



The BEACON

The Official Newsletter of Christ Church United Church of Christ, Des Plaines, Illinois
An Open & Affirming WISE for mental health congregation

Volume I, Issue I

January 2024

From The Pastor

"...for once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light..." -
Ephesians 5:8

Blessings to everyone, and a blessed new year! I pray you had an opportunity to celebrate the reason for the season with friends and family. I am amazed at the level of work we did in 2023.

Our congregation continued to come together to help support organizations like the Des Plaines Self-Help Closet & Pantry and San Lucas U.C.C., to name a couple in one form or another. We also supported new organizations like Exodus World Service in Park Ridge, A Just Harvest in Rogers Park, and The Community Backpack Program of Des Plaines. And let's remember that our Community Holiday Sing-Along was a great success!

The most memorable experience working with these organizations was the visit that Laura and I made to a family in Oak Park the day before Thanksgiving. The family connected to us via Exodus migrated from Malaysia, a mother and son duo. The middle schooler jumped to set up the small alarm clock on the list of items in the welcome package.

The apartment was a one-bedroom with a small room of the living room that was turned into the pre-teen's room. The only things in the apartment that organizations provided for them were two beds, one for mom and one for kiddo, a modest sofa, a coffee table, and a small five-piece dining table set. The mom was so touched that we brought so much stuff to help them settle in.

Laura, Abigail (Exodus liaison), and I helped her unpack everything. I was amazed at how fast we could help put all the items away that our congregation came together to supply. Mom could not stop thanking us for our generosity.



Honestly, I could write several pages on the experience, but let's face it: the newsletter includes many other items. I will say that I left their apartment with a full heart of joy and gratitude that God blessed me with a congregation that took up the cause of helping this family. As a pastor, I realized the hope that Christ Church U.C.C. could do more in the coming year ignited in me.

We will continue to flourish and expand our reach. We will continue to live into our vision, "Make a lasting difference in our lives, community, and world." In helping the refugee family, we touched a small part of the world. We touch our community when we give to the pantry and backpack program. In making a difference in the lives of others, we make a difference in ours by feeling humbled by our work and knowing we are living into our calling of amplifying the light of Christ to the world.

My dear siblings, our congregation has always been a beacon of hope! The only difference is that now, we are even more intentional in strengthening that light of promise, hope, and affirmation. It is, therefore, after much discernment throughout the last few months that I felt renaming our newsletter to "The Beacon" best describes the life of our congregation and the direction we continue to travel.

Rev. Gilbert

Growing In The Word of God

For all those who are following the Scripture lessons used during the Sunday Worship Services, here are the December 2023 Common Lectionary readings:



January 7, 1st Sunday after Epiphany: Gen 1:1-5; Ps 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11

January 14, 2nd Sunday after Epiphany: 1 Sam 3:1-10, (11-20); Ps 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Cor 6:12-20; John 1:43-51

January 21, 3rd Sunday after Epiphany: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Ps 62:5-12; 1 Cor 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

January 28, 4th Sunday after Epiphany: Deut 18:15-20; Ps 111; 1 Cor 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

Pastor's Office Hours:

Sundays: By Appt before or after worship.

Mondays: office closed

Tuesdays & Wednesdays: 10 am - 3 pm*

Sabbath: Fridays and Saturdays

*Can schedule later appointments on a case-by-case basis. For emergencies, call the pastor on his cell: 254-250-9898

Business Manager's Office Hours:

Tuesday - Friday: 8:30 am-1:30 pm

Administrative Assistant's Hours:

Tuesday - Friday: 10 am-3 pm

STAFF MEETING: Tuesdays 10 am - 12 pm
The office phone is not answered.

Community Backpack Program

Suggested items - please, no glass jars!

Single-serve breakfast cereal

Instant oatmeal packets

Pancake mix (just add water variety)

Canned red beans

One-pound bags of rice

Pasta and pasta sauce (in cans or plastic jars)



Canned tuna, beef or chicken
Peanut butter and jelly (in plastic jars)
Fruit cups, pudding cups, fruit snacks
Individually wrapped snacks and chips
Canned pasta (ravioli, beef-a-Roni, etc.), stew or chili
Canned soup

The Community Backpack Program seeks a compassionate driver who can help deliver and support to schools every Wednesday.

