The Chronicles

December 2026

Christ Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WORSHIP SERVICE

SUNDAYS

9:30AM

CHRIST CHURCH

915 E Oklahoma Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53187
414-481-3530
office@uccmke.org
www.uccmke.org

IN THIS ISSUE

- Calendar
- Pastor's Letter
- New Council Officers
- Giving Opportunities
- Welcome New Members/Staff
- Advent Brunch
- Council Corner
- Creation Care Corner
- Birthdays
- Thank Yous



december 2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 Choir 7pm 	4 Thanksgiving/ Christmas Dinner Gathering 6pm	5
6 Liturgist-Unity D Sunday School Program Practice Advent Brunch Endowment Grants DUE BVCC Donations	7	8 Quilting 9:30am	9	10 Handbells 9:30am Finance Meeting 11am	11	12 Sunday School Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal 9–10:30am
13 Liturgist-Jill U Sunday School Christmas Program 	14	15 Council Meeting 6pm	16	17 Handbells 9:30am Choir 7pm 	18	19
20 Liturgist-Chuck T Choir Handbells NO Sunday School	21	22 Quilting 9:30am	23 Handbells 9:30am	24 Liturgist-Doris Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7pm  Choir	25 	26
27 Liturgist-Andy O NO Sunday School Property Committee Meeting Hats & mittens DUE	28	29	30	31		

Liturgists

Dec 6	Unity D
Dec 13	Jill U
Dec 20	Chuck T
Dec 24	Doris M
Dec 27	Andy O

Sunday Counters

1st Sunday	Mark P / Dean K
2nd Sunday	Janet K / Joyce Z
3rd Sunday	Danette V / Renolle V
4th Sunday	Peggy C / Jill U
5th Sunday	Debbie H / Doris M

Greeters

Dec 6	Kathy S
Dec 13	Sue S
Dec 20	Karen K
Dec 27	

Coffee Hour

Dec 6	Advent Brunch - Social Concerns
Dec 13	Bob & Joyce Z
Dec 20	Vicki T and family
Dec 27	



WE WAIT IN HOPE FOR THE LORD.

PSALM 33:20, NIV

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24 @ 7pm

Choir & Handbells

CHOIR

Thursdays, **Dec 3 and 17** at 7pm

Singing - Sunday, **Dec 20** and Thursday, **Dec 24**

HANDBELLS

Thursday, **Dec 10 and 17** at 9:30am

Playing - Sunday, **Dec 20**

Quilting	**Tues, Dec 8 and 22,** 9:30am–noon
Finance Meeting	**Thurs, Dec 10** at 11am
Council Meeting	**Tues, Dec 15** at 6pm
Property Meeting	**Sun, Dec 27** after church

Come to the Party!

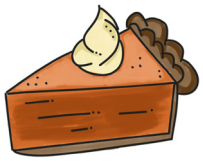
Sunday School's Christmas Program

December 13 during service

See you there!



Thanksgiving/Christmas Dinner Gathering



Friday, December 4 at 6pm | Joe's K-Ranch, 4840 S Whitnall Ave, Cudahy, WI

Everyone is welcome! Let's gather as a church family to enjoy an evening of good food, fellowship, and friendship as we celebrate the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons together. We have scheduled this gathering before the busiest days leading up to Christmas, giving everyone an opportunity to relax, reconnect, and enjoy time with those of us that are part of the Christ Church faith community.

The gathering will take place in the lower level of Joe's K-Ranch, which is accessible by stairs only.

Because the restaurant is expecting several large groups that evening, we may have a limited menu of five or six selected dinner entrées. More information about the menu will be shared as it becomes available.

We hope you'll join us for this special opportunity to celebrate the season and strengthen the friendships that make Christ Church such a welcoming community. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the Lenox St bulletin board. *Jim W*

Advent Brunch



Sunday, December 6 at 10:30am in the Fellowship Hall

Join us for brunch as we pause for reflection during a busy holiday season. There will be time for us to gather and socialize while eating a variety of foods and desserts. Our speaker, Mary Gross, wife of Pastor Bob, will speak on the topic: " Loving Your Neighbor by Being a Catalyst for Change." She will share how churches dream boldly and try new things in partnership with others in local communities. Through a Catalyst Grant which is available from the Wisconsin Conference UCC, there are many ways our congregation can enrich the lives of others in our community.

We look forward to your participation and as always guests are welcome. A sign-up sheet to attend is on the Lenox Street bulletin board and donations toward the meal are welcome. A separate sheet is posted for salad and dessert donations. All are welcome, including trans and non-binary people. Please sign up **by Sunday, November 29**.

