



The BEACON

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

Volume II, Issue I

January 2025

From The Pastor



The Des Plaines Clergy Alliance is a testament to the power of hope, unity, and collaboration. Together, we have achieved more than we ever could, proving that the possibilities are endless when faith communities come together. This partnership has deepened our commitment to environmental stewardship through initiatives like the recycling challenge and strengthened the bonds between four diverse faith communities, allowing us to grow in mutual understanding and support.

In just three years, our Holiday Community Sing-Along has blossomed into an event that brings over 100 attendees together in joy and celebration. Our Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service has become a sacred space where we can learn from one another, experiencing the beauty of how different faith traditions live into their spirituality and affirm their relationship with God. These moments remind us that unity in diversity is possible and profoundly enriching.

The alliance has also provided invaluable pastoral support, offering strength and encouragement to each of the four pastors involved. It is a living example of how the body of Christ works together, lifting one another up to serve the greater good.

As we look to the future, let us be inspired by what we have already accomplished and dream even more significant. How can we continue to come together to serve our community, care for creation, and spread the message of hope? Let us not be content with the achievements of the past but be energized by them to take bold steps forward. We can shine even brighter as a beacon of God's love in Des Plaines and beyond.

In God's Love,

Rev. Gilbert

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"

—Psalm 133:1

In this newsletter you can expect:

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Nourishment Through Scripture

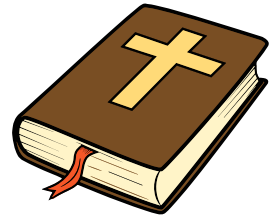
For all those who are following the Scripture lessons used during the Sunday Worship Services, here are the January 2025 Common Lectionary readings:

January 5: Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

January 12: Isaiah 43:1-7; Acts 8:12-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 19: Isaiah 62:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

January 26: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21



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.

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

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>
January 5	-	Holly Schmidt	Mandy O'Donnell
January 12	Confirmands	Mandy O'Donnell	John Skibbe
January 19	Jacob Guerra-Martinez	Laura Hallberg	Mandy O'Donnell
January 26	Putz-Cheng Family	Judy Rosedale	John Skibbe

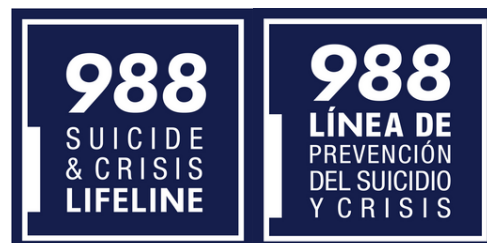


Ushers

January 5	Rita Barth, Gary Smith, Cathy Wiesner, George Bielat
January 12	Jan Storm, Donna Boyko, Alice Barnhart, Julie Radman, Carolyn Amick
January 19	Rita Barth, Gary Smith, Cathy Wiesner, George Bielat
January 26	Jan Storm, Donna Boyko, Alice Barnhart, Julie Radman, Carolyn Amick



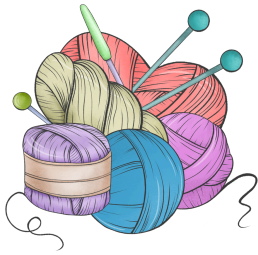
**DECEMBER'S AVERAGE
ATTENDANCE:**
58±



FINANCIAL REPORT

Christ Church UCC Des Plaines Statement of Financial Activity November 24 through December 21, 2024

	Week of Nov 24, 24	Week of Dec 1, 24	Week of Dec 8, 24	Week of Dec 15, 24	TOTAL
▼ Ordinary Income/Expense...					
▶ Income	8,842.50	731.26	2,266.00	7,250.00	19,089.76
Gross Profit	8,842.50	731.26	2,266.00	7,250.00	19,089.76
▶ Expense ▶	15,736.93	1,029.86	1,790.95	-853.05	17,704.69
Net Ordinary Income	-6,894.43	-298.60	475.05	8,103.05	1,385.07
▶ Other Income/Expense	-277.81	0.00	0.00	0.00	-277.81
Net Income	<u>-7,172.24</u>	<u>-298.60</u>	<u>475.05</u>	<u>8,103.05</u>	<u>1,107.26</u>



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. *The next meeting will be on January 15th, from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm.*

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.



