



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 XI

December 2024

From The Pastor

As we enter this Advent season, I reflect on a lesson my mother taught me that has shaped my understanding of joy and resilience through life's challenges. Every Christmas, she created an atmosphere of cheer and warmth despite the silent pain she carried.

One year, my parents experienced a small fire in their home. Though it was contained, the damage was significant—especially to my mother's treasured Christmas decorations. Some of these she had collected over the years, including from her childhood. She did not let the loss define her. She picked herself up, began again, and rebuilt her collection of Christmas treasures. Amid the loss, she found the strength to create new memories, showing me the power of resilience and renewal.

This spirit of resilience had roots in something more profound. My mother had long carried the grief of losing her own mother during the holidays, a loss that had occurred more than 50 years earlier. Yet, year after year, she went all out with Christmas—decorating the house, hanging lights, and filling the air with music. One of my favorite memories was the sound of electronic bells hanging in a tree-shaped shell on our wall, playing softly throughout the season. It was a simple yet enduring symbol of her determination to celebrate, even in the face of sorrow.

In our last Christmas together, my mother and I talked openly about how much she still missed her mom, even after so many years. Her grief was still there, a quiet ache, but it didn't stop her from embracing the joy of the season. She taught me that grief doesn't vanish with time but doesn't have to rob us of joy. We can hold both sorrow and hope together.

I am reminded of 2 Corinthians 4:8-9:

"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."

My mother's life was a living testimony of this truth. Even in the face of loss, she chose joy. She showed me that the beauty of Christmas isn't found in the absence of pain but in the presence of Christ, who walks with us through it all.

If you are grieving this holiday season, know you are not alone. Like my mother, we can find hope and joy even amid hardship. Let us embrace the truth of Isaiah 61:3:

"To provide for those who grieve... to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning."

As we celebrate Christ's birth, may we hold our joy and sorrow in His presence, knowing that He is with us, bringing light into our darkness.

In God's Love,

Rev. Gilbert



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Nourishment Through Scripture

For all those who are following the Scripture lessons used during the Sunday Worship Services, here are the December 2024 Common Lectionary readings:

December 1: Luke 2:7; Matthew 14:13-21

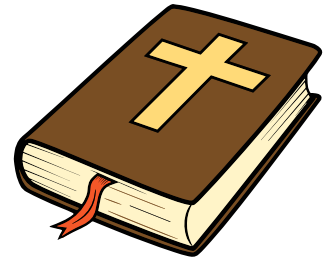
December 8: Luke 2:14; Luke 10:1-6

December 15: Luke 2:20; Luke 19:1-10

December 22: Luke 2:30-32; Matthew 9:35-37

December 24: Luke 2:10-12; Luke 4: 18-19

December 29: 1 Sam 2:18-20, 26; Col 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52



Pastor's Office Hours:

Sundays: By Appt after worship.

Mondays: Phone, Video, or Appt.

Tuesdays & Wednesdays: 10 am - 3 pm*

Thursdays: By Appt.

Sabbath: Fridays and Saturdays

**Can schedule later appointments on a case-by-case basis. For emergencies, call the pastor on his cell: 224-250-9898*

Finance Manager's Office Hours:

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

Administrative Assistant's Hours:

Tuesday - Friday: 9 am - 3 pm

STAFF MEETING: Tuesdays 10 am - 12 pm

The office phone is not answered.

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!



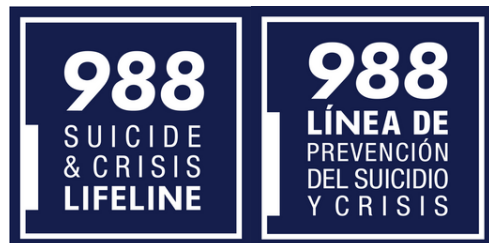
SUNDAY CHURCH MINISTRIES

	<u>Liturgist/Lector</u>	<u>Council Greeter</u>	<u>Streaming Coordinator</u>
December 1	Jessica Busse	Laura Hallberg	John Skibbe
December 8	Kyle Speer	Judy Rosedale	Mandy O'Donnell
December 15	Laura Hallberg	Steve Bay	John Skibbe
December 22	Megan Shipp	Alice Barnhart	Mandy O'Donnell
December 29	Holly Schmidt	Bob Neil	John Skibbe