Social Concerns Committee: *Mary Ann M, Debbie H, Sara R, Jan N, Vicki T, Randene W*



Hat and Mitten Collection

We will be collecting hats and mittens to donate to local schools this winter. Handmade or purchased items are greatly appreciated. You can place your donations on the tree in the chapel beginning the end of November. We will be collecting items **until December 27**. Thanks for helping keep the children of our community warm this winter.

Your Social Concerns Committee, *Peggy C, Debbie H, Mary Ann M, Jan N, Sara R, Vicki T, Randene W*

BVCC Donations



We are continuing our monthly donation of food for the BVCC food pantry. Please bring your items to church the **first Sunday of each month**. Donations can be placed in the grocery cart located in the chapel. Thank you for helping provide for those families in our community in need! Any donations are greatly appreciated, or a financial contribution can be made directly to the BVCC. *BVCC thanks you for supporting your neighbors in need!*

Needed items: canned vegetables and fruit, peanut butter and jelly/jam, rice and beans, breakfast cereals, oatmeal, shelf-stable milk, canned tuna or chicken, cooking oil, personal individually wrapped single serving snacks, hygiene products (toothpaste, soap, shampoo), laundry detergent, dish soap, and toilet paper





"Second Annual" Halloween a Big Hit!

Christ Church once again distributed lots of candy on Halloween. We dodged raindrops early in the evening so the brand new awning was much appreciated! A big thank you to **Peggy Carew, Sue Cribb, Nancy Kaye, Karen Nack, Sue Pfeifer,** and **Joyce Zieman,** who along with **Andy & Julie Oren** made sure the candy bowls never went empty. Nancy Kaye even left her own birthday party to spend an hour helping out! We also want to thank everyone who donated candy leading up to the big day. At the end of the night there was only enough left over to fill a big bowl which went right to the next day's Coffee Hour. All in all it was a fun evening, and we all enjoyed seeing the many creative (and scary) costumes. This was another great opportunity for us to move outside of our building and share in the neighborhood fun. Until next year!



Creation Care Corner

Whenever I drive by our church on Oklahoma, I have a moment of pride that we have a "Shut Down Line 5" sign on the front lawn.

The Enbridge Line 5 continues to be in the news, and not in a good way. The Bad River Reservation has not renewed the Enbridge lease to allow the pipeline to pass through their land, so the Canadian energy company is building a forty-one mile by-pass around the reservation, carrying toxic fossil fuel products across our state and under the Straits of Mackinac in Michigan on their way to refineries in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada. The Wisconsin DNR, in just the last month, has alleged seven Enbridge violations of regulations that threaten groundwater and air in the Lake Superior watershed.



LIne 5 is bad for the waters of Wisconsin, Michigan, the Great Lakes and the air that everyone breathes. It threatens the Bad River Reservation and adds to the long history of violating treating rights with the Ojibwa people. And it signals the extended use of fossil fuels which drive climate change and global warming. Join me in adding one of these lovely signs to your yard. They are available at church.

Thank you. Mother Earth thanks you.
John H

COUNCIL CORNER

Happy New Year!

You may think that I am too early, but the church year begins with Advent. Advent is the four Sundays before Christmas. This year, it begins on November 29.

This is a time to prepare for Christ's coming—both as a baby and his triumphant return. As we are waiting we focus on the familiar themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. Do you approach New Years Eve with quite reflection—or maybe new resolutions? It is a time to start again. A tune for sharing with others, treating people fairly and being kind. In the words of Gloria Patri, "As it is was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen."

Doris M, Christian Education

STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET

Monthly Activity	October	YTD
Contributions & Other Income	$ 23,349	$ 166,420
Expenses	$ 16,496	$ 181,837
Budgeted Amount	$ 18,051	$ 180,516

Endowment Grants

The Endowment Committee is again receiving service outreach grant requests for 2026. Please fill out a Grant Request form. The forms have been placed in the holders between the chapel and lounge, near the handicap restroom, and in the church office. **The application deadline is December 6, 2026.** Please ask any member of the Endowment Committee if you have questions: *Joan G, Mary Ann M, Sarah R, Jackie B, Jill U*

Introducing "Dinner for 7" – Starting January 2027!

