

321 East Church Street • Martinsville, Virginia • 276-632-2896 • www.christchurchmvl.org
We are a community of faith striving to love God fully and our neighbors as ourselves.

The Third Sunday of Advent
December 14, 2025
10:30 A.M. Holy Eucharist, Rite I

*Please silence your electronic devices.
Music and lyrics of hymns may be found in the blue Hymnal 1982.*

The Opening Voluntary	<i>Sleepers Wake</i>	J. S. Bach
Processional Hymn	<i>"On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry"</i>	Hymn 76

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

Celebrant 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.**

Celebrant 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.

Kyrie eleison *Sung, standing*

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And with thy spirit.

Celebrant Let us pray.

Stir up thy power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let thy bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be honor and glory, world without end. **Amen.**

Reader A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (35:1-10)

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."

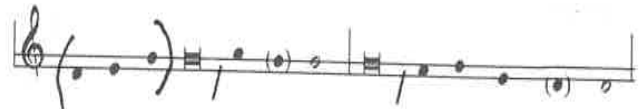
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground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

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

Psalm 146:4-9 *Lauda, anima mea*

The Cantor sings verse 1 and the congregation joins in on verse 2.

4 Happy are they who have the God of Jacob
 for/ their help! *
 whose hope is /in the Lord their God;



5 Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is /in them; *
 who keeps his pro/mise for ever;

6 Who gives justice to those who are /oppressed, *
 and food to /those who hunger.

7 The Lord sets the prisoners free;
 the Lord opens the eyes of /the blind; *
 the Lord lifts up those /who are bowed down;

8 The Lord loves the righteous;
 the Lord cares for the /stranger; *
 he sustains the orphan and widow,
 but frustrates the way /of the wicked.

9 The Lord shall reign for /ever, *
 your God, O Zion, throughout all generations./
 Hallelujah!

Reader A reading from the Book of James (5:7-10)

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

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

Sequence Hymn *"Comfort, comfort ye my people"* Hymn 67

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ According to Matthew (11:2-11)

People: *Glory be to thee, O Lord.*

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

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

The Sermon "The Wilderness" The Rev. John Adams

Ideas to ponder:

- What makes you leave civilization to go into the wilderness?
- In an increasingly secular world, what keeps you returning to Christ Church?

The Nicene Creed *Standing* BCP 327

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;	who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds,	and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made;	he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father;

and he shall come again, with glory,
to judge both the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Ghost the Lord,
and Giver of Life,
who proceedeth from the Father and
the Son;
who with the Father and the Son
together is worshiped
and glorified;

who spake by the Prophets.
And I believe one holy Catholic and
Apostolic Church;
I acknowledge one Baptism for the
remission of sins;
and I look for the resurrection of the
dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

The Prayers of the People

Standing or kneeling

BCP 328

Reader Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church and the world.

Almighty and everliving God, who in thy holy Word hast taught us to make prayers, and supplications, and to give thanks for all men: Receive these our prayers which we offer unto thy divine Majesty, beseeching thee to inspire continually the Universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord; and grant that all those who do confess thy holy Name may agree in the truth of thy holy Word, and live in unity and godly love.

Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all bishops and other ministers, that they may, both by their life and doctrine, set forth thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments.

And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace, and especially to this congregation here present; that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear and receive thy holy Word, truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

We beseech thee also so to rule the hearts of Donald, our President, and all those who bear the authority of government in this and every land, that they may be led to wise decisions and right actions for the welfare and peace of the world.

Open, O Lord, the eyes of all people to behold thy gracious hand in all thy works, that, rejoicing in thy whole creation, they may honor thee with their substance, and be faithful stewards of thy bounty.

And we most humbly beseech thee, of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succor *Sue, Julia, Jennifer, Mallory, Hope, Doug, Leon, Randy, Betsy E., Ruby, Joe, John, Ginger C., Jay A., David, Eliza*, and all those who in this transitory life, are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear, beseeching thee to grant them continual growth in thy love and service; and to grant us grace so to follow the good examples of all thy saints, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom.

Grant these our prayers, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. **Amen.**

Confession of Sin

Kneeling or standing

BCP 330

Celebrant Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God.

misdoings;
the remembrance of them is grievous
unto us,
the burden of them is intolerable.
Have mercy upon us,
have mercy upon us, most merciful
Father;
for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may ever hereafter
serve and please thee in newness of life,
to the honor and glory of thy Name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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.**

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

The Peace may be exchanged through handshakes, hugs, fist bumps, waves, nods, or other such expressions; please be attentive to how much or little physical contact your neighbors would prefer. Once the Peace has been sufficiently exchanged, the people may sit for announcements.

arr. Shirley McRae

Old 100th

All: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host: praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

BCP 340

Hymnal S 112

BCP 341

Sanctus Sung

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.

All glory be to thee... through the same Jesus Christ our Lord;

The Great Amen

Hymnal S 118

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

And now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say,

Celebrant and people

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,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Agnus Dei Sung

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.

Celebrant The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Breaking of Bread

All baptized Christians are invited to receive at the altar rail, kneeling or standing. Gluten-free wafers are available by request. If you do not wish to receive communion, you may come forward and place your arms across your chest to receive a blessing. After receiving the bread, you may choose to consume the bread and take a sip of wine from the chalice or hold onto the bread and intinct (dip) it into the wine, in which case please hold the wafer in front of you so the chalice will know to bring you the intinction cup. You may also decline to receive the wine (as the bread in itself is full communion), in which case if you remain at the altar rail please place your arms across your chest to signal the chalice. Those who cannot or prefer not to come forward may inform an usher, and the Celebrant will come to you.

