



# CHRIST CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AN OPEN & AFFIRMING WISE CONGREGATION.

CHRISTMAS EVE



December 24, 2025

4 PM



# 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](http://christchurchuccdesplaines.org)

📺 [facebook.com/christchurchuccdesplaines](https://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](http://christchurchuccdesplaines.org)

## 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."



## 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.

"Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and all that fills it." - Psalm 96:11

**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 ponder with Mary;

**All: we marvel at Christ's birth.**

One: God comes to us, a vulnerable child—

**All: heaven and earth, meeting in a manger.**

One: The angels sing, the shepherds dance.

**All: We treasure these things in our hearts.**

One: Come and worship, all you who dream and imagine.

**All: We have come to wonder and praise.**

\*\*\*\*\* **BELL** \*\*\*\*\*

## OPENING PRAYER

## SILENT PRAYER

## HYMN

*"Angels We Have Heard on High"*

*(Red Hymnal 90)*

## **ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING**

Pastor: The birth of Jesus...a thousand ways.

**All: Its impact cannot be contained in any one perspective. The element of the story we focus on changes how we hear it, how we imagine it, and how we experience it.**

Pastor: Close your eyes...coming to upset the empire?

Liturgist: Now you may open your eyes. We hope, when we believe something good is on the horizon! We hope, when we recognize all is not yet as it should be. Before we can hope, we must be honest with what is wrong, including racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, Christian nationalism, and more. Our world is not what it should be, but with Jesus, we have hope that one day it will be.

**All: We light the candle of hope because hope creates a path for a new, unknown story to unfold.**

Person C: Hope allows us to set down, even temporarily, anxiety and worry for much-needed peace. Peace allows for a respite, bringing much-needed restoration. And restoration is needed to act without becoming numb or burned out.

**All: We light the candle of peace because peace requires us to pay attention to the needs of those around us.**

Pastor: When we are at peace...beauty in a harsh world.

**All: We light the candle of joy because joy sustains us in the midst of uncertainty.**

Liturgist: From joy we move to love! Love for God, love for family, for our neighbors, and for this world. Love motivates us to protect others and this world for generations to come. Love is far more than an emotion; it is the foundation of the gospel that is good for all!

**All:** We light the candle of love because love makes the impossible possible.

Pastor: Tonight, we light the...dreams to come.

**All:** Give us the will to dream, O God. May all be true in your name.

**HYMN** "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (Red Hymnal 99)

### **PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION** (unison)

One: Jesus is born and the world rejoices! Confident in God's mercy, let us offer our whole selves to God, who became one of us in order to redeem us.

**All:** God-with-us, Immanuel: the angels sing of peace on earth, but conflict and unrest prevail in our world and in our hearts. We confess that we defend our interests and judge our neighbors, instead of living with grace and mercy. We fear difference instead of celebrating diversity. We close doors instead of opening them to neighbors in need. Abide in our hearts and renew us to lead with compassion in all that we say and do. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

### *TIME FOR SILENT CONFESSION*

### **ASSURANCE OF GRACE**

### **WAVING A SIGN OF PEACE**



### **MINISTRY OF MUSIC**

### **READINGS** (NRSVUE)

Isaiah 9:2-7

\*Luke 2:1-20

### **CHARACTER NARRATIVE**

### **SERMON**

"Christmas in the Margins"

Rev. Gilbert Martinez

### **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 FAITH**

One: Let us affirm God's gift of courageous care and loving embodiment through the incarnation.

**All:** We believe the birth and incarnation of Jesus changes everything. In a world that pushes out the vulnerable, erases the poor, and forgets the weary, we worship a God who is birthed in humility, cares for the overlooked, and shelters with peace. We believe that in a world that prizes wealth, domination, and force, we choose to kneel before a God who chose poverty and embraces with welcome. We believe peace, justice, and care can start small—just like the manger. We claim we don't need worldly power to be part of God's story. Real power looks like care, not control. We believe with Mary as our model of courageous care and loving embodiment, we, too, can commit ourselves to be wombs for Christ this Christmas. We give ourselves as spaces where love grows and grace breathes. We believe peace will come when we let the sides of our own souls stretch so we might become large with God's promise. We believe in allowing the Spirit to push us to the furthest rims of who we are, so the imagination of a new kin-dom expands with life. We fully give ourselves to the Christmas miracle that Jesus may be born in us, to us, and through us.

\*HYMN

“Silent Night, Holy Night”

(Red Hymnal 95)

### COMMUNION

One: God be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your fears, your hopes, your dreams.

**All: We lift them up to God.**

One: Let us give thanks to our generous, imaginative God.

**All: We joyfully give our thanks and praise. God of Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, and Elizabeth, we join with all the saints, rejoicing in the gift of your son, Immanuel, God-with-us. We thank you for his life, death, and resurrection, for making a way through the desert of time so that we might all catch a glimpse of the holy imagination. As we remember Jesus in the taking of the bread and cup, forgive us for our shortcomings and bless us with faith to live out the dream today and every day.**

One: And so...unending hymn:

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Holy are you, and blessed is your name. You, O God, never leave us. You, who came to model a new kind of power using mercy and not might, love and not hate, you can reorient us and give us the will to dream once more.**

One: Because of these...mystery of our faith:

**All: Christ was executed. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

### PRAYER OF PETITION

One: O God...the good news.

**All: Be born again, Lord Jesus, in us and in our world.**

One: And sometimes...open hearts, open minds.

