



The Parish News

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2025

Sunday, November 30 (1 Advent) ~ 8:00 am & 10:00 am Mass
 Friday, December 5 ~ Woodbury Christmas Tree Lighting & Open House 5:00 pm
 Sunday, December 7 (2 Advent) ~ 8:00 am & 10:00 am Mass & Child Bishop
 Sunday, December 14 (3 Advent) ~ 8:00 am & 10:00 am Mass
 Friday, December 19 ~ A Service of Lessons and Carols 6:30 pm
 Sunday, December 21 (4 Advent) ~ 8:00 am & 10:00 am Mass
 Wednesday, December 24 (Christmas Eve) ~ 5:00 pm & 11:00 pm Choral Mass
 Thursday, December 25 (Christmas Day) ~ 10:00 am Mass with organ
 Sunday, December 28 (1st Christmas) ~ 8:00 am & 10:00 am Mass
 Thursday, January 1 (Feast of the Holy Name) ~ 10:00 am Mass
 Sunday, January 4 (2nd Christmas) ~ 8:00 am & 10:00 am Mass
 Tuesday, January 6 ~ (Feast of the Epiphany) 6:30 pm Choral Mass with Reception



AT CHRIST CHURCH WOODBURY



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



From the Priest-in-Charge	2-3
Senior Warden Message	4
Junior Warden Message	5
From the Organist	6
Office Updates	7
Buildings & Grounds	8-10
Garden Ministry	11
Brotherhood of St. Andrew	12-13
Stewardship	14-15
ECW	16
Acolytes	17
Youth Group / Bible Study	18
Convention Update	19
Evangelism	26
GWCM	21
Reading Room	22-24
Upcoming Events	25-35
Save the Dates/ TWS	36-37
Kids Corner	38-39

Christ Church

Woodbury, New Jersey

A Parish in the Diocese of New Jersey





From the Priest-in-Charge



Dear Parishioners of Christ Church,

Advent Sunday 2025

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isaiah 35:10)

Advent marks the beginning of a new liturgical year. It is a time to prepare and live into hope- a hope for the Lord's coming. Of course, we tend to focus on the Lord's coming in the birth of Jesus. Indeed, this is a time to prepare for Christmas and Epiphany. But we lose another crucial opportunity if we forget that the season of Advent gives us the time to reflect on Christ's Second Coming. Our readings in late November and early December in fact, all point to this event in one way or another. It is an event which our Lord promises will take place. Our vigilance and readiness are crucial. And we are not called to be preoccupied with Christ's second coming itself. Rather, we are called to be preoccupied with his coming at all times and in all places throughout our life- throughout each day. And to become more aware of his presence requires action on our part. It requires that we cultivate a life which helps us remain open to receiving God's grace. The Holy Spirit is never not active in our lives, and to appreciate this means we need to be vigilant and ready to welcome Him. It means cultivating a deeper life of prayer and cultivating an open heart which says yes to God's will and action in our lives.

Advent gives us the time and space not only to remember the power of God's Incarnation in the birth of Jesus. Advent reminds us that we share in the power of his presence and grace. We share in all that the Incarnation has given us- Christ's life, passion, death and resurrection. In order to be vigilant and ready to live into this life-changing reality, we are called daily to willingly accept the grace that Christ earned for us and live by that grace in obedience to Christ. Saint Charles Borromeo reminds us that Christ is prepared to come again: *When we remove all obstacles to his presence he will come at any hour and moment, to dwell spiritually in our hearts bringing with him the riches of his grace.* (Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis, t.2, Lugduni, 1683, 917). This gift is only made possible by the Incarnation and continued presence of the Holy Spirit among us. He never forces us to accept his grace or presence. But in his love, which triumphs over all, he gently invites us to recognize and welcome his coming and to prepare for the ultimate coming. This is part of the Good News that we are all called to share with the world in need around us.

Part of our common Advent hope is that Christ Church continues to turn outward in focus to share this good news. There is much happening in this parish. Since Homecoming Sunday, many of you have returned to, or begun new ministries. The Acolytes, Eucharistic Ministers, Choir, Altar Guild and Ushers have worked very hard to enrich our worship which spreads the Good News. Our Sunday School and Youth program is now offering more teaching days for education and fellowship among our young people. This is crucial in forming the next generation who are called to spread the Good News. The Garden Ministry and Parish Archives preserve history and the beauty around us which helps us spread the Good News. Our Pastoral Care team reaches our parishioners in need and our work with the Greater Woodbury Cooperative Ministry reaches the greater community in need. The Vestry addresses not only administrative needs but

the importance of Stewardship, Buildings and Grounds, Hospitality, Programs and Activities, Communication, Mission, Outreach and Evangelism which is also essential to spreading the Good News. ECW and the Brotherhood of St. Andrew are essential to the life of this parish and what it is called to. And more of you are coming to Coffee Hour, both hosting and simply attending. This is a needed time to enjoy weekly fellowship and learn during the Adult Forum. Scott Carr has been sharing a class on the Nicene Creed-which celebrates its 1,700th anniversary this year. After Epiphany, we will return to our walk through the Book of Common Prayer, spending a lot of time on the Eucharist. We will focus on its development and its composition, what we believe and why we do what we do during its celebration.

Advent Lessons and Carols will take place on December 19th. In addition to our regular weekday and Sunday services, two Masses will be celebrated on Christmas Eve, one on Christmas Day and one on New Year's Day. The parish will celebrate the Epiphany with a Choral Mass and a reception on January 6th. This is a great time of the year to invite a friend or extended family member to join us. This is an example of faith moving outward towards those we love and to those in the community. It is so important that we all do our part to go out of our way to welcome new people to our parish. This is an essential aspect of spreading the Good News.

On January 25th, the parish will have its Annual Meeting directly following the 10:00 Mass. This year we will have quite a bit on the agenda. Full parish participation in this meeting is another way to witness to the importance of spreading the Good News of God's Kingdom.

As we journey through this Advent season to the joy of Christmastide, let us embrace the joy that comes from our faith not only in our individual lives, but in action as a parish. We can find strength in God's promises and excitement in our anticipation for what He has in store for us. Together, let us serve one another, share our joy, and make a positive impact in the lives of those around us. As we celebrate this holy season, may we commit ourselves to spreading joy throughout all aspects of our lives.

