

The Christian Church of Villa Park (Disciples of Christ) How Our Money Becomes Ministry



Through the Spirit we seek to enact the love of God made incarnate in our Savior Jesus Christ.

Introduction

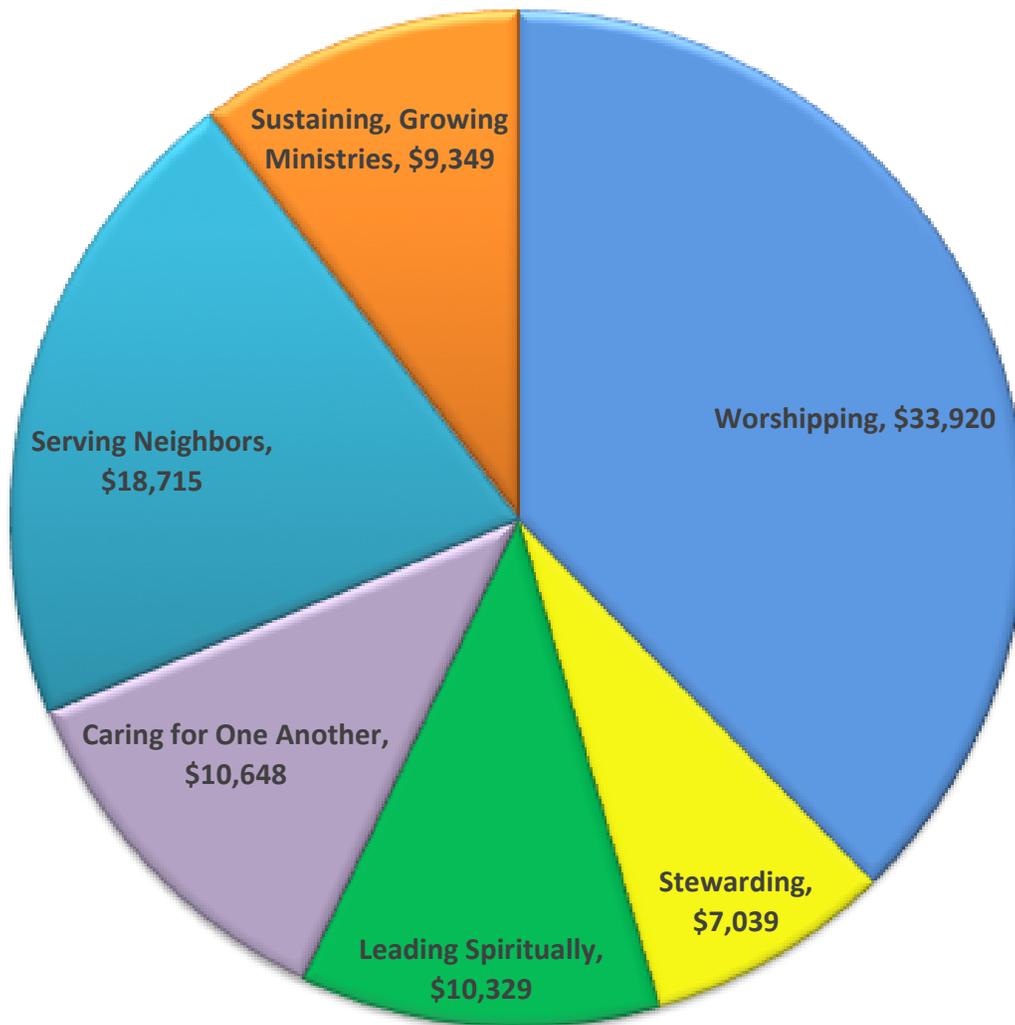
In 2021 we shared a budget that envisioned us living ever more deeply into our Design while also recognizing that we are, and have been, in an “in-between” time. We have done much that we set out to do in the last year and we have found unexpected paths along the way. We experienced new ways and spaces of worship. New faces joined us and new leaders stepped up. We have continued to serve those around us and to learn together despite the restrictions necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We will continue to do all this and more in the coming year because that is who we are and because we have resources in time and money that are available because of the sale of the building.

In 2022, we will continue exploring our call in God. We are experiencing, for the first time, what we might do without the resources that go into owning a building. We are excited to see what we might do together with our time, money, and gifts focused in new ways.

The story on the following pages provides just a glimpse of our shared vision for the coming year. The ‘price tag’ will show you what we need to bring it to life. We are still in the process of discerning exactly what God is calling us into. So, this story will tell us two tales. One of what we do and will continue to do, the already. The other of the hopes and possibilities that lie before us, the not yet. None of these dreams can come to life without the generous stewardship of the congregation, sharing their time, talents, and treasures. Throughout the shifts and changes of 2021, your gifts enabled us to continue to live fully into our budget and we are confident that, together, we can continue to do so in the coming year. By the grace of God, we’re looking to another year of fruitful witness to the love and grace of God.

Expected Ministry Budget for 2022 \$90,000

Our Budget for 2022 \$90,000: Through the Spirit...



