



CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

EXTENDING THE LOVE AND EMBRACE OF CHRIST

THE HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

8:00 & 10:30 A.M.

Sunday, December 21, 2025 | Fourth Sunday of Advent



“SHE WILL BEAR A SON, AND
YOU ARE TO NAME HIM JESUS,
FOR HE WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE
FROM THEIR SINS.”

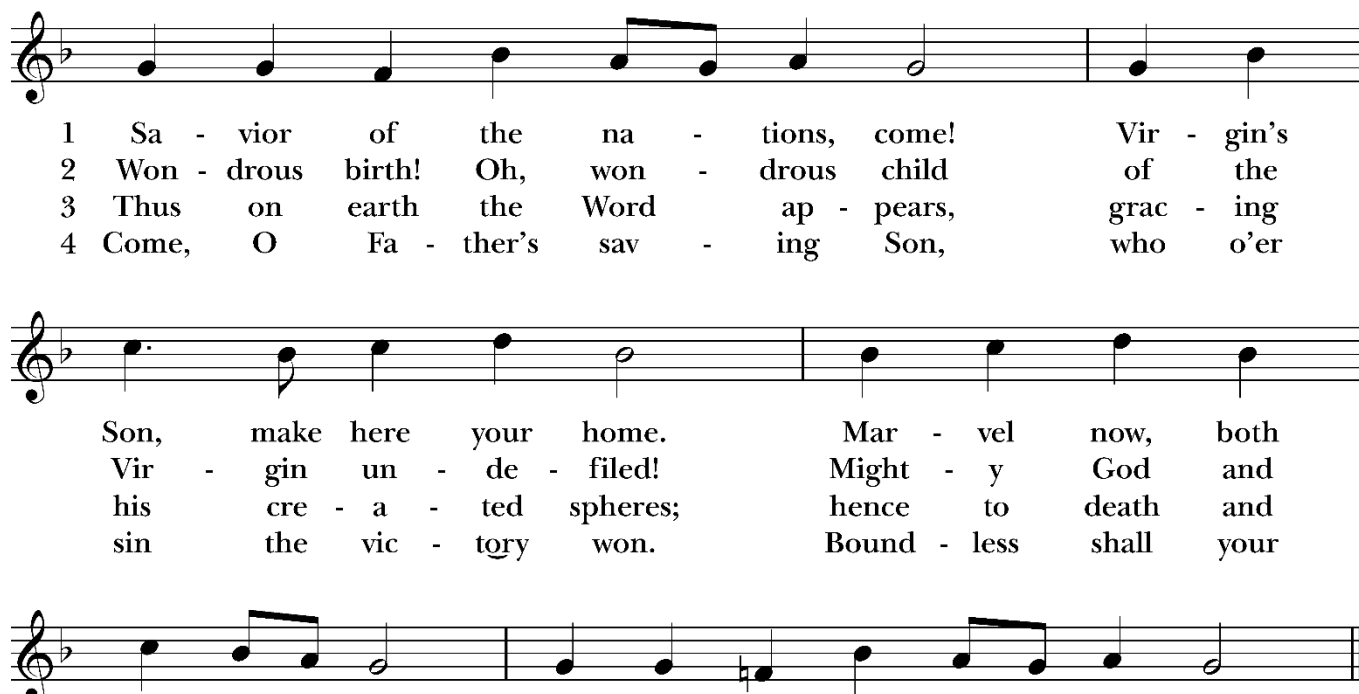
MATTHEW 1:21

Welcome Home!

Welcome to worship at Christ Episcopal Church. If this is your first time with us, we invite you to complete a visitor's form. Our website provides up to date information about our vibrant church: www.christchurchcolumbia.org

This bulletin contains all you need to join us in worship, everyone is welcome to receive communion at God's table, and the clergy are happy to speak with you at any time.