Blessings for a holy and joyful Advent and Christmastide,
Father Civale





Message from our Senior Warden

Warden's Winter Message

As we enter this season of Advent and prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, I am grateful for the faithful work and spirit of our parish community. This time of year always invites reflection, and our vestry recently had the opportunity to do just that during our annual retreat this fall. Our focus this year was the ongoing discernment surrounding our priest-in-charge as we look ahead to the conclusion of his contract next August. It was a time of honest conversation, prayer and thoughtful listening and we remain committed to a process rooted in openness and trust in the Holy Spirit's guidance.

I also want to offer a heartfelt thank you to all who give so generously of their time, talent and treasure. Your dedication truly strengthens our parish. So much of what we do relies on the quiet, faithful service of many, and as our ministries continue to grow, I invite everyone to consider how they might lend a hand when opportunities arise. Every contribution, large or small, makes a meaningful difference.

We are also preparing for our Annual Meeting in January. This is a chance to celebrate our shared ministry, review the past year, and look with hope toward the future. Your presence and participation are vital to the life of our parish, and I hope you will plan to attend.

May this holy season bring you peace, joy and renewed hope for the coming year.

Tori Wishnick
Senior Warden



Message from our Junior Warden

As we come to the close of 2025 and another Vestry term, the Wardens would like to thank and recognize the hard work and dedication of the members of Vestry. In 2025 the Vestry worked in collaboration, and with joyful purpose, and we all should be truly thankful for that. Many of you reading this have been on Vestry in the past and know what is involved. We all know it is a volunteer position which takes much time and energy. Those who serve do it out of love for the Parish and for all Glory to God. Many may feel they don't have the time to be in such a leadership position or feel hesitant in that they don't want to let the Parish down. While true it can be at times demanding, frustrating and sometimes seem overwhelming I believe the joyful benefits of serving far outweigh any negatives or concerns parishioners may foresee when being asked to run for a leadership position. To be a successful Vestry member all it really takes is being faithful in attendance, an open mind to other's ideas and concerns, a willingness to get involved and help others, and a love for Christ Church.

In 2025 we had an open seat on Vestry and in 2026 we anticipate a second open seat. This will leave the 2026 Vestry hard pressed to do everything themselves in making sure we accomplish all God calls us to do. In 2026 it will take us all getting more involved with ideas, time and talent. The Vestry should not have to plan every activity and event on our calendar. We are always looking for new ideas. What the Parish can expect is that Vestry will give its full support to everything on our calendar next year. This will take all lay leadership, ministry leaders included, along with those not in lay leadership positions shaking off the overall malaise many of us have seen and experienced of the last several years. I suspect we are not the only Parish suffering such a malaise in these times. To break this, we all need to do this together. How you may ask? Being more regular in attendance, participating in an activity on the calendar you may not have done in the past, supporting other ministries outside of your own and overall being present for one another. If we expect to grow our numbers and have new families join us they need to see a vibrant, caring parish and well attended services and events.

The annual service of Lessons and Carols is set for 12/19. This is the perfect opportunity to support the Parish, the music program and choristers, invite others in, and show the wider community what we have at Christ Church is truly special. I hope to see you there. It really is a special night which has been integral in our Parish's Christmas celebrations.

Merry Christmas to all!

Faithfully,
Steve Lewis
Junior Warden



Vestry Retreat



From the Organist & Choir Director Luke Staisiunas

I wanted to start off by extending my thanks for the warm welcome here at Christ Church over the last few months; it's hard to believe Advent is upon us! It has been a whirlwind jumping in head first, but the choir and choral scholars have been working hard to make music at a high level week after week—and it's always a blessing to have a congregation who sings confidently. After all, worship is a “team sport”, as it were, and it's a wonderful feeling to have everyone do their part to give praise to God through congregational music!

I have enjoyed exploring a variety of music from the choral library with the choir, along with planning a wide breadth of hymnody to reflect the readings appointed by the lectionary. Celebrating 40 years since its publication, the Hymnal 1982 is a wealth of musical riches to explore, with some hymns which may not be as immediately familiar, as others—but I encourage you all to stay engaged with this musical form of prayer as we move through Advent and Christmas. Additionally the span of music in our other resources, both in Hymnal 1982 supplements and those hymns in the Hymnal 1940 which didn't make it, provides much to draw from. It is my hope that you enjoy singing and engaging with the hymns as much as I enjoy planning them to enhance and enrich Mass!





Office Updates Jackie Fahr



I would like to say how welcome every one has made me feel and how excited I am to be a part of the Christ Church Community.

A big thank you to Betsey Murphy for all of her assistance in process of me transitioning into my current role as Parrish Administrator. Also wanted to thank Dee Ballestri for all of her help in the office, as well as Carol Hill & Helen Gwalthney for proofreading the Sunday Service Sheets.

As we enter the month of December we are very busy with events and activities for our church family. This time of year is always hectic so we try to send out reminders about any upcoming events, services or any pertinent news. Please make sure we have your most current mailing address, telephone number and email on file so you can always know what is happening at Christ Church.

Sunday, December 1st is the start of the new liturgical year. In the upcoming year, we hope that many more of you will request altar flowers for celebrations, thanksgivings and memorials. You can use the new universal envelopes in the pews for everything from your weekly giving to a variety of special donations, including Christmas memorial requests.





Buildings and Grounds

“Striving to protect our historic buildings”

Adopt – a - Project!

Our singular project for this period is the Parish Hall exterior window repair and painting along with the trim and doors of the building and painting of the stucco to match the rear of the building. This project was introduced in September, but we have not pushed it so not to interfere with the Stewardship campaign. Now that the campaign is over, we want everyone to consider giving to this much needed project. The project cost is \$15,000 and has been broken down into the adoption of the twenty-five windows that are a part of the program. Each “window” has a cost of \$600. The \$600 will go toward the overall cost of the work to be done on the Parish Hall exterior. You can adopt one or more windows as well as contribute to an individual window. Any level of contribution will be accepted. Adoption papers are available in the Upper Assembly Hall, or you can see Jim Bathurst with your intention. This work needed to be done years ago as evidenced by the bare wood that can be found throughout the exterior of the Parish Hall. Since the work is outside of the budget, we cannot begin the work until we have garnered the entire cost of the project. If there are any questions, please contact one of the Committee members listed below.

