



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 II

February 2025

From The Pastor

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" - Psalm 133:1

During my second semester of seminary, we were required to attend a church service outside of our religious tradition. While many of my colleagues chose to visit a synagogue, I wanted to take the opportunity to step even further outside my comfort zone. With the guidance of my professor, the esteemed theologian Dr. Julia Speller—who had assigned us this task as part of our course—I chose to visit a spiritualist church.

Walking into the sanctuary, I was immediately struck by a large sunflower mural adorning the front wall, starkly contrasting the familiar red drapes of our congregation. A unique part of their service involved mediums offering to "read" the attendees. Though skeptical, I embraced the experience fully and agreed, along with Jacob, to participate. My reading consisted of general insights—easily dismissed by a skeptic—but Jacob's experience differed. The specificity of what was shared with him left him thinking twice.

To this day, I am grateful to Dr. Speller for encouraging us to step beyond our own traditions and experience the faith of others firsthand. This experience taught me the value of curiosity and open-mindedness in my spiritual journey. I share this story because we welcomed the Kol Hadash Humanistic Congregation's confirmation class on the last Sunday of January. As part of their confirmation program, they visited different faith communities to witness and experience how others practice their beliefs. Interestingly, they even hold some of their own services in a Unitarian church, giving them another perspective on spirituality.

Why do I share this with you? The journey of faith is about what we believe and how we learn from and grow with others. Even as adults, we should remain curious—seeking to understand how our human siblings "do church" and exploring how their practices might enrich our spiritual lives. Instead of focusing on differences that divide us, we should aim to embrace the shared humanity that unites us. The Divine calls us to journey together, listen, learn, and grow in community.

Reflecting on this visit, I encourage you to approach future opportunities with an open heart and mind. Let us continue to embrace the beauty of diversity in faith and discover how it can deepen our journey with God.

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 February 2025 Common Lectionary readings:

February 2: Jeremiah 1:4-10; Luke 4:21-30

February 9: Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13); 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

February 16: Jeremiah 17:5-10; 1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Luke 6:17-26

February 23: Genesis 45:3-11, 15; 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50; Luke 6:27-38



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

	Liturgist/Lector	Council Greeter	Streaming Coordinator
February 2	Laura Hallberg	Holly Schmidt	Mandy O'Donnell
February 9	Kyle Speer	Mandy O'Donnell	John Skibbe
February 16	Jessica Busse	Laura Hallberg	Mandy O'Donnell
February 23	Megan Shipp	Judy Rosedale	John Skibbe



	Ushers
February 2	Rita Barth, Gary Smith, Cathy Wiesner, George Bielat, Rahsaan Strode Jr
February 9	Jan Storm, Donna Boyko, Alice Barnhart, Julie Radman, Carolyn Amick
February 16	Rita Barth, Gary Smith, Cathy Wiesner, George Bielat, Rahsaan Strode Jr
February 23	Jan Storm, Donna Boyko, Alice Barnhart, Julie Radman, Carolyn Amick



JANUARY'S AVERAGE
ATTENDANCE:
59±

988

SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE

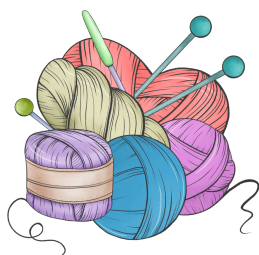
988

LÍNEA DE
PREVENCIÓN
DEL SUICIDIO
Y CRISIS

FINANCIAL REPORT

Christ Church UCC Des Plaines
Statement of Financial Activity
December 29, 2024 through January 25, 2025

	Week of Dec 29, 24	Week of Jan 5, 25	Week of Jan 12, 25	Week of Jan 19, 25	TOTAL
Ordinary Income/Expense...					
Income	2,602.50	2,155.55	557.50	963.00	6,278.55
Gross Profit	2,602.50	2,155.55	557.50	963.00	6,278.55
Expense	2,041.40	1,385.70	0.00	224.95	3,652.05
Net Ordinary Income	561.10	769.85	557.50	738.05	2,626.50
Net Income	561.10	769.85	557.50	738.05	2,626.50



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 February 19th, 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.