Jesus frequently used a shared table as a place of welcome, conversation, and discovery. Beginning in **January 2027**, Christ Church UCC is launching Dinner for 7—a new, flexible fellowship ministry inspired by the spirit of our former Dinner for 8 program. The goal is simple: sit around a table together intentionally as followers of Christ, connect with members we might not otherwise get to know, and strengthen the community we call Christ Church.

How It Works

- **Diverse, Rotating Groups:** Each quarter, participants will be placed into groups of roughly 7 people (6–8 depending on sign-ups), intentionally mixing generations, newer and longtime members, singles, couples, and families. New groups are formed every three months so you can meet new faces throughout the year.
- **Flexible Scheduling:** Once groups are assigned in early January 2027, your group chooses a date and time that works best for everyone to gather sometime during that quarter.
- **At Least Three Ways to Gather:** Each group decides how they want to share their meal:
  1. **In a Home:** The host provides the main dish, and guests bring sides, salad, dessert, or beverages.
  2. **Potluck:** Everyone contributes a dish to share. Use of the church is an option.
  3. **At a Restaurant:** The group picks a reasonably priced local spot, and each person covers their own meal.
- **Everyone Is Welcome:** Open to adults and families with children! Groups can decide together whether to host an adults-only evening or a family-friendly dinner.
- **Meaningful Conversation:** This isn't a formal Bible study or church program—just good company. Groups are encouraged to open with a simple prayer or blessing and use a few optional conversation starters (such as "What gives you hope these days?" or "Where have you seen God at work in your life recently?") to spark deeper connection.

Cost & Accessibility

Our focus is on hospitality and conversation, not an elaborate or expensive meal. Whether splitting a potluck or choosing a budget-friendly restaurant, Dinner for 7 is designed to be affordable for everyone. Financial circumstances should never keep anyone from the table—confidential assistance is available if needed.

Ready to Pull Up a Chair?

We are launching our first quarter in January 2027 and would love for you to be part of it!

- **How to Sign Up:** Sign-up sheet will be posted at the Lenox St. entrance
- **Sign-Up Deadline:** Please sign up by Dec 31
- **Questions?** Contact: Jim Wick, 414-614-2612 or email: jameswick73@gmail.com

Come share a meal, tell your story, and listen for God's presence around the table!



Grateful Thankful ♥ Blessed

2027 Christ Church Council Officers

James Wick, President | Long Range Planning/Church Renewal | Legal

Sue Cribb, Vice President | Financial Secretary

Janet Key, Recording Secretary

Julie Oren, Treasurer | Finance | Memorial | Property/Insurance

Pam Kothrade | Music & Worship

Jan Naefken | Social Concerns

Doris Mayeshiba | Christian Education | Stewardship

Peggy Carew | PPPR | Membership

Vicki Teal | ONA | IT & AV

Endowment Committee

Joan Gaeth

Sara Rogers

Jackie Blazavier

Mary Ann Mowery

Jill Unglaub

Auditor

Dean Mowery

A great big thank you

to **Sue Pfeifer** and **Joe Rogge** for their faithful service on the Christ Church Council for a least six years—and more, when the Covid 19 pandemic is factored in. Their faithfulness and dedication to the Christ Church congregation, and endless attention to details and committees is much appreciated. Council will miss you, Sue and Joe.

The Christ Church Council would also like to extend their heartfelt thanks to **Randene Wick** and **Tom Dohoney** for their devoted service to the Endowment Committee. We are indebted to them for their steady-handed leadership and conscientious attention to the particulars of the church finances. The Committee will miss you, Randene and Tom.

In His love for us all,
Christ Church Council



Pastor's Letter

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is worshiped by Roman Catholics and often ignored by Protestants. No matter where you are on that spectrum, there would be no Christmas without Mary. I believe she's worth some attention, especially as we approach Christmas.

When the angel visited Mary and told her she would bear a child after the Holy Spirit had come upon her, Mary said "yes." Without knowing how everything would happen, she opened herself to God at work in her life. (Luke 1: 26-38)

A popular song at this time of year is "Mary Did You Know?" Mary might have known the details listed out in the lyrics, but she definitely knew that God was doing something spectacular within her. When Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, Elizabeth calls out, "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?…And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." (Luke 1: 42-45)

"The mother of my Lord." Elizabeth knew. And Mary's response to her lets us know that she knew her child would bring liberation to the oppressed.



"[God] 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." (Luke 1: 51-53)

John gives us Mary's final recorded words in the gospels. It's at the wedding in Cana. Mary goes to Jesus to inform him that the wine has run out. He pushes back, "what concern is that to me and to you?"

