CHRIST CHURCH PARISH
EPISCOPAL

5:00 PM

The Third Saturday of Advent

December 13, 2025



WELCOME

Christ Church is an Episcopal Parish in the Diocese of Massachusetts. We welcome and honor the God-given gifts that make us unique as individuals and strong as community. You and your family are welcome regardless of age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status or prior religious affiliation.

A Note to Parents and Caregivers with Children in Church

Thank you for bringing your children to church. We are so glad you are here!

We know it can be difficult at times to manage little ones during the service.

For that reason, we have provided some resources which we hope will make it easier for you and your family to enjoy worship together.

You will find books and coloring pages at the back of the Mary Chapel. Please feel free to utilize these at any point during the service.

We have installed a TV in the nursery! You are welcome to visit the nursery with your child during any portion of our service and join us via our livestream.

It is okay to take breaks. If you need to step out with your child, our parish grounds are a great place to get the wiggles out.

Above all, please remember: You and your family are very welcome here!

Though your children may be squirming, talking, or making noise, they are also observing, copying, and learning. Children are a gift and an important part of our community; we are grateful to have them worship with us.

Hearing assistance devices are available in labeled baskets by the sanctuary entrances.

The Word of God

PRELUDE **Kristen Abbott**

ENTRANCE HYMN
On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry **1982 Hymnal 76**

OPENING ACCLAMATION
The people standing, the Celebrant says

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

COLLECT FOR PURITY
The Celebrant may say

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OPENING ANTHEM
The following is said three times, all standing

Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One.
Have mercy upon us.

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY
Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant Let us pray.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

The Lessons

FIRST READING: **Isaiah 35:1-10**

The people sit.

A Reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

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. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Silence may follow.

Canticle 15

Remain seated.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

SECOND READING: **James 5:7-10**

The people sit.

A Reading from the letter of James.

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Silence may follow.

GOSPEL: **Matthew 11:2-11**

All stand.

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

THE SERMON **The Rev. Melissa Howell**

THE CREED

All stand.

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,

of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE
Deacon or Celebrant: O God, who calls us to prepare, to pay attention, and to actively wait for the many arrivals of your Son Jesus among us: Heed our voices as we say, God in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Intercessor: We pray for the Church, the Body of Christ, that we may never become settled in comfort but that we might always be on pilgrimage serving those we encounter.
Silence
God in your mercy, **hear our prayer**.

We pray for those who hold authority over us, that they might escape from their fears and hatreds and govern in the glory of your mercy and wisdom.
Silence
God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for each other in this parish community, that we might discern our own calls to be Christ in all the places our day-to-day lives take us.
Silence
God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the natural world and for our own stewardship of your creation, that we might advocate and take action to leave a healthy earth to future generations.
Silence
God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all in need of healing and relief from their burdens, sufferings, worries, and fears. We remember especially those on our parish prayer list, and those we name now, either silently or aloud.
Silence is held for a time as people offer their intercessions.
God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who have died, remembering especially [_____ and] those we name now, either silently or aloud.
Silence is held for a time as people offer their intercessions.
We pray for all those who are grieving. Hasten the day of Christ's return that we might be reunited with all whom we love and see no more.
God in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

The Celebrant prays:
Almighty God, you have entered into our world and blessed our lives through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ. As we prepare and wait for his arrival among us, continually bless and inspire us by your Holy Spirit to follow your will and become the people you call us to be. **Amen.**

CONFESSION OF SIN
The Deacon or Celebrant says

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

Minister and People

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

The Priest stands and says

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

THE PEACE
All stand.

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

Then the Ministers and the People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Holy Communion

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

If you wish to make a gift to support the ministries of Christ Church Parish, you may place your offering in the plate, or scan the QR code to the right to donate online. Thank you!

All undesignated gifts from today's special Advent offering will support the Christ Church rector's discretionary fund, which provides direct financial aid year-round to parishioners and greater Plymouth community members in need, and our holiday gift card ministry, which sends grocery store gift cards to Christ Church parishioners who may be in need of extra support this Christmas season. Please write or type "Advent offering 2025" in the memo line of your check or in the online donation form. Thank you for your generous support.

OFFERTORY HYMN
There's a voice in the wilderness crying **1982 Hymnal 75**

The Great Thanksgiving

The People remain standing.

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant Lift up your hearts.
People **We lift them to the Lord.**
Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

SANCTUS
Celebrant and People

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

The People stand or kneel.

The Celebrant continues

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, “Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.”