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 | |
| • Juice (large bottles or boxed) | | |
| • Breakfast cereal (chocolate if possible) | | |
| • New or like-new clean bed linens and towels | | |



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

Men's Lunch:

Next meeting is Monday, **February 10th at 11:45 am.**

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



Women's Breakfast:

Next meeting is Tuesday, **February 11th at 9 am.**

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

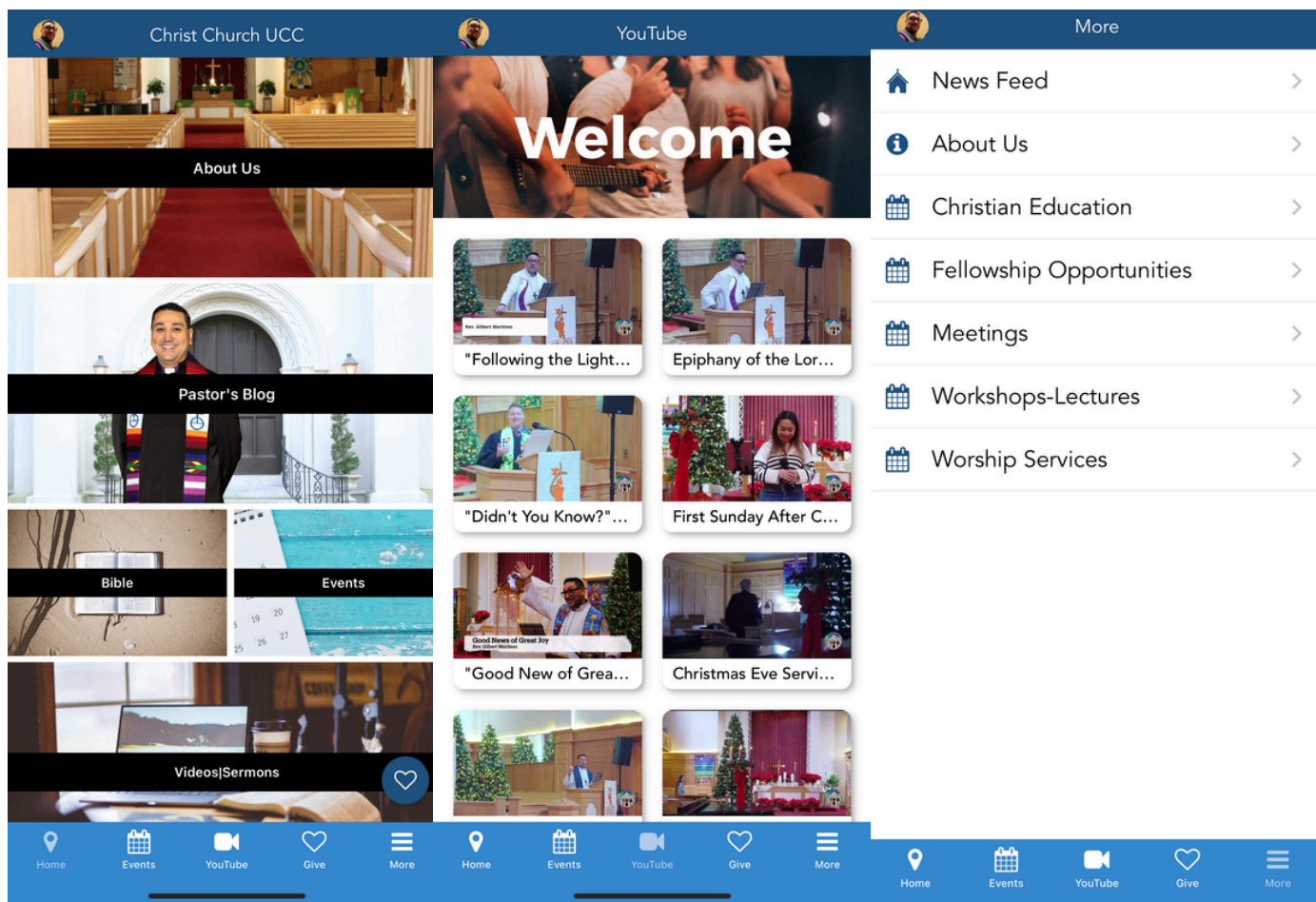
LIBRARY



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.



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>

**Scan to download
the app**



OR



THE TITHE.LY CHURCH APP

**Christ Church United
Church of Christ**

WELCOME

New Members!



Judy Taylor, Ruben Oviedo, & Joe Busse

Christ Church Council Meeting December 2024

Meeting Start: 7:01 pm

Attendees: Steve Bay, Judy Rosedale. Mandy O'Donnell, Bob Neil, Alice Barnhart, Holly Schmidt, Laura Hallberg, Pastor Gilbert

Prayer: Alice

November Council Meeting Minutes

Review of the November 2024 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made to approve the November Council Meeting Minutes and was seconded. The motion was passed by the Council.