OPENING HYMN 54 | Savior of the Nations, Com

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland


1 Sa - vior of the na - tions, come! Vir - gin's
 2 Won - drous birth! Oh, won - drous child of the
 3 Thus on earth the Word ap - pears, grac - ing
 4 Come, O Fa - ther's sav - ing Son, who o'er

Son, make here your home. Mar - vel now, both
 Vir - gin un - de - filed! Might - y God and
 his cre - a - ted spheres; hence to death and
 sin the vic - tory won. Bound - less shall your

heaven and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth.
 Ma - ry's son, ea - ger now his race to run!
 hell de - scends, then the heaven - ly throne a - scends.
 king - dom be; grant that we its glo - ries see.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE |

Fourth Candle | The Candle of Love

Celebrant: Last Sunday we lit the Candle of Joy. We light it and the Candles of Hope and Peace as we remember that Jesus, born in Bethlehem, our hope, our peace and our joy. *A person lights the candles of Hope, Peace and Joy.*

Today we light the Fourth Candle of Advent, the Candle of Love. In their old age God gave to Zechariah and Elisabeth a son called John. John spoke to the people bravely in the desert denying his own comforts and prepared to die for what he believed. John taught that we should share what we have with others, treat each other kindly and show God's love. He did this because he cared for people and wanted them to repent and find God's forgiveness. Peace is like a shining light in a dark place. As we look at this candle we celebrate the peace we find in Jesus Christ. *A person lights the Fourth Candle, the Candle of Love.*

Celebrant: Love is like a candle shining in a dark place. As we look at the light of this candle we celebrate the love we have in Christ.
 Let us pray.

People: Lord God, Your witness John the Baptist grew up strong in spirit and prepared people for the coming of the Lord. He loved your people and baptized them in the River Jordan to wash away their sins. Help us to have the same love that we would be witnesses to him and spread the good news of your love. As Christmas draws closer day by day, help us to be ready to welcome him.
Amen.

OPENING ACCLAMATION |

Celebrant: Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People: **And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY |

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The people may be seated.

THE FIRST LESSON | Isaiah 7:10-16

Reader: *A reading from Isaiah.*

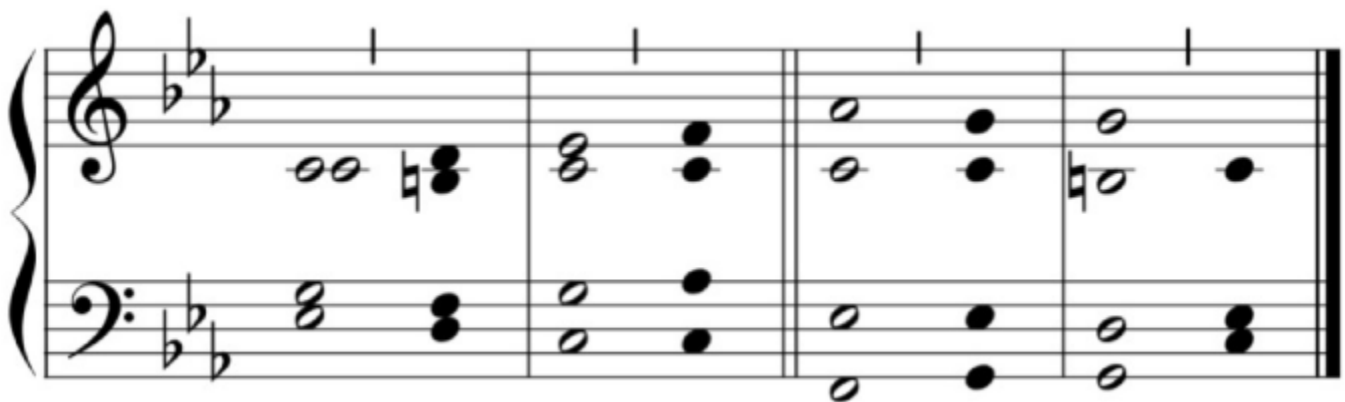
Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

Reader: The word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

THE PSALM

Psalms 80:1-7, 16-18 | *Qui regis Israel (Prayer for the restoration of Israel)*



Restore us again, O God of ¹ hosts; |
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be ¹ whole. ||

You have brought a vine out of ¹ Egypt; |
you have cast out the nations and ¹ planted it. ||

You made room for ¹ it, |
and when it had taken root, it filled the ¹ land. ||

The hills were covered with the shadow of ¹ it, |
and the boughs thereof were like the mighty cedar ¹ trees. ||

It stretched out its branches to the ¹ sea |
and its boughs to the ¹ river. ||

Why have you broken down its ¹ hedge, |
so that all those who go by pluck off its ¹ grapes? ||

The wild boar out of the wood roots it ¹ up, |
and the wild beasts of the field de ¹ vour it. ||

Turn again, O God of hosts, look down from ¹ heaven; |
behold, and visit this ¹ vine, ||

And the place of the vineyard that your right hand has ¹ planted, |
and the branch that you made so strong for your ¹ self. ||

As for those who burn it with fire and cut it ¹ down, |
let them perish at the rebuke of your ¹ countenance. ||

Let your hand be upon the man of your right ¹ hand |
and upon the son of man, whom you made so strong for your ¹ self. ||

And so we will not turn back from ¹ you; |
O let us live, and we shall call upon your ¹ Name. ||

Restore us again, O Lord God of ¹ hosts; |
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be ¹ whole. ||

THE EPISTLE | Romans 1:1-7

Reader: *A reading from Romans.*

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The people stand as able.

