

Christ Episcopal Church

Extending the Love and Embrace of Christ

Taizé Vespers | Sunday, March 17, 2024

Welcome to Sunday Taizé 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.

Gathering Song | Adoramus te Christe (We adore you, Jesus Christ)

Alternate between Latin and English refrains.



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 lamp-stand 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*

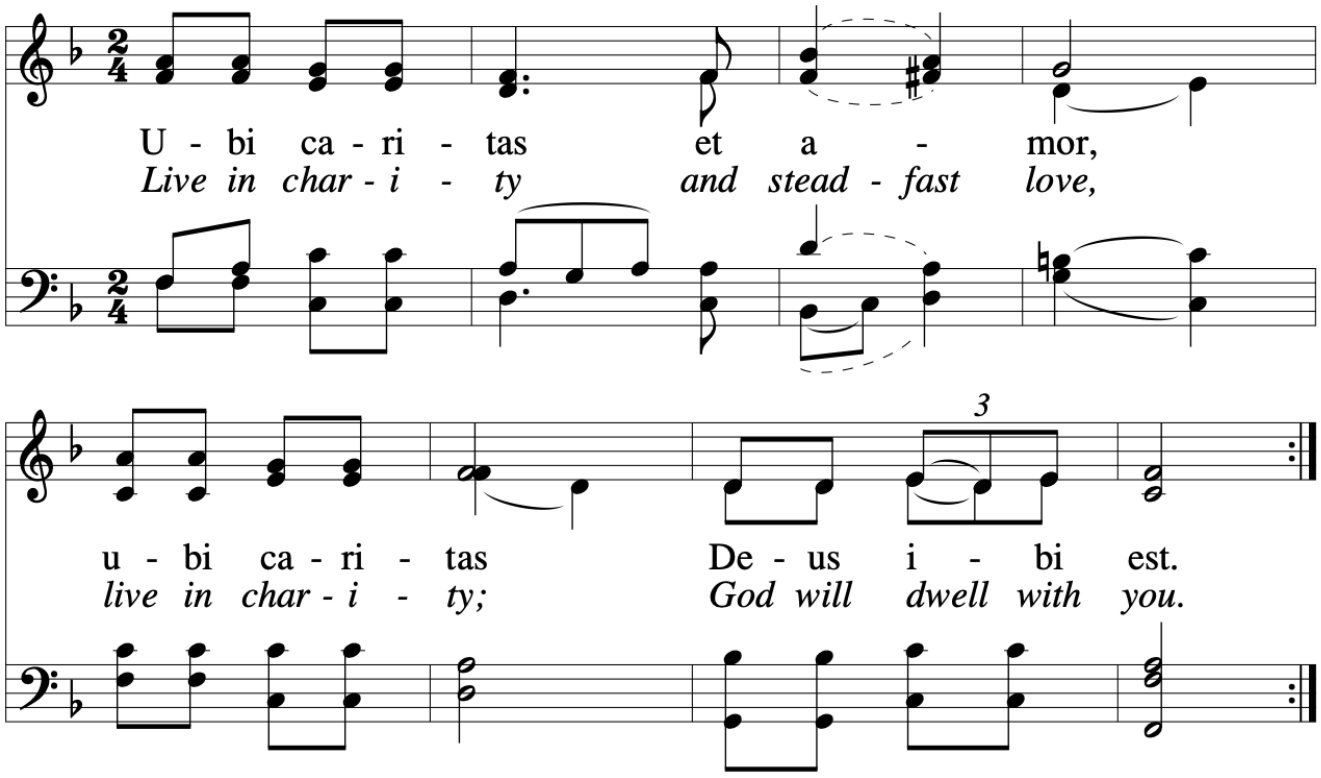
Let us pray.

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 | Ubi Caritas (Live in Charity)



Consolations | Gratitude

Gratitude is not a passive response to something we have been given, gratitude arises from paying attention, from being awake in the presence of everything that lives within and without us. Gratitude is not necessarily something that is shown after the event, it is the deep, *a priori* state of attention that shows we understand and are equal to the gifted nature of life.

Gratitude is the understanding that many millions of things come together and live together and mesh together and breathe together in order for us to take even one more breath of air, that the underlying gift of life and incarnation as a living, participating human being is a privilege; that we are miraculously, part of something, rather than nothing. Even if that something is temporarily pain or despair, we inhabit a living world, with real faces, real voices, laughter, the color blue, the green of the fields, the freshness of a cold wind, or the tawny hue of a winter landscape.