POTLUCK: Come and bring a dish for the potluck dinner. The dinner will be at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, January 8, 2025. Join us 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!

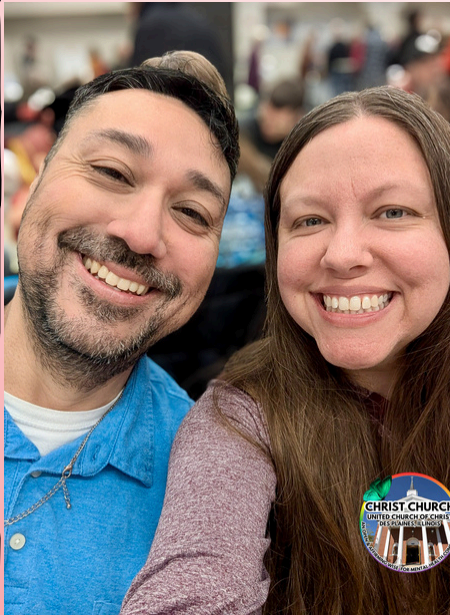
Looking for a good read? Thanks to our dedicated Faith Forward Commission, our Little Library is stocked with various books for all ages. Each book has been carefully selected and stamped with our library stamp.

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

ADVENT DECORATING 2024



Thank you!



Empty Bowls Event

December 7, 2024





The Beacon
Season's greetings
**SANTA &
MRS. CLAUS**
DECEMBER 1, 2024

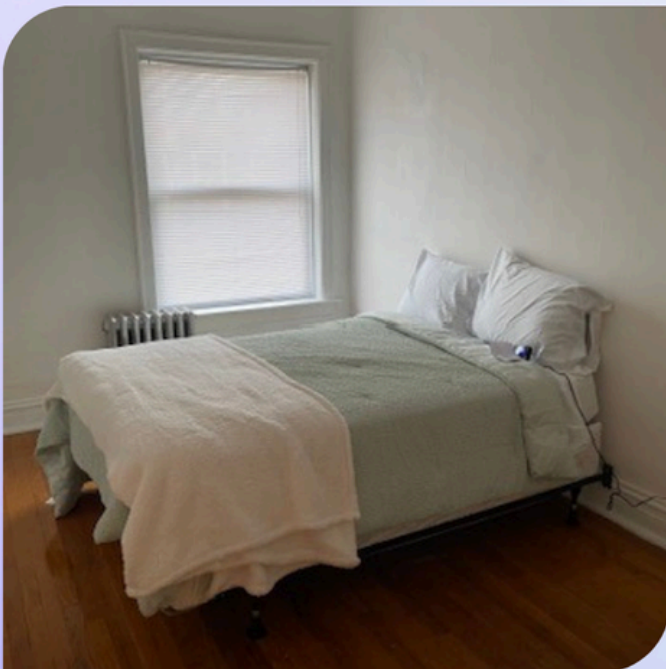


Exodus Welcome to America Pack



Laura Hallberg, as a representative of Christ Church UCC and in partnership with members of Trinity Lutheran Church of Des Plaines, had the joy of delivering an Exodus Welcome to America Pack to a family of seven from Syria, now living on the north side of Chicago on Tuesday, December 10.

thank you



This act of kindness was made possible by the combined efforts of both congregations. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who donated items to help warmly welcome this family. Your generosity and collaboration reflect the spirit of community and compassion!



3rd Annual

December

Intergenerational

Do Not B

December



Sing-Along

er 5, 2024



onal Pageant

Be Afraid

r 15, 2024



CHRIST CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES – NOVEMBER 13, 2024

Call to order: 6:59 pm

Roll Call:

Holly Schmidt, Bob Neil, Mandy O'Donnell, Laura Hallberg, Alice Barnhart, Judy Rosedale, Steve Bay

Also present: Pastor Gilbert

Prayer: Laura

Approval of September 2024 meeting minutes:

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

Financial Report

Question on the Financial Status report (10/11/24). The amounts under the Klaus Request to General Fund categories for October 2024 seem high. This was an error that reported a lifetime amount, not the YTD (year to date) amount. This will be corrected for the next report. Also, for 2025 the Pastor 25% salary and the Social Media Coordinator amounts will be removed as it will be part of the 2025 budget.

