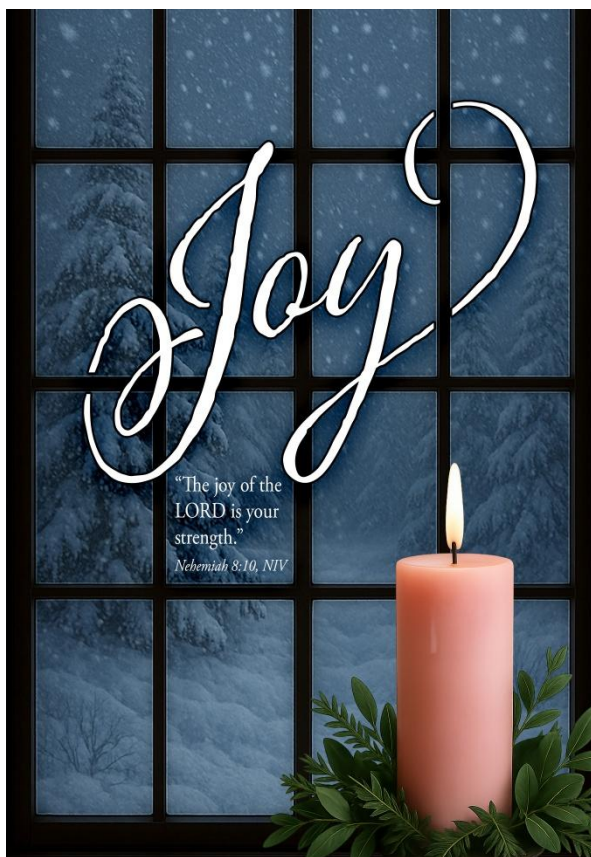


Christ Church

an Open & Affirming Congregation
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



December 14, 2025

Ministers: Every member of this congregation

Worship Leader: Rev. Deborah Payden

Music Director: Terryl Dietert

Guitar | Visuals: Paul Mayeshiba

Video: Richard Tremarello

Liturgist: Randene Wick

Welcome to Christ Church! We are so glad you are here this morning! Whether you are a "first-timer," a regular, or somewhere in between, it is a joy to have you here with us this day. May you be blessed by God's Word in worship today! If you are a **first-time visitor**, please fill out a visitor card and put it in the offering plate, and then make your way to the Chapel (in the back) after worship where we have a small gift for you.

**Please stand as you are able*

For Your Reflection

Joy is the serious business of heaven. - C.S. Lewis

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.

- Desmond Tutu

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

We Light the Candle of Joy

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appears.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**O come Thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine
advent here; Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's
dark shadows put to flight.**

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Isaiah 35:1-6a

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

Call to Worship

(adapted from Psalm 14)

One: Sing praise to God all lifelong!

Many: Happy are those whose hope is in God who keeps faith with us forever.

One: God lifts up those who are bowed down and trodden upon.

Many: God loves righteousness and those who uphold it.

All: God will reign forever. Praise the LORD!

*Gathering Prayer

Gracious God, we come this day with anticipation and joy-filled praise to you for your steadfast promises. We also come with hesitation and wondering how your Way is present in our troubled world. Open our hearts to see more clearly the signs of Christ's transforming presence. Remind us of the deep joy in being called your beloved children. Empower us to show the world the reality and truth of your limitless, compassionate love by serving the most forgotten. Restore our hope and fill us with steadfast faith in you. We pray in the name of the child born in Bethlehem. Amen.

*Words of Grace

(to tune of *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*)

**Oh ye beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low;
Who toil along the climbing path with painful steps and slow.
Look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing.
Oh rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing!**

*Passing the Peace of Christ

*Response

Glory to God

Hymn #240

**Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory in the highest!
Glory to God, Glory to God, Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Gift of Music

Sanctuary Choir

First Scripture Reading: Matthew 11:2-11

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Second Scripture Reading: Luke 1:39-56

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said,
"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name;
indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

A Message for The Young and The Young at Heart

Sermon "Other Worldly Joy" Rev. Deborah Payden

Hymn *Prepare the Way of the Lord (3X)* **Hymn #174**

Prayers of the People (see Weekly Newsletter for details)

For those experiencing trials or ongoing health concerns: Kathy B,
Gloria H, Judy B, Jerry G, Bonnie & Jeff J, Nicole, Bart, Tom, Dulce, Laurel, Bill,
Blair, Joe, Kozy, Stacy, Susie

Pastoral Prayer

Prayer of our Savior

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom 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 kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Invitation to Generosity

Something in us changes, when we live our lives with a spirit of giving and grace. Something in us changes when we share what we have and who we are.

Something in us changes when we choose generosity as a way of life, without judging or questioning those who need us to be generous. That change is a gift of God, and we find God's love filling our hearts and our lives with every good gift we give freely and without question.

SCAN TO DONATE



Offertory

***Doxology Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God, all creatures here below
Praise God above, ye heavenly host
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost, Amen**

*Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, you continually bestow all good gifts upon us. Your love for all of creation is more than we can ever measure. Your generosity to us is boundless. We praise you not only with our voices, but with our lives and gifts we offer to your church. Accept these offerings as a token of our thanksgiving. May they be used to further the ministry of Christ in the world. Amen.

Closing Hymn *Canticle of The Turning- Cooney

**1. My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
So from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?**

Refrain

**My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn!**

**2. Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
And your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and to those who would for you yearn,
You will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn. Refrain**

**3. From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
for the food they can never earn;
There are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn. Refrain**

**4. Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
'Til the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around. Refrain**

*Benediction

*Benediction Song *Now it's Time to Say Goodbye*

**Now it's time to say goodbye
To go on out from here
To live the visions and the dreams
To scatter hate and fear
So may the Peace be with you now
A peace that's filled with Grace
May it surround all your struggles**

**And everything you face.
And may you find your own way
To sing out love's own song
With courage, tears and laughter
And then to pass it on.
Yes the time has come to say goodbye
May peace be with you now**

Postlude



**PLEASE pick up your 2026 offering envelopes
in the chapel. Thank you!**

You can also pick up a copy of
A Season of Peace, an Advent devotional,
to help you prepare for Christmas.

Monthly Activity	November	YTD
Contributions	\$11,820	\$97,501
Other Income	\$299	\$80,484
Total Income	\$12,119	\$177,985
Expenses	\$30,845	\$199,435
Budgeted Amount	\$14,867	\$163,533

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If you should need pastoral support, please contact
Rev. Sandy Graham at 414-943-6321 or RevDrGraham@gmail.com
or **Rev. John Helt** at 262-622-3165 or JohnCliffordHelt@gmail.com