To see the full miraculous essentiality of the color blue is to be grateful with no necessity for a word of thanks. To see fully, the beauty of a daughter's face is to be fully grateful without having to seek a God to thank him. To sit among friends and strangers, hearing many voices, strange opinions; to intuit inner lives beneath surface lives, to inhabit many worlds at once in this world, to be a someone amongst all other someones, and therefore to make a conversation without saying a word, is to deepen our sense of presence and therefore our natural sense of thankfulness that everything happens both with us and without us, that we are participants and witness all at once.

Thankfulness finds its full measure in generosity of presence, both through participation and witness. We sit at the table as part of every other person's world while making our own world without will or effort, this is what is extraordinary and gifted, this is the essence of gratefulness, seeing to the heart of privilege. Thanksgiving happens when our sense of presence meets all other presences. Being unappreciative might mean we are simply not paying attention.

The following psalm is read responsively by half-verse.

Psalm145 | *Exaltabo te, Deus*

I will exalt you, O God my King, *
and bless your Name forever and ever.

Every day will I bless you *
and praise your Name forever and ever.

Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; *
there is no end to his greatness.

One generation shall praise your works to another *
and shall declare your power.

I will ponder the glorious splendor of your majesty *
and all your marvelous works.

They shall speak of the might of your wondrous acts, *
and I will tell of your greatness.

They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness; *
they shall sing of your righteous deeds.

The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, *
slow to anger and of great kindness.

The LORD is loving to everyone *
and his compassion is over all his works.

All your works praise you, O LORD, *
and your faithful servants bless you.

They make known the glory of your kingdom *
and speak of your power;

That the peoples may know of your power *
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; *
your dominion endures throughout all ages.

The LORD is faithful in all his words *
and merciful in all his deeds.

The LORD upholds all those who fall; *
he lifts up those who are bowed down.

The eyes of all wait upon you, O LORD, *
and you give them their food in due season.

You open wide your hand *
and satisfy the needs of every living creature.

The LORD is righteous in all his ways *
and loving in all his works.

The LORD is near to those who call upon him, *
to all who call upon him faithfully.

He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; *
he hears their cry and helps them.

The LORD preserves all those who love him, *
but he destroys all the wicked.

My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD; *
let all flesh bless his holy Name forever and ever.

Song | Nada te turbe (Nothing can trouble)

Alternate between Spanish and English refrains.



Scripture Reading | Romans 12:1-21

Reader: A reading from The Epistle to the Romans.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.
All: **Thanks be to God.**