Steve commented it was good to see our Internet costs reduced after negotiation. The amount on the Financial Status report is the Christ Church portion. The \$100 portion for Maranatha is part of the tenant donation line item.

Steve would like us to look at the ADP cost to see if they can be negotiated down.

Pastor Gilbert said that they will make sure as contracts are up for renewal that we will have discussions to negotiate the next contract terms.

A 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 November 13, 2024

Rev. Jon Gilbert Martinez October 6 – November 6

Worship & Arts:

- Regular Worship services – Four (4), One (1) with Communion
- All Saints Day Worship Service • Veterans' Day Worship Service & Fellowship (Thank you, Mandy O'Donnell for organizing.)
- Rev. Dr. Grice III served as pulpit supply on Sunday, October 13th .
- Installed and dedicated new benches. • New Member Sunday, November 17th .
- Santa & Mrs. Claus to visit on December 1st at 10:30 am.
- Advent Decorating is scheduled for Saturday, November 30th at 10 am.

Faith Forward Commission | Christian Education

- Faith Forward Adventures (Sunday School)
- Inter-generational Christmas Pageant is in the works, rehearsals to start soon. o Pageant-December 15th .
- Installed and dedicated Little Library.
- Confirmation: two classes
- Our next meeting is Monday, December 9th at 5:15 pm.

Pastoral Care:

- Pastoral contact (pastoral care-related calls/texts, emails, in-person visits, greeting cards) = 47±
- Two hospital visit(s).

Administrative/Personnel:

- Staff Meeting – Eight (8) (includes w/maintenance technician on Sundays)
- Stewardship Drive initiated and completed.
- Co-hosted with Outreach Committee the Recycling Challenge Potluck Celebration
- Continue to co-manage all social media. • Updated website. • Six (6) committee meeting(s)
- Klaus Fund Committee awarded \$5,000 non-renewal grant to the Outreach Committee.
- The Finance Committee has requested budget proposals for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year.
 - Approved a raise for the Finance Mgr. from \$15 to \$22, pending Council approval.
- The Girls Scout Troop found a home at Trinity Lutheran Church.

Wider UCC & DP Community Meetings/Presentations/Events:

- DP Clergy Meeting
- Sing-Along Meeting; event is scheduled for Thursday, December 5th, at 7 pm. Admission is a food item for the pack Project.
- Backpack Project Meeting – Jana Haas
- Illinois Conference of the UCC Annual Meeting & Celebration, November 1st & 2nd .
- Anti-Racism/Bias Training via Illinois Conference of the UCC, October 31st .
- Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service, Sunday, November 24th at 6:30 pm at Trinity Lutheran Church

November 13, 2024 - Council Meeting Committee Reports**Finance Committee:**

The Committee approved the Pastor's request to increase the Finance Manager's hourly wage from \$15 to \$22, subject to Council approval. It remains to be determined whether or not the new wage will take effect immediately upon the Council's decision.

– A question arose about whether the Pastor had informed the Council that the Finance Committee had tabled the parking lot update project. This query surfaced as the Council proceeded with the project.

– The Pastor clarified that the Finance Committee's role is advisory, and the Council has the final authority for fiscal decisions.

• Outreach Committee: Last month we celebrated our yearlong plastic recycling drive with a potluck dinner. All 4 participating churches earned benches from Trex. There were approximately 60 people in attendance.

– The committee is busy finalizing the Sing-Along program. This year we have four churches participating. The whole community is invited to attend and sing on December 5th at 7p.m.

– December 7th is Empty Bowls at Oakton College. We hope to bring a large group of Christ Church members and friends to support this global movement to raise money for food banks, soup kitchens, and other meal programs. We will proudly wear buttons to identify us as Christ Church, Des Plaines.

– We are also working on a realistic projected budget for the Outreach Committee for 2025.

