rev. Ryan Motter or Levon Weaver for more detailed information on the upgrades.

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**This Sunday at Community**

Whether you will be joining us in the sanctuary or virtually from your home sanctuary, you can follow along with this Sunday’s order of worship by clicking [here](#). Our scripture this week will come from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. We welcome Rev. Bill Rose-Heim, Regional Minister of the Greater Kansas City Region, to worship with us this week.

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**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](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.

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**Connect with us online throughout the week!**

**Sunday**
- 10 a.m. Piano prelude with Tim Whitmer on Facebook and YouTube
- 10:30 a.m. Worship live on Facebook and YouTube

**Thursday**
- Newsletter email sent

**Saturday**
- 8 a.m. Saturday Sit with Shanna on Zoom
  - [bit.ly/saturdaysit](bit.ly/saturdaysit)

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**Prayers of Sorrow and Thanksgiving**

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

Letha Boyd
Pam Simpson
Congratulations to Addie Nerstheimer, who graduated summa cum laude from the University of Central Missouri last weekend! Congratulations to Ian McDonald, who is graduating from Rockhurst High School!

The Steeple of Light this weekend is dedicated in honor of Wyatt Jake Ohle, born on April 12, and in memory of Marj Palmer. Wyatt is the grandson of Katie Ohle and the great-grandson of Marj Palmer.

Kara Strickler
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