Mary tells the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." They do and the water turns into wine.

Finally, in the Orthodox tradition Mary is known as Theotokas, the God bearer. The one who carries God into the world. I find this image most compelling. When we pay attention to God's voice, the Spirit's nudging, or Jesus' leading, we too can become bearers of God in our spheres of influence. We can "bring down the powerful from their thrones" and send the rich away empty. Together we can lift the lowly and fill the hungry with good things.

May it be so.
Merry Christmas,

Pastor Bob

Coffee Anyone?



In an article on ucc.org, Seth Wispelwey began with these words: "I have a toddler, therefore I drink coffee." To get going and keep up with my delightful young one, I certainly savor but also definitely need at least a few cups to warm up and turn my own lights on—especially since I'm usually woken up before the sun.

I began drinking coffee as an adult in my first organizing job, where "coffee meetings," as in congregational life, were the norm. My work is within communities of faith and conscience, leveraging our power to manifest a just and fair world in all our endeavors. In these caffeinated meetings, many revolving around "Fair Trade," I learned very quickly that not all coffee is created equal.

Whatever your preferred grind of bean for taking on the grind, coffee is an extremely popular commodity—and one that, for most of us, is cultivated far away. The history of how coffee became an everyday staple is riven with grave injustice, beginning with the transatlantic slave trade. Much coffee available to us these days is still produced under exploitative and abusive conditions. Thanks to decades of organized global struggle, there are also abundant choices for coffee that "tastes like justice." Nowadays consumers can leverage awareness of fairly and directly traded coffee producers into devoting our dollars to supporting workers and families worldwide who make this ubiquitous beverage possible.

This gives us pause to think about the coffee we purchase. Are we buying coffee "produced under exploitive and abusive conditions" to get a cheaper price, or something that "tastes like justice"? The next time you're purchasing coffee for home or Coffee Hour, look for the "Fair Trade" label. You'll be making a difference for a farmer and their family while getting a better grade of coffee. You might also want to consider one of the many coffee roasters in Milwaukee who roast fair trade beans.

Read Rev. Wispelwey's full reflection here: https://ow.ly/RQXr5102qtZ

Rooted in Gospel values, the United Church of Christ officially declared itself to be a "Fair Trade Denomination" in 2005. (Read the resolution here: https://ow.ly/nE4X51030Sa)



OCWM WISCONSIN IMPACT

The Wisconsin Conference UCC supports and strengthens the faithful ministry of congregations because of gifts to OCWM Wisconsin Impact (formerly, OCWM Basic Support). This mission often means supporting congregations and pastors as they engage the "search and call" process.

Barbara Bendlin stepped forward to lead the First Congregational UCC of Janesville, WI, search process. "Honestly, it was time consuming," Barbara reported, "But also the most fulfilling volunteer service I've participated in at church." The committee built deep relationships with each other as they took on the serious work of listening to the congregation and the leadings of the Holy Spirit to find a new pastor. The process helped the congregation better understand itself.

Rev. Rachel Bauman provided support along the way. "When we felt overwhelmed, Rachel helped breakdown all we had to do in manageable steps." The committee often turned to Rachel for guidance and coaching.

Interim Rev. Bob Gross hosted cottage meetings with members of the congregation. His work helped inform the development of the profile, ensuring the committee clearly expressed their identity to prospective applicants.

All the work of the search committee showed up when they interviewed Rev. BJ Barlow. "I was immediately impressed by their thoughtfulness in the interview process." The care of the committee came out in many ways, such as during his in-person interview when the committee prepared a gift basket of maps, Janesville knick-knacks, and snacks for his room. He found the opportunity compelling, noting, "I could clearly see that they were on a journey that celebrated music and children and youth."

As BJ discerned the call to Janesville, Rachel walked with BJ through questions he had. "I appreciated her responsiveness and encouragement."

The Conference supports our search and call processes because of the generous gifts of congregations like ours. OCWM Wisconsin Impact is included in our budget annually. Learn more at *www.wcucc.org*.

*OCWM Wisconsin Impact, formerly known as OCWM Basic Support, funds the wider mission and ministry of the United Church of Christ. Because of our gifts to OCWM Wisconsin Impact, the Wisconsin Conference can support the vitality of congregations like ours. A portion of OCWM Wisconsin Impact goes to regional missions like United Church Camps Inc. (outdoor ministry) and the National Ministries of the UCC.

DECEMBER Birthdays

Happy birthday blessings to YOU!