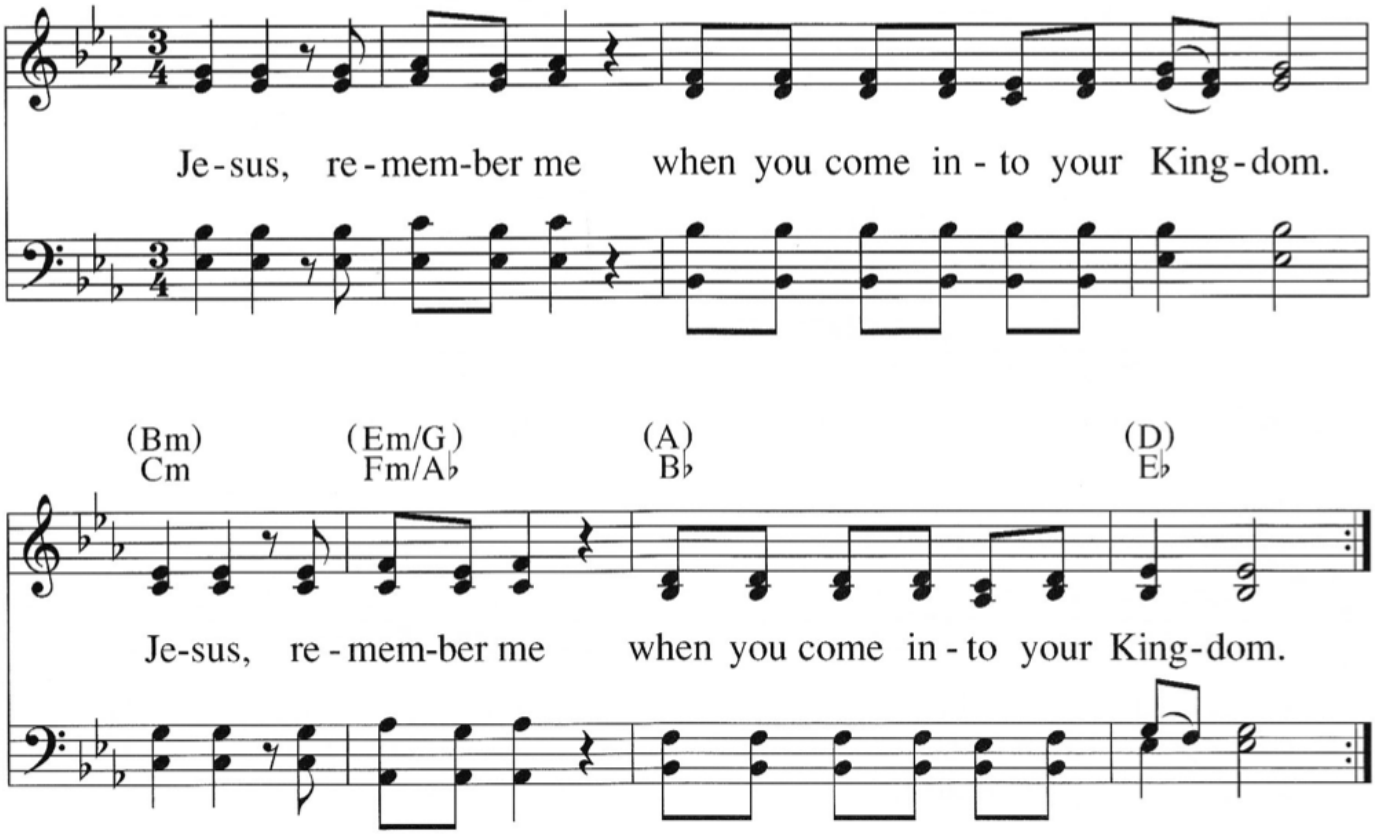
Homily/Reflection | Gregory Schuckman

Silent Meditation |

Announcements |

Please scan to give.

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





Poem | by Pamela Pruitt

God's World

If God
Did not
Love
Creation,
He would
Not have
Made
The Sun
To caress it.

If He
Did not
Love
The World,
He would
Not have
Chosen
Gracious flowers
To bless it,

If God
Did not
Love
His children,
He would not
Have
Created Us
To possess it.

Prayers of the People |

With all the faithful, let us pray to the Lord, who is our hiding place in times of trouble, who surrounds us with glad cries of deliverance. **Lord, hear our prayers.**

We pray for all who are hungry—whether hungry for power and glory or hungry for a simple meal. Show the mighty that you alone can satisfy their deepest need, and feed the poor from the abundance of your good creation. **Lord, hear our prayers.**

We pray for the church in times of trial—whether tested by tempestuous change or tempted by safety of the status quo. Give us peace when anger and fear threaten to divide us, and challenge us when we are too comfortable in this world. **Lord, hear our prayers.**

We pray for leaders in high places—whether determined to help those who suffer or distant from the cries of the oppressed. Open their eyes to see your saving power at work, and open their ears to hear your prophets' calls for justice. **Lord, hear our prayers.**

Lord God, instruct us in the way we should go and let your steadfast love surround us always; in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Officiant: Let us pray.

All: **Eternal Spirit,**
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. 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.***



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



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

Thank you for joining us today!

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PARISH CALENDAR
MARCH 17 TO MARCH 24

Sunday, March 17

8:00 am	Holy Eucharist – Old Brick
8:30 am	Breakfast – New Brick, lower level
8:45 – 9:30 am	Coffee Hour – Old Brick
9:00 am	Family Service – New Brick, upper level
9:30 – 10:15 am	Sunday School – Parish Hall & New Brick, lower levels
9:30 – 10:30 am	Bible Study – Parish Hall, conference room
9:30 – 10:30 am	Sunday Circle – Old Brick & Zoom
10:30 am	Holy Eucharist w/music – New Brick, upper level
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Virtual Coffee Hour – Zoom
12:30 – 5:30 pm	Tabernacle of David Church – Old Brick
1:30 – 4:30 pm	EFM – Parish Hall, conference room
2:00 pm	Confirmation Class – Zoom
6:00 – 7:00 pm	Taizé Vespers – New Brick, upper level
6:00 – 10:00 pm	Ministerio Embajadores M.E.J. – Parish Hall, lower level

Monday, March 18

7:00 am	Morning Prayer Livestream
7:00 pm	Centering Prayer – Old Brick & Zoom
7:00 pm	First Wednesday Fellowship Planning Meeting – Zoom

Tuesday, March 19

7:00 am	Morning Prayer Livestream
11:00 – 12:00 pm	Weekly Staff Meeting – Zoom
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Virtual Coffee Hour – Zoom
7:00 – 11:00 pm	Ministerio Embajadores M.E.J. – Parish Hall, lower level
7:15 – 8:45 pm	Theology on Tap – Frisco and the Reckless Shepherd, Columbia