**All: Be born again, Lord Jesus, in us and in our world.**

One: And sometimes...your kin-dom coming.

**All: Be born again, Lord Jesus, in us and in our world. 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 kindom 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 kindom, 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

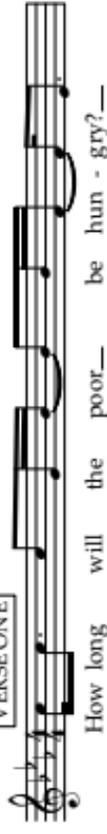
“Will to Dream”

(during collection, see music insert)

# 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.



Give us the will to dream, the will\_ to dream, give us the

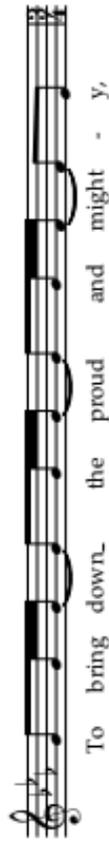


will to dream as we\_ pre - pare the way. (Second time to bridge)

## VERSE TWO



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



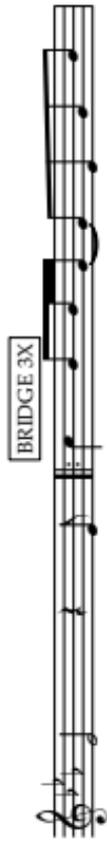
To bring down\_ the proud and might - y,



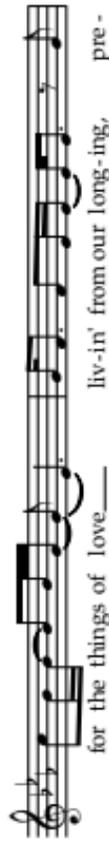
make sure ev - ry bel - ly's fed. - make sure ev - ry bel - ly's fed. There's



(Back to chorus)  
work in the wait - ing. - Give us the



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

**CANDLELIGHT VIGIL**

*“Ave Maria”*

**Verse 1**

She picks the flowers in the morning, tucks just  
a few in her hair  
The joy of her mother and father as she spins  
around unaware  
She carries her song in the evening, the  
dreams of all little girls  
She carries the bread to the table, she carries  
the hope of the world

**Chorus 1**

Ave Maria, ave maria

**Verse 2**

Angels can carry glad tidings or burdens to  
bear in the dark  
Love can take both fear and wonder and hold  
them inside the same heart  
You carried hope in a promise,  
You carried shame and disgrace  
Which was the heavier burden that drew lines  
in a little girl's face

**Chorus 2**

Ave Maria

**Bridge**

Gratia plena, maria, gratia plena Maria, gratia  
plena,  
Ave, ave, dominus Dominus tecum, benedicta  
tu in mulleribus  
Et benedictus, et benedictus fructus ventris  
Ventris tuae, Iesus

**Verse 3**

Held by the love you were holding, is this what  
it means to be blessed  
To carry your hope through the darkness as it  
carries you into your rest

**Chorus 3**

Ave Maria, ave maria

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

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

**What a gift to witness new life! God, incarnate, came as an infant, showing us that new life is possible even in the hardest times. As we go forth, we will look for possibilities in the present, not only in distant dreams. We give thanks that on that quiet night, beneath the noise of the empire, Christ was born—not in power, but in vulnerability. Amen.**

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

**\*HYMN**

*“Joy to the World”*

*(Red Hymnal 313)*

**POSTLUDE**

# IN MEMORY / HONOR

In loving memory of our son Mike, our parents & grandparents at Christmas, from Bud & Elaine Hudson

In loving memory of Ron Groll from Kathie Groll

In loving memory of Lou Scornavacco from Kathie Groll

In loving memory of my husband Don from Charlene Dohse

Merry Christmas & Healthy New Year to my church friends from Charlene Dohse



## May we continue special prayers for...

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

## 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.

## Thanks to everyone scheduled to help with worship:

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Pastor .....          | Rev. Gilbert Martinez                     |
| Liturgist/Lector..... | Jazmyn Vasquez                            |
| Church Pianist.....   | Annie Liu                                 |
| Ushers.....           | Julie Radman, Cathy Wiesner, Ruben Oviedo |

**MAY THE  
SPIRIT OF  
Christmas  
BE WITH YOU**

# Choose KINDNESS

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

inspire

**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 January 21st, 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!



**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. 9:30 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](http://christchurchuccdesplaines.org)  
**Facebook:** [facebook.com/christchurchuccdesplaines](https://facebook.com/christchurchuccdesplaines)  
**Instagram:** [instagram.com/christchurchuccdesplaines](https://instagram.com/christchurchuccdesplaines)

### **CHURCH STAFF**

**Rev. Gilbert Martinez, Pastor**  
[gilbert@christchurchuccdesplaines.org](mailto:gilbert@christchurchuccdesplaines.org)

**Kat Chwalisz, Administrative Assistant**  
[kat@christchurchuccdesplaines.org](mailto:kat@christchurchuccdesplaines.org)

**Kyle Speer, Finance Manager & Music Coordinator**  
[kyle@christchurchuccdesplaines.org](mailto:kyle@christchurchuccdesplaines.org)

**Tommie Jordan, Custodian**  
**Emanuel Alvarez, Maintenance Technician**  
**Rita S. Barth, Faith Forward Adventures Lead Teacher**  
**Grace Pastor, Faith Forward Adventures Teacher**

### **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.