



CHRIST CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

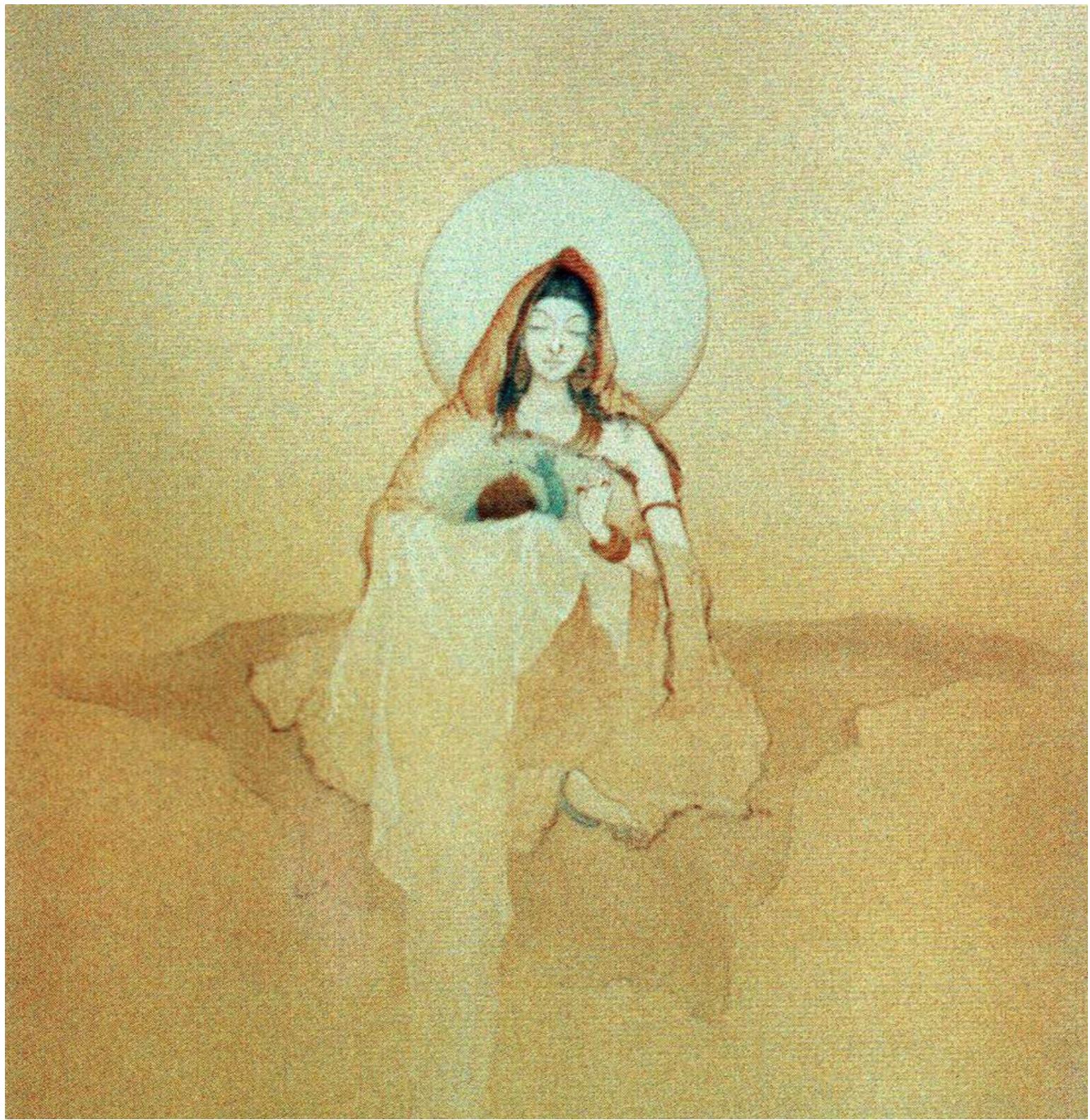
AN OPEN & AFFIRMING WISE CONGREGATION.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS



January 4th, 2026

9:30 AM



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 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."

"O Lord, you will hear the desire of the meek;
you will strengthen their heart, you will incline your ear." - Psalm 10:17

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 listen with Joseph,
All: **guided by faith and dreams.**
One: In fear or in flight,
All: **God is our refuge.**
One: By the light of a star,
All: **God guides us on the way.**
One: Come and worship, all you who dream and imagine.
All: **We have come to wonder and praise.**

***** BELL *****

OPENING PRAYER

SILENT PRAYER

CHRIST CANDLE LIGHTING

Liturgist II: Jesus is born!
All: **Immanuel! God is with us!**
Liturgist II: The world is different, but not everyone knows this yet. The magi suspect, but they do not yet know. Wise people today wonder how things can be different. The empire seems so strong. Children continue to be vulnerable, and oppressive regimes exist. And yet, there is also a courageous defiance. Joy that bubbles up when it would seem impossible. Kindness and generosity from those who have little to nothing. The magi, like us, are dreaming of a different world.
Liturgist: A world where all children are able to remain securely with their families.
Person C: A world where leaders care more about the people they lead than the position they possess.
Liturgist II: A world where all basic needs are met, including food, housing, health care, and education.
Liturgist: The dream is for the world to be as it is in heaven. A place where every person is valued, just as they are, and our systems reflect the best of caring for one another.
All: **Immanuel, God-with-us, thank you for being present when life unravels and for giving us the strength to keep going toward your blessings.**

HYMN

"Go Tell It On The Mountain"

(see *music insert*)

PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION (unison)

One: Answering God's call, let us confess our sins and recommit ourselves to God's pathways of righteousness.