Ushers

December 1	Rita Barth, Gary Smith, Cathy Wiesner, George Bielat
December 8	Jan Storm, Donna Boyko, Alice Barnhart, Julie Radman, Carolyn Amick
December 15	Rita Barth, Gary Smith, Cathy Wiesner, George Bielat
December 22	Jan Storm, Donna Boyko, Alice Barnhart, Julie Radman, Carolyn Amick
December 29	Rita Barth, Gary Smith, Cathy Wiesner, George Bielat



**NOVEMBER'S AVERAGE
ATTENDANCE:**
55±

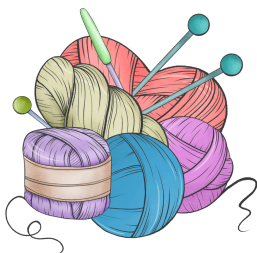


WELCOME

NEW MEMBER:

Tammy Fredrickson





Lets Get Involved!

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.

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



TRINITY COMMUNITY LUNCHEON: Trinity Lutheran Church of Des Plaines offers a monthly drive-through community lunch on the second Saturday of each month. **On December 14, from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm**, all are also welcome to bring their meal inside for fellowship.

MISSION COMMITTEE: On the first Sunday of every month, we collect 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:

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| • Ketchup | • Body wash | • Men's, Women's, and children's all-sizes underwear |
| • Mustard | • Shampoo | • Ensure, Boost, Glucerna (generic ok) |
| • Mayonnaise | • Dish soap | • Canned dinners (hash, chili) |
| • Pasta sauce (plain) | • Laundry detergent | • Canned fruit |
| • Flour | • Paper towels | • Peanut butter |
| • Sugar | • Dog food (canned and dry) | • Jelly or jam |
| • Instant coffee | • Cooking oil | |
| • Breakfast cereal (chocolate if possible) | • Juice (large bottles or boxed) | |
| • New or like-new clean bed linens and towels | | |



Please bring clean, dry plastic grocery bags. Thank you everyone for all your help.

LIBRARY



NEW BOOKS IN THE LITTLE LIBRARY!

Looking for a good read? Thanks to our dedicated Faith Forward Commission, our Little Library is stocked with various books for all ages. Each book has been carefully selected and stamped with our library stamp.

Want to contribute? Please hand your book donations to a Commission member. Remember, only pre-approved books will be added to the library.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO TOWN?

SANTA & MRS. CLAUS



ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1ST, 2024
RIGHT AFTER OUR 9:30 AM WORSHIP SERVICE.

CHRIST CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

An open & affirming and WISE for mental health congregation.

JOIN US
FOR A CHRISTMAS
PAGEANT

Sunday, December 15th
9:30 am



White Christmas

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8TH



Help Us Spread Holiday Cheer in Des Plaines!
This holiday season, we're partnering with the Self-Help Closet to make sure our neighbors in need have a Merry and White Christmas!

Please bring in white goods like:

- Paper towels
- Toilet tissue
- Kleenex
- Diapers

Your generous donations will go directly to families in Des Plaines who need a little extra support this season.



CHRIST CHURCH
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Mission Committee

Rita, Donna, Laura, Rev. Gilbert, and Holly

Gifts for San Lucas



Sunday, December 1, the Christmas Tree will be set up in the narthex, adorned with tags representing children of various ages from San Lucas. Christ Church has long partnered with this community to celebrate Three Kings Day, and this year, we continue this tradition by offering gifts to their children as a way of sharing our faith and love. Many families in San Lucas have faced financial hardships, and this is an opportunity for us to help bring joy to their holiday season.

Please take a tag or two with a child's age and sign your name next to that age on the list by the tree. The suggested gift value is \$20–\$25, and gifts can include toys, games, books, or gift cards. If you choose to give a gift card, Target and McDonald's are good options. Just a gentle reminder: please do not wrap your gift, though you are welcome to place it in a gift bag or simple wrapping.

For years, Christ Church has helped the families of San Lucas celebrate the Feast of the Three Kings, and your generosity will continue to make a difference in their lives. All gifts should be returned to the church by Sunday, December 22. San Lucas will celebrate Three Kings Day on Sunday, January 5, 2025.

