

# We Are CCU

## Winter '24 Newsletter

In response to Christ's call to love our neighbors, Christian Churches United brings together local churches, community partners, and concerned neighbors to serve those facing homelessness, incarceration, and poverty through supportive programs and compassionate engagement.

The more things change, the more some things stay the same. Christian Churches United began because local churches in Harrisburg recognized the call to love their neighbors who have found themselves in need. For nearly 50 years CCU has operated as hands and feet of the local church to tangibly love our neighbors. As uncertainty and fear grows and abounds in our world, that mission remains the same. We will respond to Christ's call to love our neighbors.

While change can bring anxiety and fear, it can also bring opportunity. We do not know what the future brings, however we are excited for what God will do in and through CCU in the coming years. After an extensive search and interview process, Christian Churches United is excited to welcome Matthew Reichard as its new Executive Director. Matthew has a wealth of experience in the non-profit world, not just locally and nationally, but also internationally. Matthew has worked at Paxton Ministries, with Freedom Global Outreach, and most recently has spent the last 6.5 years as the Associate Pastor at CrossPoint United Methodist Church. A Central PA native, Matt resides in Carlisle with his wife of almost 24 years, Julie. They have three children: Logan (21), Austin (17) and Madison (16).

"I am excited to work with the amazing staff, volunteers, and member churches of CCU to fulfill our mission to serve those facing homelessness, incarceration, and poverty. I believe that we reflect the heart of Jesus when we work together to serve those in need in our community. It is my hope that we can continue to be a light in the region and show, in very tangible ways, that everybody is important because everybody was created in the image of God."

Matt's official start date with Christian Churches United of the Tri-County Area is February 10th. Please join us in welcoming and praying for Matt as he steps into the role of Executive Director at CCU.



**Matthew Reichard**

*Executive Director*

### Upcoming Events

**May 2nd** - Community Day with Thrivent Financial | **May TBD** - Spring Assembly | **June 2nd** - 48th Annual Golf Tournament

# New Faces at CCU



**Dr. Joe Jones**  
Prison Chaplain

We are extremely grateful to have welcomed Dr. Joe Jones to CCU as the new Prison Chaplain. Dr. Jones comes to CCU with a wealth of experience across multiple areas of ministry. We thought it best to let Chaplain Jones introduce himself in his own words:

You may have heard the adage: "the need is the call." I have known about this great need for ministry in the prisons and support for ex-offenders after their release. I directly served this need for about 14 years before committing to a life in higher education, preparing students to be light in these dark areas, offering hope where there is so much hopelessness, and extending the forgiveness that God gives those who would seek Him in their bondage of unforgiveness.

I am humbled by the opportunity to serve as light with others in Christ who are ready to share the Life that God gives to those who seek Him.

I am amazed at how desperate for the Word and Prayer the men and women we are serve are in their recognition of failure and hopelessness. I have been in ministry for many decades but seldom have I encountered such desperate desires for prayer and hearing the scriptures. This life-giving service makes God's Word alive in that whatever we sow, we shall reap.

I want to invite you to walk with us to sow into this work with your time, resources, gifts, and most of all, your love. This work is a call to wash the feet of those most identify as unworthy. Washing these feet remind us of how unworthy we are of the cleansing power of God in us.



## Join the M25.40 Team

"I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me - you did it to me." **Matthew 25:40** (*The Message*)

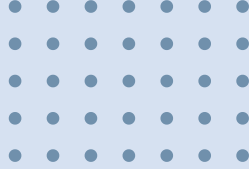
We want to invite you to see Christ in every person, to offer a cup of cold water, food, clothing, or a visit to those in need. Our Matthew 25.40 team is made up of people like you and me who recognize the Imago Dei in others and offer that 'cup of cold water' through giving to CCU monthly.

Monthly giving helps provide stability not only for non-profits like CCU; but it provides stability for those who find themselves in a position of need. It means that when a crisis hits, CCU is there to respond. When you give \$25 a month, that's \$300 a year - and that can provide laundry for 10 people who are living on the streets! When you give \$40 a month, that's \$480 a year and can provide a week's housing and support at Susquehanna Harbor Safe Haven!

The month of February is National Heart Month, and we want to invite you to 'Share Your Heart'! We are looking for 25 people to commit to \$40 a month or 40 people to commit to \$25 a month; increasing our Monthly Giving support by \$1,000 per month; that's \$12,000 a year! A little can go a long way! Would you prayerfully consider how God might be inviting you to join Christian Churches United M25.40 monthly support team?