Wednesday, March 20

7:00 am	Morning Prayer Livestream
10:00 – 11:00 am	Bible Study – Parish Hall, conference room
6:30 pm	Lenten Supper Series – New Brick, lower level
6:30 pm	Youth Lenten Group – Old Brick
7:00 – 8:00 pm	Adult Children of Alcoholics – Parish Hall, lower level

Thursday, March 21

8:00 am	Morning Prayer Livestream
10:45 am – 12:00 pm	Lumen Christi Rehearsal – New Brick, upper level
12:00 pm	Healing Eucharist – Old Brick
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Virtual Coffee Hour – Zoom
7:00 – 7:30 pm	Handbell Choir Rehearsal – New Brick, upper level
7:00 – 11:00 pm	Ministerio Embajadores M.E.J. – Parish Hall, lower level
7:30 – 9:00 pm	Adult Choir Rehearsal – New Brick, upper level
7:30 – 9:00 pm	Boy Scouts – New Brick, lower level

Friday, March 22

7:00 am	Morning Prayer Livestream
7:00 pm	Evening Prayer Livestream
7:30 – 9:00 pm	Book Club – Zoom
8:00 pm – 12:00 am	Tabernacle of David Church – Old Brick

Saturday, March 23

12:00 – 1:30 pm	Lumen Christi Rehearsal – New Brick, upper level
2:00 pm	AA Meeting – Parish Hall, lower level
7:00 – 11:00 pm	Ministerio Embajadores M.E.J. – Parish Hall, lower level

Sunday, March 24 – Palm Sunday

8:00 am	Holy Eucharist – Old Brick
8:30 am	Breakfast – New Brick, lower level
8:45 – 9:30 am	Coffee Hour – Old Brick
9:00 am	Family Service – New Brick, upper level
10:30 am	Holy Eucharist w/music – New Brick, upper level
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Virtual Coffee Hour – Zoom
12:30 – 5:30 pm	Tabernacle of David Church – Old Brick
4:30 – 5:30 pm	Lumen Christi Rehearsal – New Brick, upper level
6:00 – 7:30 pm	Meditations on the Passion – New Brick, upper level
6:00 – 10:00 pm	Ministerio Embajadores M.E.J. – Parish Hall, lower level

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

To submit announcements for publication,
email to communications@christchurchcolumbia.org by Tuesday evening
For a digital copy of this service leaflet with working links, etc., visit the main page of our website.

Lent V - Sunday Morning

The Fifth Sunday in Lent at Christ Church has three services, beginning with Holy Eucharist in Old Brick at 8 a.m. Our Children & Family Worship gathers at 9:00, and then Holy Eucharist with choral and musical accompaniment is at 10:30, both in New Brick. Sunday Circle continues its *Addiction and Spirituality* series in Old Brick, and Sunday School, Youth Formation, and all other Sunday gatherings also take place.

Easter Altar Flowers and Gifts

Easter Sunday is a time that we honor, remember, or give thanks for someone or a blessing in our lives by donating flowers to adorn our worship spaces as we celebrate our risen Lord. If you would like to present Altar gifts this Easter, you can find our online Easter Offering form at **https://onrealm.org/christchurchcolumbia/-/form/give/lenteaster**. Be sure to place the dedication name(s) in the *MEMO* line. There are also envelopes in the Narthex and the rear of Old Brick. You can also drop your donation in the plate on Sunday or at the Church Office during the week; include the same dedication information on the *MEMO* line of a check, please. **Email the Church Office** with any questions.

Centering Prayer - Monday Evening

Centering Prayer is a weekly evening prayer gathering that helps us be present and open to God. The daily practice of this prayer could lead to a more intimate union with God and a more powerful experience of God's presence in our lives. This active presence heals, transforms, and offers freedom and peace. Join us in Old Brick at 7:00 p.m. this Monday. **The Zoom link is here**, the Meeting ID is **875 9496 3596** and the Passcode is **Centering!**

Theology on Tap – Tuesday Evening

Gather with us for our monthly get-together, some casual and informal chat about religious topics and articles of the day at Frisco and the Reckless Shepherd, 8895 McGaw Rd. in Columbia at 7:15 p.m.

First Wednesday Fellowship Meeting - Monday Evening

In May, FWF returns and so we will hold two Zoom planning meetings to help prepare. Everyone is welcome to join us for the first meeting on Monday, March 18th at 7 p.m. and we hope you do - we'd love ideas and thoughts from

everyone so we can make the first fellowship of each month the best it can be. We will discuss any questions, ideas, concerns, activities, cuisine, and much more. **The Zoom link is here**, the Meeting ID is **865 4794 8810** and the Passcode is **Fellowship**.