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.” Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People

We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

The Celebrant continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with [_____ and] all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER
And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People and Celebrant

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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

FRACTION ANTHEM
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: **Have mercy on us.**
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: **Have mercy on us.**
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: **Grant us peace.**

INVITATION

The Presider invites the people to Communion with these or similar words:
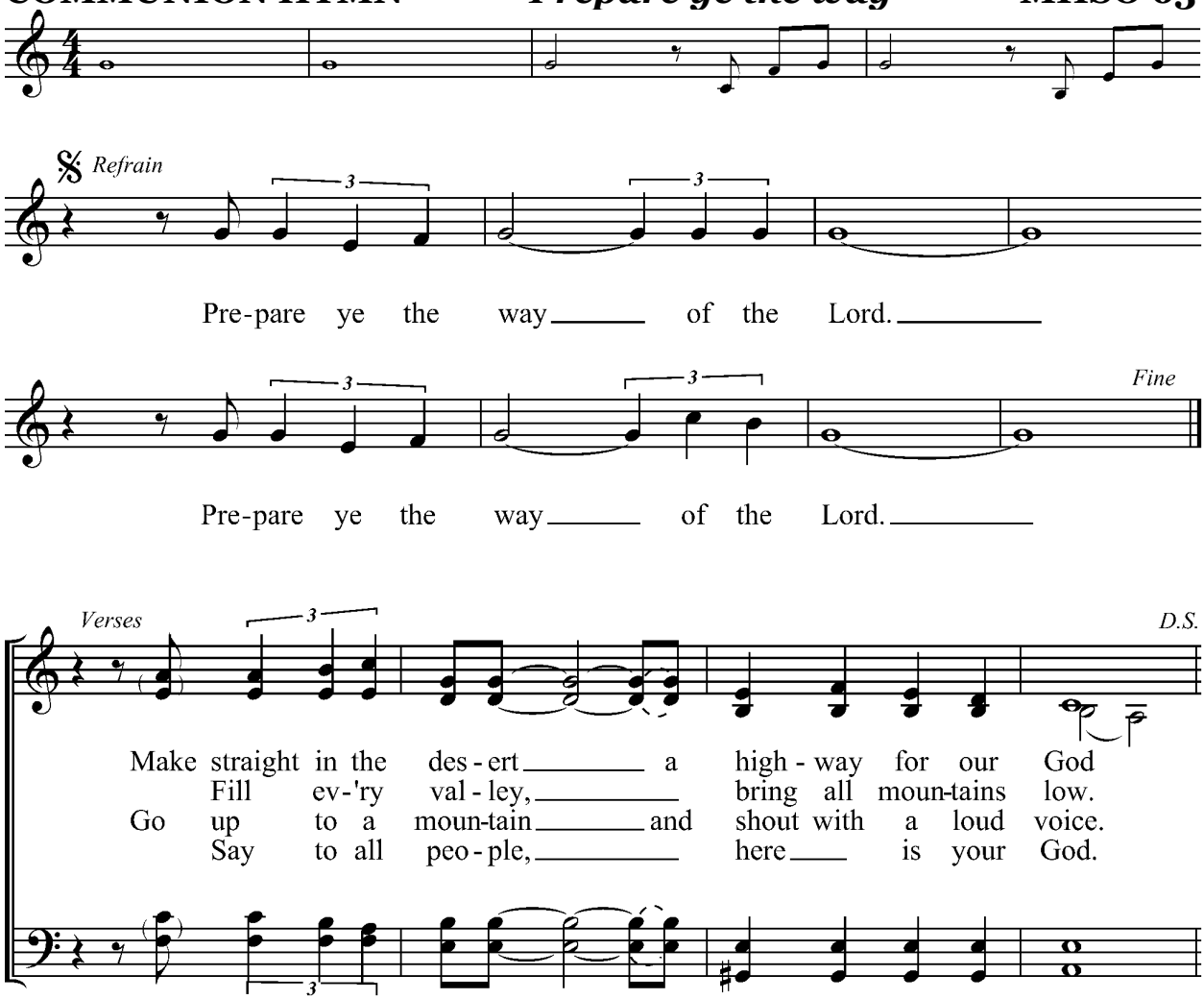
Wherever you are on your journey, you are welcome at God's table.

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

To receive the Sacrament, come forward and hold out your hands. The minister will place the bread in your palm. You may then receive the wine by drinking from the larger cup or intincting (dipping) the bread in the smaller cup. If you do not wish to receive the wine, cross your arms as you pass by the cup bearers to return to your seat.

If you would prefer a blessing, come forward, cross your arms across your chest, and the minister will bless you.

COMMUNION HYMN ***Prepare ye the way*** **MHSO 63**



POST-COMMUNION PRAYER
After Communion, the Celebrant says

Let us pray.

