

Christ Episcopal Church

Sparta, NC

A Home to All

Sharing God's Unconditional Love



Third Sunday of Advent
December 16, 2018 – 10:30 AM
Celebrating 20 years!

The Rt. Rev José McLoughlin
Bishop of Western North Carolina

The Rev. Stephanie E. Parker
Rector

Welcome to Christ Episcopal Church

We are delighted God has brought you to this special place. Our tradition is to invite newcomers to introduce themselves during the announcements, if they would like. Following the service, the ushers have guest cards which we hope you will fill out, so we can personally welcome you to the church community. Everyone is invited for refreshments and fellowship in the parish hall afterwards.

What do you need to know about worship? Everything you need for your worship today is in the booklet you are holding. Our service is based on the Book of Common Prayer, using music from sources including the Hymnal 1982 and Taizé.

Are you worshipping with us for the first time? We would love to get to know you! Please fill out one of the pew cards tucked into the pew in front of you. Let us know if we can call you, answer questions, or pray for you. And know that wherever you are on your journey of faith, there is a place for you at Christ Church.

Home communion visits: Do you know someone who isn't able to get to church, but would like a home communion visit? Please call the church office at 336.372.7983 to arrange a visit.

Please wear a name tag. No permanent one? Please use the blank name tags found in the church entryway. We're happy to make you a new nametag, a replacement, or simply a spare. For permanent name tags, email the church office at ccepiscopal@skybest.com.

Newsletter: Sign up today to receive our electronic newsletter, the weekly *Good News & Notes*. Email the church office at ccepiscopal@skybest.com.

Sermons Available: Recent sermons available at www.christchurchallegany.com.

Adult Formation at Christ Church includes an Adult Forum series Sunday mornings at 9:00 am in the fellowship hall downstairs.

We extend special thanks today to the following people:

Betty Upchurch, for serving as musician and for being so generous with her talents,

The Altar Guild, for providing the flowers for the altar, and the

Jeanne Green, for providing refreshments for our fellowship after the service.

The Gathering

Prelude

All stand, as able.

Processional Hymn #65

Of the Father's Love Begotten

Prepare the way, O Zion

Advent Wreath Prayers

Remain standing, as able.

Third Sunday of Advent

Leader God has called us
People **To bring Good News to the poor**
 To live with integrity.

God has called us
To heal the broken-hearted
To bring justice to the hungry.

God has called us
To hold on to what is good
To avoid every form of evil.

The Spirit of God is in us
We are people of God.

Be happy
Be holy
Rejoice in God!

Be brave
Love justice
Rejoice in God!

Be merciful
Walk wisely
Rejoice in God!

Be good
Avoid evil
Rejoice in God!

Presider: May God wrap us in integrity,
People: **Clothe us in salvation,
And adorn us with beauty and joy.**
All: **And may the blessing of God, Protector, Perfecter, and Spirit of Joy, surround us all
our nights and days. AMEN.**

We light two blue candles and one pink candle.

Remain standing, as able.

The Collect of the Day

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray,

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Wait for the Lord (*sung by all*)

Taizé Songbook #12

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart!

Wait for the Lord, His day is near.

Wait for the Lord. Be strong, take heart! (Repeat)

All are seated.

Liturgy of the Word

First Lesson

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.

The Lord, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing
as on a day of festival.
I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.
I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.
And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.
At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the Lord.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People **Thanks be to God.**

The Response
Canticle 9
Isaiah 12:2-6

BCP, page 86

Surely, it is God who saves me; *
I will trust in him and not be afraid.
For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, *
and he will be my Savior.
Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing *
from the springs of salvation.
And on that day you shall say, *
Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;

Make his deeds known among the peoples; *
see that they remember that his Name is exalted.

Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, *
and this is known in all the world.

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, *
for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Second Lesson

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand, as able.

Gospel Hymn #56, vss 1, 6-7

O come O come, Emmanuel

Presider The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

The Gospel

Luke 3:7-18

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Presider The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Sermon

The Rev. Stephanie E. Parker

A time of silence following the sermon.

Please stand, as able.