Bible Study and Lunch - Wednesday Morning
Christ Church's Bible Study meets each Wednesday morning in the Conference Room of the Parish House, explore the Lectionary readings for that Sunday, and then have lunch together at a local restaurant. Wednesday Bible Study begins at 10:00 a.m. and is led by the Christ Church clergy and/or postulants.

Wednesday Evening Lenten Supper Series
Christ Church's Wednesday Evening Lenten Series, one of the most cherished traditions of our Lenten season, concludes Wednesday evening at 6:30 with a communal meal sponsored by the Christ Church Vestry and is, as is tradition, followed by a presentation by our own Father Manny. This series offers insightful discussions on our theme for this year, *Be a Joyful Gift to Others*.

Lenten Healing Eucharist - Thursday
On Thursdays, join us for midday Healing Eucharist in Old Brick, with readings, prayers, a litany for healing, and the Holy Eucharist. All are welcome to reflect, pray, and participate in a service in our beautiful, historic chapel - the oldest building of worship still in regular use in Howard County.

Christ Church Choir - Thursday Evening
Choir rehearses on Thursday evenings in New Brick and everyone is welcome to take part. No matter if you're a novice singer or a seasoned musician, there's a place for you in our Vocal or Handbell Choirs. If you're interested, please email Larissa at **music@christchurchcolumbia.org**

Movie Screening and Discussion - March 22
There will be a re-screening of the film *After Death* in the lower level of the Parish House on Friday, March 22nd at 7 p.m. The film chronicles Near-Death Experiences (NDEs) and their evidence of consciousness beyond the body. According to its maker, it's a film that "explores the afterlife based on real near-death experiences, conveyed by scientists, authors, and survivors" so bring some potluck munchies to satisfy a hungry movie crowd, and we'll all discuss the film afterward. You can view the trailer **here**.

Holy Thursday Seder Meal & Vigil Sign-Ups
The Christian observance of the Seder meal celebrates our tradition of Christ's last supper, and so on Holy Thursday, we hold a potluck before our Tenebrae service in New Brick and overnight Vigil in Old Brick. Please visit the **Seder Meal sign-up sheet link** to bring something, and then visit **the Vigil sign-up here**. If you have any questions, please speak with Fr. Manny.

Altar Guild Easter Preparations - March 30
The Christ Church Altar Guild invites all parishioners to join us in our Easter preparations. You can learn how we accomplish our tasks and help us prepare the sanctuary and altar for this most blessed time of year. Stop by New Brick on Saturday, March 30th from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Thank you!

Help Us Prepare for the Easter Egg Hunt
Just a heads-up: our Youth and Family Ministry can use hard-boiled eggs from parishioners so that we can decorate them and get them ready for the Easter Sunday Egg Hunt. Please drop off hard-boiled eggs in the couple of days leading up to Saturday, March 30th. Ask Kiona for more info on Sunday, or watch this space for more details and drop-off location next week.

Church Office Closed
Please note that the Church Office will be closed on Monday, April 1st (Easter Monday). It will reopen on Tuesday, April 2nd.

WOCC News
Thanks to everyone who helped make our Seafarers drive so successful! Next up: our day trip to London Town and Gardens on March 23rd and an April WOCC dinner meeting. You can learn more on our website's WOCC blog - **www.christchurchcolumbia.org/post/wocc-s-march-news-and-events**.

Communion to You
To connect more directly with those of you who are local and worship virtually, Christ Church offers *Communion to You,* an opportunity to have altar gifts delivered to you or made available for pickup at the Church Office. If you want more information, **please complete this form** or **email** the Church Office.

Please Support the Rector's Discretionary Fund
The RDF typically helps fulfill the needs of those in our community. There are real people with real needs that we help support, so we appeal to you to consider supporting the RDF for us to help our neighbors. **Visit our main Online Giving Form** and select "Rector's Discretionary Fund" from the *FUND* dropdown menu if you'd like to help.

Christ Church Sends Food Aid to Victims of War in Holy Land
At the March 11 Outreach Commission meeting, we approved a $500 donation to **World Central Kitchen** (WCK) to help feed starving residents of Gaza. They have been displaced by the Israel-Hamas War that began after Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7. More than a half-million people are facing "catastrophic levels of deprivation and starvation" in Gaza, according to the United Nations in a **post on Feb. 27**.

WCK has 60 kitchens across Gaza that are awaiting a food-laden barge. In **a March 12 post**, WCK says the food departed Cyprus on March 12 via a boat owned by the Spanish charity, Open Arms. The nonprofit organizations expect to reach Gazans despite immense logistical and security obstacles. It would be the first food aid to use a new maritime route, reports *The Washington Post* in a March 12 article, "**A Ship Carrying 200 Tons of Food is Heading to Gaza. What to Know**."