Communion Chant

Arise, O Jerusalem

Baruch 5, Psalm 147

Communion Hymn

"Creator of the stars of night"

Hymn 60

Once all have received, the celebrant says

Let us pray.

Celebrant and people

Kneeling or standing

BCP 339

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.**

The celebrant blesses the people.

Recessional Hymn

"Watchman, tell us of the night"

Hymn 640

Celebrant Let us bless the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

The Closing Voluntary

"Comfort Ye My People"

Georg Boehm

*The beauty of the Altar Flowers are
Given to the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of
Phoebe and Vance Pitzer, Campbell Pitzer and Charles Pitzer
By the Family*

*The Advent wreath is Given to the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of
Mr. and Mrs. Rives S. Brown, Jr., Lucy Brown Coleman,
Betty Meade Cullinane and Richard A. Walmsley
By Mr. and Mrs. James Coleman, Jr.*

*The Advent wreaths on the front doors are
Given to the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of
Virginia S. & William R. Windle and Margaret W. & Thomas C. Webster, MD,
by Tom, Stuart, Win, Jessica, Evans, and Clay Webster*

*The Nativity Scene is given to the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of
R. B. McCutcheon, Finley S. McCutcheon, and R. B. "Cutch" McCutcheon, Jr.
By the Family*

Pray today for the people of Christ Church, Marion and their rector, the Rev. John Church. For Grace and Peace in the Diocese of Haiti. Our companion diocese, the Diocese of Leeds and their Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Toby Howarth.

Upcoming Deadlines – details listed below.

- Angel Tree GIFTS turned into the Church office or put under the tree in the Narthex by or before Monday, December 15
- Christmas poinsettia orders in the office by or before Monday, December 15
- ALL stock pledge payments for 2025 or 2026 are due by or before Monday, December 15

- If you have children or grandchildren who would like to sing during the Christmas service, please let Will Zimmer know (wilzim61@yahoo.com) by or before Thursday, December 18
- Reading a part for Lessons & Carols, names to John by or before Thursday, December 18
- 2025 pledge payments or donations turned in by or before Monday, December 29
- 2026 pledge cards, turned in as soon as possible for budgeting purposes.

Monday Bible Study

Our Monday evening study meets in the Parish House from 7:00 to 8:00. On December 15, we will continue reading the Book of Ecclesiastes with chapter 8 and following, as Qohelet offers miscellaneous thoughts on power in an uncertain world. All are welcome and encouraged to join at any time; no reading ahead of time is necessary.

Christmas Poinsettia Memorials

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.

Checks should be made payable to Christ Episcopal Church, clearly noted "Christmas Flowers," and the cost is \$15.00 for EACH person or couple honored or memorialized.

ALL orders are due in the Church office no later than Monday, December 15th.

Angel Tree Ministry

Thank you to everyone who participated in this ministry by taking an angel card from the tree and/or writing a check.

The angel cards that were not taken last Sunday have been removed so that the staff of the Boys and Girls Club can purchase gifts for the children whose cards were not taken by using the funds provided by the checks from parishioners.

For parishioners who took an angel from the tree, please note that the gifts, with the angel card attached (to facilitate accurate delivery) may be placed in the Narthex on Sunday morning or delivered to the church 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.

Nursery Volunteers Needed

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

Blue Christmas – December 21

In a season often marked by joyous anticipation, Blue Christmas is a service recognizing that many of us experience grief around the holidays as we remember lost loved ones and mourn other differences between Christmases past and present reality. Fr. John will be joining Pastors Ryan Ware, Faith Weedling, and Steve Weedling in Blue Christmas service at 4:00 pm on December 21 at Smith Memorial UMC (2703 Daniels Creek Rd, Collinsville), and all are welcome to attend.

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 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 or 571-232-1294) by December 18.

Twelfth Night

At 5:30 pm on Sunday, January 4, Lynn and Phil Gardner invite us to their farm (4064 Barrows Mill Road) for a celebration of Twelfth Night. Following brief prayers for the burning of the Christmas greens and the blessing of the house for Epiphany, we will enjoy a time of fellowship. Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share; the Gardners will provide chili and beverages (beer, wine, and soft drinks). You are welcome to bring your Christmas tree or any other greens you wish to burn. **If you are planning to come, please RSVP to the Office (276-632-2896, christchurchmvl@gmail.com, or sign up under ‘volunteers’) by Friday, January 2.**

2026 Pledges

Pledges of financial support for 2026. To this point, we have received 41 pledges totaling \$176,250 for 2026, compared to 54 totaling \$234,410 for 2025. **If you’ve 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.

Church History

Our next church history session will be January 14 at 10:30 in the Undercroft, when we’ll survey the unfortunate entanglements of church and state in the time of King Charles I, Oliver Cromwell, and the English Civil War.

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.

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.

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO SERVE!

Celebrant: The Rev. John Adams

Reader: Kelly Cain

Chalists: Natalie Coleman, Tom Webster

Ushers: Ben Beeler, Michael Hodges

Organist/Choirmaster: Lynn Gardner

Chorister/Cantor: Raul West

Christ Church Choir: St. Christopher's Choir

Camera Operator: Andy Williams

Counters: Susan Critz, Pat Russell

Nursery: NO Nursery today

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

2025 Christ Church Vestry

Year 3: Natalie Coleman; Secretary, Pat Russell. Will Zimmer

Year 2: Bob Bushnell, Rives Coleman; Senior Warden, LaRue Powers,
Bob Weatherall, Junior Warden

Year 1: Susan Critz, Butch Hamlet; Treasurer, Michael Hodges, Steve Keyser