If you have any questions, please contact Rita Barth. Thank you for your kindness and for helping bring the spirit of the season to the children of San Lucas.



CHRIST CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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hosts

3RD ANNUAL HOLIDAY COMMUNITY SING-ALONG



Thursday, December 5th at 7 p.m.

1492 Henry Avenue

Des Plaines, IL

*Admission Ticket is one of the
following items for
The Community Backpack Project:*



- Pound of Pasta
- Single Serve Cereal
- Soup Can
- Pudding Cups
- Fruit Cups



OUR PARTNERS



ST. MARTIN'S EPISCOPAL
CHURCH OF DES PLAINES



THE FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
OF DES PLAINES



TRINITY
LUTHERAN CHURCH

CHRIST CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES – OCTOBER 9, 2024

Call to order: 7:00 pm

Roll Call: Holly Schmidt, Bob Neil, Mandy O'Donnell, Laura Hallberg, Alice Barnhart, Judy Rosedale, Steve Bay
Also present: Pastor Gilbert

Prayer: Holly

Approval of September 2024 meeting minutes:

Motion made to accept the September 2024 Meeting Minutes as presented, seconded and carried by the council.

Financial Report

Question on if there is an opportunity to reduce our costs with ADT or understand why the costs have increase. Bob will follow with ADT and get back to the council. Steve has questions on a few other line items that have increased since last year. Steve will put together a list of those items and bring it back to council so we can have a focused discussion on these items.

The financial reports were sent out to the Council members. Motion and second made to approve the financial report as sent out – the council approved the report.

Officer Report

No report this month.

Pastor Report October 9, 2024

Rev. Jon Gilbert Martinez September 6 – October 6

Worship & Arts:

- Regular Worship services – Four (4), One (1) with Communion
- World Communion Day Service
- Introduced this year's confirmands to the congregation.
- Rev. Dr. Grice III served as pulpit supply on Sunday, September 29th.

Faith Forward Commission | Christian Education

- Faith Forward Adventures (Sunday School) & Confirmation Classes continue.
- Our next meeting is Monday, October 23rd at 5:15 pm.

Pastoral Care:

- Pastoral contact (*pastoral care-related calls/texts, emails, in-person visits, greeting cards*) = 40±
- One hospital visit (2 people) w/Communion provided final blessing for one person.
- Four home visits w/Communion
- Memorial Service, Saturday, October 5th – Carl Odell Malone
- All Saints Day Worship Service bulletin open to listing loved ones.

Administrative/Personnel:

- Staff Meeting – Seven (7) (*includes w/maintenance technician on Sundays*)
- Continue to co-manage all social media.
- One (1) committee meeting
- Updated our approved vendors/resource worksheet. Verified sharing with staff.
- Addressed concern with exploded soda cans in freezer with Maranatha.

Wider UCC & DP Community Meetings/Presentations/Events:

- DP Clergy Meeting
- Backpack Project Meeting – George Bielat
- Spoke in-depth with Girl Scout Troop Leader

Committee Reports

August 14, 2024 - Council Meeting Committee Reports

- **Finance Committee:** Zelle will be utilized to reimburse maintenance technician (internal) amount not greater than \$300 on a trial basis through December 31, 2024.
- **Outreach Committee:** The Outreach Committee is currently working on our upcoming Des Plaines Faith Community Plastic Recycling Challenge Celebration on Oct 19th from 5-7 pm. All the churches involved, and their business partners are invited to a potluck dinner to recognize everyone's efforts in collecting over 2 tons of plastic. We are working on media coverage for this event. Christ Church earned a bench for our efforts which will be installed outside by this event.
- **Building Committee:** The plumber assessed the failing pumps and electrical panel, suspecting they are old and may need replacement. The pumps aren't receiving power, and the plumber recommended consulting an electrician first. The plumber offered a temporary solution of using portable pumps to drain the system, but this is expensive and not a long-term fix. There's a concern that the pumps might be faulty and could cause a power shutdown. Our maintenance technician is working on the foundation for our new neighborhood welcoming space, including our new benches and Little Library. The Bldg. Committee Chair issued the final approval. We received word that someone was again doing "donuts" in our parking lot. Unfortunately, our camera didn't capture anything. Our neighbor was advised to call the police.
- **Faith Forward Commission:** The \$246 that was made during our Fall Fellowship Day was deposited into the Goebel Scholarship Fund. The FFC is working on the books that will be available in our Little Library. We will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony for our new benches and Little Library on Sunday, October 20th before our benediction. Preparation for our Intergenerational Christmas Pageant is underway. Anyone interested in participating should contact Rita S. Barth, Teacher or Jacob Martinez, Programming Coordinator. Our Confirmation Class is underway with the students having met twice already. They are following Confirm not Conform Curriculum. The students will be helping in various segments of the worship service throughout the school year.
- **Mission Committee:** The Mission Committee – no report. Next meeting is on Tues., Oct. 29th.
- **Memorial Garden:** The Soves have officially stepped down as co-chairs of the garden. Barb Nix has graciously accepted the responsibility of chair.