All: God of refuge, we confess that we are captive to the political and economic realities that cause neighbors to live in uncertainty and fear. We are slow to show hospitality to the immigrant and reluctant to risk our privilege for the sake of advocacy and generosity. Grant us humility and courage, and stir up in us a renewed commitment to holy resistance, for the sake of those seeking refuge. 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)

Exodus 1:8–2:10

*Matthew 2:1-15

CHARACTER NARRATIVE

GUEST SPEAKER

Program Director - National Youth Advocate Program

Lissethe Tellez

RESPONSE to scripture(twice)

b Je-su, Je-su, fill us with your love, show b
 b us how to serve the neigh-bors we have from you. b

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

One: Let us affirm God's gift of revelation and the courageous faith it asks of us.

All: We believe God's revelation comes to us in the quiet and the subtle, from the margins and in the cries of nature. God's revelation comes through dreams, the light of stars, and the voices of those fearing for their lives. We believe the message of God's revelation is always an urgent one, calling for immediate trust and radical care. It continually points toward justice, asking us to defy and resist the harmful forces around us. We believe, like Joseph, who protected his family, God's revelation shines on the path of protection, asking us to be sheltering arms for the vulnerable. We believe, like the magi, who listened to the voice of the Spirit rather than that of empire, God's revelation calls us to courageous faith and embodied resistance. We believe, like a single star shining in the sky, God's revelation empowers us to a purity of heart and calling, where we have clarity on what we are to do, and live it out with simple, steady faithfulness. So, we commit ourselves to small acts of courage as holy epiphanies, trusting that with each one, God's revelation will spread and shine.

***HYMN**

“Love Came Down at Christmas”

(see music insert)

PRAYER OF PETITION

One: Gracious One,

All: in your mercy, hear our prayers. God of plowshares, you interrupt violence with visions and dreams. You expose the plans of the powerful that would only serve to protect their own interests. We pray for the courage to stand against corruption and for one another.

One: Gracious One,

All: in your mercy, hear our prayers. Ever-present Friend, you accompany your people as they seek safety. You promise that none of us are ever outside your care. Grant your protection to all who flee from harm, your compassion to all who would receive them.

One: Gracious One,

All: in your mercy, hear our prayers. Incarnate One, may each of us value our own bodies, and each other's, as holy sites, deserving of dignity and honor. May all our bodies receive the tending and care they need. May we live out the promise of sanctuary for all who seek it.

One: Gracious One,

All: In your mercy, hear our prayers. Come again to us this Epiphany, God. May we learn from our storied ancestors how to look for you, how to trust you, how to follow you toward a faith-filled life.

One: Gracious One,

All: In your mercy, hear our prayers.

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.

STAR WORDS INTRODUCTION

Today is Epiphany, a day in the liturgical calendar when we celebrate the magi's arrival to Jesus. The magi, a noble group of people, studied stars and knew when a new one appeared. The star guided them to the place of Jesus' birth, where they recognized and honored Jesus as king. After the service, you will have the opportunity to choose a star word. You can spend time reading through the words and choosing one for your year, or select one at random. Your word might instantly make sense to you or be a bit of a mystery. We encourage you to keep it in a place where you will see it daily (such as a bathroom mirror, bedside table, or car).

All: Holy One, as the star once guided the magi, so may these words guide our hearts and steps. Let each word shine with your light, becoming intention and prayer for the year ahead. 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

"Open the Eyes of My Heart" (during collection, see music insert)

***BENEDICTION**

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

Through Christ's work in the world and on the cross, we see fear, violence, and cruelty replaced with courage, wisdom, and hope. We go forth as God's hands and feet, standing against oppression and offering love and justice. May our eyes see the beauty around us, our ears hear God's voice, and our mouths share the good news with all. Amen.

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

*HYMN

"Here Am I"

(see music insert)

POSTLUDE

654

Here Am I

Unison F#m Bm7 Esus4 E Dmaj7 A/C#

1. Here am I, where un - der - neath the brid - ges
2. Here am I, with peo - ple in the line - up,
3. Here am I, where two or three are gath - ered,

Bm7 A/C# F#m E

of our win - ter cit - ies home - less peo - ple sleep.
anx - ious for a hand - out, ach - ing for a job.
read - y to be al - tered, shar - ing wine and bread.