General News

The Committee has been active over the last few months. Quarterly inspections of our historic buildings have begun, and it has allowed us to identify basic items that in the past have gone unnoticed until they have become major items to be addressed. Wherever possible we do the work with a few exceptions when we must bring in a licensed trade person. Examples of our work include replacing the stairwell treads to the Upper Assembly Hall, installation of new splash panels around the sink in the men’s bathroom, inspection and repair to the kneelers and pews in the Church, and the permanent covering of the old exhaust fan from the Lower Assembly Hall. Ed Ferrell has completed one additional project. The vestibule area to the Church has been an eyesore for many years due to the infiltration of water and the breakdown of the masonry walls near the entrance to the Nave. These walls have shown flakey walls and a total breakdown of the finish. Through the patient and diligent work of Ed Ferrell these walls have been repaired and painted to improve the appearance of this area as you enter the Nave. A big thank you to Ed for all his time and effort on this project.





Church Repairs





Church Repairs

Thank you Ed for all of your hard work on this project.





Gardening Ministry & Brotherhood of St. Andrew

Thank you so very much to those members of the Gardening Ministry, Brotherhood and their families for a very successful Fall garden cleanup up on Sat, Nov 29. We filled 80+ lawn recycle bags. Along with hard work, we enjoyed each others company, working side by side, had a few laughs and finished the morning with coffee, hot cocoa and donuts. Gardens look great! Thank you all again! (Apologize if we missed capturing anyone's photo.)

Debbie Rash, Gardening Ministry
Steve Shomo, Brotherhood



Thank you to all the members for all the hard work you did this year.



Brotherhood of St. Andrew

December 1, 2025

The Brotherhood of Saint Andrew has spent Fall of 2025 being very busy. On November 16th, we hosted Coffee Hour and with great success. Many Brothers made their breakfast specialty and all enjoyed great food, conversation and community.

On November 1st, a few Brothers attended a Regional Brotherhood Conference in Whiting, NJ where we got to meet leaders of the national Brotherhood organization, as well as other Brotherhood Chapters from nearby. It was a great learning experience.

We followed that up with a Coat Drive for Jeanette's Closet, an arm of the Greater Woodbury Cooperative Ministries. We asked Christ Church members to donate coats and jackets and frankly, we were overwhelmed by the response! The coat drive went even better than expected and we thank everyone who was able to donate. As winter looms, just around the corner, there are many people who will be extremely grateful for these items!

As November drew to a close, we teamed up with Christ Church's Gardening Ministry and other friends to clean up leaves from the Church grounds. We had a great turnout and in just over 2 hours, we filled approximately 80 bags of leaves! It was a cold day some Brothers even brought their kids to help rake and fill bags. The work paid off as the grounds look wonderful as we move into the Advent Season.

On November 30th we celebrated the Feast of St. Andrew during our Sunday Service and inducted Brother, Sam Buck, as an official member of the Brotherhood of Saint Andrew. Father Civale provided a wonderful service and in addition, several members of the Brotherhood donated Philadelphia Phillies shirts to Jeanette's Closet in honor of our former Chapter President, Jim Atkins, whom we lost this past summer. Jim was a die-hard Phillies fan and even worked for the Phillies for a decade.

In addition, also on the Feast of St. Andrew, we re-unveiled the Brotherhood plaque, listing the names of those Brothers who have passed over the years. The plaque went missing after the parish hall renovations and mysteriously re-appeared recently. Thanks to the hard work of Jim Bathurst, the plaque was able to be recovered and updated. It is currently on display in the upstairs Parish Hall. Please take a moment to view it and pay your respects to our Brothers who have passed on.

As Christmas approaches, the Brotherhood is hard at work attempting to bring back the Nativity Scene in the Jubilee Garden. Unfortunately, as many of you know, our old, very large and beautiful Nativity set fell into a state of disrepair and had to be discarded several years ago. We have been in search of a new set for years but have met obstacles dealing with price, size and other roadblocks as well. This Christmas, we believe we have a set that will suffice and honor Christ once again. It may not be quite as grandiose as the old Nativity Scene, but we are working on making it as beautiful as possible. We hope that we are able to get it up in time for everyone in the community to enjoy.

Please note that the Brotherhood of Saint Andrew meets on the 3rd Thursday of every month from September through May. There will be no "official" meeting in December, though we will have a social gathering, for anyone who would like to attend, at the Bonesaw Brewery at the Deptford Mall on Thursday, December 18th, immediately following 6:30 PM mass. All are invited and it will be Dutch Treat.

If you or anyone you know are interested in joining the Brotherhood, please do not hesitate to approach one of us at a Service, Coffee Hour or simply by emailing steve.shomo@yahoo.com or texting Steve Shomo at 609-970-6493. We have seen our Chapter grow in the recent year or so and would love to see that growth continue. Have a wonderful Advent, Christmas and New Year and my God Bless each and every one of your families and loved ones.

Steve Shomo, Chairman

Brotherhood of Saint Andrew



The Brotherhood at Christ Church meets the third (3rd) Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm. Join The Brotherhood of St. Andrew for prayer, study, and service. The Brotherhood of St. Andrew is an international ministry of men within the Anglican Communion with the commission of spreading Christ's kingdom among men and youth.



Stewardship 2026

Following in Faith

Thank you to everyone who has pledged to support Christ Church in 2026. If you have not yet pledged, it is not too late. Completed pledge cards can be placed in the offering plate at Mass or sent to the office, Christ Church, 62 Delaware Street, Woodbury, NJ 08096.

