



CHRIST CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AN OPEN & AFFIRMING WISE CONGREGATION.



THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

December 14th, 2025

9:30 AM

JOY



Welcome to Christ Church United Church of Christ – Des Plaines

"We serve to be a beacon of God's love; a place of hope & belonging."

We're so glad you're here. Whether you're visiting or looking for a church home, we hope you experience belonging in this sacred space.

📺 Our **worship services** are livestreamed and available on:

🌐 christchurchuccdesplaines.org

📘 facebook.com/christchurchuccdesplaines

We also invite you to join us after worship for fellowship—a time to connect, enjoy refreshments, and get to know one another.

👶 CHILDREN ARE WELCOME IN WORSHIP

We joyfully welcome children of all ages in our services. Feel free to move about as needed—this space is for your whole family.

Helpful Resources:

- **Toys & Activities:** Located in the Narthex—ask an usher for assistance.
- **Sunday School:** Offered every other week during worship, with fellowship & activities.
- **Play Area:** Available during fellowship time after worship.

FACILITIES & AMENITIES

🚻 **Gender-neutral Restrooms:** Wobbe Hall (accessible, changing table) & Sacristy

🚻 **Gendered Restrooms:** Downstairs via Narthex (changing tables)

💧 **Water Cooler:** Outside the Narthex (right-hand side)

🌿 **Quiet Spots:** Memorial Garden & Little Library Courtyard for peaceful rest or prayer.

🌍 OUR VISION

To make a lasting difference in our lives, community, and world.

💻 Want to learn more?

You can find additional details about our ministries, history, beliefs, and justice commitments at

👉 christchurchuccdesplaines.org

OUR DENOMINATION

We are part of the **United Church of Christ (UCC)**—a progressive, justice-seeking denomination known as a “church of firsts” and a community of extravagant welcome, the UCC unites faith and action in a shared vision “...that they may all be one” (John 17:21). Christ Church UCC belongs to the **Illinois Conference** and the **Chicago Metropolitan Association** of the UCC.

ABOUT US

We are an **Open and Affirming (ONA)** and **WISE for Mental Health** congregation.

At **Christ Church UCC**, we embrace diversity and affirm the sacred worth of every person. We welcome people of all races, ethnicities, ages, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, marital statuses, and faith backgrounds into full participation in our life, ministry, and leadership.



UCC Mental Health Network

Welcoming • Inclusive • Supportive • Engaged

As a **WISE congregation**, we recognize the gifts of those living with mental health challenges, including mental illness, addiction, and trauma. We commit to:

- Reducing stigma through education and inclusion
- Supporting individuals and families through companionship and advocacy
- Including people with lived experience in all aspects of church life
- Partnering with organizations engaged in mental health and faith-based work



🌿 OUR MISSION

“Share God’s teachings through worship, prayer, and ministries while striving to continue the work of Jesus Christ by treating all with compassion and kindness and helping those in need.”

"He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap." - Psalm 113:7

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

*** Please stand in body or spirit.**

Quiet meditation at the first note of the prelude.

PRELUDE

***** **LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES** *****

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

* CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We gather together in this place:
All: prophets and dreamers, singers and poets,
One: we who dare to imagine a world renewed;
All: we who dare to dream God's dream.
One: We sing with Elizabeth and Mary.
All: Our spirits rejoice in God, our savior!
One: We bless the God of justice and joy,
All: who lifts up the lowly and vulnerable.
One: God's mercy is upon us all,
All: from generation to generation.
One: Come and worship, all you who dream and wait.
All: We have come to wonder and praise.

***** **BELL** *****

OPENING PRAYER

SILENT PRAYER

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Pastor: The birth of Jesus...a thousand ways.
All: Its impact cannot be contained in any one perspective. But who is telling the story changes how we hear it, how we imagine it, how we experience it. We light the candle of hope because hope creates a path for a new, unknown story to unfold. We light the candle of peace because peace requires us to pay attention to the needs of those around us.
Pastor: Close your eyes...joy of this wonderful occasion.
Liturgist: Open your eyes. When Elizabeth shares her surprising news with Mary, her joy doubles upon hearing that Mary is also pregnant. The two women sing of joy as they sense, literally, in their bodies that change is coming.
Person C: A joy of defiance that good news perseveres even in the most difficult of circumstances. From Isaiah to Mary and Elizabeth, from biblical times to the present, joy can be found. Joy is not a denial of harm that is happening; it is a refusal to let injustice define all reality.
Pastor: A joy that moves...proclaim today.
Liturgist: A joy our world needs to experience this season, not to hide from what is wrong, but to strengthen God's people to bear a world that is not right.
All: Today, we also light the candle of joy because joy sustains us in the midst of uncertainty.