WCK announced **a special effort in conjunction with Ramadan**, the Muslim holy month that began this week during which the faithful worldwide engage in fasting, prayer, reflection, and community. WCK hopes to deliver 92,000 food boxes, serving 4.7 million meals. Thanks to matching funds for WCK, the Christ Church donation could provide 700 meals during Ramadan.

This is the second contribution for humanitarian aid in the Holy Land that Outreach has approved. Last November, we sent a $600 donation to **Episcopal Relief and Development** (ERD), which partnered with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem to support its hospital ministry among the Palestinians. In both instances, these are Vestry-approved funds derived from your pledges and contributions. Heartfelt thanks go out to all who make such donations possible. ERD provides **a link** to encourage prayers in a time of crisis. Please continue to pray for peace in the Holy Land.

Last Call: Columbia Community Care's 'Mystery' Dinner Is on Saturday, March 16
It's not too late to order tickets for an unusual fundraiser for **Columbia Community Care** (CCC), A mystery-themed dinner takes place on Saturday, March 16, from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, 5485 Twin Knolls Rd., Columbia MD 21045.

Go to CCC's **events page** to order tickets, which are said to be available through the day of the event. Admission is $95 for an individual or $85 for members of a group, plus online registration fees. CCC says, "$10 of each ticket will go to food and resources for students and families in Columbia." Guests must be 21 or older. Admission includes a three-course dinner, tax, gratuity, free parking, and the program. "Sinister Speakeasy" is an interactive murder-mystery game conducted by Whodunnit for Hire. It's for a good cause, as CCC provides groceries and other necessities to those in need at three distribution sites on Saturdays.

If you or someone you know could benefit, please go online to the **"I Need Help"** portion of CCC's website. Or learn how to volunteer at the sites or in other ways by visiting the **"I Can Help" portion of its website**. Look for updates on the **CCC Facebook Group**. Meanwhile, CCC has added paper goods to its list of needed essentials. Also please keep collecting diapers, baby wipes, sanitary and personal care items and adult diapers. Put these in the yellow bin, marked "CCC," inside the Parish Hall. Drop off items on weekdays when the church office is open or on Sundays. The Christ Church point of contact is Leigh Smith, who monitors the bins and delivers their contents.

Look for the FISH Bin on the Breezeway near the Parish Hall
FISH of Howard County needs non-perishable foods and toiletries, which we collect in the basket at the altar or in a marked yellow bin on the breezeway between the Parish Hall and Old Brick. **FISH** provides committed support to select families in need. The neighbors you help give thanks for all you do in their support.

In general, if you have suggestions about ways to help the community, if you want to get involved, or if you need assistance, please email Christ Church Outreach at outreach@christchurchcolumbia.org. Your help is greatly welcomed and appreciated. Thank you.