Celebrant and People

Almighty and everliving God,
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food
of the most precious Body and Blood
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.
And now, Father, send us out
to do the work you have given us to do,
to love and serve you
as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

If Lay Eucharistic Visitors are being sent out to bring the Sacrament to those who cannot be with us in-person, the following is said as the Visitors are handed the bread and wine:

Celebrant: In the name of this congregation, I send you forth bearing these holy gifts, that those to whom you go may share with us in the Communion of Christ's body and blood.

People: **We who are many are one body, for we all share one bread and one cup.**

BLESSING
The Priest blesses the people, saying

May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of God's blessing and set you free from all sin. **Amen.**

May Christ, whose second Coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love. **Amen.**

May you, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer, at his second Advent be rewarded with unending life. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and upon all those you love, this day and always. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

Come, thou long-expected Jesus **1982 Hymnal 66**

DISMISSAL

The Deacon or Celebrant dismisses the people.
The people respond: **Thanks be to God.**

Announcements

Please keep the following people in your prayers during the coming week. Any names added this week are in bold.

Anita Chase; Arnie Kaupp; Barbara Hulme; Carol MacPhee; David Flynn; Don Bolt; Donna Eby; Ellen Nordquist; Evelyn Ferioli; Forrest Berardi; Greta Couter; Jack Willett; **James Elksnin;** Jane Murphy; Jim Kelly; John Powderly; John Steele; Karen Guerra; Katharine LiBretto; Kathy Rust; Kenny Blackwell; Laurie Ghelfi Smith; Mark Poster; Nancy Dixon; Norm Harbinson; Peter Trenouth; Polly Chadwick; Raymond Reid; Sandy Underhill; Skip Nielsen; Stephanie "Petie" Blanchard; Suzanne and Dave Salois; Sylvia Wade; Theodora; Mark Ouellette; Valerie B. Pflock; William Underhill

We ask your prayers for those serving in the military and their families:
Aidan McKinney, Andrew Barton, Austin Vico, Harry Morini, Joel Carveiro, Josh Zabin, Peter Leone

From the Office

In order to have your announcements included in the weekly bulletin and *Keeping Connected,* please send them to the office by 12 Noon on Wednesday. They should include date, time, place, description of event and contact information and should be written exactly the way you want them to appear.

Christmas Flowers and Musicians - If you wish to remember or honor a loved one or give in thanksgiving, you may do so by sponsoring the flowers and guest musicians for our Christmas services. The form is included at the end of the bulletin. In order to have your memorial listed in the Christmas bulletins, please return the form by Sunday, December 21.

Special Advent Collection and Offering - *"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." – Hebrews 6:19*

As an act of sharing God's gift of hope this Advent, at all three services on both the weekends of December 7th and December 14th, all non-designated plate offerings and online donations will be split between:

- The Rector's Discretionary Fund, which provides financial support to individuals and families in need in the wider Plymouth community. So far in 2025, the fund has provided over $8,500 in direct support to over 30 households and individuals.
- The purchase of grocery gift cards, which will be mailed to parishioners who may be in need of extra support this Christmas season.

When making your gift by paper check or online at our website, please write or type "Advent offering 2025" in the memo line. Thank you for all of the ways you generously and prayerfully support our neighbors.

What Sweeter Music – Start your Christmas early and join Lea Tyler and friends for What Sweeter Music: A Christmas Concert on December 21st at 5:00 PM at Christ Church. Admission is free.

Grief Retreat Day - Saturday, January 10, 2026 9 AM – 4 PM
Blessed are they who mourn,… (Matthew 5:4)

The holidays can be a very difficult time for those grieving the loss of a loved one whether that loss is recent or occurred a long time ago. Memories live on, grief persists. Christ Church is offering a grief retreat day, for men and women alike, where participants will have the opportunity to share their grief story, receive support, get information on ways to cope, and may, through prayer and meditation, find new strength and hope to continue on their healing journey. By acknowledging your sorrow, you will learn to recognize the grace that is guiding you through recovery and to a redefined identity.

9:00 AM – The day begins with Morning Prayer in the Sanctuary, Rev. Melissa presiding.
Sharing, meditation, and learning about grief – all sessions in the dining room and upstairs.
Noon – Noonday Prayer followed by lunch (provided).
Guided meditation and learning to pray during grief.
4:00 PM – Close of day.