HYMN

"People Look East"

(see music insert)

PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION (*unison*)

One: Answering the invitation of God, who loves justice and promises us mercy, let us confess our sin.

All: God of joy, you created this world for joy and flourishing. We confess that we construct barriers to protect our happiness, even at the expense of others. We fill ourselves with good things, taking no heed of those who are left empty. We ignore oppression when it benefits our interests. We dismiss the brokenhearted when we feel inconvenienced. We crave power over liberation. Remember us in compassion and come to our aid. Tear down our dividing walls. Scatter our pride and reawaken the imagination of our hearts. Lead us again in the work of repair and restoration. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TIME FOR SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

WAVING A SIGN OF PEACE 🙌

READINGS (NRSVUE)

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

*Luke 1:39-55

CHARACTER NARRATIVE

INTERGENERATIONAL PAGEANT

RESPONSE to scripture(*twice*) ♪ Je-su, Je-su, fill us with your love, show ♪
 ♪ us how to serve the neigh-bors we have from you. ♪

AFFIRMATION OF PEACE

One: Let us affirm God's gift of life-giving and justice-seeking joy.

All: We believe “joy is the justice we give ourselves.” Because God’s joy dwells with the humble and is rooted in justice, we find its warmth and light shine brightest through shared witness and sacred disruption.

We believe joy grows through blessing others and fostering authentic relationships.

We believe joy is more than a feeling or the things we possess. Joy is our faith made visible and something we share by choosing connection.

We believe joy is truth and truth-telling.

We believe joy is active resistance, Spirit-filled solidarity, and the bringing of God's dream.

We believe true joy is not the opposite of heartache, but lives right within the swirl of our grief and hardest emotions.

We celebrate the depth of God's joy and how it can hold our pain. When we are filled with this kind of joy, we celebrate what God is birthing now, even amid a world where so much appears to be ending.

We believe joy is freedom and healing, redemption and return.

We believe joy comes from knowing God is close, even when life is hard. God's joy shows up not just in breathtaking beauty but in moments we hurt so much we can't breathe.

We choose justice. We choose love.

We choose each other. We choose joy.

***HYMN**

"Mary Woman of the Promise"

(see music insert)

PRAYER OF PETITION

One: Gracious God,

All: may we be bearers of joy, carrying good news, blessing one another for this journey we share. Help us prepare room for you, Loving God, in every heart, in all the world. Where sins and sorrows grow, where injustices pile high, when all our energy seems to be taken by struggle, remind us that joy, too, is an act of resistance— born of truth-telling, sustained by community. Grant us strength to labor and to laugh alongside each other.

One: Gracious God,

All: may we be bearers of joy, carrying good news, blessing one another for this journey we share. As your Beloved One comes to make blessings flow, may we, too, open our hearts and our hands: freely sharing welcome and compassion, gladly receiving wisdom and care, building together a world where all those brought low are lifted up, where all those who hunger are filled with good things, where all our voices together proclaim the wonders of your love.

One: Gracious God,

All: may we be bearers of joy, carrying good news, blessing one another for this journey we share. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER *(unison)*. *please recite the version closest to your heart*

(Our Father, Our Mother, Our Parent, etc.)

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY The ushers will bring the collection basket to you. Thank you for your continued support. *Other ways to give:* Text-to-Give (847) 750-3007 Online: <https://bit.ly/CCUCCGiving>



HYMN

"Will to Dream"

(during collection, see music insert)

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE** *(After the benediction, you are invited to respond with these words.)*

Liturgist: There is joy in centering the voices of those typically unheard.

All: We go forth with ears to hear, and hearts ready to believe the cries of women, immigrants, elders, and all who are vulnerable and silenced.

Liturgist: May we be strengthened not just to hear and believe, but to act.

All: We will act, for there is no greater joy than ensuring that all God's children need not cry out any longer.