Allbright, Paul & Debra

Atkins, Robin

Baldwin, Kate & Matt

Bathurst, Jim & Mary Beth

Bird, Mary Beth

Brown, Joan

Carrigan, Maureen

Civale, Lawrence

Civalier, Richard

Coleman, Patrick

Cranston, Sarah & Chris

Curtis, Hughie

Daugherty, Fred & Audrey

Dennison, Thomas

Ferrell, Edward Starr & Allene

Fulgham, Francis & Judith May

Gwalthney, Frank & Helen

Hanson, David & Delores

Hay, James & Denise

Hendricks, Mark

Henning, Kim (Wycoff) & Robert

Hill, Douglas & Carol

Howey, Richard & Regina

Johnson, Robert & Kimberly

Jones, Amelia Mimi

Kaback, Susann

Kurtz, Richard & Gloria

Lasoski, Bernie & Beverly

Lewis, Jr., Charles

Lewis, Steven & Jennifer

Lucas, Jean

Lyden, John

Mass, Natalie

Mass, Paul

Mass, Tara

McGeoch, Ellen

McGeoch, Scott & Marilynn

Mills, Doreen

Mitchell, Joan

Nester, Mark

Nichols, Philip

Novalsky, Mark & Susan Jane

Novalsky, Sarah

OMEalia, Barbara

Piskum, Chris

Pleis, Jean

Preole, John & Margaret

Rash, Sarah

Rash, Steve & Debbie

Reiter, Nancy

Rheiner, Cheryl

Rickert, Stephen

Rodano, Annalisa

Rosser, Linda

Sanchez, Mike & Darcie

Sheekey, Dale

Sheets, Barbara

Shomo, Steven & Robertta

Simpson, Gwendolyn

Sims, Dennis & Brandy

Straub, James

Straub, Jim

Straub, Timothy

Sullivan, Robert

Teris, Ben & Leslie

Tillberg, CARol

Viereck, Michael & Kathleen

Wenzel, James & Donna

Whitehead, Bonnie

Wierski, Micheal

Wilgus, Theodore & Dolores

Wishnick, Nathan

Wishnick, Victoria

Wright, Kimberly

Yeiter, Sherm & Stacey





Stewardship 2026

Following in Faith

Christ Episcopal Church Woodbury 2026 Financial & Faith Commitment



"All Things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given Thee." 1 Chronicles 29:14

**Thank you for your support of
Christ Church's Mission and Ministry!**

Christ Church
62 Delaware St., Woodbury, NJ 08096
(856) 845-0190
office@christchurch.woodburynj.org
www.christchurchwoodbury.org

I/We joyfully commit to support the mission of Christ Church in 2026:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Are you a first time pledger? Yes No

My/ Our total annual pledge \$ _____ to be fulfilled \$ _____ Weekly Monthly One-Time

I/We would like Envelopes Give Electronically (*reverse side of card must be signed and completed*).

Signed: _____ Date: _____

For Office Use: SK Env. # _____ E-Give

Electronic Giving Authorization

First and Last Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Total amount of giving for 2026: \$ _____

Payment Amount: \$ _____ Frequency: Weekly (on Friday) Monthly (on the 15th) Annually (on 1/1/2026)

Account type: Checking Savings Account #: _____ Routing #: _____

IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THIS AGREEMENT, YOU MUST ATTACH A VOIDED CHECK OR DEPOSIT SLIP (WITH ACCOUNT #) TO THIS FORM. I hereby authorize Christ Church to withdraw the designated funds on the mutually agreed upon schedule until such time that authorization is cancelled on **December 31, 2026**. I agree to notify Christ Church in writing of any changes to the designated account. I understand any current electronic giving arrangement will expire on December 31, 2025, and this agreement will then commence **beginning January 1, 2026**.

Signature: _____ Date: _____





ECW (Episcopal Church Women)



ALL ARE WELCOME!

The ECW at Christ Church meets the third (3rd) Wednesday of every month at 7:00 pm; There is no regular meeting in December. The next regular meeting is on January 21st at 7:00 pm. All women who attend Christ Church are considered members of the ECW. Since 1871, the National Episcopal Church Women, ECW, have championed women's rights and the Christian foundation of God and family. They are a ministry of the Episcopal Church and celebrate that Episcopalians believe in a loving, liberating, and life-giving God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

ECW WINTER TEA

"Let Heaven and Nature Sing"

Saturday, January 10, 2026 1:00-3:00

Upper Level Parish Hall

All women of the Parish are cordially invited to the Annual Winter Tea hosted by ECW of Christ Church. Join us for an enjoyable afternoon of friendship and fun.

For more information and to RSVP, contact Marilyn McGeoch (856-296-4231) or email her at mjmcgeoch414@gmail.com

"Let every heart prepare Him room, and Heaven and Nature sing."

Wishing you a blessed Advent and Christmas season.





Acolytes

Our Acolytes have had a wonderful start to the season! We welcomed three new acolytes—Petra Ayers, Evan Shomo, and Johnny Lyden. Their enthusiasm and eagerness to learn are truly admirable. Our returning acolytes have already proven to be excellent role models, and I am proud of each and every one of them for the commitment and passion they bring to this ministry.

The next three months will be a busy and exciting time. With Lessons & Carols, our two Christmas Eve Masses, Epiphany, and all the Sundays in between, our acolytes will have many opportunities to shine and to show how seriously they take their role.

And there won't be much rest after that! On Tuesday, February 17, we will host our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Breakfast. This event is always a favorite and an important fundraiser for our acolytes and the mission they choose to support. Please stay tuned for details on this and other upcoming activities.

As a reminder, we are always welcoming new acolytes. If you know someone age 8 or older who may be interested, please share their name and contact information with me. Acolytes typically serve about once a month. We are blessed with a wonderful group of children and young adults who are always eager to help newcomers find their confidence in this meaningful ministry and their service to God.

We are grateful for your prayers and encouragement as our acolytes continue their faithful work.

Robertta Shomo

Share your pictures!



If you attend a Christ Church event, please take some pictures and email them to the office:
office@christchurch.woodburynj.org.

We will try to include them in our Quarterly Newsletter, website, social media and Annual Report.
Thank you!





Youth Group

Our youth group has had an exciting start to our year! We have moved into one of the downstairs classrooms where we have a couch and comfy chairs to create a relaxed environment. We are studying the Gospel of Mark on Sundays. Our youth are learning how to read the Bible and meditate on the life of Jesus. We had a fun excursion to the corn maze and pumpkin patch at Dalton Farms. Everyone had a great time. The youth are excited for our Christmas service project delivering poinsettias to homebound parishioners. We had a lot of success with this service project last year and are excited to serve members of our parish again this year.

If you have any teenagers in your family or any of your teens friends that want a community to belong and grow deeper in their relationship with God, we would love to have them as part of the youth group! We meet after Church every Sunday during Coffee Hour.

The Youth Group will be doing a Christmas service project, visiting parishioners who aren't able to make it to church and delivering poinsettias on December 14th. If your teenager would like to be involved in this wonderful opportunity to share Christmas love with valuable members of our community, please reach out to Sarah Cranston, Scott and Anna Carr, or Brandon Gorman.

Thank you!

Scott Carr and Sarah Cranston



Adult Bible Study

Our Adult Bible Study meets on Zoom every Monday at 8 PM. We have excellent discussions reflecting on the meaning of Scripture and hope you will join us! We will be spending the Winter and Spring of 2026 discussing the Gospel of Matthew, our Gospel for this liturgical year. We will be using the *N. T. Wright for Everyone Bible Study Guide*.