SEQUENCE HYMN 56 | O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vs 7-8)

Veni, veni, Emmanuel

7 O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind in one the
8 O come, O come, Em - man u - el, and ran - som

7 hearts of all man - kind; bid thou our sad di - vi - sions
8 cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile

7 cease, and be thy - self our King of Peace. Re - joice! Re - joice!
8 here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.

Em - man u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

THE GOSPEL | Matthew 1:18-25

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Celebrant: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Lead me, Lord, lead me in Thy right-eousness,

Make Thy way plain be - fore Thy face.

For it is Thou, Lord, Thou, Lord on - ly, that

mak - est me dwell in safe - ty.

The people may be seated at the invitation of the preacher.

THE SERMON | The Rev. Marcia Davenport, *Associate Rector for Children and Family Ministries*

The people stand as able.

THE NICENE CREED |

All: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE |

May we be servants of the Lord and act in faith according to His will. May we be strengthened to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to the entire world. His love and mercy are extended to all in every generation. Our Lord will lift our spirits and fill us with good things sustaining our bodies and giving joy to our souls. **Glory to Christ, the rock of our salvation**

May our conscience be moved to aid those feeling abandoned, overwhelmed by illness, unemployment, hunger, fear of eviction in the approaching cold winter. Many people are struggling to care for their children to nurture and educate them, giving them hope for a better future. We pray that we may serve those in need providing resources and encouragement to the best of our abilities. Help us to have peace and confidence in our national, state and local leadership. Grant wisdom to our President, Congress and our Federal Courts. Lord, please heal the divisions in our country bringing unity and deep understanding to all. **May God's love hold us fast**

We hold up in prayer the worldwide Church, today we pray for: The Anglican Church of Burundi that it may provide new life and purpose to all. In our Diocese of Maryland, we pray for: St. Mary the Virgin, Baltimore; Holy Trinity, Essex, and Good Shepherd, Towson. We ask for strength and courage in all our spiritual leaders, our Presiding Bishop, Sean; our Diocesan Bishop Carrie; our rector, Emmanuel; Clergy; Richard & Marcia, and Seminarian, Yehinuel. We give thanks for our Director of Music, Larissa. We are grateful to our Vestry and all our Commissions for their hard work. We are so fortunate to continue to worship for special services in our 1811 historic building, Old Brick. We extend our warm hospitality to all visitors and newcomers with us today. **May God's majesty shine over all the Earth**

Our thoughts and prayers are with those who are ill, especially Clarence, Steve, Diane, Priscilla, Natasha, Mildred, Nancy, Patrick, Winifred, Priscilla, Kayode, Isaac, Abel, Rachan & Sherry, and those you now name. May the healing touch of Christ bring health and wholeness to all. We also ask our Lord to bless the families, friends and caregivers who love and support those in need. We remember all those who have died and entered eternal life, especially those you now name. We ask that special care be given to those who grieve to overcome the loneliness and emptiness that often fills their lives. **May the Lord remain close giving comfort and peace to all**

We celebrate all those joyous occasions in our Parish this week, especially the birthdays of Tanner, Kyle, Kristen, Ben, Paul, April, Roger & James, wedding anniversaries of Jo Emily & Nathaniel Knox and Philip & Shelsie Fung, and the baptismal anniversary of Melanie. We recognize the contributions of all the marvelous people in our lives. **May we serve the Lord with joy**

Let us live in Faith, in trust and confidence in Christ, aiming to please Him by our words and deeds, and urged on by His endless love. **AMEN.**

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION |

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

All: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

THE PEACE |

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

The people may greet one another in the name of the Lord and then be seated.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS |

OFFERTORY ANTHEM | There Is No Rose

Jessica Nelson

Please scan to give.



PRESENTATION HYMN 380 (v. 3) |

Old 100th

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.