Worshipping \$33,920

We are disciples, followers of Jesus. Each week we continue to create worship services that renew and transform our hearts and minds to God's call in whatever space we worship. Worship is an act of the entire gathered community, united physically and electronically.

Already

We are disciples, followers of Jesus. Each week we seek to create worship services that enable us to be fully present regardless of our locations, worship that renews and transforms our hearts and minds to God's call.

Participation of the whole congregation in the leadership and the communal acts of worship is essential to how we understand ourselves.

Prayer, scripture, music, message, and communion continue to be essential pieces of our worship even as they look different than



they once did. Rev. Reed continues the practice of developing worship series with the wisdom of the worship committee. Especially for those who cannot join worship live, Rev. Reed continues to link videos of our worship services on the church's website.

Music remains a vital part of our service through the leadership of Eric Hays, our pianist.

Not Yet

Our worship services have been through a lot of changes in the last two years. As we continue to evolve in our worship together, we are refocusing on engaging the full community in creating worship together. We will explore ways to use all of our gifts to praise God and serve together.

We will also be creative in how we use the space that we are creating. We will explore different orientations of the space and ways that the space can help us worship in new ways.

We hope to be able to return vocal music to our worship and will look forward to the wide variety of music that we will be able to make together.

Stewarding \$7,039

We are stewards. God has given us many gifts and it is our responsibility to use them all as God would have us do. The Stewardship Council is called to particularly oversee the physical and financial gifts of our congregation. Many of these gifts are reflected throughout our annual budget. However, we also care for other resources. Although not reflected in the annual budget, they are critical pieces of how we provide witness to God's grace throughout the world. Monies for these ministries come from a variety of sources including past fundraising campaigns, direct community donations, and donations given in memory of beloved members of our congregation.

Already

Throughout 2021, the Stewardship Council has been leading the congregation in discernment about the sale of our physical property and guiding the congregation through the process of selling and establishing new spaces in the building.

Over the past year members of our congregation continued donations to our many extra budget missions. We gave \$1165 to special day offerings of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Individual giving to these offerings supports mission around the world and down the street. It goes to disaster relief, new church starts, anti-racism/pro-reconciliation work, education, camps, and much more.

We give our time and money to easing hunger around the world and in Villa Park through the local CROP Walk. Joining with other faith-filled walkers from our area, walkers from our congregation raised over \$1600 in 2021 and we hope to raise even more next year. Additionally, over the last 12 months, individuals in the church have given hundreds of hours of volunteer time to the Food Pantry. The Pantry receives funds from individuals outside the church and from community groups.

After six incredible years, we again reached out to serve our community through "Love Your Neighbor Day." We collaborated with more congregations as this grows as a community day of service assisting those financially and/or physically unable to complete work at their homes. Many congregations and members of the community participated with us as more than 140 volunteers cleaned, cleared debris, painted, and helped 28 families in our community.

Not Yet

For the first time, the Stewardship Council will not be stewarding a building. There is, however, still plenty for the council to faithfully oversee.

Part of the focus will be investing monies faithfully, both in the ministries the church is called to and in financial investments to support the future ministry of this congregation.

We will be exploring, as a community, what it means to steward all of our resources including our time and our gifts. We will seek to be fruitful with the resources we now have.



The morning of Love Your Neighbor Day 2021

Leading Spiritually \$10,329

We are still learning. As people of faith we are all called to continue growing in our faith in community. Life is a conversation, a process of discovery among friends. We learn from and grow with one another, receiving wisdom from those who journey with us. We are called to pray, read, discern, and grow together into God's vision for us.

Already

In 2021, we continued, as individuals and congregation, to explore what it means to give our whole lives to God. God calls us to do more than show up on Sunday mornings and give of our excess. We will grow together in reimagining our lives as abundant in gifts allowing us to share God's love with the world.

The elders will continue to meet together, renewing their spirits and living deeply into the roles the Design has called them. They will faithfully gather resources to help them guide and equip other leaders in this congregation and seek new ways to enhance the congregation's spiritual vitality on its journey into the "new normal".

Our Sunday school classes continue as an all-ages, in-person community. We share stories and conversation, encouraging questions and sharing our gifts.

We affirm that our faith in and relationship with God grow as we converse with those outside of our immediate community. Rev. Reed, joining with other faith leaders, continues, as part of Interfaith Partners of Villa Park and Lombard, to provide the community with places of conversation, prayer, song, and reflection. She will also continue to learn through conversation with local ecumenical and Disciples clergy as these groups are able to meet.

Not Yet

As we move into the next chapter in the story of our congregation, we are focusing on nurturing the gifts of every person in our congregation. God has brought us together and our gifts complement one another. Without the gifts of each of us we cannot fully follow the call of God.

The Elders will seek to focus on discerning how to best incorporate all of our gifts, to make sure our voices are heard and used toward the ministries God calls us into.

We seek to provide opportunities within the ministries of our congregation to nurture, develop, and hone our various gifts. We also strive to support those seeking opportunities beyond those available in our local congregation. We are all enriched when one or more of us receives knowledge and training elsewhere and returns to share with us.