Financial Report

Question on where we get the dollars for the deficit that we have each month. Currently it is coming out of the Centry 21st Fund, however that fund is no depleted. The council will need to decide where to get the dollars for any future deficit in the future (approx. \$100k).

The council will discuss and determine where the deficit will be made up from. Once Council has a recommendation a Congregational meeting will need to be held to approve it. This can be done at our February Annual meeting.

Statement of Financial Activity

- Workmen's comp it an insurance payment
- Church Council: report says \$300 but should be \$150

Statement of Financial Status November 19, 2024

- Circle of Friends has a balance of \$1100. Was this given to the General Fund as requested? The balance should be \$0. This line item can be removed for the future.
- A motion was made to accept the November Financial Report as presented and the motion was seconded. The motion was passed by the Council.
- The current version of QuickBooks is stand alone. Plan to move the cloud-based version which will allow the information to be accessed from any computer with the approved log on credentials. As we move to the new version it is recommended that we hire an "expert" to help us set up the information to best suit the Church's needs. Recommendation is that we hire our auditor who has the expertise.
- We will vote on this at the next meeting when we have more information including the cost.

Officer Report - none

PASTOR'S REPORT**Worship & Arts**

- regular Worship services - 3, 1 with communion
- new member welcomed on Sunday Nov 17
- Santa and Mrs. Claus on Sunday 12/1
- Advent decorating occurred on Saturday Nov 30

Faith Forward Commission / Christian Education

- Faith Forward Adventures continues with more children participating in November
- Intergenerational Christmas Pageant on Dec 15. Rehearsal is on Dec 14

-Confirmation - 2 classes - our next meeting is Dec 9 at 5 pm -Continue to reach out to scholarship recipients with only one response

Pastoral Care

- Pastoral contacts = 52+ (calls / texts, emails, greeting cards)

Administrative / Personnel

- staff meeting - 7 (includes w maintenance technician on Sundays)
- the pay period moved to bi-weekly vs bi-monthly. Pay dates will occur every two Fridays beginning December 13
- Annual reviews for our Administrative Assistant and Maintenance Technician completed and filed
- continued to co-manage social media
- updated website
- three (3) committee meetings;
- the Finance Committee sends proposals via the Pastor's reporting. Letter attached to Council packet.

Wider UCC & DP Community Meetings / Presentations / Events

- DP Clergy Meeting
- Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship Service & Pie Fellowship Sunday, Nov 24th., Trinity Lutheran Church
- Holiday Community Sing Along was a huge success!
- Sunday May 8th - Tyler Yost's Ordination at Frist Congregational Church in Evanston

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee - See attached proposals

Outreach Committee - no report

Building Committee - discussion in unfinished business and new business

Faith Forward Commission -

- pageant roles filled, rehearsals complete, dress rehearsal on Saturday 12/14; Pageant on 12/15
- Santa and Mrs. Clause at Coffee Hour on 12/1
- Budget discussion with the commission members on 12/29
- preliminary ideas for discussion for an FFC fundraiser in January

Mission Committee

Gifts for San Lucas' children - all tags taken on Sunday December 1. We had 35 tags. Gifts should be returned by Sunday December 22. We are helping out the self-help closet this Holiday season. We call it a "white Christmas". We are collecting white paper goods like toilet paper, paper towels, tissues and diapers.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Organ Repair - the organ has been repaired. Will reach out to St. Martin's organist to come in to test the computer and begin using it at the next service that Hana is playing music for us.

Electrical - Contacted JKO Electric. Parts have been ordered, and the proposal was signed. The electrician will come for the repair once the parts arrive. He will call Bob or Judy to arrange a time.

- In the meantime, Steve showed Emanuel how to manually reset the pumps if needed. The electrician will also disconnect the power for the dishwasher so that Emanuel can remove the dishwasher.
- Additional bathroom - planning continues for the additional bathroom off the kitchen. Received a quote but have requested an itemized quote. Plan to pull permits when ready. Also, will purchase fixtures - 2 ADA toilets, sink, mirror and faucet. Will also need a vent in the new bathroom. Will schedule a special congregational meeting for the work when we have all the information.
- Repairs - repair kitchen faucet and bathroom faucet.