THE HOLY COMMUNION



EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER B |

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

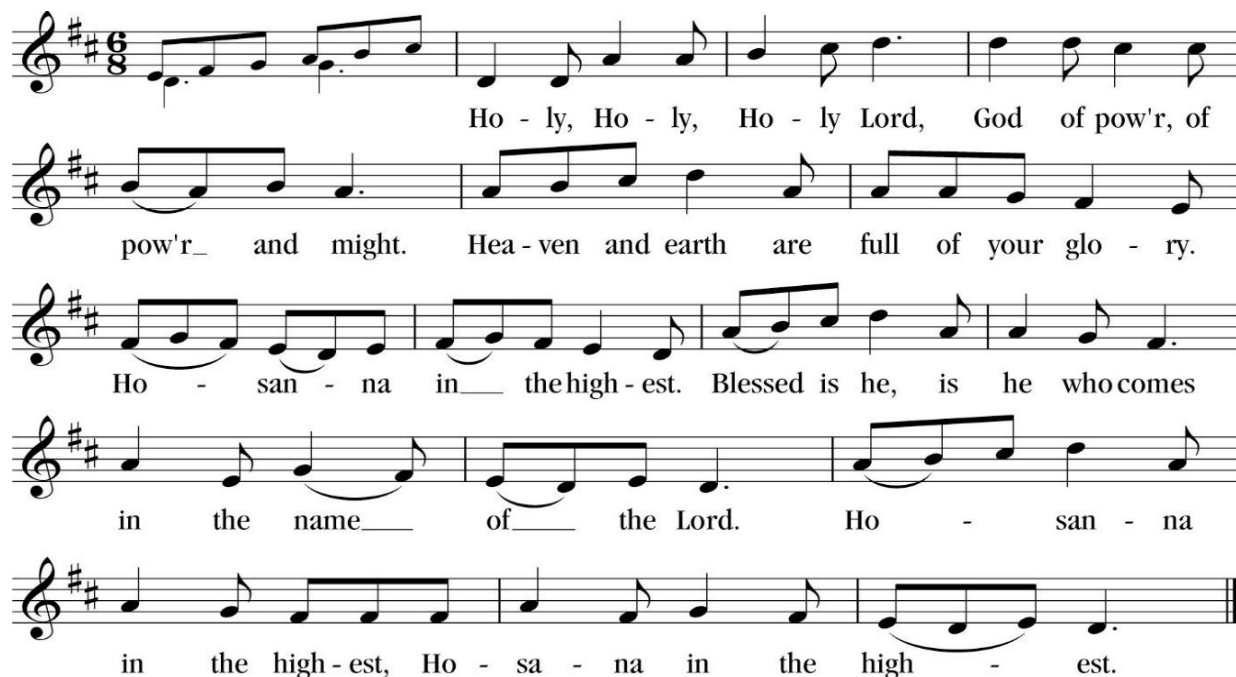
People: We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Celebrant: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth...

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:



The Celebrant continues

Celebrant: We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or to lay a hand upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Celebrant: After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,
Celebrant and People: **We remember his death,
 We proclaim his resurrection.
 Christ will come again.**

Celebrant: And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine. We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER |

