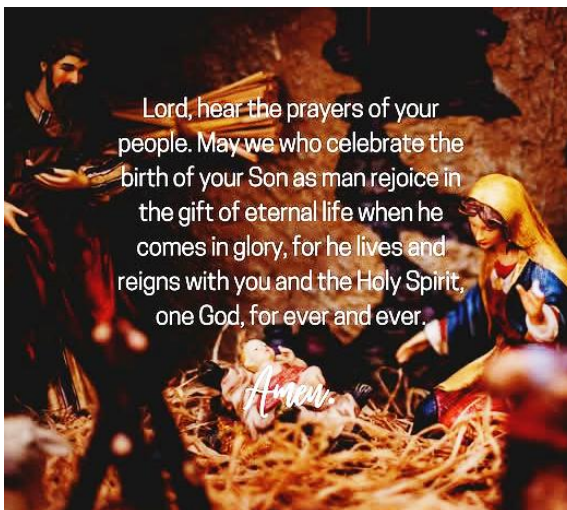


321 E. Church Street
Martinsville, VA 24112
276-632-2896
www.christchurchmvl.org



December 2025

We are a community of faith striving to love God fully and our neighbors as ourselves.

Dear members and friends of Christ Church,

As a church, our signature service ministry is Loaves & Fishes, the free dinner we serve to our neighbors on the last Wednesday of each month (holidays permitting). Since early 2023, Andy Williams has taken the lead by picking the menu, obtaining the food, and preparing most of the dishes, and we are extremely grateful not only for all his work but for the consistent deliciousness of his recipes. However, because of the demands of his job, Andy is no longer able to devote one Wednesday each month to grocery shopping and cooking and must step back from spearheading this ministry; September 24 was his last in-person Loaves & Fishes, although he barbecued the pork for October 29. Our next dinner (which will be January 28 because we skipped Thanksgiving Eve and will skip New Years Eve) thus requires new leadership.

Acknowledging that Andy gifted us with a combination of time, talent, and energy that few can match, the Vestry and I are hoping that, rather than asking one person to replace Andy, we can find three or four who are willing to serve as the team leader for Loaves & Fishes three or four times in 2026. Such team leaders would pick a menu (from our binder of recipes or their own resources) and, whether on their own or in coordination with our cadre of volunteers, purchase the ingredients (on the church credit card and using funds from the Mission Committee) and prepare the dishes. As we hope to continue this important ministry to our community, I ask that you pray about whether God is calling you to be one of our leaders in this new era and, if you do feel so called, please talk to Rives or me.

- Fr. John

Birth Announcement

Theodore (Teddy) Augustine Mason, son of Eliza Walmsley and James Mason and grandson of Pat Walmsley, was born November 18.

Nursery Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed in the Nursery on December 14, Christmas Eve (5:00 pm), and December 28. Please contact the Church office if you are available to volunteer.

Bible Studies

Our regular Bible studies meet on Sunday mornings (9:30 – 10:10ish, currently making our way through Paul's First Letter to the Church in Corinth) and Monday evenings (7:00 – 8:00, currently reading the Book of Ecclesiastes). All are welcome at any time and no reading in advance is required; both studies meet in the Parish House (if the stairs present a challenge, let Fr. John know and he will have the lift ready).

Angel Tree

Christ Church is again partnering with the Boys and Girls Club of The Blue Ridge in the annual Angel Tree Ministry to provide Christmas gifts for children in need. We are blessed with this opportunity for our congregation to serve our community by brightening up the holidays of needy children and their families.

There are two methods by which members of the congregation can participate. One: Take an angel card from the tree and purchase a gift for a specific child (or children) Two: Write a check **payable to Boys and Girls Club with a notation "For the Angel Tree Ministry."** **Checks are due in the church office no later than Monday, December 8.**

Detailed instructions on both methods are available in printed form near the Angel Tree in the narthex or from the office. If you would like to participate by providing a gift or gifts AND by writing a check, that would be wonderful! If you have any questions or would like to volunteer to help wrap and/or deliver the gifts to the various schools, please call the church office. **Gifts, preferably wrapped, must be delivered to the church office or placed under the tree no later than Monday, December 15. There are 37 angels left on the tree.**

If you're available to wrap and/or deliver gifts on Tues., December 16, please contact the Church office.

Kings Grant Eucharist

Fr. John celebrates Eucharist in the chapel at Kings Grant at 1:30 pm on the first Thursday of each month. The next services will be **December 4** and January 8 (changed to avoid New Years Day).