Current Business

- Building
 - o The organ part that was broken has been fixed but other issues were found. Mike Skibbe and Emanuel are working on fixing the other issues.
 - o Motion to have Mike Skibbe lead the organ repair and keep Bob and Steve in the loop. Motion was seconded and passed.
 - o The smoke detector in the sanctuary has been repaired.
 - o The parking lot upgrade in the three spaces is complete.
- The Illinois conference of the UCC Annual Celebration is Nov 1 & 2 in Western Springs. Pastor Gilbert will be attending and attending a training session the day before. We are looking for members to attend. Judy will attend on Saturday (8 – 2 pm). Need someone for Friday – the hours are 10 am – 10 pm but do not need to attend the entire time. Holly will work on trying to get a volunteer.
- Cradles to Crayons will need a location for their donation box. Suggestion to put it by the bike rack until the replacement asphalt cures.

New Business

- Discussion on putting a second bathroom by Wobbe Hall. Possible location is where the current pantry resides and move the pantry. A motion was made to look into the second bathroom (where and cost). Judy suggested we have Best quality Construction (Park Ridge) come in to evaluate the location and provide an estimate. Judy will provide Bob with their number to call them. The motion passed.

- There is water in the basement under the kitchen. The problem is an electrical issue with the pump. Bob will follow up with Kyle on what the plumber told him. In the future we will try to have a building committee member present when work professionals (electricians, plumbers, etc.) come in to make sure we understand the issue.
- A local Girl Scout troop would like to use our building for their meetings. They would like to come on the 1st and 2nd Wednesdays of the month. This will conflict with the Council meeting so we will work out a solution with them. A motion was made to have the Girl Scouts use the space. The motion was seconded and passed.
- Timer on the parking lot lights had to be reset by Steve. We have had issues in the past with cars doing donuts in the parking lot, etc. Steve suggested we have some lights go off at midnight and others stay on dusk to dawn. Steve will investigate it and provide a solution for the future.
- Exodus Welcome to America Kits – Laura is working with members of Trinity Lutheran Church to begin a new drive for a Family Welcome to America kit. She is connecting with them this week.

Motion to adjourn at 8:12 pm

3 of 3

FINANCIAL REPORT

Christ Church UCC Des Plaines Statement of Financial Activity October 27 through November 23, 2024

	Week of Oct 27, 24	Week of Nov 3, 24	Week of Nov 10, 24	Week of Nov 17, 24	TOTAL
▼ Ordinary Income/Expe...					
▶ Income	6,095.00	1,502.50	2,867.50	868.50	11,333.50
▶ Expense ▶	15,896.81 ◀	3,186.42	4,900.00	1,610.61	25,593.84
Net Ordinary Income	-9,801.81	-1,683.92	-2,032.50	-742.11	-14,260.34



COMMITTEE CHAIRS: Please submit a budget for the fiscal year (March 2025 - Feb 2026). This will help build a better structure for the Annual Meeting. Please put it in Rev. Gilbert's box by December 15th.

COMMUNITY BACKPACK PROGRAM

Suggested items - please, no peanut based snacks and no glass jars!

