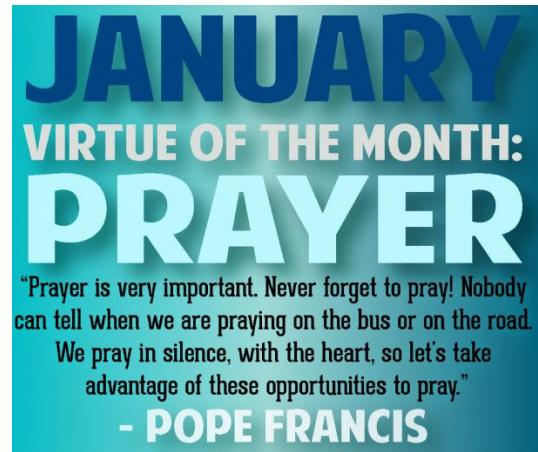


321 E. Church Street
Martinsville, VA 24112
276-632-2896
www.christchurchmvl.org



January 2026

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

Dear members and friends of Christ Church,

The good Lord willing and the creek don't rise, on the last day of January the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia will elect our Seventh Bishop at our Convention in Roanoke. Our Search Committee has nominated a slate of four strong candidates: 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). They will be in the Diocese for a series of meet-and-greets the week of January 5; all members of the Diocese are invited to attend or watch online (each of the three evenings will be livestreamed and recorded for subsequent viewing).

I encourage each of you to get to know the candidates and pray for and about them through this process; if you hear the Holy Spirit calling you toward a particular candidate (or warning you against a particular candidate), please let me or our delegates (Rives Coleman and Jay Dickens) know so we can include your observations in our prayerful discernment. Although most of us only encounter a Bishop on their visit to Christ Church every year or two, the Bishop can significantly impact Christ Church in several ways. Their priorities for the staff and mission of the Diocese may directly benefit our members (such as the Canon for Evangelism working with the Vestry on the direction of the church, or the Diocesan Youth Ministry providing community and events for our teenagers). Their plans for Diocesan finances (including the Voluntary Proportionate Giving they ask of Diocesan churches) can directly impact our budget. Their liturgical leadership, preaching, and even personality can attract members to the churches and priests to the Diocese, or adversely impact them.

All of which is to say, even if you never make your way to the Bishop Search part of the Diocesan website, I ask you to pray for Jay, Rives, and me on January 31 as we vote. If all goes well, the new Bishop will be consecrated and begin work in June.

- Fr. John

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.

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 Song of Songs). 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).

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 **January 8** (changed to avoid New Years Day) and February 5.

Women’s Group Meeting

It’s almost 2026, and it’s time to get our Women’s Group back together. Please join me on **Tuesday, January 13, at 5:30 in the Parish House**. We’ll share snacks and conversation, but we’ll also plan an event for February. The church will host a Trivia Night on Shrove Tuesday (February 17), and our group will be coordinating the event.

Please sign up on our website under volunteers if you’re able to attend on the 13th. Happy New Year!
Natalie

Church History Class

Our monthly Church History class will continue studying the Reformation on **January 14 at 10:30 in the Undercroft**. This month, we will consider King Charles I, the English Civil War, and the Interregnum, during which religion and politics were increasingly inseparable. All are welcome to join at any time, and no homework is required.

Public Theology

Public Theology meets on **January 14 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm**. Stay tuned for details about location and topic of conversation.

Loaves & Fishes

Ron Probst and Kelly Cain have graciously volunteered to serve as L&F leaders. Loaves & Fishes (our monthly free dinner, open to all) resumes on **January 28**, with dinner being served from 5:00 to 6:00. Even if you are not helping with cooking, serving, cleaning, or donating fruit or dessert, church members are encouraged to come and sit down for a meal with our neighbors in the community. **Sign up on our website under volunteers or contact the Church office.**

Mark Your Calendars

On February 17 (Shrove Tuesday), we will have Supper and Trivia Night in the Undercroft; more details as the month progresses.

A Note from the Boys and Girls Club

Dear Mr. Bushnell,

BGCBR (Boys & Girls Clubs of the Blue Ridge) cannot thank you enough for leading the Angel Tree event. It is a big deal for many of our families to receive such thoughtful gifts from the Church. We appreciate your hard work! May God continue to bless and keep each of you.