Caring for One Another \$10,648

We are caregivers. We value time spent in community and affirm our call, as the body of Christ, to share stories and walk alongside all members of community.

Already

Since the pandemic began, we have viscerally experienced the importance of connections with one another. Because of this we have discovered new ways of coming together. We have opportunities to meet weekly on Zoom, creating a space for anyone to share where we support one another in times of trial and we share joyous events together.

We share news, stories, events, and more in our newsletter. We make our life together visible through our website. These will continue to be vital pieces of our ministry and will be important tools in our transformation. We will share our story in more ways in the coming year and use the many tools of communication to reach out and encourage participation in new ways.



Not Yet

As we have seen over the last year and more, caring for one another is one of the most essential acts of community. As we look forward, we want to continue to emphasize this and the role we all play in making God's love known in the good and hard moments of our lives.

We will be exploring new ways to come together as community as we continue to observe all health restrictions that are necessary and lean in to creating community that is present on multiple platforms. We hope to provide ways for members of our congregation of all ages to build and strengthen our relationships with each other, talk about faith and life, laugh and have fun with one another. We will look for new ways we can come to know one another better.

We will seek to be more creative in how we connect with one another and share news and stories together. We will strive to create a space where all are comfortable sharing the fulness of who they are and what is happening in their lives.

Serving Our Neighbors \$18,715

We are called by God to be servants within our community and witnesses to God's promise for each and every one of God's children. Where we see suffering, we help to alleviate it. Where we see hurt, we provide comfort.

Already

Disciples Food Pantry is a wonderful expression of Christian spirit and over the past 12 months we were able to help feed many people. Because of the pandemic, this ministry continues to function as a drive-thru service on Wednesday mornings. We are blessed to be able to keep helping our community. The work of volunteers from our congregation and the wider community blesses our building. We give thanks that many have been touched by this ministry, including several clients who have been so moved by the welcome and help they have received that they are called to give back. When possible, we hope to continue expanding the impact of our ministry on our community by returning to inside service. The food pantry will continue to be a place for connections with other community members and organizations to flourish.

Rev. Reed also continued to address emergency needs of our neighbors through the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.

As a congregation, we support the regional ministries of the Christian Church in Illinois/Wisconsin and the general ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). By giving to our regional and general denominational ministries, we are becoming better stewards and participating in ministries that reach neighbors in our community and across the world. In 2022, we will increase the portion of our budget supporting these ministries. We believe that our God created a world filled with generosity and we believe that living into this generosity is an act of faith. By expressing this generosity to our denomination, we are connecting to other people of faith throughout the entire world.

Not Yet

In the coming year we will be exploring new ways to serve our neighbor and to enhance the ways we already minister together.

Previously, we used our ownership of the building as a major way of serving, providing space to a variety of groups. Although we no longer own a building, we still find our roots in this community and want to grow them even deeper. We hope to be able to serve in new ways, meeting even more needs than before.

The ministries we already have are places we will start, but, we are also exploring new relationships with community organizations that will allow us to be more effective in addressing the various needs in our community. We remain committed to alleviating hunger and also look to ways we can address underlying issues of food insecurity. We remain committed to helping homeowners who are struggling to maintain their properties and also look to the underlying issues that lead to struggles with housing.



CROP Walk, October 2021

Sustaining and Growing our Ministries \$9,349

We are a community. As we are in ministry together, we know that we do not act in solitude, that we are enriched by being in a community of believers and sharing our ministry.

Already

CCVP 20/20, our visioning ministry, continues to focus on discerning what new ways God will be calling us as we enter the "new normal". We look forward to the renewal, conversation, and ideas that will come out of our Ministry Gatherings in the next year. The Ministry Gathering is a place not only for current ministries, but a place from which new ministries will arise. We are exploring new ways of meeting and holding these vibrant conversations.

Rev. Reed also continues to live into the importance of sustaining and growing ministry through time together. She continues to seek out spaces of spiritual rejuvenation and deep wisdom, taking a few days apart twice a year. In addition, we, as a congregation, will look to participate in wider gatherings of the church as the pandemic eases.

Not Yet

CCVP 20/20 will focus on things we have learned about ourselves as a community through the pandemic and the sale of our building and engage in small and large conversations to see what concrete actions we might take together as we hear God's call.

Rev. Reed is exploring ways to incorporate sustainability and growth more into the everyday ministries of her work and our congregation's work. It can feel difficult to take time away from all that needs to be done to make space to dwell with God, but taking even a few minutes on a regular basis can give us the space we need to truly hear God.

Conclusion

We are excited about who we are becoming! The narrative budget, its priorities and missions, will guide our decisions through the coming year. As a congregation, we commit ourselves to be part of this story, to support it with our money as well as with our hearts and hands.

This is our story and it is only together that we make it real.

Your estimate of giving card is enclosed. Please prayerfully consider all that you are able to give to creating this congregation's story. On November 28, we will celebrate God's abundance and the gifts we give as an act of worship having submitted our pledge cards electronically or by mail.