We would love to have you be a part of our discussions! The Zoom link will be coming in the bulletin and the weekly newsletter.



Diocese of New Jersey Convention November 22, 2025

Report of the 242nd Diocese of New Jersey held on November 22, 2025 via Zoom attended by James Wentzel, Michelle Schiffer, Leslie McGeoch Teris & Father Civile.

The business meeting opened at 9:00 am at Chris Church in Toms River with Holy Eucharist.

The full agenda and reports are available on the Diocese website at this time if you are interested .

The following are a few items I found of particular interest during the convention:

1. Through the Jane O. P. Turner Fund, the Diocese of New Jersey is providing a \$1 million dollar gift to the Diocese of Jerusalem to support medical and trauma care of children, youth and the families in Gaza and the Palestinian Territories.
2. On October 10, 2025, the Bishop and the standing committee approved the reclassification of three Mission congregations to Parish status: St Peters at the Light, Barnegat Light; Church of St. Mark and All Saints, Galloway; and St. Peter's Igbo Church, Hamilton.
3. They also approved the budget for 2026 and encouraged commitment of all parishes, as they can, to giving at a level of at least 10%.

We thank our Parish for giving us the opportunity of representing you at this convention.

Your Diocese Convention Delegates



The Episcopal
DIOCESE OF
NEW JERSEY

Established in 1785



Evangelism

Ushers and Greeters

Introducing a Greeting Ministry

Each Sunday we are welcomed into our church by a dedicated team of ushers who focus on the needs and safety of the parish. We thank Steve Shomo and his team for all that they do to assist our parishioners and clergy on Sundays, weekdays, and at holiday masses. Their responsibilities begin at the front door as an usher is present outside the doors to welcome and, if needed, assist parishioners and visitors when they arrive. As we enter the nave, there is a second usher who offers a greeting, a bulletin, and service music booklet, while counting those who have come to worship and receive the sacrament. This usher will place our food donations and other offerings in the designated baskets at the back of the church.

During the mass, the ushers oversee the congregation, collect and present the offering, and notify Father Civale if communion in the pew has been requested. During communion they guide us to and from the altar rail. Following the procession hymn, they assist those exiting through the front doors to greet Father Civale.

If we have **Ushers**, why do we need **Greeters**? A greeting ministry is an important part of New Member Ministry. Greeters are those who stand outside our church's doors to welcome all who are coming to attend a service at Christ Church. A greeter's responsibility is to be the first person, the first connection, to welcome those who are coming to worship with us. Greeters can answer questions, give directions to child-care, Sunday school, restrooms, and parish hall. Greeters will also be outside when the mass is over to extend an invitation to return to worship with us again and to join us in the parish hall for refreshments and Adult Forum. There will be an opportunity to learn more about this important ministry in the new year.

These two ministries are very important in the life of our parish. Ushers and greeters will be scheduled to serve once every 4-6 weeks. Prayerfully consider how you can be part of one of these ministries.

Contact: Steve Shomo, Head Usher

Doreen Mills, Evangelism



Greater Woodbury Cooperative Ministries



Greater Woodbury Cooperative Ministries News

Thank you all for your dedication to this ministry. Bringing one item of food to church is a simple but powerful way to help our community. Between the main pantry and Colonial Manor, GWCM served 915 families (3,562 people) in October.

Thank You

Thank you to our parish family! Because of you Christ Church was able to send a \$1000 donation to Greater Woodbury Cooperative Ministries!

Thank you to our parish family for donating items to make “fixins” bags. These bags included stuffing mix, corn bread mix, canned vegetables, etc. They were handed out to clients along with their turkey products from South Jersey Food Bank.

Thank you to ECW for preparing 25 “cake in a pan” sets. Each one included a pan for baking, cake mix, soda, frosting, jimmies, and a spatula (plus the recipe). The Colonial Manor Food Pantry was so grateful!

Christmas

This year the pantry will be giving each family a hygiene bag for Christmas. I volunteered our Christ Church Family to turn in 50 bags. I know we can do this!

Each bag will be a gallon ziplock that includes: soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, shampoo, disposable razors, and dental floss. (No mouthwash please). These items are easily purchased at a dollar store. I was able to fill two bags for \$22. We are hoping each Christ Church family will be able to contribute a bag or two. If your children need service hours this is a great project for them to work on – we can give them a service hours receipt. The last Sunday to collect the hygiene bags is December 14th.

There are two baskets at the back of Fellowship Hall to collect the Hygiene bags.

GWCM is also collecting new unwrapped toys to benefit the children of clients. Look for the flyer in the service sheet with the drop-off locations.

If you have any questions, please contact Darcie Sanchez at 856-906-8800

Information about online monetary donations and events can be found at GWCM.org





The Reading Room by Sarah Cranston

The Reading Room

Welcome back to the newest installation of The Reading Room! It's been a little while — I took a break from sharing recommendations this fall, but I'm glad to be back, and even more glad to share a few books (and a podcast!) that have been meaningful companions to me over the past few months. They have shaped my prayer life, my understanding of faith in seasons of struggle, and my sense of God's quiet presence in the ordinariness of daily life.

Open Mind, Open Heart — Thomas Keating

If you're longing to deepen your prayer life, *Open Mind, Open Heart* is a gentle but transformative guide. Thomas Keating introduces the method of Centering Prayer, a simple yet profound practice of consenting to God's presence in silence.

Keating demystifies contemplative prayer, making it accessible for beginners while offering rich wisdom for seasoned prayers. He names the obstacles we all face — distraction, restlessness, self-doubt — and shows how the very things that trouble us can become the doorway to surrender and healing. This book strengthened my own commitment to centering prayer and nudged me deeper into resting in God's love.

Becoming Elisabeth Elliot — Ellen Vaughn

I picked this one up expecting a biography and instead found a deeply moving spiritual portrait. Drawing from Elisabeth Elliot's journals and letters, Ellen Vaughn reveals a woman of fierce faith, honest struggle, and profound obedience. Yes, the dramatic moments are here — missionary life, loss, sacrifice — but what struck me most was the ordinariness of her faithfulness.

Elisabeth wrestled, questioned, grieved, waited, and obeyed. She made daily choices to trust God's leading even when His ways were hard to understand. This book reminded me that holiness takes shape in both small and large acts of surrender and perseverance. For anyone navigating discerning God's call, her story offers both challenge and consolation.