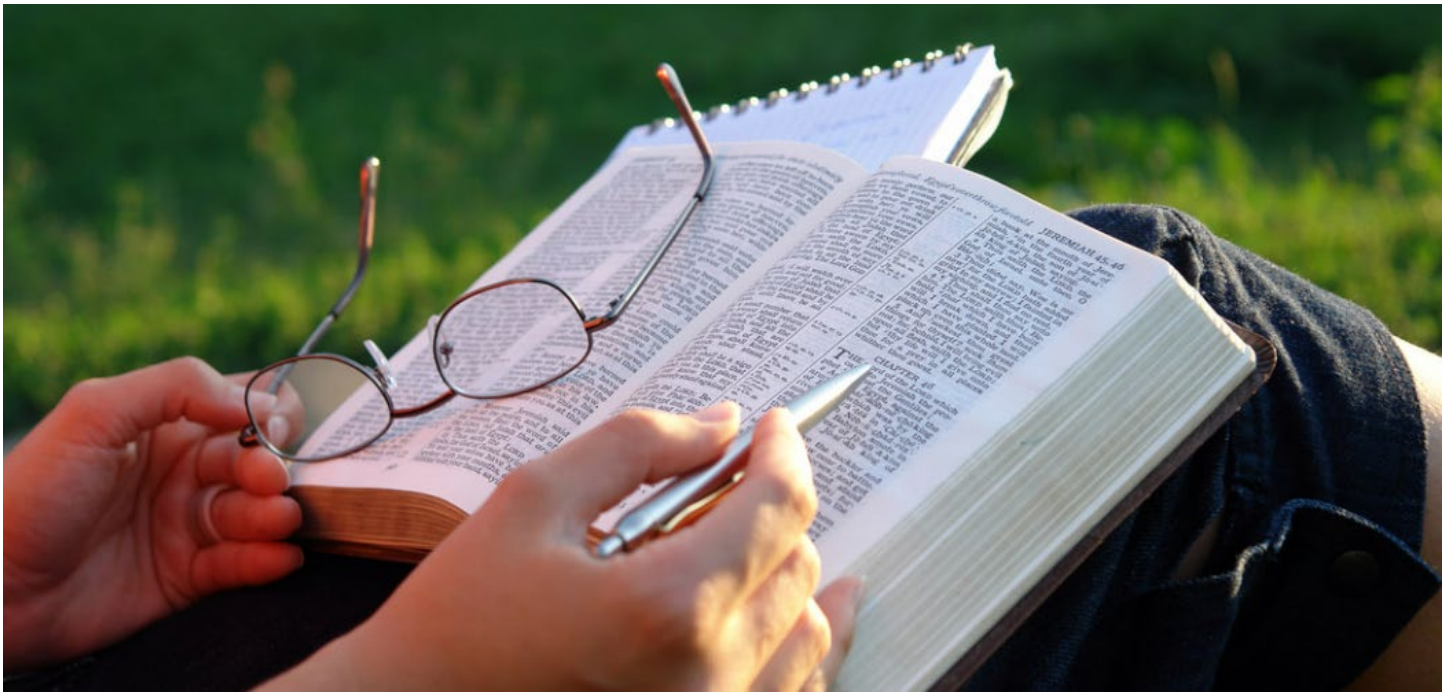
March
The Rend Collective (Christian Concert): March 17
Easter Egg Coloring & Decorating for Families with Children: March 30
Easter Egg Hunt: March 31

April
New Beginnings (Diocesan Retreat; 6th-12th Grade): April 19-21
Youth Sunday: April 28
SENIORS, Please have an outline or draft of your sermons ready by March 17th.

May
Mothers' Day Flower Arrangements & Sale: May 11

June
DreamBuilders Blitz-Building Mission Trip/Outreach: June 16-22
Mandatory for all confirmands.
$700/person. DreamBuilders and Christ Church can offer scholarships.
Please register on their **website**.

Sign up for the Youth Ministry Newsletter:
email kiona@christchurchcolumbia.org



Purposive Approach

A dear friend of mine shared a story of her new venture - she just started a blog and a podcast. "That's pretty impressive," I said to her. I will someday share with you the wonderful stories about this friend, how we met, and how she, in some profound way, shaped my life. Her modesty is such that she would decline to take any sort of credit for what has become of me. But that's just her humble nature speaking.

After sharing the news with me, she sent me the link to her blog (she's a lawyer, by the way). I clicked on the link and read it. I have since read it multiple times - mainly for the story about Pedro and Aso, two friends of hers who also shaped her life. But there's more. Her blog introduced me to a legal principle: purposive approach. That was my first experience with this principle - not that I am familiar with all legal principles, of course.

I later searched Wikipedia to learn more about purposive approach and found out that it is an attempt to go beyond the text of a legislation to determine the purpose of that legislation. In other words, it is about establishing the purpose of a particular law.

It is an approach that judges use in fleshing out the intent of the legislature, what informed the decision-making process, and - to an extent - what type of problem begs for such a legislative intervention.

I asked her if the same approach could be used in understanding scripture. Her immediate response was that yes, it can, and does in so many ways.

The first thought that came to my mind was the story of another lawyer in Luke's gospel who asked Jesus this nagging question: "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this, and you will live."

(continued)

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus then tells the Samaritan parable to help this man understand what the law invites him to do. The pure reading of the law may not readily reveal to us who our neighbor is, in fact. That is why the lawyer asked the important question, "And who is my neighbor?"

To answer this question, you have to go beyond the text. That may be the only way to chance upon the Unspoken Word of a text.

In the Samaritan story, Jesus helps the lawyer with a purposive approach to the text. He instructs him with these words: "Go, and do likewise." In other words, go and be like the Samaritan who wasn't constrained by any allegiance to a tribe, culture, religion, or even the law. Go and be like the Samaritan who understood what a purposive approach to the law looks like. Go and be like the Samaritan whom Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperative meant everything. Go and be like the Samaritan who understood the purposive construct of the law.

Purposive approach feels, to me, like the bilingual language of democracy. For starters, I think that democracy speaks only two languages. It is not English, French, Spanish, Mandarin, or even Fante, my native tongue, but it still is bilingual because it speaks the Spoken Word *and* the Unspoken Word.