A D/A A Dmaj7 A/C#

Here am I, where in de - cay - ing hous - es
Here am I, when pen - sion - ers and strik - ers
Here am I, where those who hear the preach - ing

Bm7 A Bm7 D E A

lit - tle chil - dren shiv - er, cry - ing at the cold. Where are you?
sing and march to - geth - er, want - ing some - thing new. Where are you?
change their way of liv - ing, find the way to life. Where are you?

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Negro Spiritual

Adapted by John W. Work, 1901-1967

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN *Irregular**Negro Melody*

Refrain

Go, tell it on the moun - tain, O- ver the hills and ev - ery-where;

Go, tell it on the moun - tain That Je - sus Christ is born!

1. While shep-herds kept their watch-ing O'er si - lent flocks by night, Be -
2. The shep-herds feared and trem - bled When lo! a - bove the earth Rang
3. Down in a low - ly man - ger The hum - ble Christ was born, And

D.C.

held through-out the heav - ens There shone a ho - ly light.
 out the an - gel cho - rus That hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
 God sent us sal - va - tion That bless - ed Christ- mas morn.

Matt. 2:1-11; Luke 2:8-18

Christina G. Rossetti, 1885; alt.

1 Love came down at Christ - mas, Love all love - ly, Love di - vine;
 2 Wor - ship we the God - head, Love in - car - nate, Love di - vine;
 3 Love shall be our to - ken; love be yours and love be mine;

Love was born at Christ - mas; star and an - gels gave the sign.
 Wor - ship we our Je - sus, but where is God's sa - cred sign?
 Love to God and neigh - bor, love for plea and gift and sign.

CCLI 1718955



Katrina Sudman - pianist

With a Masters of Music in Piano Performance, Katrina has years of experience as both a concert pianist and as a church Director of Music.

Laura Tillack - violinist

Violinist Laura Tillack (Demarest, NJ) is currently pursuing her B.Mus. at the Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University under the tutelage of Jinjoo Cho. She has performed at and attended music festivals such as Colorado College Summer Music Festival, the Meadowmount School of Music, Domaine Forget de Charlevoix, and the Encore Chamber Music Institute. Her ensemble experience includes the New York Youth Symphony and Second Ending Ensemble. In 2023, she performed with the Sion Festival Orchestra as part of the Tibor Varga International Junior Violin Competition in Sion, Switzerland.



Open the Eyes of My Heart

Refrain

E B/D#

O-p-en the eyes_ of my heart, _ Lord, _ o-p-en the eyes_ of my heart;_

— 3 — A2/C# A2 — 3 — Esus E

— I want to see you, — I want to see you. —

1, 3 2, 4

A2 B

— To see you high and lif - ted up, —

C#m A F#m7/9 B

— shin- ing in the light of your glo - - ry. —

B7/9 C#m F#m7

Pour out your pow'r and love, — as we sing ho - ly, ho - - ly, ho -

Bsus B D.C. (first time only) AE

- ly. — Ho - ly, ho - - ly, ho -

E B/D# E/D#

- - ly, ho - ly, ho - - ly, ho - ly, —

A2/C# E/B A2 — 3 — E

ho - ly, ho - - ly, ho - ly, — I want to see you. —



IN MEMORY / HONOR

In memory of George Bielat, from Laura Hallberg; Rev. Dr. William & Ann Grice



May we continue special prayers for...

Marion Meseth*	Marilyn McCown	Cathy Wiesner	Our Country
Dawn Mashek	Dorothy Zemke*	Rev. Marcia Urban	Ukraine, Lebanon,
Linda Steckel	Kelly Roberts	Jack Branding	Palestinian, and Israeli
Jack Storm	Hope & Bruce Tschappat*	Frank Staggs	citizens
Marilyn Hoover*	Helen Harney	Charles Eppely	
Sue Prunty	Caid Carter	Eppely 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!

8 - Ann Grice
10 - Linda Steckel

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Thanks to everyone scheduled to help with worship:

Guest Speaker.....	Lissethe Tellez
Liturgist/Lector.....	Laura Hallberg Holly Schmidt
Church Pianist.....	Katrina Sudman
Council Greeter.....	Judy Rosedale
Ushers.....	Rita Barth, Gary Smith, Cathy Wiesner, Ruben Oviedo



ANNOUNCEMENTS



LAST WEEK'S ATTENDANCE: 34±
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 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 **TODAY** after worship. If you're able to stay and lend a hand, your help will be greatly appreciated!



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>

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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
Facebook: [facebook.com/christchurchuccdesplaines](https://www.facebook.com/christchurchuccdesplaines)
Instagram: [instagram.com/christchurchuccdesplaines](https://www.instagram.com/christchurchuccdesplaines)

CHURCH STAFF

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kat@christchurchuccdesplaines.org

Kyle Speer, Finance Manager & Music Coordinator
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*; Laura Hallberg, *Council Vice-President*
Council greeters are available to listen to your questions, concerns
& positive feedback about worship and all areas of church life.