- Single-serve breakfast cereal
- Instant oatmeal packets
- Pancake mix (add water variety)
- Canned red beans
- One-pound bags of rice
- Pasta and pasta sauce (in cans or plastic jars)

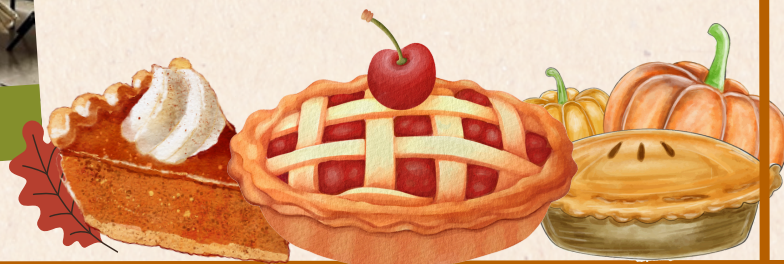


- Canned tuna, beef or chicken
- Peanut butter and jelly (in plastic jars)
- Fruit cups, pudding cups, fruit snacks
- Individually wrapped snacks and chips
- Canned pasta (ravioli, beef-a-Roni, stew, or chili)
- Canned soup

Ecumenical Thanksgiving and Pie Fellowship



Sunday, November 24



Lux Cantorum Winter Concerts

Lux Cantorum Chicago is redefining the sacred music experience. Next month, we will present "Glory!," honoring togetherness and universal aspirations for peace, love, and hope. Dr. Wilbert O. Watkins, Conductor.



- **Dec. 6 at 7:30 p.m.** - Fourth Presbyterian Church, 126 E. Chestnut St, Chicago
- **Dec. 8 at 4:00 p.m.** - St. Peter/Paul Lutheran Church, 250 Woodside Rd, Riverside
- **Dec. 14 at 7:30 p.m.** - Pilgrim Congregational Church, 460 Lake St, Oak Park

To learn more and purchase tickets, visit: <https://luxcantorum.org/upcoming>

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

*Contemplative
Safe Space
Reflective*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2024

5:00 PM



CHRIST CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

An open & affirming and WISE for mental health congregation.



Mission Committee Organizations

Who We Support

Self-Help Closet & Pantry



The Self Help Closet & Pantry of Des Plaines is an independent, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization governed by a Board of Directors. The Pantry serves more than 900 households - all in the city of Des Plaines or with children in Des Plaines public schools - with free food and clothing. In 1971, the Women's Fellowship Circle of the First Congregational Church of Des Plaines established the Self- Help Closet & Pantry to offer food, clothing and small household items to help families of migrant workers adjust to life in this area. A small group of about ten women operated the Pantry in the church basement for several years. In 1987, the Pantry established itself as an independent, not-for-profit organization.

UCC Mental Health Network

The United Church of Christ Mental Health Network proclaims and celebrates the basic sacred right each individual has to their own mental health. Therefore, our mission is to reduce stigma, and promote the inclusion of people and families with self-reported emotional/neurodiverse symptoms, experiences, and diagnoses, in the life and leadership of congregations, synagogues, and organizations. We recognize the despair prevalent in today's world and respond in joyful embrace of the individual's divinity and dignity. Our programs normalize the conversation around mental health, and seek to prevent isolation and suicide by centering on education, belonging, and safety.



Journeys from PADS to Hope, Palatine

A community based non-profit in Chicago's north and northwest suburbs, JOURNEYS | The Road Home provides shelter and social services to people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

Homelessness and housing insecurity are on the rise, and the solutions to this growing problem are complex. Financial instability now affects a wider segment of our population, extending into the middle class. JOURNEYS has been increasing and diversifying supportive services to provide top to bottom care that fight against this trend for individuals and families in our community. These free services offset costs typically absorbed by hospitals, municipalities, and legal systems.