The Re-Creation Podcast — Nicole Roccas & Eleni Opperwall

This recommendation is a little off the beaten path, but well worth it. *The Re-Creation Podcast* explores what it means to become fully human in a wounded world from an Orthodox perspective. With wisdom, honesty, and deep compassion, Nicole Roccas and Eleni Opperwall hold space for conversations about grief, trauma, hope, mental health, and spiritual renewal.

The tone is refreshingly real — not sentimental, not simplistic. They acknowledge that life wounds us, sometimes profoundly. But they also remind us that in Christ, nothing is beyond redemption. Healing happens in community, in honesty, and in God's persistent grace.

The Re-Creation podcast can be found on Substack, Apple, and Spotify.



Advent by Sarah Cranston

Finding Grace in Discomfort

I have not, in the past, been the biggest fan of the weeks before Christmas. By the time the big day arrives, I am exhausted from all the cooking, shopping, mingling, and decorating. By the season's end, I mostly just feel overwhelmed and guilty because all I want to do is turn out the lights and go to bed. This year, however, I resolved that it would be different. I would get Christmas "done" before Advent started so that I could fully participate in the season and choose a discipline to help focus on the coming incarnation.

Discipline in my life has usually meant adopting some regime to make me better – better Christian, better mother, better wife, better face, better health, better brain, better productivity...better whatever. But I am increasingly learning that this perspective makes it about what I choose to do and not necessarily waiting to see what God has in mind.

For example, I have long had a practice of morning prayer using the BCP, and I was very proud of this. Regular prayer...check, regular scripture study...check. But it was starting to feel a little too *productive*, if you know what I mean. It was becoming no different than crossing items off my shopping list.

I felt nudged to stop all the doing and just sit and be with God. Then I stumbled upon the writings of Father Thomas Keating and the practice of Centering Prayer. Keating was a 20th century Trappist monk and abbot and one of the main developers of Centering Prayer, which is rooted in the ancient practice of contemplative prayer.

Centering Prayer is simple. Before beginning, you choose a word to return to when your mind wanders. Then for 20-30 minutes, you sit quietly, usually with eyes closed, and consent to God's presence. As the mind wanders you gently return to the word you chose. To be clear, that word is nothing other than a symbol of your consent to God. It is not a mantra and is not used with the goal of entering some trancelike state. It is rather an acknowledgement that you are available to God should He have anything He wants to say or do in you.

I admit that this practice, especially in the beginning, was more often than not excruciatingly boring. Through this discipline, however, I have learned that while I do, in a theoretical sense, want God's presence in my life, I am not always smitten with the *reality* of his nearness if it gets in the way of what *I* want to do. I'd much rather think my thoughts and make my plans and check things off my list than wait for God. So it is quite appropriate that this practice has come to me in this season. Advent is a time of waiting and expectation; a time when we look towards Jesus' birth and the light that is to come into the world. I struggle to remember this, though, when during the four weeks (or more) before the *actual* Christmas season arrives liturgically, the world is lit up with artificial lights and tinny Christmas music piped over the aisles of every store and I am focused on just getting it all done before midnight December 24.

Being intentionally still and quiet when it feels like there is just so much to do (and buy) reminds me that the point of this life is not getting and doing more. It is about learning to be in the presence of God, even in the midst of all the chaos. And such stillness and presence requires discipline. Discipline, however, is not about wrenching myself into right action. I cannot by practice and sheer force of will heal myself of whatever sins ail me. Unfortunately, it appears that I must be continually reminded that I am not God, and the things I turn to in an effort to make myself feel or be better are also not God.



Advent by Sarah Cranston—Continued

Centering Prayer's principle of consenting to God's presence arrested my attention because it goes against activity, which I believed to be essential to discipline. But the act of consent is itself a discipline. It is both very simple and extraordinarily difficult. For authentic healing to occur in me, all I must really do, is say, "yes." Yes Lord, I will sit here and be quiet and you are welcome to enter in – into my life, into my soul, and into my body, and I will be content with whatever you choose to do (or not do). I am not the activating agent in this scenario – it's all God. And that requires faith. Faith that God is real, that he is present, that he is all-powerful, and most shockingly, that he loves me.

Engaging in disciplines, like fasting and prayer which can make us uncomfortable, help us turn away from the assurances of this world that we like to fashion into idols – our abilities, our comfort, our productivity, our betterment – and acknowledge that God is God and we are his creation.

In and of itself I do not believe there is anything wrong with being comfortable. The danger is that we start to believe that we don't need God and if we don't need God then we don't need Christmas. And Christmas is reduced to what the world wants you to think it is – merely a time to gather and give gifts and eat delicious food. These are all lovely things, but Christmas is so much more. It is light, it is hope, it is God himself in our midst. So, before we get to the light, I urge you to spend a little time in the dark. Try being a little uncomfortable this Advent season and consent. Consent to be quiet. Consent to be hungry. Consent to be bored. Consent to be unproductive. Consent to wait in faith.

May you have a very blessed Advent.

Sarah Cranston

A Service of
LESSONS and CAROLS
at Christ Church in Woodbury



Virgin and Child in an Apse, Copy after Robert Campin (Netherlandish, ca. 1490)

Friday,
December 19th
at 6:30 in the evening

Christ Church
62 Delaware Street
Woodbury, New Jersey

Christmas Mass Remembrances

**It's not too late to honor a loved one at our
Christmas Mass on December 25, 2025.**

**Please reach out to the Parish Office and we would be
more than happy to assist you.**





Blessing of the Vestments September 14, 2025



*Given In Memory of
The Reverend John E. Bird Jr.
The Reverend Canon William V. Rauscher*



Blessing of the Animals October 4, 2025





Baptisms
October 5, 2025
Christopher Kirchner

November 2, 2025
Harrison & Hadley Moore





Christ Church Activities

Altar Guild setting up for Advent



Blessing of the Thanksgiving Food Table



Brotherhood of St. Andrew Wine and Cheese Event



Winter Coat Drive





Christ Church Activities



**Homecoming Sunday
September 14, 2025**

**Vestry Retreat
October 25, 2025**



Christmas Attic

HELP DONATE TO OUR

CHRISTMAS ATTIC

Planned for
November 2026

It's a long way off but we can start to get ready for this parish event now! As you are preparing your homes for the celebration of our Lord, set aside Christmas decorations and any Christmas theme items you no longer want or need. Pack them up to donate to the Christmas Attic. Tell your neighbors, friends, and family to save their items and give them to you for our sale!