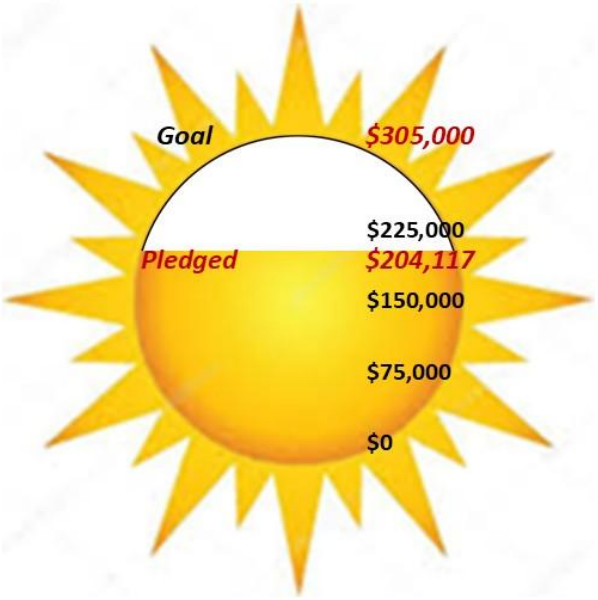
The day is being facilitated by parishioners Margery Buckingham and Ann Fowler both of whom are experienced in the field. Any questions? Contact those below.

RSVP (as soon as possible or by December 31st) –
Margery Buckingham 617-710-0174 or morganbuckingham@msn.com
Ann Fowler 207-751-2004 or dafowler2@comcast.net
Louise Woodruff 508-380-2922 or Lwoodr1451@aol.com

2026 Stewardship Campaign

Shining Our Light

Support Christ Church and its Ministries



In order to have your memorial included in the Christmas bulletins, please return this form to the parish office no later than

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025

Christmas Instrumentalists



Given by**:** _____

In Loving Memory of**:** _____

_____

As a Thank Offering**:** _____

***Amount Enclosed:**_____ **Envelope Number:**_____

*****Please put **2025 Christmas Memorials** in Memo Line.

In order to have your memorial included in the Christmas bulletins, please return this form to the parish office no later than

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025

Christmas Flowers



Given by**:** _____

In Loving Memory of**:** _____

_____

As a Thank Offering**:** _____

***Amount Enclosed:**_____ **Envelope Number:**_____

***** Please put **2025 Christmas Memorials** in Memo Line

Week At - A - Glance * December 14, 2025 – December 21, 2025

SUNDAY	**8:00 AM**	**Holy Eucharist Rite I – The Third Sunday of Advent**
	9:00 AM	Church School, Grades PreK-5
	9:00 AM	Adult Sunday School
	9:00 AM	Youth Formation
	10:00 AM	**Advent Lessons & Carols (No Communion) – The Third Sunday of Advent**
	11:30 AM	Coffee Hour
MONDAY	**9:00 AM**	**Morning Prayer –** Facebook Live
	10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	Fore & Aft
TUESDAY	10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	Fore & Aft
WEDNESDAY	**9:00 AM**	**Morning Prayer –** Facebook Live
	10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	Fore & Aft
	5:00 PM	Parish Ministry Network
THURSDAY	10:00 AM – 4:00 PM	Thrift Shoppe
	10:00 AM	Bible Study
	10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	Fore & Aft
	12:00 PM – 1:15 PM	Food Pantry
	1:00 PM	Faith Based Book Study
	4:00 PM – 5:15 PM	Food Pantry
FRIDAY	**9:00 AM**	**Morning Prayer –** Facebook Live
	10:00 AM – 4:00 PM	Thrift Shoppe
	5:30 PM	Youth Group
SATURDAY	10:00 AM – 11:15 AM	Food Pantry
	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Thrift Shoppe
	10:00 AM	Brass Polishing
	5:00 PM	**Holy Eucharist Rite II – The Fourth Sunday of Advent – Music with The Hills**
SUNDAY	**8:00 AM**	**Holy Eucharist Rite I – The Fourth Sunday of Advent**
	9:00 AM	Church School, Grades PreK-5
	9:00 AM	Adult Sunday School
	9:00 AM	Youth Formation
	10:00 AM	**Holy Eucharist Rite II – The Fourth Sunday of Advent**
	11:30 AM	Coffee Hour
	5:00 PM	What Sweeter Music: A Christmas Concert
	5:00 PM	Overnights of Hospitality Begin

Christ Church Parish
Seeking Christ in Ourselves * Serving Christ in the World

JESUS CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

MINISTERS

All the people of Christ Church Parish

Staff
The Rev. Melissa Howell, Rector
The Rev. Deacons James & Natalie Thomas
David Tyler, Parish Administrator
Lea Tyler, Choir Director
Peter Litchfield, Accompanist
Sam Stevenson, Sexton

Officers and Vestry Representatives
Robb Pflock, Senior Warden
John Steele, Junior Warden
Ray Rogers, Treasurer
Amanda Peterson, Clerk

Wil Bernard, David Greene, Don Hill, Barb Hurney, Kat LiBretto, Judy Lutz, Makenzie Manchester, Melissa Pechey, and Nancy Ricks

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Phone: 508-746-4959
E-mail: office.christchurchplymouth@gmail.com

Scan here to visit our website:
https://www.christchurchplymouth.org/

Office Hours
Monday - Friday 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM