

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

EXTENDING THE LOVE AND EMBRACE OF CHRIST

TAIZÉ VESPERS

6:00 P.M.

Sunday, March 30, 2025 | Fourth Sunday in Lent

WELCOME TO SUNDAY TAIZE VESPERS AT CHRIST CHURCH

For centuries, people have asked God for guidance and care as day turns to night. This night, we ask God to refresh, inspire, and call us into a deeper relationship with the Divine Spark that is in this world. Enter into God's presence through prayers, readings, songs, silence, and poetry. And as you feel so moved: breathe deeply, be still, and know that you are loved.

May God bless you in this time of reflection and meditation.

TAIZÉ

Taizé (named for the ecumenical Christian community formed in Taizé, France, in 1940) is a quiet, sung, meditative prayer. The songs are short phrases that we sing repeatedly so that the words may enter our hearts. The songs may be sung in many different languages, reminding us that the Gospel is for all the world and we are all God's people.

THE PATTERN OF VESPERS

GATHERING: God beckons us to gather, to reflect on life where we live it, and to be engaged as fully as possible in the world around us. We light candles and sing a song of thanksgiving for God's bringing light into the darkness of our lives.

WORD: God continues to communicate through words of wisdom, encouragement, hope, and challenge spoken throughout the ages by God's beloved children.

PSALMS: Psalms are the Bible's language of prayer and praise. They provide us language to speak about all of life, including our joys, disappointments, confusion and anger, sadness, and concern for ourselves, others, and this world.

MEDITATION: When we listen and pray while gathered in community, we are reminded that we are not alone. We also affirm that life is not about "just me," but about participating in a larger movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.

PRAYERS: Prayer is honest, holy conversation with God and those who gather. God invites our honesty, joys, sorrows, confusion, anger, and wonder. Prayer practices can open us up to deeper understanding and meaningful spiritual connections with God, others, and ourselves.

GOING OUT: As we leave the Vesper service, we are reminded of Christ's peace, presence, and purpose in all of life.



OPENING SONG | Adoramus te



Officiant: God dwells in you.

People: And also in you.

Officiant: Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one lights a lamp to put it under a bucket, but on a lampstand where it gives light for everyone in the house. And you, like the lamp, must shed light among your fellow men, so that they may see the deed you do, and give glory to your Father in heaven." *Matthew 5:14-16*

Let us pray.

All: Almighty God, we give you thanks for surrounding us, as daylight fades, with the brightness of the vesper light; and we implore you of your great mercy that, as you enfold us with the radiance of this light, so you would shine into our hearts the brightness of your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Almighty and most merciful God, kindle within us the fire of love, that by its cleansing flame we may be purged of all our sins and made worthy to worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Please be seated.

SONG | Stay With Us |

Ostinato Chorale

Stay with us, O Lord Je-sus Christ, night will soon fall. Then stay with us, O Lord Je-sus Christ, light in our dark-ness.

CONSOLATIONS | Despair

Despair takes us in when we have nowhere else to go; when we feel the heart cannot break anymore, when our world or our loved ones disappear, when we feel we cannot be loved or do not deserve to be loved, when our God disappoints, or when our body is carrying profound pain in a way that does not seem to go away.

Despair is a haven with its own temporary form of beauty; of self-compassion, it is the invitation we accept when we want to remove ourselves from hurt. Despair is a last protection. To disappear through despair, is to seek a temporary but necessary illusion, a place where we hope nothing can ever find us in the same way again.

Despair is a necessary and seasonal state of repair, a temporary healing absence, an internal physiological and psychological winter when our previous forms of participation in the world take a rest; it is a loss of horizon, it is the place we go when we do not want to be found in the same way anymore. We give up hope when certain particular wishes are no longer able to come true and despair is the time in which we both endure and heal, even when we have not yet found the new form of hope.

Despair is strangely, the last bastion of hope; the wish being, that if we cannot be found in the old way we cannot ever be touched or hurt in that way again. Despair is the sweet but illusory abstraction of leaving the body while still inhabiting it, so we can stop the body from feeling anymore. Despair is the place we go when we no longer want to make a home in the world and where we feel, with a beautifully cruel form of satisfaction, that we may never deserved that home in the first place. Despair, strangely, has its own sense of achievement, and despair, even more strangely, needs despair to keep it alive.

Despair turns to depression and abstraction when we try to make it stay beyond its appointed season and start to shape our identity arounds its frozen disappointments. But despair can only stay beyond its appointed time through the forced artificiality of created distance, by abstracting ourselves from bodily feeling, by trapping ourselves in the disappointed mind, by convincing ourselves that eh seasons have stopped and can never turn again, and perhaps, most simply and importantly, by refusing to let the body breathe by itself, fully and deeply. Despair is kept alive by freezing our sense of time and the rhythms of time; when we no longer feel imprisoned by time, and when the season is allowed to turn, despair cannot survive.