Your time and effort can make a life-changing difference to children in need. If you're willing and able to help, please contact George Bielat for more information.

PORTALS OF PRAYER: If you are still interested in continuing to receive a copy of "Portals of Prayer," please let us know. Our subscription is set to expire early next year, and we want to ensure that we order enough copies to match the interest level. We don't want to order too many and have excess copies. Thank you for your help with this, and please contact Kyle if you have any questions.

Giving

Did you know our church offers online giving and text-to-give? They're easy to use and secure! You can give a gift of support online at <https://bit.ly/ChristChurchUCCGive> or give via text message by texting the amount you would like to give to 847-750-3007.



Kindness is free.
Let's sprinkle that stuff everywhere!



SUNDAY CHURCH MINISTRIES

Liturgist/Lector

January 7	Alice Barnhart
January 14	Holly Schmidt
January 21	Putz-Cheng Family
January 28	Kyle Speer

Council Greeter

Laura Hallberg
Holly Schmidt
Megan Shipp
Julie Staggs



Ushers

January 7	Jan Storm, Donna Boyko, Alice Barnhart
January 14	Rita Barth, Gary Smith, Bob Neil
January 21	Jan Storm, Donna Boyko, Alice Barnhart
January 28	Rita Barth, Gary Smith, Bob Neil

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**LÍNEA DE
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Y CRISIS**

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**SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE**

LAST MONTH'S AVERAGE ATTENDANCE:

36±

Our attendance is calculated using our LIVE Facebook viewers and those in person.



Lets Get Involved!

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS: Friendly reminder that all are welcome to join the first Thursday of each month, summer included, to come and enjoy fellowship. At noon, with coffee and tea provided, bring your lunch. **January 4th, in Wobbe Hall, 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm.**



GET IT TOGETHER: Come, chat, and have some coffee! The third Wednesday of each month. The next meeting will be on **January 17, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm.**



Notables: The Notables will be meeting again in preparation for the coming busy season. As always in Wobbe Hall from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm. Contact Kyle Speer for more details.

Christ Church Book Club: Our next meeting is to be determined. It will likely take place sometime in January 2024. Please let us know if you are interested so we can get you more information.



Men's Lunch:

Next meeting is Monday, **January 8th at 11:45 am.**

Women's Breakfast:

Next meeting is Tuesday, **January 9th at 9:00 am.**

Sunrise Grill: 1930 E Touhy Ave, Des Plaines, IL 60018

MISSION COMMITTEE: On the first Sunday of every month, we are collecting food for the Self-Help Closet and Pantry of Des Plaines. The Red Barrels will be in the narthex. Please, no expired food; here are a few suggestions:

- Canned beans (kidney, black, northern, etc.)
- Canned tomatoes
- Pudding mixes
- Breakfast cereal
- Pasta sauce in jars
- Spaghetti
- Vegetarian items: soups/meal items in cans or pouches
- *Men's stretch boxer briefs*
- *Women's, girls, boys underwear*
- *Boys' and girls' socks*
- *Paper towels*
- *Dog/cat food*

Thank you everyone for all your help.



Lets Get Involved!

Plastic Recycling Challenge: Christ Church started a plastic recycling challenge in October. The goal is to collect 500 pounds of plastics! We are at 458 lbs! If we can make the goal, the church will receive a bench for the churchyard. **Keep bringing your plastic!**



Memorials/Honors for December

In loving memory of my husband, Don, on his birthday - 12/17, by *Charlene Dohse*

In memory of Mary Ann Neil, by *Melissa Neil*

In loving memory of my husband, George, by *Rita Barth*

In memory of my husband, Don, at Christmas, by *Charlene Dohse*

In loving memory of our son, Mike, our Parents & Granparents at Christmas,
by *Bud and Elaine Hudson*