******* Bell & Extinguishing of the Candles *******

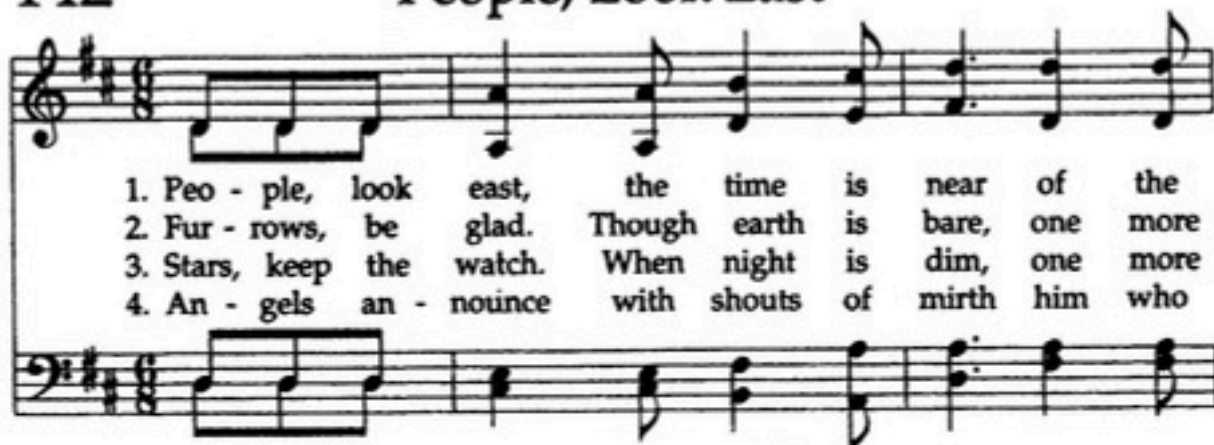
***HYMN**

"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

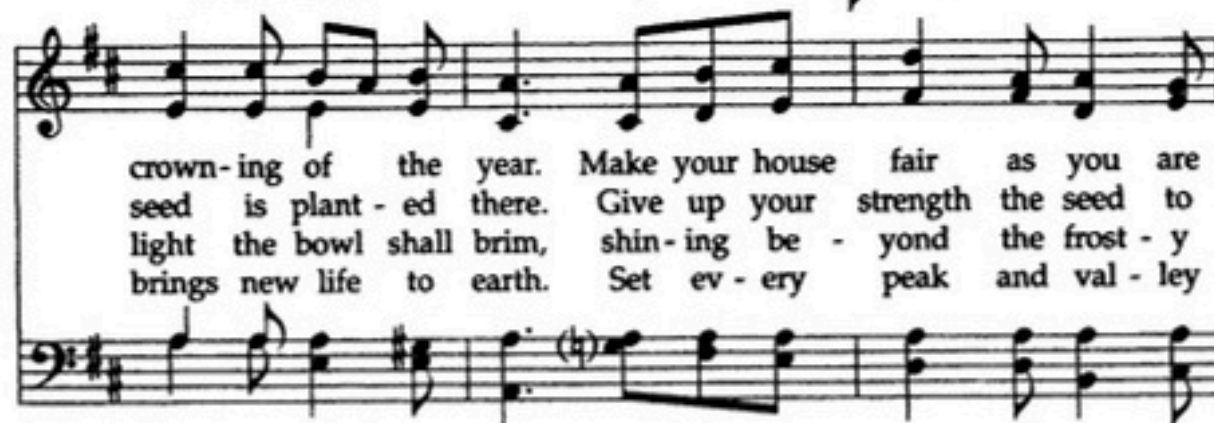
(see music insert)