Church History Class

Our monthly Church History class will continue studying the Reformation on **December 10** at 10:30 in the Undercroft. This month, we will consider the Scottish Reformation and England under the Stuarts, with religion and politics becoming increasingly inseparable. All are welcome to join at any time, and no homework is required.

Public Theology

Public Theology meets on **December 10** in the dining room of Forest Park Country Club (to the left after coming through the front clubhouse entrance at 1821 Mulberry Rd). We begin gathering around 6:00 pm; food (sandwiches, burgers, wings, etc.) and drinks (beer and wine) are available to purchase from the Clubhouse Grill, and the discussion goes from 7:00 to 8:00.

Poinsettias

If you wish to give Christmas flowers for the decoration of the Church as a memorial or in thanksgiving, please complete the **red form in the Narthex** and mail it to the church office, put it through the Church office mail slot, or place it in the collection plate along with your check (made payable to Christ Episcopal Church and a note for "Christmas Flowers"). The cost is **\$15** for each person or couple honored or memorialized. **All orders are due in the Office no later than Monday, December 15.**

End of the Year - 2025 or 2026 Pledge Payments or Donations

Please have all pledge payments or donations into the Church office **no later than Monday, December 29th.** All stock transfers for 2025 or 2026 need to be made by **Monday, December 15th.** **NOTE: Charles Schwab is our broker. Contact the Church office for trading information. Please email the office with all information for stock transfers at office@christchurchmvl.org.**

Christmas

Our Christmas service will be at 5:00 pm on Wednesday, December 24. During the service, Will Zimmer will lead an anthem during the offertory, and he invites any children who will be present to join him. If you have children or grandchildren who would like to sing, please let him know (wilzim61@yahoo.com) by **December 18.**

Christmas Holiday

The Church office will be closed from Monday, December 22 through Monday, December 29, and on Thursday, January 1. There will be no Noon Eucharist on December 24 or 31, and no Bible Studies on December 28 or 29.

Christmas Lessons & Carols – December 28

Our 10:30 service on Sunday, **December 28**, will be the Festival of Christmas Lessons & Carols. This is an opportunity to hear the fullness of the Christmas story from Holy Scripture and to sing more Christmas carols than we can on Christmas Eve. If you expect to attend and are willing to read a lesson (even and especially if you are not part of the regular reading rotation), please contact Fr. John ([johndavidadams85@gmail.com](mailto: johndavidadams85@gmail.com) or 571-232-1294) by **December 18**.

Oyster Roast

From the Oyster Roast held on November 7, our net income was \$19,488.38 (compared to a budgeted net of \$14,000)! Many thanks to everyone who helped before, during, or after the event, and to everyone whose presence made it such an enjoyable and successful night!

2025 Vestry

At our Annual Meeting on November 16, we elected Kelly Cain, Jay Dickens, Linda O'Dell, and Ron Probst to three-year terms on the Vestry expiring at the end of 2028. They join continuing members Bob Bushnell, Rives Coleman, LaRue Powers, and Bob Weatherall (2026) and Susan Critz, Butch Hamlet, Michael Hodges, and Steve Keyser (2027). Many thanks to Natalie Coleman, Pat Russell, Will Zimmer, and the late Betty Budde, whose terms expire at the end of this year, for their three years of dedicated service on the Vestry.

2026 Pledges

To this point, we have received 39 pledges totaling \$174,030 for 2026, compared to 54 totaling \$234,410 for 2025. Thank you! If you have not yet done so, we ask that you take some time to pray about your giving to Christ Church next year and submit your pledge as soon as possible. Pledge cards are available in the narthex or from the office.

Winter Weather Policy

When we experience inclement winter weather on a Sunday morning, there will still be a 10:30 worship service in the church, but Fr. John encourages you to stay home if you feel you cannot arrive in safety, even if you are scheduled to serve. During the week, if Martinsville Public Schools are closed, the Office will also be closed.

Bishop Nominees

The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia has announced a [slate of four candidates](#) to serve as our 7th Bishop: The Rev. Paul Canady (Rector, Christ Church, New Bern, NC), The Rev. Karin MacPhail (Rector, St. Elizabeth's, Roanoke, VA), The Very Rev. Becky McDaniel (Rector, Westover Church, Charles City, VA), and The Rev. Grant Stokes (Rector, Trinity, Portsmouth, VA). Meet-and-greets with the candidates will be the first week in January, and the election will be at the end of January at Diocesan Convention.