To keep despair alive we have to abstract and immobilize our bodies, our faculties of hearing, touch and smell, and keep the surrounding springtime of the world at a distance. Despair needs a certain tending, a reinforcing, and isolation, but the body left to itself will breathe, the ears will hear the first birdsong of morning or catch the leaves being touched by the wind in the trees, and the wind will blow away even the grayest cloud; will move even the most immovable season; the heart will continue to beat and the world, we realize, will never stop or go away.

The antidote to despair is not to be found in the brave attempt to cheer ourselves up with happy abstracts, but in paying a profound and courageous attention to the body and the breath, independent of our imprisoning thoughts and stories, even strangely, in paying attention to despair itself, and the way we hold it, and which we realize, was never ours to own and to hold in the first place. To see and experience despair fully in our body is to begin to see it as a necessary, seasonal visitation, and the first step in letting it have its own life, neither holding it nor moving it on before its time.

We take the first steps out of despair by taking on its full weight and coming fully to ground in our wish not to be here. We let our bodies and we let our world breathe again. In that place, strangely, despair cannot do anything but change into something else, into some other season, as it was meant to do, from the beginning. Despair is a difficult, beautiful necessary, a binding, understanding between human beings caught in a fierce and difficult world where half of our experience is meditated by loss, but is a season, a waveform passing through the body, not a prison surrounding us. A season left to itself will always move, however slowly, under its own patience, power and volition.

Refusing to despair about despair itself, we can let despair have its own natural life and take a first step onto the foundational ground of human compassion, the ability to see and understand and touch and even speak, the heartfelt grief of another.

THE PSALM |

Psalm 32 | *Beati quorum*

Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, *

and whose sin is put away!

Happy are they to whom the Lord imputes no guilt, *

and in whose spirit there is no guile!

While I held my tongue, my bones withered away, *

because of my groaning all day long.

For your hand was heavy upon me day and night; *

my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you, *

and did not conceal my guilt.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." *

Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble; *

when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.

You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble; *

you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go; *

I will guide you with my eye.

Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding; *

who must be fitted with bit and bridle,

or else they will not stay near you."

Great are the tribulations of the wicked; *

but mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord.

Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the Lord; *

shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

SONG | Within Our Darkest Night |

p B Em D

With - in our dark - est night, you kin - dle the fire that nev - er dies a -
 Dans nos ob - scu - ri - tés, al - lu - me le feu qui ne s'é - teint ja -

p

G *mf* C G D *f* *p* G Em C Am

way, nev - er dies a - way. With - in our dark - est night, you kin - dle the
 mais, ne s'é - teint ja - mais. Dans nos ob - scu - ri - tés, al - lu - me le

mf *f* *p*

B Em Am B *pp* Em Am B *fine*

fire that nev - er dies a - way, nev - er dies a - way. With - in our dark - est
 feu qui ne s'é - teint ja - mais, ne s'é - teint ja - mais. Dans nos ob - scu - ri -

pp *fine*

SCRIPTURE READING | Joshua 5:9-12

Reader: A reading from Joshua.

The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE READING | 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Reader: A reading from 2nd Corinthians.

From now on, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

***People:* Thanks be to God.**

THE HOMILY/REFLECTION | Leah Chrest

THE SILENT MEDITATION |

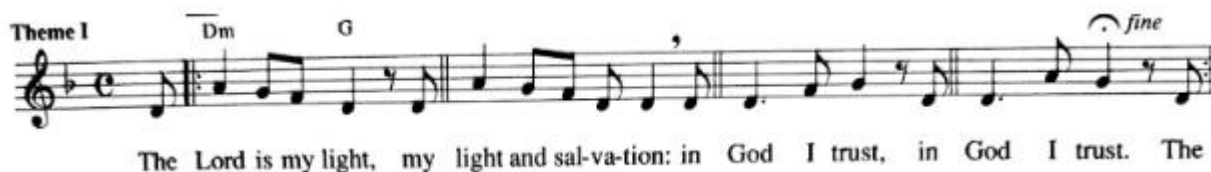
ANNOUNCEMENTS



OFFERTORY SONG | The Lord Is My Light |

During the singing, you are invited to come forward to light a candle in prayer.

Please scan to give



Gifts

To create
Our worlds,
God gives
Us
Time
To fashion
Our varied
Pleasures,

Ways and
Willingness
To build shelters
To bury
Them in

And
Fancy toys
To combat
The resulting
Loneliness.