**BRING DONATIONS TO THE
PARISH HALL
NOW UNTIL FEBRUARY 1ST**



Christmas Attic

WHAT TO DONATE

Wreaths
Christmas lights
Ornaments
Indoor/Outdoor swags
Stockings
Tree skirts
Candles
Lights
Mugs
Dishes
Serving Dishes
Entertainment dishes
Nutcrackers
Nativity Sets
Snowmen
Angels
Decorative Boxes
Gift Wrap and Bags
Santa's Pillows
Placemats, Tablecloths, Napkins & Towels
Christmas Books
Outdoor Decorations

Help Host Coffee Hour—It's Easy and Fun!

Be Part of Our Sunday Tradition

Love a good cup of coffee and catching up after church? Coffee hour is where it all happens, and we need volunteers like you to keep the coffee brewing and the treats flowing. Hosting is simple and a great way to meet new friends!

Why Volunteer?

It's a chance to get to know folks you might not chat with otherwise.
You help make church feel welcoming, especially for new faces.
It's fun—and it's not hard!

What's Involved?

Arrive a little early or stay after service to set up snacks and drinks.
Smile, prepare coffee, and help everyone feel at home.
Clean up when it's done—it goes fast with a friend.

Sign Up!

Interested? Contact Jim or/and Mary Beth Bathurst. Host with friends or family—it's more fun together.
Don't worry if you've never done it before, we'll show you how it's done!
Let's keep coffee hour going strong—one cup at a time!

Mary Beth Bathurst
jim5001@verizon.net
609-412-0691



Red Cross Blood Drive: Give the Gift of Life



Donate Blood—Make a Difference Today

Every day, patients rely on blood donations for lifesaving care. Join us at our Red Cross Blood Drive on **Monday, December 22, 2025** and be the reason someone gets a second chance.

How You Help

With each donation, you offer hope to those in urgent need—children, accident victims, and cancer patients.

What to Expect

The process is quick and safe, guided by trained staff. Enjoy refreshments afterwards.

Get Involved

- **Visit our drive at Christ Episcopal Church, Mon., Dec. 22nd, from 2PM to 7PM**
- Schedule an appointment: call Jim or Mary Beth Bathurst 609-472-2812 or go online www.giveblood.org
- Walk-ins welcome
- If you're unable to donate, consider spreading the word.



Bring Your Community

Invite friends, family, and colleagues—each donor strengthens our blood supply.

Help save lives. Join us at the Red Cross Blood Drive on Monday, At Christ Church on December 22, 2025



Save the Date



Sunday, December 7	Feast of St. Nicholas—Child Bishop	10:00am Mass
Monday December 8	The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	10:00 am Mass
Friday, December 19	Lessons and Carols	6:30pm
Monday, December 22	Red Cross Blood Drive	7:00am to 2:00pm
Wednesday, December 24	Christmas Eve	5:00 pm Choral Mass & Blessing of the Creche 11:00 pm Choral Mass
Thursday, December 25	Christmas Day	10:00am Mass with Hymns
Thursday, January 1	Feast of the Holy Name	10:00am Mass
Tuesday, January 6	Feast of the Epiphany & Reception	6:30pm Choral Mass
Sunday, January 25	Annual Meeting	After 10:00 am Mass
Tuesday, February 17	Shrove Pancake Breakfast	
Wednesday, February 18	Ash Wednesday	

Save the Date



Those Who Serve



THOSE WHO SERVE December 2025	Sunday December 7	Sunday December 14	Lessons & Carol December 19 6:30 pm	Sunday December 21	Wednesday December 24 Christmas Eve 5:00 pm	Wednesday December 24 Christmas Eve 11:00 pm	Thursday December 25 Christmas Day 10:00 am	Sunday December 28
Acolytes 10:00am	Sanchez 1st Server: Maya Sanchez 2nd Server: Rebecca Piskum Torches: Thomas Piskum & Petra	Carr 1st Server: Joey Lyden 2nd Server: Daphne Rhodes Torches: Johnny Lyden & Joey	Sanchez 1st Server: 2nd Server: Torches: Maya Sanchez & Riley Shomo Thurifier:	Carr 1st Server: Joey Lyden 2nd Server: Thomas Piskum Torches: Rebecca Piskum & Johnny	Lyden 1st Server: Riley Shomo 2nd Server: Daphne Rhodes Torches: Thomas Piskum & Rebecca	Miguel Sanchez 1st Server: Payton Sims 2nd Server: Maya Sanchez Torches: Scott Cranston &	TBD	Branson Gorman 1st Server: Daphne Rhodes 2nd Server: Rebecca Piskum Torches: Thomas Piskum & Petra
Acolyte Master	Robertta Shomo	Robertta Shomo	Robertta Shomo	Robertta Shomo	Robertta Shomo	Robertta Shomo	Robertta Shomo	Robertta Shomo
Reader 10:00am	Charles Lewis	Scott Carr	TBD	MiMi Jones	Doreen Mills	Jim Bathurst	Jean Lucas	Marilyn McGeoch
Intercessor 10:00am	Jean Lucas	Ellen McGeoch	TBD	Nathan Wishnick	Jennifer Lewis	Mary Beth Bathurst	Gwen Simpson	Toru Wishnick
Ushers 10:00am	Steve Shomo Dennis Sims	Mark Novalsky Steve Rash	Steve Shomo Nathan Wishnick	Chris Piskun Charles Lewis	Steve Shomo Dennis Sims	Chris Piskun Charles Lewis	Steve Shomo	Mike Sanchez Chris Cranston
Nursery	Jennifer Allbright	Jennifer Allbright		Jennifer Allbright	Jennifer Allbright	Jennifer Allbright	Jennifer Allbright	Jennifer Allbright
Notewriter	Marilyn McGeoch	Cheryl Rheiner	Gwen Simpson	Marilyn McGeoch	Cheryl Rheiner	Gwen Simpson	Cheryl Rheiner	Marilyn McGeoch
Vestry Counters	Team 3 Steve Lewis Robertta Shomo Charles Lewis	Team 4 Sherm Yeiter Gwen Simpson Jim Bathurst		Team 1 Doreen Mills Mark Novalsky Nathan Wishnick	Team 2 Tori Wishnick Laura Erasmus	Team 3 Steve Lewis Robertta Shomo Charles Lewis	Team 4 Sherm Yeiter Gwen Simpson Jim Bathurst	Team 1 Doreen Mills Mark Novalsky Nathan Wishnick
Vestry Lock Up	Steve Lewis	Sherm Yeiter		Doreen Mills	Tori Erasmus	Robertta Shomo	Gwen Simpson	Mark Novalsky
Food Bank Delivery	Doug & Carol Hill	Kim Henning		Jim & Mary Beth Bathurst	Charles Lewis		Mike & Darcie Sanchez	Sue Velasquez
Coffee Hour Host	Pastoral Care	No one volunteered		Ares-Deterding, Eva & Zach				No Sunday School