Blake David Blazavier - 1

Sue Cribb - 4

John Helt - 5

Janet Dietert - 9

Paul Wick - 13

Kristen Wick - 14

Jeff Crouse - 16

Vicki Teal Lovely - 17

Doris Mayeshiba - 24

Harrison Tremarello - 30



Thank you

The Share and Care Thanksgiving bags have been delivered. Thank you to all who contributed items and to those who made the deliveries. I know that we brought some sunshine to our church members.

The Social Concerns Committee: Mary Ann Mowery, Vicki Teal, Jan Naefken, Peggy Carew, Debbie Hansen, Randene Wick



Here's an update on some of the items that we have collected from the Social Concerns Donation Box on Lenox Street:

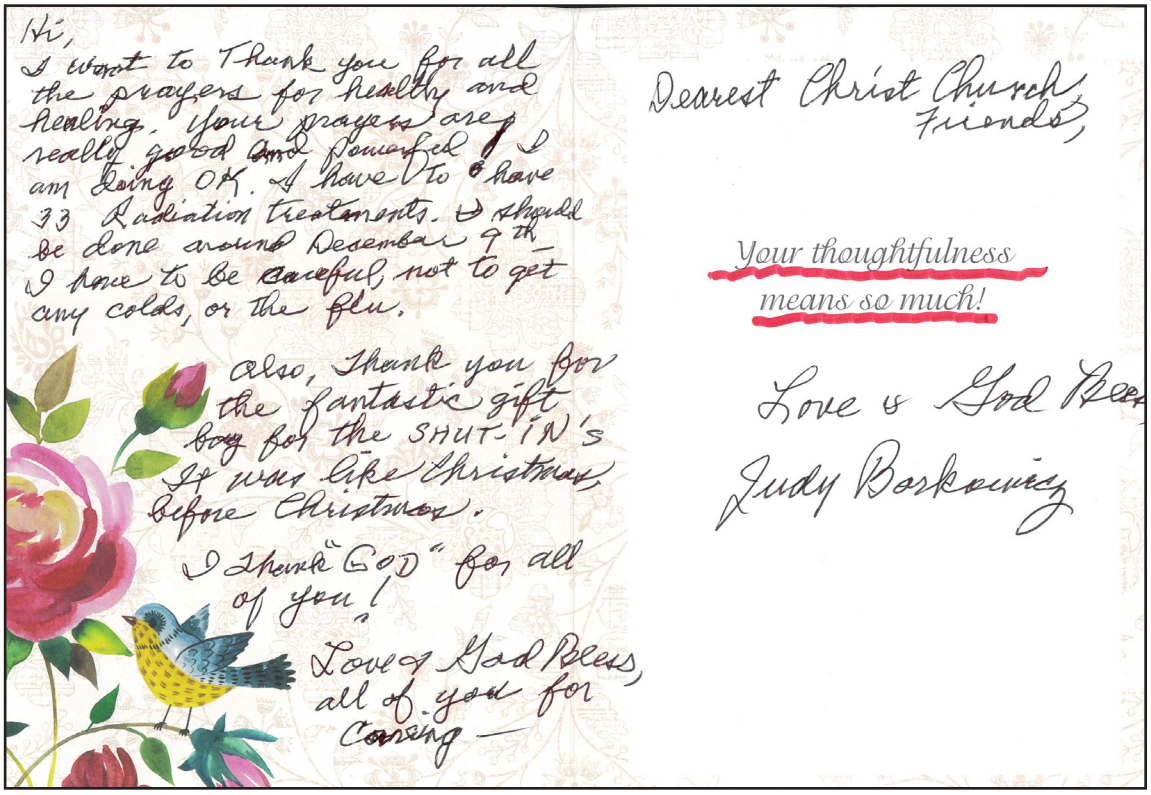
In August, we received many school supplies. In fact, there was a donation of at least 24 backpacks provided by one individual. We exceeded the number of items collected significantly from previous years. There have also been several donations of non-perishable food items. We will continue to share our requests on Facebook through the Christ Church site as well as the Bay View Town Hall site to involve the community in our outreach projects.

The Social Concerns Committee



REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS.

PHILIPPIANS 4:4, ESV



Hi,
I want to Thank you for all the prayers for health and healing. Your prayers are really good and powerful. I am doing OK. I have to have 33 Radiation treatments. It should be done around December 9th. I have to be careful, not to get any colds, or the flu.

Also, Thank you for the fantastic gift bag for the SHUT-IN's It was like Christmas before Christmas.

I thank "GOD" for all of you!