POSTLUDE

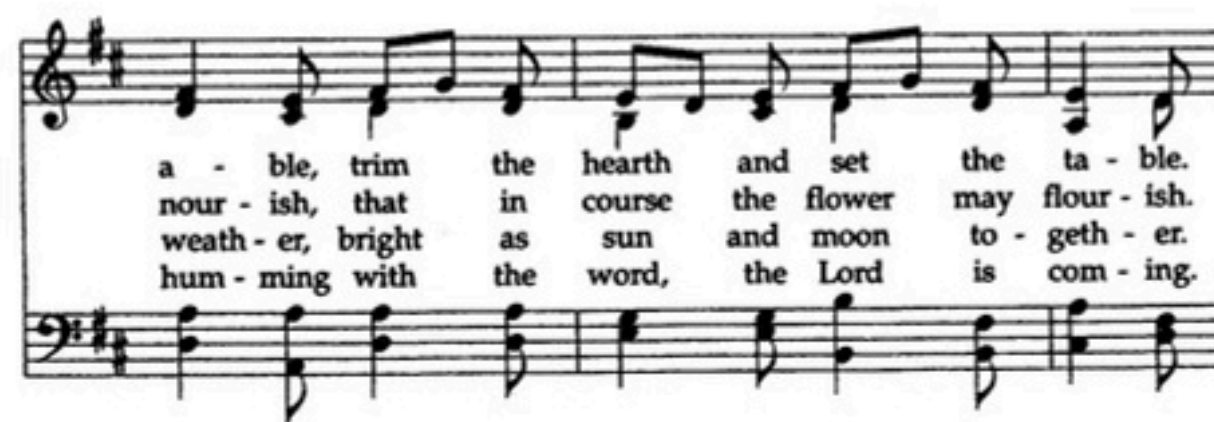
People, Look East




1. Peo - ple, look east, the time is near of the
 2. Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more
 3. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more
 4. An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who



crown - ing of the year. Make your house fair as you are
 seed is plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to
 light the bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y
 brings new life to earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley



a - ble, trim the hearth and set the ta - ble.
 nour - ish, that in course the flower may flour - ish.
 weath - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er.
 hum - ming with the word, the Lord is com - ing.




Peo - ple, look east and sing to - day:
 Peo - ple, look east: Love, the Guest, is on the way.
 Love, the Rose, is on the way.
 Peo - ple, look east: Love, the Star, is on the way.
 Love, the Lord, is on the way.


Mary, Woman of the Promise

Luke 1:39-55

Mary Frances Fleischaker, 1988



1 Mar - y, wom - an of the prom - ise; ves - sel
 2 Mar - y, song of ho - ly wis - dom sung be -
 3 Mar - y, morn - ing star of jus - tice; mir - ror
 4 Mar - y, mod - el of com - pas - sion; wound - ed
 5 Mar - y, wom - an of the gos - pel; hum - ble




of your peo - ple's dreams: Through your o - pen,
 fore the world be - gan: Faith - ful to the
 of the Ra - diant Light: In the shad - ows
 by your off - spring's pain: When our hearts are
 home for trea - sured seed: Help us to be




will - ing spir - it wa - ters of God's good - ness streamed.
 Word with - in you, as you bore God's won - drous plan.
 of life's jour - ney, be a bea - con for our sight.
 torn by sor - row, teach us how to love a - gain.
 true dis - ci - ples, bear - ing fruit in word and deed.



This text, selected as the winner in a regional Hymn Society competition seeking contemporary Marian hymns, portrays Mary's many roles in fulfilling God's promise. The author is an Adrian Dominican sister whose ministry has focused on worship and the arts.

Tune: QUEM PASTORES 8.7.8.7.
 German carol, 14th century
 Harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

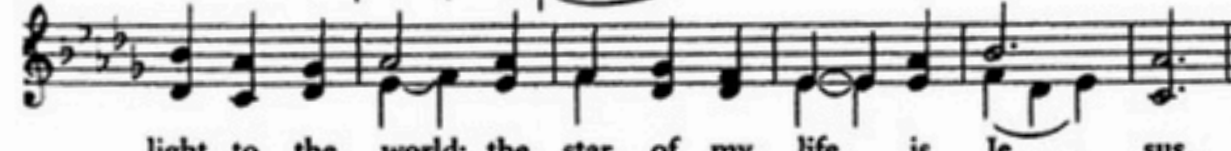
16 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light



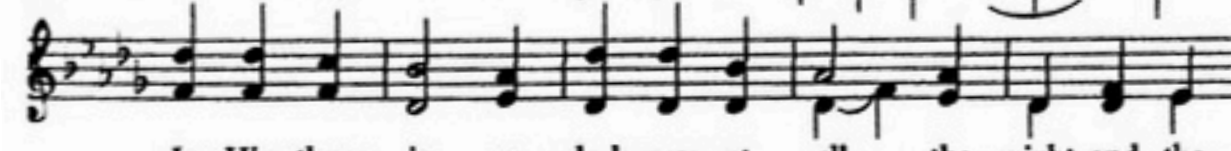
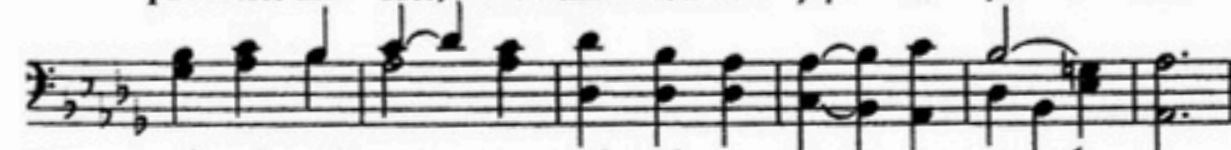
1. I want to walk as a child of the light; I want to
 2. I want to see the bright-ness of God; I want to
 3. I'm look-ing for the com-ing of Christ; I want to