Kids Corner – Christmas Word Find

Christmas

S B N W W D E L J U U G S M Y
B A A F I Q S P E Z S E D A J
J L I N R S Z I S T T A F R O
S W E N G A E Q U O A D J Y S
Q V V S T E N M S I R V Q L E
J R B E S N L K E U O E Q K P
I E R E I I I S I N N N F L H
M M N I T D N C O N W T B R K
L Y A A C H C G H W C Q O I G
V O R N T R L A S O R E U R O
S B A R G I E E R V L B N D L
L G Z L H E V C H O B A W S D
R F M A F H R I H E L X S E E
D O R N H D P X T E M S L F D
O W D F M Y R R H Y O M A G I

SAINT NICHOLAS

FRANKINCENSE

BETHLEHEM

BLESSINGS

NATIVITY

ADVENT

WISE MEN

CAROLS

ANGELS

CRECHE

MYRRH

MANGER

MYRRH

GOLD

JESUS

MAGI

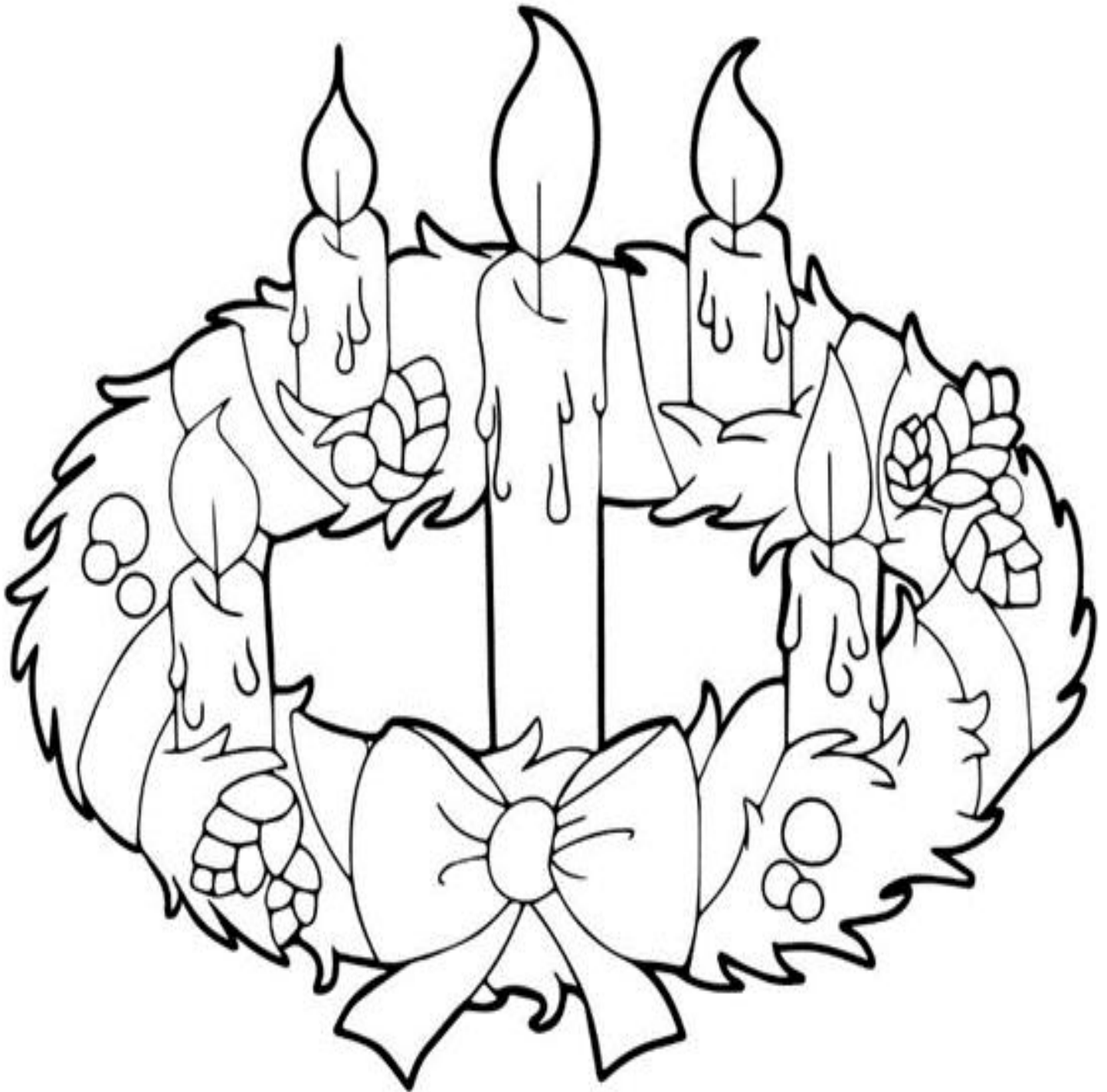
MARY

JOSEPH

STAR



Kids Corner – Coloring Pages



Christ Church

62 Delaware Street,
Woodbury, NJ 08096
(856) 845-0190

www.christchurch.woodburynj.org

*A Parish of the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey
and the worldwide Anglican Communion*

Service Schedule

Sunday: 8:00 AM & 10:00 AM
Wednesday: 10:00 AM Healing Mass
Thursday: 6:30 PM Mass
Friday: 5:30 PM Evening Prayer
Sacrament of Penance (Confession)
by appointment

Priest-in-Charge

The Rev. Lawrence Civale

Our Vestry

Wardens: Tori Wishnick & Steve Lewis

Treasurer: Mark Novalsky

Clerk: Gwen Simpson

Class of 2026

Doreen Mills

Gwen Simpson

Sherm Yeiter

Class of 2027

Jim Bathurst

Charles Lewis

Tori Wishnick

Class of 2028

Laura Erasmus

Robertta Shomo

Nathan Wishnick