Love & God Bless all of you for Caring —

Dearest Christ Church Friends,

Your thoughtfulness means so much!

Love & God Bless

Judy Borkowicz



Welcome New Members!

On Sunday, November 8th, we welcomed
Thomas Lynch
& his wife, **Jacqueline Velasco-Lynch**
into the membership of Christ Church.
We also welcomed their son,
Aaron Manolo Velasco-Lynch
into the faith and family of Jesus through the gift of baptism. Please take some time to get to know them as you extend a warm Christ Church welcome.



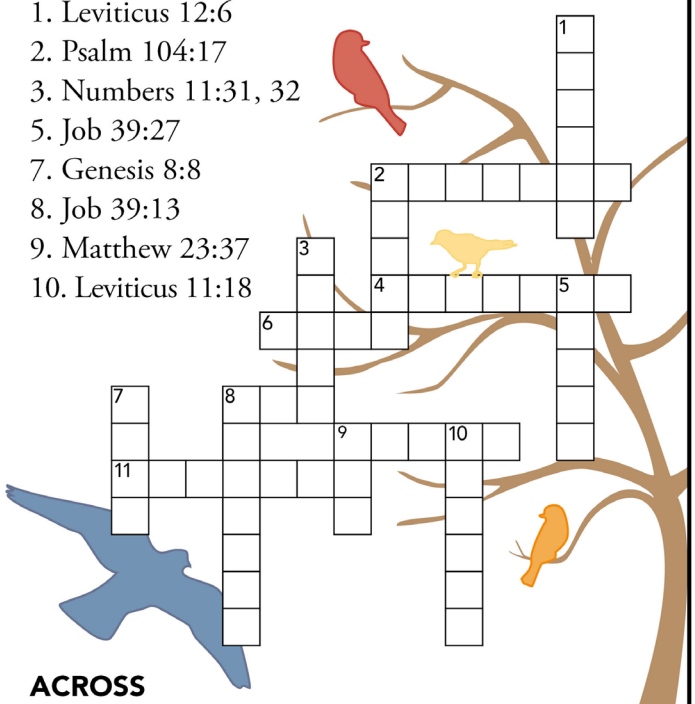
Puzzle!

"And God said, …let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky."
Genesis 1:20

Find the bird mentioned in each of the verses below. Fit it into the boxes in the puzzle.

Down

1. Leviticus 12:6
2. Psalm 104:17
3. Numbers 11:31, 32
5. Job 39:27
7. Genesis 8:8
8. Job 39:13
9. Matthew 23:37
10. Leviticus 11:18



ACROSS

2. Matthew 10:29–31
4. Mark 14:30
6. Job 39:26
8. Leviticus 11:16
9. Leviticus 11:19
11. Leviticus 11:13

Answers: 1 Down: Pigeon, 2 Across: Sparrow, 2 Down: Stork, 3 Down: Quail, 4 Across: Rooster, 5 Down: Eagle, 6 Across: Hawk, 7 Down: Dove, 8 Across: Owl, 8 Down: Ostrich, 9 Across: Heron, 9 Down: Hen, 10 Down: Osprey, 11 Across: Vulture



Welcome, Gary Aubry!

Christ Church is delighted to welcome
Gary Aubry as our new Choir Director!
We are excited to have Gary leading our Sanctuary Singers and look forward to the music, inspiration, and enthusiasm he will bring to our worship services.

Gary brings a wealth of musical talent and experience to our church. He has served as choir director at East Castle Retirement Community for many years as well as Director of Cantare Choral in South Milwaukee. One of his passions is arranging music, much of which has been performed by local orchestras in the Milwaukee area.

Gary is also a familiar face in the Bay View community. He previously served as Choir Director at Bay View United Methodist Church, where he shared his love of music and helped lead its music ministry for 11 years.

During Gary's time in music ministry at BVUM and Andy Oren's time in congregational ministry there, Gary and his wife, Karen, became good friends with Andy and Julie Oren. After a few years of retirement, Andy and Gary were having breakfast together when Andy mentioned the opening at Christ Church. We are not only blessed that Gary was interested in the position but also grateful to Andy for helping bring Gary our way!

Please join us in giving Gary a warm Christ Church welcome! We are happy to have him as part of our church family.

CHRIST CHURCH
United Church of Christ
915 East Oklahoma Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53187

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THE CHRONICLES
December 2026



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Or, go to the church website and click on the donate button at www.uccmke.org/donate

DONATE NOW

Thank You!