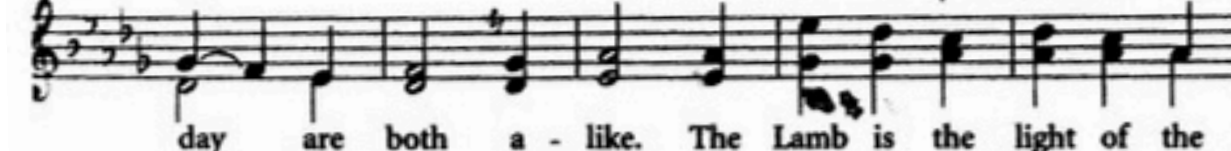
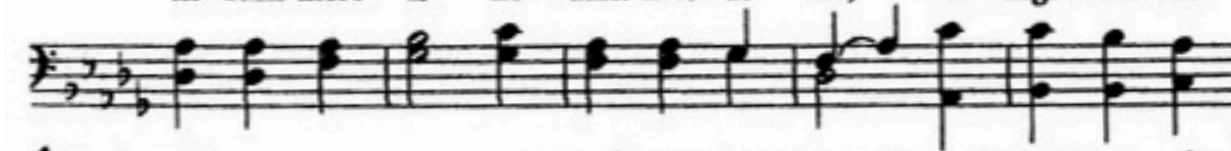
fol - low Je - sus. God set the stars to give
 look at Je - sus. Clear Sun of righ-teous-ness,
 be with Je - sus. When we have run with



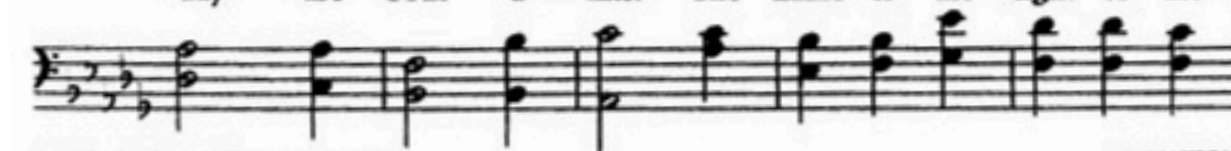
light to the world; the star of my life is Je - sus.
 shine on my path, and show me the way to the Fa - ther.
 pa - tience the race, we shall know the joy of Je - sus.



In Him there is no dark-ness at all; the night and the



day are both a - like. The Lamb is the light of the





All are welcome to gather
with us for our Christmas
Eve worship at 4 PM



The Will to Dream

Words & Music by Nathan Evans Fox,
Andrea Hamilton, and Amanda Meisenheimer

VERSE ONE



How long will the poor_ be hun - gry?_



How long will the babies cry? How long will the peo ple weep? For the




trees are gone and the wells run dry the wells run



dry. There's work in the wait - ing. Give us the

CHORUS



will to dream, the will_ to dream, Give us the will to dream.



Gave us the will to dream, the will_ to dream, give us the



will to dream as we_ pre - pare the way. *(Second time to bridge)*

VERSE TWO



How long have we held a prom ise, held a pro - mise to be kept?