Many thanks,
Marisa Womack (Chief Operations Officer)

2026 Vestry

At our December meeting, the Vestry elected officers for 2026: Senior Warden Rives Coleman, Junior Warden Bob Weatherall, Treasurer Butch Hamlet, and Secretary Michael Hodges. We thank them for their willingness to serve. The other members of Vestry in 2026 are Bob Bushnell, LaRue Powers, Susan Critz, Steve Keyser, Kelly Cain, Jay Dickens, Linda O'Dell, and Ron Probst.

2026 Pledges

To this point, we have received 48 pledges totaling \$214,350 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 this year and submit your pledge as soon as possible. Pledge cards are available in the narthex or from the office.

Altar Guild Available Date

We have the following open date for altar flowers if anyone would like to do a memorial in loving memory of... or in thanksgiving for... someone. It is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

January 25, 2026- The Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Please note that funerals, weddings, and baptisms take precedence over scheduled memorials.

This date is for 2026 only. The date may be different in 2027 and in the future. Please let me know if you're interested and whether you'd like to continue your dedication to 2027.

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.

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) on our homepage

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

Please pray for Sue, Julia, Jennifer, Mallory, Hope, Doug, Leon, Joe, John, Ginger C., Jay J., David, Eliza, Margaret, Ashley F., Mattie, and Audrey Grace.

Please let John or Deborah know if anyone needs to be added or removed from the prayer list.

Kroger Grocery Card Program

The Kroger grocery card program has been a benefit to our congregation; an easy fundraiser that costs our membership nothing and requires little effort. Kroger requires the use of Kroger Plus cards that many of us already use at time of purchase. Christ Church members can assign our church as the beneficiary of the bonus paid by Kroger each quarter for purchases made when the Kroger Plus card is scanned. **In 2025, CEC made \$161.36 in Kroger rebates. Kroger: Link your Kroger Plus card to the church using the following link: Kroger register your card by account number, enter Christ Church's organization number VT594**

in the search field, click search, select the church and then click on enroll. Then all you have to do is shop. The rest is automatic. Please contact the Church office at 276-632-2896 for directions to assign CEC as the charity or beneficiary.

Grace Network - Our Grace Network Assignments for January - March: Assorted canned greens (turnip, collard, etc.). For January: toilet paper, feminine products, deodorant, and other hygiene items.

From Tracy Hinchcliff, Executive Director, Grace Network

As we approach the new year, there are many families in our community that struggle all of the seasons of the year. But, your participation in our mission to help is priceless, and we thank you so much for your dedication. Remember to pick up our assigned items when you visit the grocery store.

Thank you for helping to make a difference in 2025 for so many that are hurting. Your generous donations are essential in helping our mission and we simply cannot do what we do without your help. God Bless You All!

You can bring your items to the Church office OR put them in the little red wagon in the Narthex.

January Server Schedule

10:30AM	January 4 The Second Sunday after Christmas Day	January 11 The First Sunday after the Epiphany	January 18 The Second Sunday after the Epiphany	January 25 The Third Sunday after the Epiphany
Lector Prayers	Ann Gardner	Pete Scouras	Kelly Cain	Susan Critz
Chalist	Natalie Coleman Rives Coleman	Hank Long Dawn Stone	Bob Bushnell John Swezey	Jay Dickens Tom Webster
Acolyte				
Ushers	Trippi Penn Pete Scouras	Bob Weatherall Gus Barber	Hank Long Dan Cahill	Rives Coleman John Swezey
Camera Operator	Andy Williams	Andy Williams	Andy Williams	Andy Williams
Counters	Linda O'Dell Kelly Cain	Linda O'Dell Kelly Cain	Linda O'Dell Kelly Cain	Linda O'Dell Kelly Cain
Nursery Attendants	Caroline Davis Volunteer Needed	Caroline Davis Volunteer Needed	Caroline Davis Volunteer Needed	Caroline Davis Volunteer Needed

Altar Guild: Team #5 – Lloyd Barber, Debbie Lewis, Jill Dickens, Amy Joyce, Pat Russell, Vicki Crosby