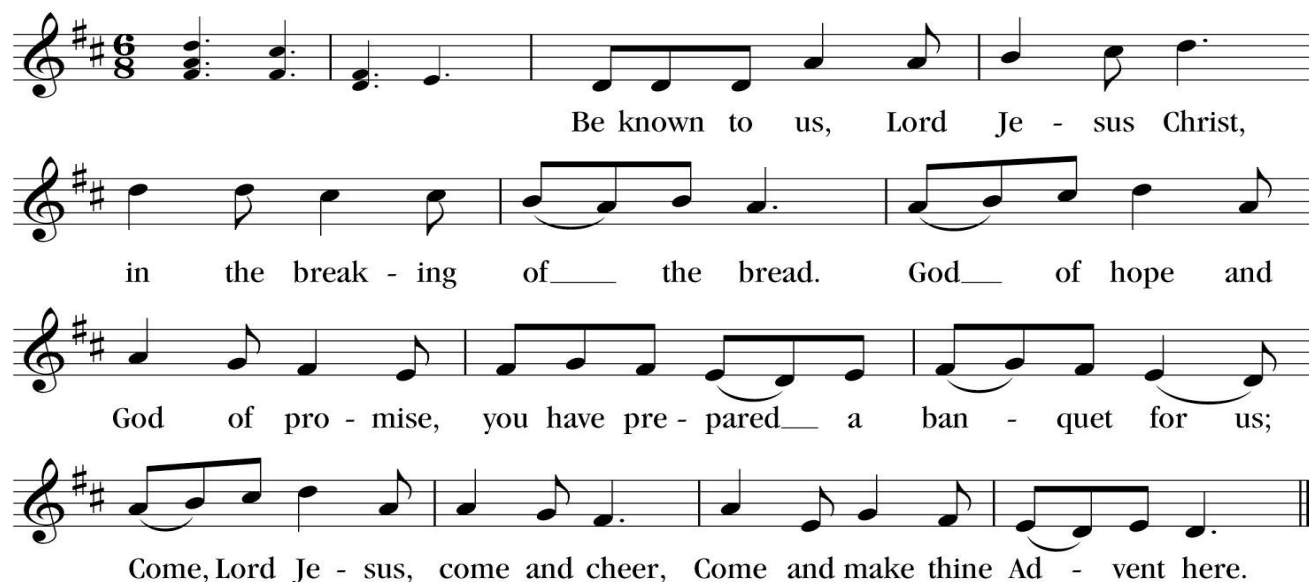
Celebrant: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,
All: **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD |

Celebrant: Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People: **Therefore, let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

FRACTION ANTHEM | Be Known To Us

*St. James Advent Service
 arr. Richard Shepard*



Be known to us, Lord Je - sus Christ,
 in the break - ing of the bread. God of hope and
 God of pro - mise, you have pre - pared a ban - quet for us;
 Come, Lord Je - sus, come and cheer, Come and make thine Ad - vent here.

1 Lo, how a Rose e'er bloom-ing from ten - der stem hath sprung!
 2 I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, the Rose I have in mind,
 * 3 O Flower, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet - ness fills the air,

Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as seers of old have sung.
 with Ma - ry we be - hold it, the Vir - gin Mo - ther kind.
 dis - pel in glo - rious splen - dor the dark - ness ev - ery - where;

It came, a blos - som bright, a - mid the
 To show God's love a - right, she bore to
 true man, yet ve - ry God, from sin and

cold of win - ter, when half spent was the night.
 us a Sa - vior, when half spent was the night.
 death now save us, and share our ev - ery load.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER |

Celebrant: Let us pray.

All: Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

EUCCHARISTIC VISITORS' PRAYER | 8 & 10:30 a.m. service

Celebrant: In the name of this congregation, we send you forth bearing these gifts that those to whom you go may share with us in the communion of Christ's Body and Blood.

People: We who are many are one body because we all share one bread, one cup.

THE BLESSING |

The Celebrant offers a blessing, and the People respond Amen.

CLOSING HYMN 71 | Hark! the Glad Sound! the Savior Comes!

Bristol

1 Hark! the glad sound! the Sa - vior comes, the Sa - vior
2 He comes, the pri - soners to re - lease in Sa - tan's
3 He comes, the bro - ken heart to bind, the bleed - ing
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, thy wel - come

prom - ised long: let ev - ery heart pre -
bond - age held; the gates of brass be -
soul to cure; and with the trea - sures
shall pro - claim; and heaven's e - ter - nal

pare a throne, and ev - ery voice a song.
fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.
of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.
arch - es ring with thy be - lov - ed Name.

THE DISMISSAL |

The Celebrant dismisses the people who respond:
Thanks be to God! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

POSTLUDE | Voluntary No. 4

Paul F. Page

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Assisting in Worship Today

10:30 a.m. Service

Altar Guild: Jai Jones, Maria Rios, Pamela Foreman

Acolytes: Shreya Chrzanowski, Abigail Boyer, Daniel Jackson

Advent Candle Lighting: Heather Duncan, Tara Miller & Lona Duncan-Capps

Chalicerist: Theo Jones-Quarthey

Lector/Reader: Theo Jones-Quarthey

Ushers: Isaac Olajide, Yetti Lipede, Jane Adams, Cherry Williams, Betty Dagne, Alex Amponsah