To bring down the proud and might - y,




make sure ev - ry bel ly's fed_ make sure ev - ry bel ly's fed. There's

(Back to chorus)

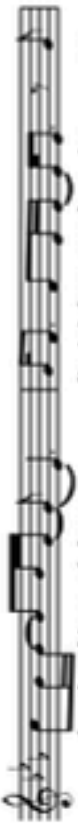


work in the wait - ing_ Give us the

BRIDGE 3X



There's work in the wait - ing, long - ing




for the things of love_ liv - in' from our long - ing, pre -



par - ing for_ the One, There's

VERSE THREE




Ho - ly One, you nev - er left us, nev - er turned your face a - way. We

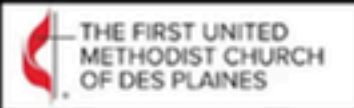


turn to you_ to help_ us dream of

(Back to chorus)



king - dom come to us to - day_ Give us the



Des Plaines Clergy Alliance
invites You to a

Community **Blue Christmas**

A Service of Healing & Hope



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19
7:00 PM

ST. MARTIN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1095 E. THACKER ST.
847-824-2043



A BRIGHT CHRISTMAS FOR SAN LUCAS' CHILDREN

You can help bring Christmas cheer to the children of San Lucas UCC!

- Check out our San Lucas tree and choose a tag or two.
- Write your name on the nearby sign up sheet next to the child that you picked and specify their gender and age.
- Aim for a gift value of \$20 to \$25.
- Highly encouraged gifts include: toys, games, books, or Target and McDonald's gift cards.
- Do not wrap the gifts - please put them in a gift bag.
- Gifts due to the church by Sunday, Dec 21st.



A VISIT FROM
SANTA AND
MRS. CLAUS



Dec 21st after Worship



Donate:



Support Families in Gaza Through LIFE Relief Efforts

Life for Relief and Development (LIFE)—a humanitarian organization with over 33 years of global service—continues to provide life-saving aid in Gaza, where over 2 million people are homeless and without access to food and clean water.

LIFE has remained on the ground when hundreds of other organizations could not, providing:

- Millions of gallons of clean water
- Over 10,000 family tents and \$2.2 million in medical supplies
- Food baskets, hygiene kits, and care packages for mothers and infants

You and your congregation can help:

- \$1,500 provides 15,000 liters of clean water for 500 families
- \$600 provides a family shelter tent for five people

To give or learn more, visit **www.lifeusa.org** or call **1-800-827-3543**.

Every gift helps bring shelter, water, and hope to Gaza's families.



“...WHEN THEY SAW
THE **STAR**,
THEY WERE FILLED
WITH **JOY**...”