To create
His world,
God only
Gives
Us
Love.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE |

Intervenor: 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, especially Sean, our Presiding Bishop, Carrie, our Diocesan Bishop, Emmanuel, our Rector; Kiona, our Deacon; Marcia, our Associate Rector Emeritus; Rebecca, our Candidate for Ordination to the Diaconate; and Mike our Postulant; 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 those who bear the authority of government in this and every land, especially Donald, our President: Wes, our Governor; and Calvin, our County Executive; that they may be led to wise decisions and right actions for the welfare and peace of the world.

And we most humbly beseech thee, of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succor Kerry, Lucy, Chuck, Wha-Ja, Sharon, and those who care for them.

The People may add additional petitions and thanksgivings.

Intervessor: And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear especially Jan Knight and those you now name, 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.

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER |

Officiant: Let us pray.

***All:* Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Officiant: The coming night is dark. Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives be dispelled in this hour. The night is quiet. Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all who are dear to us, and all who have no peace. The night heralds the dawn. Let us look expectantly to a new day, new joys, new possibilities. In your name we pray. ***Amen.***

Officiant: The Lord bless you and keep you. ***Amen.***

The Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you. ***Amen.***

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace. ***Amen.***

CLOSING SONG | Nunc Dimittis

1st time in Latin, all following repetitions in English.

Ostinato Refrain

Nunc di - mīt - tis ser - vum tu - um, Dó - mi -
Let your ser - vant now go in peace, O

ne,
Lord,

se - cún - dum ver - bum
now go in peace ac -

ne,
Lord,

Dó - mi - ne,
O Lord,

pa - ce.
word.

tu - um in pa - ce, Dó - mi - ne. Nunc di -
cord - ing to your word, to your word. Let your

Last time

Last time

Caitlin Gompf, soprano
Catherine Hinton, soprano
Maureen Monk, flute
Amanda McKay, viola
Larissa Sanders, piano

Thank you for joining us today!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you have an announcement to share with the church,
Please send to communications@christchurchcolumbia.org by Tuesday evening.
SCAN THE QR CODE FOR ALL OF THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS



Holy Week at Christ Church

Palm Sunday is the service that signals the coming of Holy Week, and it takes place on Sunday, April 13th. Between that day and Easter, Christ Church has a dozen worship opportunities, and we hope that you'll join us throughout the week. Our website's Lenten season page has times and details for every one of our worship services, so be sure to check <https://www.christchurchcolumbia.org/holy-week> for all of that information. You can still find all of the Lenten gatherings at www.christchurchcolumbia.org/lent

Lenten Evening Prayer - Weeknights at 8 p.m. on YouTube, Facebook, and our website

During Lent this year, Mother Marcia Davenport presents us with a nightly evening prayer livestream, and if you haven't tuned in to any of these yet, you're truly missing out. She leads us in a brief worship using different prayer books from around the world, followed by a unique, personal reflection. They go live at 8:00 p.m. each weeknight, but you can view them all on our website at <https://www.christchurchcolumbia.org/lenten-evening-prayer>, our YouTube page, or our Facebook page at any time. Don't miss this beautiful way to worship in your own time at home during Lent, as it's a perfect way to close out another day.

Centering Prayer - Mondays

Centering Prayer is a special evening prayer gathering that can help lead to a more intimate union with God, a gathering that takes place every Monday. This active presence heals, transforms, and offers freedom and peace. We are a hybrid gathering, so be with us in Old Brick or online via Zoom at 7 p.m. on Monday evenings.

Wednesday Evening Lenten Supper Series

Christ Church's Wednesday Evening Lenten Series, one of the most cherished traditions of the season, takes place Wednesday evening at 6:30 with a communal meal provided by the Christ Church Vestry and is followed by a presentation by the Reverend Richard Ginnever, Rector Emeritus at Christ Church, who'll be offering his insightful perspective on our theme for this year, ***Reaching Out in Faith***. We then conclude with a brief Communion. This is always a "do-not-miss" event, so gather with us each of the next three Wednesday evenings.

Healing Eucharist - Thursdays

At 12 noon on Thursdays during Lent, Christ Church offers midday worship in Old Brick. This service includes readings, prayers, a litany for healing, and the Holy Eucharist. Parishioners and non-parishioners are all welcome to join in a prayerful time in the presence of God, and to share in the wonderful mystery of God's love whilst we seek healing for ourselves and our loved ones. Please come in to reflect, pray, and participate in a service held in our beautiful, historic chapel.

Our Altar Guild Needs Your Help

The Christ Church Altar Guild can truly use a few more people to help us in our ministry of providing clean linens and items for every worship service. It is a vital ministry, so if you are interested in signing up or learning more, please visit our website's Altar Guild page - www.christchurchcolumbia.org/altar-guild, or you can speak with Altar Guild Coordinator, Pam Foreman, or any Altar Guild member at church.