Tellers: Catherine Miller, Lisa Taitt-Wynter



PARISH CALENDAR

DECEMBER 21 – 27, 2025

Sunday, December 21

8:00 am	Holy Eucharist – Old Brick
8:45 am– 9:30 am	Coffee Hour
9:00 am– 9:30 am	Family Worship – New Brick, UL
9:30 am– 10:30 am	Pageant Rehearsal, Sunday Circle
10:30 am	Holy Eucharist w/music – New Brick, UL
12:00 – 2:00 pm	Greening of the Church – New Brick, UL
12:30 – 5:30 pm	Tabernacle of David Church – Old Brick & Parish Hall, LL
1:00 – 5:00 pm	Education for Ministry (EfM) – Zoom & Parish Hall, CR
4:00 – 5:30 pm	Lumen Christi Practice – New Brick, UL
4:30 – 7:30 pm	Total Restoration Church – Old Brick & Parish Hall, LL
6:00 – 8:00 pm	Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols – New Brick, UL

Monday, December 22

7:00 am	Morning Prayer Livestream
6:00 – 8:30 pm	Food Addicts Anonymous – New Brick, LL
7:00 – 8:00 pm	Centering Prayer – Old Brick & Zoom
7:30 pm	Evening Compline with Mother Marcia livestream
7:00 – 8:00 pm	Refugee Ministry Meeting – Zoom

Tuesday, December 23

7:00 am	Morning Prayer Livestream
11:00 am– 12:00 pm	Weekly Staff Meeting
6:30 – 9:00 pm	Vestry Meeting – New Brick, LL
7:30 pm	Evening Compline with Mother Marcia livestream

Wednesday, December 24

All Day	Christmas Eve
7:00 am	Morning Prayer Livestream
4:00 – 5:30 pm	Christmas Pageant – New Brick, UL
7:30 – 9:30 pm	Festal Eucharist with Music – New Brick, UL
10:30 – 11:30 pm	Festal Eucharist with Music – New Brick, UL

Thursday, December 25

All Day	Christmas Day
10:00 am	Christmas Day Service – New Brick, UL
4:30 – 7:30 pm	Total Restoration Church – Old Brick & Parish Hall, LL

Saturday, December 27

9:00 – 3:00 pm	Iglesia Adventista Del Septimo Dia Fidelidad – Old Brick & Parish Hall, LL
2:00 pm	AA Meeting – Parish Hall, LL
3:30 – 4:30 pm	Altar Guild prep

And join us this evening at 6 p.m. for

**FESTIVAL OF
NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS**
AT CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21



ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you have an announcement to share with the church,
Please send to communications@christchurchcolumbia.org by Tuesday evening



SCAN THE QR CODE FOR ALL OF THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & LINKS

Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols – This Evening

Christ Church will hold a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols in New Brick, a truly wonderful gathering whose origins date back to the late 19th century in England. All are most welcome to join us in this celebration of glorious carols, anthems, and hymns led by our wonderful choir, interspersed with Bible passages. We will host a reception with beverages and hors d'oeuvres before the service, so come to the Narthex at 5:00. We will then enter the sanctuary at 6 p.m. for an evening of joyful expression, in word and song, of the greatest story ever told.

Christ Church's 2025 Christmas Schedule

The season is upon us! Christ Church's Advent and Christmas page provides an overview of upcoming services and gatherings throughout the season; visit christchurchcolumbia.org/advent-and-christmas-2025 for many wonderful worship and fellowship opportunities. Also, be sure to check back starting next Monday, December 1, for Mother Marcia's Weeknight Compline series, Pam Pruitt's daily Advent Poems, and young people's Jesse Tree details - content for all ages! You can also view our Parish Calendar [here](#), which includes all upcoming gatherings for the parish and the community. Check back often for updates and new events.

"Advent Saints and Holy Ones" Compline – Every Weeknight in Advent

A cornerstone of Christ Church's Advent season celebration, Mother Marcia presents a unique compline livestream every weeknight leading up to Christmas. Gathering inspiration from many different Christian texts, she shares stories that are both familiar and new, personal reflections, and beautiful prayers that will assist us all in maintaining a sense of calm and peace during this busy season. You can find these [on our website](#), [YouTube](#), and [Facebook](#) pages at 7:30 p.m., and we hope that you'll join us and make this a special part of your Advent journey.

Christ Church on Christmas Eve – December 24

Our incredible youth are featured in the 4:00 Christmas Eve worship at Christ Church, a family service that includes a live Nativity. All kids from pre-school through 5th grade are invited to take on a role, so email us at info@christchurchcolumbia.org or call the Church Office to participate. That evening, our excellent choir and instrumentalists will lead the seasonal music presentation before both uplifting evening services, so arrive at 7:30 and 10:30 p.m. to grab great seats and join us as we celebrate in joyous song! Worship begins at 8:00 and 11:00 p.m.