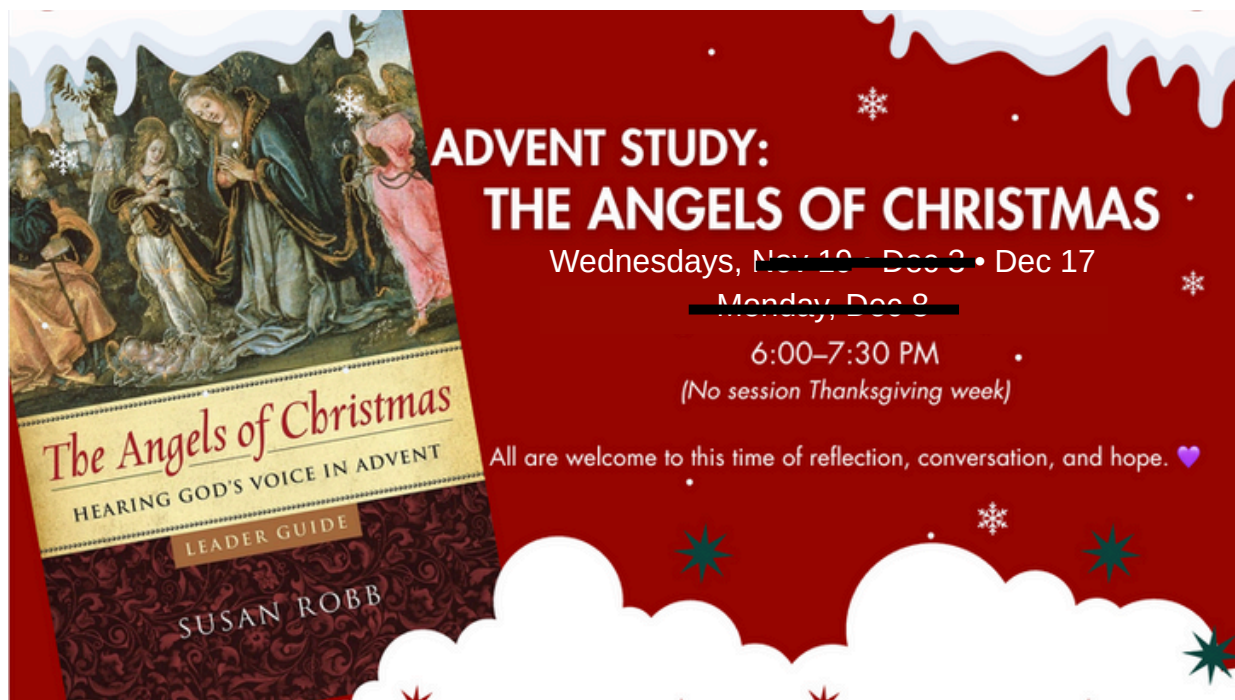
MATTHEW 2:10

Donate to The Christmas Fund

**Your care and compassion will make a tangible difference
in the lives of our ministers, church workers, and their
families in need.**



Donate Online Here!



Ch. 2 Ch. 4
Wednesdays, ~~November 19~~ • ~~December 3~~ • December 17
~~Monday, December 8~~ Ch. 3
 6:00–7:30 PM
 (No session Thanksgiving week)

This Advent season, join us for a four-week study of **“The Angels of Christmas: Hearing God’s Voice in Advent”** by Susan Robb. Together we’ll explore the four angelic visits surrounding the birth of Jesus — to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds — and discover what these heavenly messengers reveal about God’s presence in our world today.

Each week invites us to listen for God’s voice anew as we reflect on Scripture, explore the stories of Gabriel and other angels in the Bible, and prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ.

Books are **\$15.50**, and financial assistance is available — if the cost is a barrier, please reach out to Rev. Gilbert for a copy.

All are welcome to this time of reflection, conversation, and hope during the Advent season.

<https://bit.ly/Advent2025CCUCC>

**Sign-up in the office
or use the QR code.**



FAITH FORWARD ADVENTURES



growing

in

faith

together

✧ **Faith Forward Adventures** ✧
Advent Celebration for Kids!

Christ Church invites all children to join us for Faith Forward Adventures, a special Advent celebration just for kids!

Each Sunday during Advent — **November 30 through December 21** — we'll gather during regular worship for fun activities, stories, and conversation about the hope, peace, joy, and love that lead us to Christmas.

🎄 **When:** Sundays, November 30 – December 21

🎁 **Time:** During regular service

Come celebrate the season, make new friends, and discover together what makes Advent so special!

We can't wait to see you at Faith Forward Adventures!



THE TITHE.LY CHURCH APP
Christ Church United
Church of Christ

Download Our New Church App!

Stay connected with our church family anytime, anywhere. Access sermons, events, updates, and so much more—all right at your fingertips. Don't miss out on this convenient way to stay in the loop! Download it today!

<https://bit.ly/CCUCCAPP>

**Scan to download
the app**



OR



COMMUNITY BACKPACK PROJECT WINTER DRIVE

The Community Backpack Project (CBP) is kicking off its annual Hat, Scarf, and Glove Drive for District 62 students (Pre-K–8th grade). Our goal is to outfit 250 students for the cold weather **ahead!**

You can help by:

- Donating \$5 — enough to provide a hat, scarf, and gloves for one student (*items can be found at Dollar Tree*).
- Donations may be dropped off in the blue bins for delivery to the CBP.

Our goal is to distribute all items by the first week of November, before the winter chill sets in.

Thank you for your ongoing support! Because of your generosity, we never have to say “no” to a student in need.

Thanks,

Jana Haas, Coordinator, Community Backpack Project

IN MEMORY / HONOR

In loving memory of George Bielat, from Kathie Groll,
Barbara Dopp, Barbara Nix, Kyle Speer and Judy
and Don Rosedale

In loving memory of my husband Don, on his
birthday, 12/7, from Charlene Dohse



May we continue special prayers for...

Marion Meseth*	Marilyn McCown	Cathy Wiesner	Our Country Ukraine, Lebanon, Palestinian, and Israeli citizens
Dawn Mashek	Dorothy Zemke*	Rev. Marcia Urban	
Linda Steckel	Kelly Roberts	Jack Branding	
Jack Storm	Hope & Bruce Tschappat*	Frank Staggs	
Marilyn Hoover*	Helen Harney	Charles Eppely	
Sue Prunty	Caid Carter	Brynwood Family	
John Prellberg	Ariana Subera	Documented &	
Grace Pastor	Bielat Family	Undocumented Immigrants	

Homebound*

Special prayers for:

Those living with mental illness, illness, without a home or food, our church community, service people, veterans, our nation, and our leaders.