All of us can, like the lawyer who went to Jesus, read and hear the Spoken Word, but someone may have to help us understand the Unspoken Word. And oftentimes, the Unspoken Word is that wound that refuses to heal, that wound which cannot be healed, that wound which only carries bandages that remind us of the tragedies of the past, those tragedies which we would prefer not to revisit.

The Spoken Word of our democracy is our Constitution and the many laws that have been passed by Congress in support of this Constitution. The Supreme Court guides any legislation deemed as not meeting the letter and the spirit of the Constitution.

One of the pieces of legislation in support of the Constitution is the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The plain reading of this legislation - the Spoken Word - may help us understand the curative nature of this legislation. The Unspoken Word is the trauma of Slavery, Jim Crow, and Systemic Racism suffered by millions of African Americans and other minority populations.

To understand the purposive approach of this legislation is to understand that a society or even an individual must embrace corrective measures. To do so is to accept that we are never perfect nor were we created to be perfect; we were created to correct ourselves and each other when we happen to make mistakes - and that the mistakes of Slavery and its attendant evils need to be corrected.

More to the point, those who were denied the right to vote can now vote, and vote freely.
There may be many, but I have yet to find someone who sincerely believes that African Americans and other minority groups do not deserve or have the right to vote. In a few months, we will be heading to the polls to elect a president, congress, state, and local elections. I would hope that if you are eligible to vote, you go ahead and vote.

If we believe that the Spoken Word of the Voting Rights Act is curative, and if we equally believe that the Unspoken Word of that legislation holds memories of a not-too-distant future that we don't want to relive, how is it that others think that weakening curative legislation serves any purpose?

"Who is my neighbor?" asked the lawyer. Jesus' response helps us to go beyond the text of the law and determine that neighbors don't come in categories.

(continued)

Trust me - we learn something new every day, and reading my friend's blog exposed me to a principle I never knew could help influence my understanding of scripture.

As Lent slowly winds down and gives way to Palm Sunday and Holy Week, we are confronted with the worst of human depravity. But the joy of the Lenten season is the stark reminder of God's ultimate purpose for each of us - despite our depravity.

And so, this Lenten season and beyond, it is my prayer that you would embrace a purposive approach to life. For it is only within that purview that you understand why God loves you, and why your value and worth to God is incalculable.

Manny+



Christ Church Conversations

Episode 7: Magician

"The magic in you isn't about trickery - it is about authenticity, it is about the ability to see all the possibilities that are available to you and dreaming to make them happen. The magic in you is the gift of bringing the dream of possibilities to life."

This week, Father Manny wonders that the magician in each of us can turn things around, bring to life our dreams and the transformation we all need to make the world a better place.

We are excited to share this episode of ***Christ Church Conversations*** with you, our podcast series! This series will take shape in many forms - audio, video, interviews, scripture-based discussions, and so much more - and you can find us on major podcast platforms. Visit our website, choose your favorite podcast format, and take this journey with us.

You can listen right now **here**, or find every episode on our website:
www.christchurchcolumbia.org/conversations



You can read the latest Vestry-approved report for January 2024 here.

From the Treasurer:

Each January, we look ahead to new opportunities, new challenges, and a new budget. Because there is some seasonality to the budget year, the first and last parts of the year tend to be our best giving months, while late summer into fall test our optimism. Rather than comparing it to January's budget, it makes more sense to compare it to last January. Last January was measured against last year's budget, so we would want to see an increase from last year in line with the increase in our year-over-year budgets.

Best Regards,
Drew

Your faithfulness is what makes life happen at Christ Church. Your faithfulness makes Christ Church stronger. Your faithfulness enables our parish to embrace, with courage, the task that God has for us. We need to remember that Christ Church is completely dependent on this faithfulness. Your beloved Christ Church counts on you and your faithful giving.

Stewardship 2024

We are so blessed to have a community of dedicated parishioners who support our ministry of faithful service, and we hope that each parishioner will prayerfully consider their contribution to Christ Church. You may pick up a pledge card in the Narthex to complete, or you can complete one electronically on our website - **www.christchurchcolumbia.org/2024-pledge**

Text Giving

You can give securely and conveniently by using your mobile phone! Simply send a text with the word **CECGIVING** to **73256**, and you'll receive a secure link to our page where you can set up a one-time or recurring gift.

Online Giving

You can also continue to pledge and give to Christ Church online. It's a safe and secure method of contributing toward your annual pledge or another offering. Whether it's a one-time donation or a recurring gift, you can go to our **overview page** for instructions and links. Signing up is fast and easy; if you need assistance doing so, or if you have any Stewardship-related questions, please contact us at **info@christchurchcolumbia.org**



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