Celebrate Christmas Day – December 25

Christmas Day Eucharist is a truly wonderful service, and in 2025, it takes place in the sanctuary of New Brick at 10 a.m. And so, as the hymnist suggested... *"Come and worship... worship Christ, the new-born King!"*

Read to Our Sunday School Children

Do you love sharing stories and reading? Did you know that we have volunteers who read a Bible story to our youngest children in the nursery? We can always use more, and we welcome anyone - young, or young at heart - to participate in this ministry. We have books and children's Bibles, or you can bring your favorite story to share. There is no preparation needed, and it only takes 10 minutes of your Sunday. If you are interested, please contact Jenn Atkins at dandjatkings@verizon.net.

Jesse Tree

Jesse Tree materials are available in the Narthex throughout December, so be sure to grab yours! An example of a simple Jesse Tree is on the table, with both JT packets including "color your own" ornaments, as well as a Jesse Tree coloring and activity book for very young children. Wreath forms and candles are also for sale at a minimal cost. All of these materials will also be available at the December 3 First Wednesday Fellowship gathering, so put on your favorite ugly sweater and join us there!

Center for Spiritual Nourishment Returns in January - January 10

As we begin the new year, consider taking a break from the chaos and treating yourself to a peaceful morning in a soul-nurturing community. The 2nd Saturday Center for Spiritual Nourishment (CSN) provides opportunities for us to be in closer relationship with God by offering an array of experiences that engage the mind, body, and spirit.

Programs for January center around the theme "Sacred Vision" and include Conversations on Spiritual Practices, Spiritual Direction, Meditation, and Sacred Art. You can learn more about the 2nd Saturday CSN at our website www.christchurchcolumbia.org/spiritual-nourishment.

Pledge to Christ Church for 2026

We are incredibly blessed to have a community of dedicated parishioners who support our ministry of faithful service, and we hope that each of you will prayerfully consider your contribution to Christ Church for the next year, as well.

Pledge cards and envelopes are available in the Narthex to fill out, or you can safely complete one on our website at christchurchcolumbia.org/2026-pledge. You can also call the church office, and they will send one to you in the mail.

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you for supporting our worship, outreach, youth, music, and every other vital part of our common life.

Centering Prayer - Monday Evenings

Centering Prayer is a special evening prayer gathering that can help lead to a more intimate union with God, a gathering that takes place every Monday. This active presence heals, transforms, and offers freedom and peace.

We are a hybrid gathering, so be with us in Old Brick or online via Zoom at 7 p.m. on Monday evenings. [The Zoom link is here](#), the Meeting ID is 817 6254 3177, and the Passcode is CP. You can also ask for more information by speaking with Kathy Lyon at church or by emailing centering@christchurchcolumbia.org.

Bridges' Guilford House Gets a Facelift, and Christ Church Makes a Donation

Volunteers from Christ Episcopal Church worked during several outings this fall to spiff up a townhouse that is owned by [Bridges to Housing Stability](#). The Howard County property needed TLC inside and out. Known as [Guilford House](#), it is the home of several returning citizens who have gotten their lives on track after incarceration. Bridges operates this transitional housing in partnership with the Howard County Department of Corrections.

George Toth, a Vestry and Outreach member who is knowledgeable about home repair, led the refurbishment. He and Shahra Toth, who took on the role of landscaper, called on a few parishioners who have worked together on efforts for Building & Grounds at Christ Church. Dave Lanczynski worked with George to tackle outdoor drainage issues during sessions in October while Outreach member Shahra handled pruning, weeding and mulching.

Meanwhile George conferred with Bridges and Howard County personnel to plan stairwell repairs that included safety upgrades of the handrail. After George completed the improvements, including drywall, it was time to paint. On Nov. 3, a Christ Church team of six took up paint brushes and rollers to beautify the kitchen, living room, and stairwell. The Toths

were joined by Buildings & Grounds Chair Jan DeBoissiere, Cathy Gold, Eileen Harlee and Outreach member Michon Semon.

Planning began during the summer after Bridges called for volunteerism during a presentation to congregations attended by Father Manny. In the next few months, the volunteers had the chance to get to know the Guilford house residents, who work and are involved in the community. Bridges paid the bulk of expenses for the home improvement. “The transformation is night and day!” said Sarah Hicks, Affordable Housing Program Manager at Bridges. “Thank you for all the work that you have done.”