- Building Committee:

The first part of the parking lot project has been completed. Contractors have determined that what was initially considered a plumbing issue is an electrical issue. Our maintenance technician is replacing all the original outlets with new ones. The committee contributed to the installation of the new benches and Little Library.

- Faith Forward Commission:

Installed and dedicated a new Little Library. The inter-generational Christmas Pageant is underway, and the programming coordinator and Sunday school teacher are taking the lead. Rehearsals will begin soon. The pageant is scheduled for Sunday, December 15th, at our 9:30 am worship service.

• Mission Committee:

We will bring cupcakes to San Lucas for their Community Thanksgiving dinner on Tuesday, Nov. 26. A sign-up sheet is in the office. Cupcakes should be brought to Church on Sunday, Nov. 24. I told Carmen, from San Lucas, that we would do 20 - 25 gifts for their Feast of the Three Kings

Current Business

- Building
 - The organ requires one more piece to complete the repair. Mike Skibbe is the lead to get it completed.
 - The electrical work for the downstairs pump is in progress. The electrical panel will need to be replaced.
- The Illinois conference of the UCC Annual Celebration is Nov 1 & 2 in Western Springs. Pastor Gilbert
- Cradles to Crayons has ordered the donation box to be delivered. They did confirm that it can be moved to another location if needed.
- Exodus Welcome to America Kit – we are collecting for a family of 6 along with Trinity Lutheran. We have most of the items committed to by both congregations. The goal is to have the donations by December 1 and then have a family identified for the delivery.
- Discussion on putting a second bathroom by Wobbe Hall. Judy has contacted the contractor and is waiting for a bid. They are very busy at the moment but will have it soon. We will use the pantry to change it to a bathroom with a sink and toilet, make the current bathroom ADA accessible and put cabinets (to replace the pantry in the location of the current warewasher (dishwasher)).

New Business

- The dishwasher (warewasher) in the kitchen will be removed. Bob will talk to Emanuel to remove it. We will need an electrician to disconnect it due to the high voltage connection.
- The Boy Scouts that use our church are merging with another troop so will no longer be using our location. The transition should occur at the beginning of the year. Bob will follow up to make sure we get our keys / fobs to the church back as well as remove any other access codes.
- We will work to add letters to the front of the church above the doors.
- Finance Manager Salary Increase: The finance committee approved to increase the Finance Manager salary to \$22 / hour (currently \$15 / hour). It is now up to the Council for final approval. A motion was made to increase the Finance Manager's salary to \$22 / hour effective immediately. The motion passed.
- Ecclesiastical Council for Pastor Mollie will be at Park Ridge Community Church on December 1 at 2 pm. They will be voting to move her forward to her ordination. Pastor Gilbert is asking for a Christ Church lay leader to join him for this event.
- Pastors Gilberts Advisee "insert name" will have their ordination on December 8 at 5 pm. Pastor Gilbert would like a member(s) to join him at the ordination. Bob will check to see if he can attend.
- Pastor's Delegation / Mission Trip in El Salvador in January 2025. A motion was made to approve the trip to San Salvador. The estimated cost is \$1710 plus airfare. The motion passed.
- The old table from the lounge was sold for \$200 on Facebook Market Place. Jezzle coordinated the sale on behalf of the church.

Motion to adjourn at 7:44 pm

Mission Committee Organizations

Who We Support

CUE Seminaries of the UCC

Bringing together over 2,000 United Church of Christ churches in mid-America, Local Church Ministries, and Chicago, United, and Eden Theological Seminaries.

CHICAGO UNITED EDEN

Our Mission:

Strengthen the relationship between our churches and our seminaries.

Further the mission and work of these seminaries.

Provide financial support for our seminaries.

A Just Harvest, Rogers Park

A Just Harvest's mission is to fight poverty and hunger in the Rogers Park and greater Chicago community by providing nutritious meals daily while cultivating community and economic development and organizing across racial, cultural and socioeconomic lines in order to create a more just society.



Mission and Values:

We feed hungry people, but we also feed our common hunger for hope, for fellowship, and for a strong sense of community. We feed people's hunger to serve, to improve our communities, to be creative, and to be a powerful agent for justice.