A Collect for the Election of Our Bishop

Creator God, whose Church lives beyond the walls of buildings and the boundaries of cities, we ask that you guide our work as the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia moves together through a transition of leadership. We pray for patience in dialogue and wisdom in discernment, that the richness of our diverse voices, from farmland to small town, mountain to downtown, will be valued and heard. We pray for the person who will be elected as our next Bishop, for all those who are in discernment, and for the people of this diocese, so that the work of spreading God's love in southwestern Virginia and beyond will grow and flourish in the years to come. In the name of your incarnate son we pray. Amen.

Scam Alert

As we approach the holiday season, please continue to be aware of the possibility of scammers. On multiple occasions in recent years, church members have received texts purporting to be from Fr. John and asking for an unspecified favor. This is an unfortunately common scam targeting churches: unscrupulous actors obtain a church's contact list or directory and, using a fake phone number or email, contact church members identifying themselves as the church's clergyperson. Those who respond are typically asked for money in the form of a gift card. Although we have taken steps to make sure our contacts are not easily available, we know at least one of our lists is already out there, and another scam using that list at some point in the future is likely. **Fr. John will never ask you to send money (as a gift card or otherwise) to him directly.** If a text or email is purported to be from Fr. John but you are in doubt, contact him or the office by different means (for example, send him an email if you are suspicious about a text).

St. Nicholas Appeal

A Message from the Standing Committee: The St. Nicholas Appeal will be directed toward Boys Home of Virginia's growing extracurricular club program. The student-driven clubs give the young men the opportunity to extend learning beyond the classroom and explore their personal interests in a structured, supportive environment. Each club was started by the students themselves, reflecting their creativity, initiative, and desire to build community. They range from skateboard and bike clubs, which teach balance and perseverance, to the Lego and robotics clubs, where creativity meets problem-solving, each activity helps students develop confidence and leadership. The archaeology club connects them to history through hands-on discovery, while the drama club encourages self-expression, teamwork, and confidence on stage. The weightlifting, equine, and outdoor clubs provide healthy outlets for physical activity, teamwork, and personal growth. E-sports offers an opportunity for strategic thinking, digital collaboration, and friendly competition, while the cooking club teaches valuable life skills and the joy of preparing and sharing food together. Please consider faithfully how you might support this effort, either by donating online at www.dioswva.org or by mailing a check payable to the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia with "St. Nicholas Day Appeal" marked in the memo to PO Box 2279, Roanoke, VA 24009.

Giving to the Church - by Mail

You can mail a check or money order to the Church office at:

Christ Episcopal Church
311 East Church Street
Martinsville, Virginia 24112

Give with PayPal, Debit or Credit Card

You may give online, safely, and securely, through your PayPal account or with any major credit card.

[Christ Episcopal Church - Martinsville, Virginia \(christchurchmvl.org\)](http://christchurchmvl.org) on our homepage

https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=Z52WJPBKZN96L on PayPal

Grace Network - Our Grace Network Assignments for December: Oatmeal canister or instant packets. For December: dish detergent, deodorant, laundry detergent, and other hygiene items. As a Church family, we have committed to helping Grace Network with stocking their food pantry for those in need. Please remember to pick up our assigned item the next time you visit the grocery store. You can bring your items to the Church office OR put them in the little red wagon in the Narthex.

December Server Schedule

10:30AM	December 7 The Second Sunday of Advent	December 14 The Third Sunday of Advent	December 21 The Fourth Sunday of Advent	December 24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> 5:00 pm	December 28 The First Sunday after Christmas Day <i>Lessons & Carols Morning Prayer Officiating by Phil Gardner</i>
Lector Prayers	Ann Gardner	Kelly Cain	Will Zimmer	Susan Critz	
Chalist	Jay Dickens Steve Keyser	Natalie Coleman Tom Webster	Bob Bushnell Rives Coleman	Hank Long Dawn Stone	
Acolyte				Elizabeth Maxwell	
Ushers	Hank Long Dan Cahill	Ben Beeler Michael Hodges	John Swezey Ben Lewis	Ben Beeler	Jay Dickens Kyle Trent
Camera Operator	Andy Williams	Andy Williams	Andy Williams	Andy Williams	Andy Williams
Counters	Susan Critz Pat Russell	Susan Critz Pat Russell	Susan Critz Pat Russell	Susan Critz Pat Russell	Susan Critz Pat Russell
Nursery Attendants	Caroline Davis Volunteer Needed	Volunteers Needed	Caroline Davis Volunteer Needed	Volunteers Needed	Volunteers Needed

**Altar Guild Team #4 – Becky Farrar, Susan Smith, Natalie Coleman,
Ashley Ullstein, Dawn Stone, Kyle Trent**