Cradles to Crayons - Des Plaines will not issue a permit for a clothing collection box in our parking lot. Recommendation to hold a biannual clothing drive to support the organization. A motion was made to hold clothing drives 2 times a year to collect items and have them picked up. The motion passed.

Pastors Delegation Meeting - the meeting in El Salvador has been postponed until November 2025. Will be receiving a refund check.

NEW BUSINESS

Staff annual reviews for Jezzle & Emanuel for their 1st year anniversaries. They received a raise at their 90-day review; their annual review saw them receiving a small increase fraction. A motion was made and seconded to approve the salary increases. The motion passed.

Pastor Gilbert's review will be after the first of the year.

Grant Workshop

There is a workshop "Fundraising, Finance and Development" for Latino Clergy in March 2025. The cost would be up to \$3K. A motion was made to not approve this workshop trip for 2025 and the motion passed. This was not approved since the Pastors Delegation Meeting has already been approved.

MEETING ADJOURN - 8:34 PM

BOBBY JO VALENTINE

HEART-OPENING, AWARD-WINNING FOLK/POP

Save the date

MAY 8, 2025

7 PM

MORE INFORMATION TO COME

"Bobby Jo has both the spirit and songs that bring us back to believing. Whatever our faith, he has the humor, compassion, words, and music to help us believe again."

-Dar Williams

"Catchy songs with good tunes and intelligent, thoughtful lyrics in the tradition of Bob Dylan, Cat Stevens, and Bruce Hornsby."

-Stephen Schwartz, Tony award-winning creator of *Godspell*, *Wicked*, and *Pippin*





FORUM SERIES:
**BECOMING A SANCTUARY OR
IMMIGRANT-WELCOMING CHURCH**

Rev. Gilbert, with the approval of the Church Council, will lead a three-week forum series during fellowship, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to be well-informed before our congregational vote at the annual meeting.

Each session will last *30–45 minutes* and will explore what it means to become a Sanctuary or Immigrant-Welcoming Church, our Christian call to support immigrant siblings, historical context, and the evolving legal landscape.

We encourage everyone to attend as many sessions as possible. Your participation is vital in this important conversation!

**FOR AGES
13 TO 21 YEARS OLD**

**\$10 REGISTRATION
FEE**

"Who I Am" - Identity Workshop

**Saturday, March 15th
12:00pm - 3:00pm**

**First United Methodist Church
668 Graceland Ave.
Des Plaines, IL 60016**

This workshop is designed to help individuals discover, and embrace their authenticity. Betty Howard, Life Coach, will provide context, lead activities, and offer guidance as young people consider their unique gifts and personhood. There will be a time of inspiration, affirmation, and awareness. We will be enjoying food, fun and laughter. You don't want to miss this event!



**SCAN THE QR CODE
TO REGISTER
BY MARCH 8TH**



**www.fumcdp.org
847-827-5561**

Mission Committee Organizations

Who We Support

Shelter Inc., Arlington Heights



In the early 1970s, an Arlington Heights police officer had a vision. For too many years, he had watched children in need of emergency housing spend long hours at police stations or hospitals, waiting alone and afraid to be taken to a shelter often far from their home. Believing there was a better way to help kids in crisis through no fault of their own, he envisioned caring residents of Arlington Heights voluntarily opening their homes to children facing emergencies and providing them with warm, safe housing close to their own schools, families, and friends.

In 1975, Shelter began placing children and adolescents in volunteer foster homes. These special foster parents received no payment, yet they welcomed scared, lonely children into their homes and provided them with the love and attention lacking in their lives. Over the next four decades, Shelter has grown and evolved to meet the urgent needs of children and young adults throughout the Chicago metropolitan area, remaining a lifeline to the most vulnerable. Our programs include two emergency group homes, a transitional living program, foster care, a child abuse prevention program, mental health counseling, and help for young people experiencing homelessness.

Avenue to Independence, Park Ridge

Avenues was founded in 1953 when a group of parents believed things should be different for their sons and daughters with developmental disabilities. Today, thanks to their vision, Avenues is a non-profit organization that provides homes, jobs and community living programs to Chicago area adults with physical, intellectual, and other developmental disabilities, such as Down syndrome, autism, epilepsy and cerebral palsy. It is our goal to provide work and living opportunities enabling those with disabilities to be as independent as possible.



Our Mission

Avenues to Independence empowers adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live the lives they choose through personalized support, advocacy and community engagement.