Help Us Provide Eucharist to Those Unable to Travel to Church. Become a Lay Eucharistic Visitor.

This year, we have had more people request Communion to You, a service Christ Church provides to bring Eucharist to homebound parishioners. To fulfill this need, we require a few more Lay Eucharistic Visitors, so if you're interested in helping with this vital ministry, please speak with Kathy Lyon at church, or contact the Church Office. And if you, yourself, require this service, please call the Church Office. We will ensure that Communion gets to your home.

Runners Will Raise Awareness of Suicide Prevention and Support Grassroots at 'Light the Night' 5K and Community Event on April 4

Lace up your shoes or cheer the runners who enter the fourth annual "Light the Night" 5K, a public awareness event on Friday, April 4. It is intended as a "county-wide acknowledgment that we support and care for those impacted by suicide." The Howard County Department of Health, the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, and Bullseye Running are sponsors. Proceeds go to the Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Maryland (AFSP Maryland). Christ Church has long supported Grassroots, which helps the homeless and provides 24-hour crisis intervention and a supportive counseling hotline.

"Light the Night" will be held at Oakland Mills High School, 9410 Kilimanjaro Rd., in Columbia, where speakers who are active in suicide prevention will give remarks at 6:30 p.m. The race begins at 7 p.m. There will be activities for non-runners, take-home items such as bracelets and keychains, and resource packets on suicide prevention.

Runners who sign up online no later than Wednesday, April 2, will pay a \$35 registration fee. On race day, cash-only registration is \$40 to be paid at the event during runners' late packet and shirt pickup at 6 p.m. Runners' regular packet and shirt pickup is Thursday, April 3, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Feet First, 5305 Village Center Dr, #110, Columbia, MD 21044. Besides raising awareness to save lives, organizers will accept donations that will go to Grassroots and AFSP Maryland. AFSP is the largest private funder of suicide prevention research; it also creates and hosts education programs, leads public policy efforts on mental health and supports suicide-loss survivors.

Fewer Volunteers Will be Needed on Saturday, April 5, in Clarksville than in Past Food Drives at Local Giant Supermarkets

In response to a request by Giant Foods' management, we must streamline the way Christ Church conducts its Spring Food Drive on Saturday, April 5, from noon to 4 p.m., at River Hill Giant, 6050 Daybreak Circle, Clarksville, Md., 21029.

A new corporate policy will limit the number of volunteers on the supermarket premises to four at any one time. Only two people can be positioned at the table and available to engage with arriving shoppers. Two of the four volunteers will be packing any collected groceries or seated off to one side and won't interact with Giant customers.

Because of these limitations, the signup sheet is nearly full. Look for the Food Drive clipboard after services in the Narthex or in Old Brick. If you find too few slots but still hope to volunteer, especially if you wish to bring the kids, please email outreach@christchurchcolumbia.org so we can devise a way to take turns. Walk-in volunteers will be encouraged to do their part by taking a shopping list and purchasing some of the pantries' requested items.

Groceries collected from shoppers will go to two food pantries. One is the Howard County Food Bank, which is operated by the Community Action Council of Howard County (CAC). The other is SAFE, its partner pantry that provides free gluten-free and allergy-safe foods to low-income families and individuals.

The need is great. The number of struggling households has grown in Howard County due to inflation and the mass firing of federal workers. In response, the CAC posted: "Terminated federal employees living in Howard County may visit the Howard County Food Bank to receive a bag of shelf staples twice a month for up to three months."



CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

COLUMBIA, MARYLAND

WWW.CHRISTCHURCHCOLUMBIA.ORG

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Rev. Emmanuel Ato Mercer, *Rector*

Rev. Kiona Lookingbill, *Deacon & Director of Youth and Family Ministries*

Michael Looney, *Seminarian Associate*

Larissa Sanders, *Director of Music Ministry*

Ola Oladipupo, *Assistant Organist*

Yetti Lipede, *Parish Administrator & Ministry Coordinator*

Christopher Pouch, *Communications Administrator*

Amanda Kirkpatrick, *Nursery Care Coordinator*

Nytia Perry, *Nursery Care*

John Prempeh Sencherey, *Sexton*

Vestry

Denisa Abdallah (*Senior Warden*) • Diane Phillips-LaGuerre (*Junior Warden*)

Andrew Eaton (*Treasurer*) • Ron Couch (*Registrar*) • Deepti Jackson (*Youth Liaison*)

• Ronald Baran • John Curley • Ray Lyon • Greg Schuckman • Alfred Titus-Glover • Cherry Lynn Williams •
George Toth • Sara Kirkpatrick • Ed Chrzanowski • Kathy Simms

Rev. Richard Ginnever, *Rector Emeritus*
Rev. Marcia Davenport, *Associate Rector Emeritus*