CHRIST CHURCH PARISH
EPISCOPAL

8:00 AM

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 21, 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

OPENING ACCLAMATION
The people standing, the Celebrant says

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

COLLECT FOR PURITY AND GREAT COMMANDMENTS
The Celebrant says

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

Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith:
Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

TRISAGION
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 with thy spirit.**
Celebrant Let us pray.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, to purify our consciences by thy daily visitation, that when thy Son our Lord cometh he may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The Lessons

FIRST READING: **Isaiah 7:10-16**

The people sit.

A Reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

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

Silence may follow.

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18

Remain seated.

1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *
stir up your strength and come to help us.

3 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

4 O LORD God of hosts, *
how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?

5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; *
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

6 You have made us the derision of our neighbors, *
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

7 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

16 Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, *
the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.

17 And so will we never turn away from you; *
give us life, that we may call upon your Name.

18 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

SECOND READING: **Romans 1:1-7**

The people sit.

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Church in Rome.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

Silence may follow.

GOSPEL: **Matthew 1:18-25**

All stand.

Deacon The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
People **Glory be to thee, O Lord.**

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a

righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise be to thee, O Christ.**

THE SERMON **The Rev. Deacon Natalie Thomas**
Silence may follow.

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
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.

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. We give thanks for the 55th wedding anniversary of Arnie and Margie Kaupp, in whose honor the lamp of presence has been given.
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 humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God.

Silence may be kept.

Minister and People

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against thee
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved thee with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in thy will,
and walk in thy ways,
to the glory of thy Name. Amen.

The Priest stands and says

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE PEACE
All stand.

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

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!

The Great Thanksgiving

The People remain standing.

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And with thy spirit.**
Celebrant Lift up your hearts.
People **We lift them up unto the Lord.**
Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People **It is meet and right so to do.**

Facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God.

Because thou didst send thy 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 with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying,

SANCTUS
Celebrant and People

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts:
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High.
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

The people kneel or stand.

Then the Celebrant continues

All glory be to thee, Almighty God, our heavenly Father, for that thou, of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again.

For in the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Likewise, after supper, he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of this; for this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me."

Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, according to the institution of thy dearly beloved Son our Savior Jesus Christ, we, thy humble servants, do celebrate and make here before thy divine Majesty, with these thy holy gifts, which we now offer unto thee, the memorial thy Son hath commanded us to make; having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; rendering unto thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same.

And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us; and, of thy almighty goodness, vouchsafe to bless and sanctify, with thy Word and Holy Spirit, these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine; that we, receiving them according to thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood.

And we earnestly desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; most humbly beseeching thee to grant that, by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we, and all thy whole Church, may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion.

And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee; humbly beseeching thee that we, and all others who shall be partakers of this Holy Communion, may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction, and made one body with him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him.

And although we are unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service, not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offenses, through Jesus Christ our Lord;

By whom, and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. **AMEN.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER
The Celebrant then continues

And now, as our Savior Christ hath 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
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world:
Have mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world:
Have mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world:
Grant us thy peace.

PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS
The following prayer may be said. The People may join in saying this prayer

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

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.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER
After Communion, the Celebrant says

Let us pray.

The People may join in saying this prayer

Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs, through hope, of thy everlasting kingdom. And we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. 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.**

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.

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 January 4th) to Margery Buckingham 617-710-0174 / morganbuckingham@msn.com , or Ann Fowler 207-751-2004 / dafowler2@comcast.net , or Louise Woodruff 508-380-2922 / Lwoodr1451@aol.com.

Stewardship at Christ Church

Did you know?

Our 2026 budget depends on $305,000 in pledges.

Our total anticipated expenses are over $476,000 covering:

- A full-time rector
- A part-time music director, organist, administrator, sexton, and cleaners
- Building maintenance, utilities, insurance, church supplies, and hospitality

What our pledges look like of December 14, 2025

- Total number of pledging households thus far**: 85**
- Total amount received thus far: $213,497,000
- Median pledge: $2,511.00/yr (about $43.00/week)

The Gap

- We have an estimated $37,000 shortfall for 2026, made up through:
- Loose plate offerings
- AA rental income
- Share of Thrift Shoppe proceeds totaling 50% (remaining 50% supports Outreach programs)
- Special gifts and bequests
- 5% draw from out investments

Pledges remain our most reliable source of support.

Belong to two churches? Share your giving proportionally – based on your time in each place and the actual needs of each community.

Please know that we are grateful for your ongoing support. It makes a difference! When you give to Christ Church, you are not just keeping the lights on – you are helping to keep hope alive in Plymouth and beyond.

Resource Committee

Week At - A - Glance * December 21, 2025 – December 28, 2025

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
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
	4:00 PM	**Christmas Eve Family Worship with Holy Eucharist Rite II**
	10:00 PM	**Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship with Holy Eucharist Rite II**
THURSDAY	**10:00 AM**	**Christmas Day Service with Holy Eucharist Rite II**
FRIDAY	**9:00 AM**	**Morning Prayer –** Facebook Live
	10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	Fore & Aft
SATURDAY	10:00 AM – 11:15 AM	Food Pantry
	5:00 PM	**Holy Eucharist Rite II – The First Saturday after Christmas**
SUNDAY	7:00 AM	Overnights of Hospitality End
	8:00 AM	**Holy Eucharist Rite I – The First Sunday After Christmas**
	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 First Sunday After Christmas**
	11:30 AM	Coffee Hour

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

149 Court Street, Plymouth, MA 02360
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