Our Vision

We envision a future where people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are integral contributors to their communities and live with dignity and independence.

Community Renewal Society



Community Renewal Society informs and brings people of faith and congregations together, in partnership with communities, coalitions, interfaith organizations and civic leaders, to intentionally and decisively transform society toward greater social justice at the intersection of racism and poverty.

Working together, with one voice and many hearts, we advocate for what we believe—justice and equality. Together, we work every day to become a region free of race and class barriers.

Thank You

Memorials/Honors for January

In memory of Allen Angsten, *with love Elaine Angsten*

In memory of Al Angsten, a kind and caring friend, *by Kathy Groll*

In memory of our dear friend, Al Angsten, *by Charlene Dohse*

In memory of Al Angsten, a long time friend, fellow traveler & Christ Church veteran, *by Bud and Elaine Hudson*

In memory of Al Angsten, *by Barbara Dopp*

In memory of Al Angsten, *by Rita Barth*

In memory of Al Angsten, *by Don and Judy Rosedale*

In memory of my Dad on his birthday, and my parents' anniversary on 1/15, *by Rev. Gilbert Martinez*

In loving memory of Allen Angsten, *by Barbara Nix*

In loving memory of Dolores Tomsheck, *by Rita Barth*

In memory of my dear friend, Dolores Tomsheck, *by Nancy Seils*

In honor of my niece, Jazmyn, on her birthday, *by Rev. Gilbert Martinez*

In loving memory of Allen Angsten, *by Barbara Nix*

In loving memory of Dolores Tomsheck, *by Rita Barth*

In memory of my dear friend, Dolores Tomsheck, *by Nancy Seils*

In honor of my niece, Jazmyn, on her birthday, *by Rev. Gilbert Martinez*

In memory of Dolores Tomsheck, *by Barb Dopp*

In memory of John Nix, *by Bud and Elaine Hudson*

In memory of Dolores Tomsheck, *by Bud and Elaine Hudson*

In memory of Dolores Tomsheck, *by Holly Schmidt*

In memory of Al Angsten, *by Holly Schmidt*



2 - Nathaniel Martinez
7 - Nate Cheng
7 - Ady DeLaGarza
15 - Rev. Virginia Ericson
15 - Ariana Kelso

15 - Helen Smith
24 - Kathie Groll
25 - John Hangey
27 - Rita Barth

Happy
ANNIVERSARY

2 - Ed and Andrea Cheng (5)
16 - Rev. Gilbert Martinez and Jacob Guerra-Martinez (21)

COMING UP IN FEBRUARY

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>Time</u>
1	Rev. Gilbert's Anniversary as Pastor	-	-
2	Immigrant-Welcoming Forum I	Wobbe Hall	10:30 am
	Finance Committee Meeting	Lounge	11:15 am
4	Mission Committee Meeting	Lounge	6 pm
9	Faith Forward Adventures (<i>Sunday School</i>)	Sanctuary/Rm 1	9:30 am
	Immigrant-Welcoming Forum II	Wobbe Hall	10:30 am
	Confirmation Class	Lounge	11:15 am
10	Men's Lunch	Sunrise Grill	11:45 am
11	Women's Breakfast	Sunrise Grill	9 am
12	Potluck	Wobbe Hall	6 pm
	Council Meeting	Lounge	7 pm
14	Valentine's Day	-	-
16	Immigrant-Welcoming Forum III	Wobbe Hall	10:30 am
	Finance-Trust Committee Meeting	Lounge	11 am (tentative)
17	Presidents' Day	-	-
19	Get It Together	Lounge	10 am - 12 pm
23	Faith Forward Adventures (<i>Sunday School</i>)	Sanctuary/Rm 1	9:30 am
	Annual Meeting	Wobbe Hall	10:30 am
	Confirmation Class	Lounge	11:15 am
24	Faith Forward Commission Meeting	Lounge	5:15 pm



POTLUCK: Come and bring a dish for the potluck dinner. The dinner will be at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, February 12, 2025 in Wobbe Hall. Join us for fellowship.

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

William "Bill" Shipp*
Marion Meseth*
John Nix
Dawn Mashek
Linda Steckel*
Roy Sove*
Jack Storm

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

Hope & Bruce Tschappat*
Homebound*

Ukraine, Lebanon, Palestinian,
and Israeli citizens



**Christ Church
United Church of Christ**

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Des Plaines, IL 60016
847-297-4230

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Kyle Speer, Finance Manager & Music Coordinator
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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