Everyone deserves a stable place to call home. We're here to help.

thank you

Memorials/Honors for November

In celebration of our mom, Ruth Hallberg, and dad's, Irving Hallberg, birthdays, *by Janice Suchecki, Laura Hallberg, Denise Hammer & families*

For our parents, Bud & Wini Bruhn, on Christmas, *by Lori Bruhn*

ALTAR FLOWERS

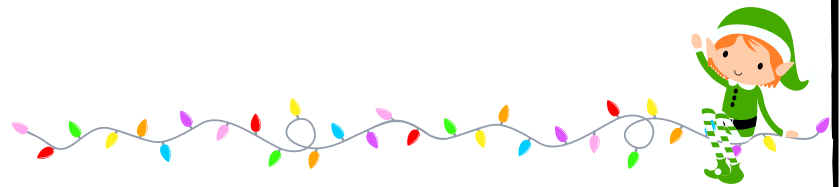
In celebration of our mom, Ruth Hallberg's birthday, *by Janice, Laura, and Denise*

Happy Birthday!

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 - Melissa Neil | 26 - Lily Cheng |
| 2 - Holly Schmidt | 29 - Virginia Hovinen |
| 6 - Colleen Mashek | 30 - Peggy Comstock |
| 16 - William Shipp | 31 - Julie Staggs |
| 22 - Terri Wester | |

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

- | |
|--------------------------------|
| 10 - Kyle and Cathy Speer (25) |
| 15 - Lori and Tim Fabian (39) |
| 26 - Julie and Gary Fritz (31) |



POTLUCK: Come and bring a dish for the potluck dinner. The dinner will be at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, December 2024. *The theme is Holiday Feast.* Join us for fellowship.



Men's Lunch:

Next meeting is Monday, **December 9th at 11:45 am.**

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

Women's Breakfast:

Next meeting is Tuesday, **December 10th at 9 am.**

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

COMING UP IN DECEMBER

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>Time</u>
Dec. 1	World Aids Day	-	-
	Faith Forward Adventures (Sunday School)	Sanctuary/Rm 1	9:30 am
	Confirmation Class	Lounge	11 am - 12:30 pm
	Santa & Mrs. Claus Visit	Wobbe Hall	10:30 am
5	3rd Annual Holiday Community Sing-Along	Wobbe Hall	7 pm
8	Tylet Yost's Ordination	First Congregational Church of Evanston	5 pm
9	Men's Lunch	Sunrise Grill	11:45 am
	Faith Forward Commission Meeting	Lounge	5:15 pm
10	Women's Breakfast	Sunrise Grill	9:00 am
11	Potluck	Wobbe Hall	6:00 pm
	Council Meeting	Lounge	7:00 pm
14	Christmas Pageant Rehearsal	Wobbe Hall	10 am
	Trinity Community Luncheon	Trinity Lutheran ELCA	11 am - 12:30 pm
15	Committee Budget Proposals Due	-	-
	<i>Do Not Be Afraid</i> Christmas Pageant	Sanctuary	9:30 am
	Confirmation Class	Lounge	11 am - 12:30 pm
21	Blue Christmas	Sanctuary	5 pm
22	Christmas Fund Mission Collection	Sanctuary	9:30 am
	Finance Committee Meeting	Lounge	11 am
23	Office is Open	-	-
24	Christmas Eve Worship Service	Sanctuary	4 pm
25-27	CHRISTMAS (OFFICE CLOSED)	-	-
29	Faith Forward Adventures (Sunday School)	Sanctuary/Rm 1	9:30 am
Jan. 1	NEW YEARS (OFFICE CLOSED)	-	-

"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 months of **November**, our thoughts and prayers were with:*

William "Bill" Shipp*	Jean Henschke*	Hope & Bruce Tschappat*
Marion Meseth*	Marilyn McCown	Roy Sove*
John Nix	Dorothy Zemke*	Karen Harkovich
Dawn Mashek	Kelly Roberts	Homebound*
Linda Steckel*	Helen Harney	
Al Angsten*	Marilyn Hoover*	
Pam Thomsen	Sue Prunty	Ukraine, Lebanon, Palestinian,
Dolores Tomsheck*	Jack Storm	and Israeli citizens



**Christ Church
United Church of Christ**

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Rev. Jon Gilbert Martinez, Pastor
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**Jezze Patterson, Administrative Assistant &
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Kyle Speer, Finance Manager & Music Coordinator
kyle@christchurchuccdesplaines.org

Hana Fujisaki, Church Organist

Leslie Thomas, Church Pianist

Tommie Jordan, Custodian

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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988

Suicide and Crisis

Lifeline

Call or Text