- \$25/ month = \$300/ year
- \$40/ month = \$480/ year
- \$75/ month = \$900/ year
- \$100/month = \$1,200/year



# Warmth in Action

A Warm Culture is different than a Cold Culture. While we have faced some intensely cold days during January, we are not talking about the weather. We are talking about culture -- the ethos and spirit of a community when it comes to possessions. In Acts 2 and Acts 4, we witnessed the early church (existing in a Warm Culture) respond with a type of generosity that is not typical for much of Western Culture today. People sold and gave freely to one another to ensure that all were cared for. While that might not be the norm in Western Culture, we have had a front row seat to it here in Harrisburg.

In the face of tragedy at Tent City down at PennDOT, we witnessed you, our neighbors, respond with love, passion, and action. Organizations rallied together to provide a Memorial Service. Groups and individuals worked tirelessly to provide not only alternative methods of heat, but emergency measures to those whose homes are made of tent and tarp.

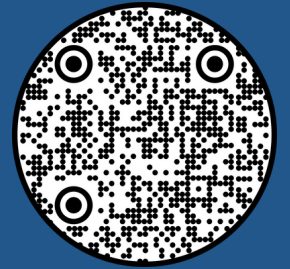
Then bitterly cold temperatures arrived and once again, you responded with your time and energy. Churches and organizations opened their doors during the cold, and within hours, volunteers began to sign up to provide support, and donations arrived. You, the beloved community, responded with warmth and provided warmth for over 200.

David Botero, a CCU Volunteer, shares, "There is PURPOSE in all that we as volunteers do." Volunteering across our city creates a transformative environment where we experience grace and change. At CCU, we desire for our volunteers to serve out of who they are and in ways that provide the assurance that they are fulfilling their purpose.

A generous community--a Warm Culture--creates an environment where all people have the opportunity to thrive and experience the life and hope they were created for. We are grateful for how generous you are with your time, talent and treasure. Let's keep doing it together!

## Volunteer Opportunities

- **Loads of Love Support Third Tuesday of every Month**
- **Overnight Shelters Expanded overnight shelter season.**
- **Pick up Truck Get food from Midwest Food Bank 1-2 times a month**



Volunteer Form

# Loads of Love

For the past few years, Christian Churches United has partnered with Angel Fox at Fox's Wash and Go for a monthly Laundry Angels, supporting those who could use a little extra help with their laundry. It has continued to grow each month, serving not only those who are unhoused, but those from the community who find themselves in need of a little extra help! We are incredibly grateful for the work that Laundry Angels and Fox's Wash and Go are doing! What a gift it is for so many! As it has grown, it has become clear that another alternative for laundry services for our Unhoused Neighbors is needed.

On January 28th, the Unsheltered Services Team at Christian Churches United launched, Loads of Love! Loads of Love will take place every 3rd Tuesday of the month and will be hosted at Morris Laundromat on Front St. in Steelton.

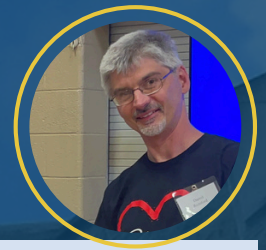
We want to invite you to consider how you, your small group, church or business can partner with Loads of Love through physical & monetary donations as well as volunteering. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Lisa, our Unsheltered Services Manager at [lkesslerpeters@ccuhbg.org](mailto:lkesslerpeters@ccuhbg.org).

It's our understanding that Fox's Wash and Go intends to continue Laundry Angels on the first Saturday of the month to help those in the neighborhood in need of free laundry services. So for those interested in continuing to support that effort, please reach out to Angel Fox directly.



# The Last Word

## Darrel Reinford



I very much believe that following Jesus is embarking on a journey. Unlike his disciples who journeyed with Jesus along the roads of Galilee, we often see our journey as one of discerning the movement of the Spirit, not one of literally walking with our guide down the road to the next town.

However, Jesus told us that he is still with us. He is that person who, for whatever reason, struggles to meet their basic needs of food, clothing and shelter. He is that person who is behind bars, socially isolated, in need of human touch. We can physically walk down the road alongside Jesus.

I've been blessed the past 9 and a half years to join with CCU – our Member Churches and the many individuals in those churches and in the larger community – to reach out in love and solidarity with the Jesus that is still in our midst. In a time when many call themselves followers of Christ but promote building walls between themselves and their neighbor in need, I'm grateful for the encouragement of working with people who break down those walls every day.

While I am moving on to see where I can find Jesus next, I will also still continue to support the work of CCU and other organizations in our community that are making the love of Christ real to our neighbors. I'm excited to see how Matt and the CCU staff will continue to help the local church make a difference in the lives of many. I hope I will randomly bump into many of you as I continue on my journey, and pray God's blessing on each of you as you find Jesus in your neighborhood or in your steps to experience neighborhoods that are different than yours.

## #WeAreCCU



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**JOIN OUR Matthew 25.40 TEAM!**

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