A Just Harvest is known for being a resource to people in need 365 days a year. At the core of the mission of A Just Harvest, is to be part of the thriving—not simply surviving—of our community. We work intentionally to be a part of the transformation of the community, for and by the people living here. This requires listening, walking with and remaining humble in our efforts. It also requires steadfastness in our commitment to not perpetuate our own existence, but remain relevant to the needs of the community.

Council for American Indian Ministry

The Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM) is the voice for American Indian people in the UCC. CAIM provides Christian ministry and witness to American Indians and to the wider church. Justice issues that affect American Indian life are communicated to the whole UCC by CAIM.

Historically, the forebears of the UCC established churches and worked with Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hocak in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin and northern Nebraska. Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. CAIM supports these local churches and their pastors. In addition, CAIM strives to be a resource for more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations and to strengthen their participation in the life of the church.

thank you!

Memorials/Honors for December

In memory of our son Mike, parents, & grandparents at Christmas time, *by Bud & Elaine Hudson*

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

Merry Xmas and a Healthy New Year to my friends at Christ Church, *by Charlene Dohse*

In honor of Cathy Wiesner, *by Mary & Garrett Pittman*



ALTAR FLOWERS



In memory of my parents, Amy & Julio, and my dear friend, Yoli, and in honor Our Lady of Guadalupe, *by Rev. Gilbert Martinez*

POINSETTIAS

In memory of loved ones, *by Rev. Dr. William G. Grice III*

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

In memory of Shirley Wiesner, *by Cathy Wiesner*

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

In memory of Jean Branding & Alice Rosedale, our Mothers, *at Christmas, by Judy and Don Rosedale*

In memory of Cecilia Bielat, *by George Bielat*



3 - Lauren Thorson

10 - Linda Steckel

14 - Larry Zemke

15 - Megan Shipp

15 - Barbara Bay

18 - Julie Radman

19 - Jan Storm

19 - Jazmyn Vasquez

19 - Debra Lynn Spetich Van Antwerp

24 - Dawn Mashek



1 - Gary and Helen Smith (28)

Men's Lunch:

Next meeting is Monday, **January 13th at 11:45 am.**

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



Women's Breakfast:

Next meeting is Tuesday, **January 14th at 9 am.**

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

COMING UP IN JANUARY

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>Time</u>
1	NEW YEAR'S DAY (OFFICE CLOSED)	-	-
5	Mission Collection	Sanctuary	9:30 am
	Advent Decorations Clean-Up	Sanctuary	10:30 am
6	Epiphany	-	-
8	Potluck	Wobbe Hall	6 pm
	Council Meeting	Lounge	7 pm
12	Faith Forward Adventures (<i>Sunday School</i>)	Sanctuary/Rm 1	9:30 am
	Confirmation Class	Lounge	11 am - 1 pm
13	Men's Lunch	Sunrise Grill	11:45 am
14	Women's Breakfast	Sunrise Grill	9 am
15	Get It Together	Wobbe Hall	10 am - 12 pm
19	Rev. Shernell Edney Stilley, IL Conference of the UCC Associate Minister, Visits	Sanctuary	9:30 am
	Faith Forward Commission Meeting	Lounge	11 am
	ONA-WISE Committee Meeting	TBD	11 am
20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	-	-
26	Faith Forward Adventures (<i>Sunday School</i>)	Sanctuary/Rm 1	9:30 am
	Confirmation Class	TBD	11 am - 12:30 pm
	Finance Committee Meeting	Lounge	11 am



"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 **December**, our thoughts and prayers were with:*

William "Bill" Shipp*
Marion Meseth*
John Nix
Dawn Mashek
Linda Steckel*
Al Angsten*
Pam Thomsen
Dolores Tomsheck*

Jean Henschke*
Marilyn McCown
Dorothy Zemke*
Kelly Roberts
Helen Harney
Marilyn Hoover*
Sue Prunty
Jack Storm

Hope & Bruce Tschappat*
Roy Sove*
Homebound*

Ukraine, Lebanon, 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
gilbert@christchurchuccdesplaines.org

**Jezze Patterson, Administrative Assistant &
Digital Outreach Coordinator**
jezze@christchurchuccdesplaines.org

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