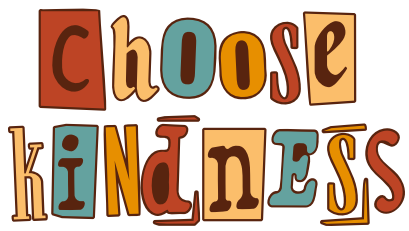
Happy Birthday!

15 - Lori and Tim Fabian (40)

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Thanks to everyone scheduled to help with worship:

Pastor	Rev. Gilbert Martinez
Liturgist/Lector.....	Megan Shipp
Church Pianist.....	Leslie Thomas
Council Greeter.....	Holly Schmidt
Ushers.....	Rita Barth, Gary Smith, Cathy Wiesner, Ruben Oviedo



ANNOUNCEMENTS



LAST WEEK'S ATTENDANCE: 36±
*Our attendance is calculated using our
LIVE Facebook viewers and those in person.*

GET IT TOGETHER: Tiny Toes & Big Hearts! Our Get It Together group crafted blankets, hats & booties for Project Baby Blanket! They'll bring a little love to NICU babies. Can you crochet or knit? Consider joining our group! The group meets on the third Wednesday of each month in the lounge. *The next meeting will be on December 17th, from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm.*


MEN'S LUNCH: Held on the second Monday of every month at 11:45 am, at Sunrise Grill.

WOMEN'S BREAKFAST: Held the second Tuesday of every month at 9:00 am, at Sunrise Grill.

SELF-HELP CLOSET & PANTRY: They are in dire need of the following items: ketchup, mustard, mayo, pasta sauce (plain), flour, sugar, instant coffee, breakfast cereal (chocolate), new or like-new clean bed linens and towels, men's, women's, children's underwear (all sizes), body wash, shampoo, dish soap, laundry detergent, and paper towels. Please bring clean, dry plastic grocery bags.

COMMUNITY BACKPACK PROJECT: If you would like to bring items for The Community Backpack Project, these are the suggested items (please no glass jars): single serve breakfast cereal, instant oatmeal packets, pancake mix, canned red beans, one-pound bags of rice, pasta and pasta sauce, canned soup, canned pasta, stew or chili, peanut butter and jelly, fruit cups, pudding cups, fruit snacks, individually-wrapped snacks and chips. Please place them in the blue bins.

COFFEE HOUR SIGN-UP: Looking for a way to get involved? Sign-up for coffee hour in the office.

ALTAR FLOWERS: Sign-up sheet is available in the office. 

ADVENT DECORATION REMOVAL: We'll be taking down the Advent and Christmas decorations right after worship on **Sunday, January 4th**. If you're able to stay and lend a hand, your help will be greatly appreciated!



ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING: Sign up sheet is now available in the office.



SANTA & MRS. CLAUS VISIT: Say hello to Santa and Mrs. Claus in Wobbe Hall on **December 21 at 10:45 AM!**



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE is on **December 24th at 4 PM.**



CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERINGS due by **December 21st.**

RELIABLE HELP FOR ALL YOUR HOME REPAIR AND UPKEEP NEEDS! Services include general repairs, minor electrical & plumbing, painting, flooring, furniture assembly, power washing, landscaping, and home & window cleaning. **Call Emanuel at (224) 392-9069**





Christ Church

United Church of Christ

1492 Henry Avenue - Des Plaines, IL 60016

847-297-4230



Tuesday - Friday

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS

Tues. & Wed. 10 am - 3 pm;

***Days off:* Friday & Saturday**



For after-hour pastoral care emergencies,

please call Rev. Gilbert on his cell phone at 224-250-9898.

Website: christchurchuccdesplaines.org

Facebook: facebook.com/christchurchuccdesplaines

Instagram: instagram.com/christchurchuccdesplaines

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Gilbert Martinez, Pastor

gilbert@christchurchuccdesplaines.org

Kat Chwalisz, Administrative Assistant

kat@christchurchuccdesplaines.org

Kyle Speer, Finance Manager & Music Coordinator

kyle@christchurchuccdesplaines.org

Tommie Jordan, Custodian

Emanuel Alvarez, Maintenance Technician

Lay Ministry: All Members

Judy Rosedale, Council President; Holly Schmidt, Council Vice-President

Council greeters are available to listen to your questions, concerns

& positive feedback about worship and all areas of church life.