In memory of my parents, Amy & Julio, on Christmas, by *Rev. Gilbert Martinez*

In memory of Harvey & Mark, by *Marilyn Hoover*

In memory of Phil at Christmas, by *Nancy Seils*

Wishing all my friends at Christ Church a very Merry Christmas and a healthy
New Year, by *Charlene Dohse*

In memory of Lila, our parents & friends, by *John Hangey*



ALTAR FLOWERS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

1 - Richard Boyko Jr

3 - Lauren Thorson

10 - Linda Steckel

14 - Lawrence Zemke

15 - Megan Shipp

15 - Barbara Bay

19 - Jazmyn Vasquez

19 - Jan Storm

19 - Debra Lynn Spetich Van Antwerp

24 - Dawn Mashek

Happy Anniversary

1 - Gary & Helen Smith (27)

COMING UP IN JANUARY

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>Time</u>
January 1	New Year's Day Office Closed		
January 4	Circle of Friends	Wobbe Hall	12:00 pm - 2:00 pm
January 6	Epiphany		
January 7	Advent Decorations take-down	All Bldg.	11:00 am
January 8	Men's Lunch	Sunrise Grill	11:45 am
January 9	Women's Breakfast	Sunrise Grill	9:00 am
January 10	Potluck	Wobbe Hall	6:00 pm
	Council Meeting	Lounge	7:00 pm
January 14	Ronald Chambers, <i>cellist returns</i>	Sanctuary	9:30 am
January 15	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Office Closed		
January 17	Get It Together	Wobbe Hall	10:00 am - 12:00 pm
January 26	All Committee Reports Due for Annual Report 2023		

Potluck: Come and bring a dish for the potluck dinner in January. As usual the dinner will be at 6:00 pm on **Wednesday, January 10, 2023**. The theme is "Appetizers and Desserts".

Council Minutes: Please let us know if you would like a copy of the council minutes. Minutes will be available for distribution after the council's approval of minutes. Ex. June's minutes will be available after July's council meeting.

Important due dates!

Please keep in mind the due dates for January. We need **ALL COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORTS** by **Friday, January 26th**. This is also the deadline for adding something to the February Beacon. Please let the office know as soon as possible, so we can publish on time.



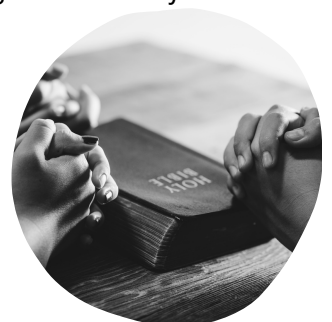
*"Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health,
as it goes well with your soul." - 3 John 1:2*

Please keep the church office informed when you hear of someone needing prayers. During the month of **December**, our thoughts and prayers were with:

William "Bill" Shipp*
Marion Meseth
John Nix
Dawn Mashek
Linda Steckel*
Jim Van Antwerp
Ally Enter
John Hangey

Jean Henschke*
Marilyn McCown
Dorothy Zemke*
Kelly Roberts
Helen Harney
Marianne Wolf
Ina Koehler
Ady De La Garza

Hope & Bruce Tschappat
Roy Sove*
Dolores Tomshek*
LaVerne Thackaberry*
Diana Guerra
Homebound*
Palestinian and Israeli citizens



**Christ Church
United Church of Christ**

1492 Henry Avenue
Des Plaines, IL 60016
847-297-4230

christchurchuccdesplaines.org

Facebook & Instagram:

@christchurchuccdesplaines

Rev. Jon Gilbert Martinez, Pastor

pastor@christchurchuccdesplaines.org

Jezze Patterson, Administrative Assistant

office@christchurchuccdesplaines.org

Kyle Speer, Business Manager & Music Coordinator

business@christchurchuccdesplaines.org

Hana Fujisaki, Church Organist

Leslie Thomas, Church Pianist

Emanuel Alvarez, Maintenance Technician

The Beacon is the official newsletter of Christ Church United Church of Christ. Edited by church staff. Published monthly, August through June.

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