The Outreach Commission at its December meeting approved a donation of \$450 to Bridges for its various programs intended to prevent and end homelessness in Howard County. These include [Bridges Alliance](#), which offers a “Circle of Support” for low-to-moderate income tenants of its properties; an initiative that collaborates with landlords, and its new [HoCo Home Share program](#) that could benefit empty-nesters. Among the two dozen entries in Bridges’ [client stories](#) of success is one about Bobby, who lived at Guilford House while advancing in a supermarket job. Bobby met his fiancé at work and they moved on to a home of their own.

On Sunday, A Last Chance Before Christmas to Buy DreamBuilders Goods

Look for fair-trade coffee, tea and chocolates being sold to benefit [DreamBuilders](#) after worship services on Sunday, Dec. 21. It’s for a good cause so teams can prepare to rebuild after disasters. The group most recently traveled to Kentucky for the third year in a row to build homes after devastating floods.

Hearty Thanks for a Heartwarming 2025 Angel Tree Drive

What a memorable Christmas it will be for each of the 12 children whose wishes are being fulfilled, for their families, and for all the helpers who have made it happen. We focused our support on a group of middle-school age “angels” to meet a need identified by the Howard County (Central Maryland) division of [The Salvation Army](#). It sponsors the Angel Tree here and elsewhere.

Generous parishioners granted all of the children’s wishes, either buying the items or donating funds. Soon after Thanksgiving, you rapidly filled up all 48 slots on the 2025 [Angel Tree signup list](#). Our “angels” will be receiving gifts such as a scooter, a soccer ball, earbuds, and a crochet kit. And each child will enjoy an outfit and new shoes.

Outreach Commission member Melanie Yaksich led the drive, which culminated on Dec. 12 when she was joined by Angela Braham and Jenny Cecil to sort the incoming gifts (see photos). These were delivered by Dec. 13 to the Salvation Army’s warehouse space. The timing allows families to receive and wrap their children’s gifts as parents anticipate a much brighter Christmas than otherwise possible. On their behalf, please accept this hearty “Thank You!”

CCC and FISH Need Diapers, Non-Perishables for Their Shared Pantry

[FISH](#) and [Columbia Community Care](#) (CCC) partnered earlier this year and merged their pantries. CCC continues to hand out food at three sites on Saturday mornings and by home delivery to Howard County residents. For information, go online to [Get Help](#). CCC also offers activities for young people. Find updates on [CCC’s Facebook page](#).

FISH continues to pick up donated goods from Christ Church and others. Please put non-perishable food and personal care products in the altar basket or in a bin just inside the Parish Hall. Look for a combo label “FISH/CCC”. Please bring baby wipes and diapers, especially large sizes. In general, if you have suggestions about ways to help the community, if you want to get involved, or if you need assistance, please email Christ Church Outreach at outreach@christchurchcolumbia.org. Your help is greatly welcomed and appreciated. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS EVE

AT CHRIST CHURCH



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT AT 4 P.M.

FESTAL EUCHARIST AT 8 & 11 P.M.

(MUSIC BEGINS AT 7:30 AND 10:30)

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The Rev. Emmanuel Ato Mercer, *Rector*
The Rev. Marcia Davenport, *Associate Rector for Children and Family Ministries*
The Rev. Richard Ginnever, *Rector Emeritus*
The Rev. Yehinuel Odidi, *Seminarian Associate*
Larissa Sanders, *Director of Music Ministry*
Ola Oladipupo, *Assistant Organist*
Yetti Lipede, *Parish Administrator & Ministry Coordinator*
Diya Jackson, *Office & Youth Ministry Coordinator*
Christopher Pouch, *Communications Administrator*
Amanda Kirkpatrick, *Nursery Care Coordinator*
Nytia Perry, *Nursery Care*
John Prempeh Sencherey, *Sexton*

Vestry

Denisa Abdallah (*Senior Warden*) • Greg Schuckman (*Junior Warden*)
Andrew Eaton (*Treasurer*) • Ron Couch (*Registrar*) • Shreya Chrzanowski (*Youth Liaison*)
• Ronald Baran • Diane Phillips-LaGuerre • Jay Abbott • George Toth
• Sara Kirkpatrick • Ed Chrzanowski • Kathy Simms • Katie Adams • David James • Jim Berkson