

CCWW and Civic Engagement

Here's a riddle:

Why couldn't the 40-something mom with a master's degree land a job interview? Not a job, an *interview*.

Stumped?

It is common practice in our state and elsewhere for employers to include a section on job applications where you check a little box if you've ever been convicted of a felony.

So the highly qualified mom who made a mistake when she was a teenager, the woman who is now on her way to earning a PhD, has to check the box. And never gets called back.

On February 28th, CCWW joined Alabama Arise in its Legislative Action Day in Montgomery, to learn about legislative issues affecting our community, such as the Ban the Box movement. Ban the Box is not a movement against background checks or accountability. It's simply a movement to remove the box from the application. If employers want to ask about the applicant's background in an interview, no problem! The issue is that there is an enormous group of people who paid a debt to society – some of them decades ago! – who are now doing everything they can to contribute to their communities in healthy, productive ways.

But how can they, when they can't even land an interview? In a world with so much strife and violence, surely everybody can get behind the idea that folks leaving prison should rejoin society by getting jobs!

Our delegation from CCWW learned not only about Ban the Box, but about multiple issues scheduled to come before the state legislature in the coming weeks. That day, Alabama Arise encouraged participants to find their state representatives and senators, and to speak with them about the issues that matter most to them.

CCWW is committed to connecting people with God, with one another, and with the community. It's not every day the church gets a chance to connect with the statewide community, to learn about issues that affect us locally, and to speak up to those who represent us.

Membership retreat

Just before Easter, CCWW will take those who want to join the church on a weekend retreat to talk about what it means to be a Christian, what it means to be a United Methodist, and what it means to be a member of a church like CCWW! Folks who join us on the weekend retreat will have an opportunity to profess their faith and make a commitment on Easter Sunday. As these friends become members, we ask that the entire extended CCWW community bathe them in prayer in the weeks leading up to Easter.



Lent

Inclement weather on Ash Wednesday meant CCWW observed an Ash *Thursday* service this year. Always better safe than sorry! The church gathered the evening after Ash Wednesday for worship with the imposition of the ashes. In place of a sermon, some of our young adult leaders put together a skit explaining the season of Lent. (Who knew you could laugh so much on Ash Wednes—I mean, Ash *Thursday*?) This element was especially helpful for our kids and first time observers of Lent.



Throughout the Lenten season, our children are learning about prayer. After having spent several weeks learning the Lord's Prayer, CCWW kids are now practicing saying and writing their own prayers to God.

Discovery

One of the most joyful weekends of the entire year happens in the springtime when CCWW and First UMC downtown join forces for Discovery, a weekend of spiritual growth, laughter, fellowship, dancing, and did we mention laughter? Led largely by our high school students, the weekend is a time of spiritual reflection for our middle schoolers. This year's theme, *Lights*, explored biblical themes of light and dark and encouraged students to apply these scriptural lessons to their own lives. At Discovery weekend, students hear a series of talks from high school students, and they discuss these talks and their scriptural foundations in small groups.



Each year, our students come home bubbling with excitement about Discovery Weekend, and this year was no different. We are always so impressed with our high school students for the enthusiasm and hard work they show for the middle schoolers!

Join With Us — Return This Today

YES! I want to know more about the Community Church Without Walls.

- I want a pastor to call me.
- I want to enter into a partner covenant with the Community Church Without Walls by promising to support the church through prayer.
- I want to enter into a partner covenant with the Community Church Without Walls by giving \$ _____ as a one-time gift, \$ _____ as a monthly gift, \$ _____ as an annual gift.

If your address is incorrect, please make changes on reverse and return this to us so we can update our mailing list.

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A Word from Pastor Caitlin



One Sunday, after celebrating Holy Communion, one of our preschool-aged kids approached the altar as I was cleaning up. Barely taller than the table, he held the edge, pressed his nose into his hands, and peered over at the Communion elements wide-eyed. I heard him mumble something, but his own hands muffled the words, so I knelt down and asked him to repeat himself. He shot a furtive glance at the chalice and then back at me.

“Is that really *BLOOD*?”

Apparently, our four-year-olds have been paying attention. And they are alarmed.

We should take note that it’s an alarming claim we make, that in these ordinary elements, these things we consume all the time, that somehow the Lord is present in them. And it’s not that Jesus is present simply in a feel-good, tingly, heart-strangely-warmed kind of way. It’s visceral. We invoke his broken body. We say we drink his blood.

If it weren’t for Holy Communion, we might get away with thinking of Jesus as purely spirit, and some early Christian traditions tried to do this. They denied the body, and sought to achieve a purely spiritual plane of existence. But in Holy Communion we remember that we follow an embodied Christ, the one who walked dusty streets, dealt with physical issues like hunger and healing, and ultimately suffered and died for the sake of love.

At Community Church Without Walls, we believe in embodied faith. Where it may be tempting to keep our faith in our heads or in our hearts, we affirm that it lives in our hands and feet too. I’ve heard it said that kindness is just love with its work boots on. At CCWW, we believe in putting on our boots, gloves, and overalls, because our faith has work to do.

To the preschooler concerned about the contents of the chalice, I reassured him that he was no cannibal, but we talk about the body and the blood because of how much Jesus loves us. Relieved, he broke off another piece of bread and happily dunked it in the cup.

May we all celebrate such Holy Communion.

Help us furnish a new space!

CCWW has been given some extra room in Urban Ministry for meetings and Bible studies. Help us furnish the new room! Currently, CCWW is looking for:

- 3 couches in good condition**
- 4 large canvas drop cloths**
- 2 medium-sized office desks in good condition**
- 2 rolling desk chairs**
- A printer (preferably Epson)**
- A locking file cabinet**
- 2 large bookshelves or other shelving in good condition**
- Large dry-erase board and dry-erase markers**
- 2 floor lamps**

Also, we need up-to-date car seats for our vans, preferably the ones that adjust to different weights/ages.

Want to help? Email Caitlin or Garrett if you’ve got a lead: caitlin.harper@umcna.org and garrett.harper@umcna.org.

MORE WAYS TO HELP

One-time gift	Monthly gift for one year	Equals
\$150	\$12.50	A week’s worth of gas in our vans
\$250	\$20.83	Sunday supper for the CCWW community
\$300	\$25.00	Sends a student to summer camp at SIFAT
\$410	\$34.17	Pays a van driver for one month
\$416	\$34.72	A month’s worth of van maintenance
\$540	\$45.00	Pays children’s director for one month
\$625	\$52.00	Pays for postage & distribution of a newsletter

Consider giving to CCWW’s core support fund

Help us keep things running smoothly! Having no building means we have very low overhead costs, but even a church with no walls has some non-negotiable administrative expenses: Things like background checks, postage, website hosting, printing, and bookkeeping. Lots of people love giving toward educating or feeding kids, and giving toward the daily grind isn’t always as fashionable. Be a hero – keep us running smoothly!