1. I be - lieve in God al - might - y, Au - thor of all things that
 2. I be - lieve that Je - sus suf - fered, scourged and scorned and cru - ci -
 3. I be - lieve in God's own Spir - it, bond - ing all the saints with-

be, Mak - er of the earth and heav - ens, Keep - er of the sky and
 died; tak - en from the cross, was bur - ied— True Life there had tru - ly
 in One church, cath - o - lic and ho - ly, where for - give - ness frees from

sea. I be - lieve in God's Son, Je - sus, now for
 died. I be - lieve that on the third day Christ was
 sin; in the bod - y's res - ur - rec - tion, for the

us both Lord and Christ, of the Spir - it and of
 raised up from the grave, then as - cend - ed to God
 break - ing of death's chain gives the life that's ev - er -

Mar - y born to bring a - bun - dant life.
 right hand. He will cōme to judge and save.
 last - ing. This the faith that I have claimed.

Prayers of the People

Prayers of the People

Intercessor God calls us to love one another; as a sign of that love, we lift our prayers to God for the needs of all people throughout the world.

We pray for the peace of the world, that our instruments of war may be transformed into instruments of peace, and that nations shall cease to learn war any more.

Silence

We pray for the church, that we may become more and more a means of grace and peace in the world.

Silence

We pray for all people of good will who seek to cast off the works of darkness, for human rights activists, peace workers, environmentalists, and for the myriads of ordinary people who in their day to day work and lives risk sharing the beauty of your truth and love with a world that does not always want to listen.

Silence

We give thanks for all of our blessings, especially...
With you, what we already have, is enough and more.

Silence

We pray for all who are in need, especially...
that we may be alert to the presence of Christ in them and ready to reach out in love.

Silence

We pray for all who have died, especially... and those you would name. And we pray for those who grieve, that they may faithfully wait upon God with confidence in that love which sustains us in every moment of our lives, even those where we sit in darkness and loss.

Silence

We pray for all assembled here today, that we may know and extend the grace and joy of being in a faith community; that we may hear the Good News of Jesus Christ and then go forth and be as Jesus to this world.

Silence

Presider We praise you, Lord our God, that you have called us to be instruments of your presence in the world. Grant us grace to discern your will and the strength and courage to do it, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Presider Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Most merciful God,
 we confess that we have sinned against you
 in thought, word, and deed,
 by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
 We have no loved you with our whole heart;
 we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
 We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
 For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
 have mercy on us and forgive us;
 that we may delight in your will,
 and walk in your ways,
 to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Presider Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

The Peace

Presider The peace of Christ be always with you.
 People And also with you.

Please greet one another in a way that is comfortable as a sign of our participation in Christ's reconciling work in the world.

Offertory *Comfort, Comfort You My People* Betty Upchurch

Doxology
*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
 praise God, all creatures here below;
 Praise God above, ye heav'nly host;
 praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

Presider All things come of thee, O Lord.
 People And of thine own have we given thee.

The Great Thanksgiving

Standing, as able.

Eucharistic Prayer 2, Enriching our Worship 1, pg. 60

Presider The Lord be with you.

All **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Because you love us, you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life and that when he shall come again in power and great love to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God,
source of life abundant.

From before time you made ready the creation.

Your Spirit moved over the deep
and brought all things into being:

sun, moon, and stars;
earth, winds, and waters;
and every living thing.

You made us in your image,
and taught us to walk in your ways.

But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away;
and yet, as a good mother cares for her children,
you would not forget us.

Time and again you called us
to live in the fullness of your love.

And so this day we join with Saints and Angels
in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity,
lifting our voices to magnify you as we sing:

Sanctus: S128 (*sung by all*)

*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.*

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Stand or kneel, as able, for Prayer of Consecration.

Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God.
To deliver us from the power of sin and death
and to reveal the riches of your grace,
you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant,
that she might conceive and bear a son,
Jesus the holy child of God.

Living among us, Jesus loved us.
He broke bread with outcasts and sinners,
healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor.
He yearned to draw all the world to himself
yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love.
Then, the time came for him to complete upon the cross
the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

On the night before he died for us,
Jesus was at table with his friends.
He took bread, gave thanks to you,
broke it, and gave it to them, and said:
“Take, eat:
This is my Body, which is given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.”

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine.
Again, he gave thanks to you,
gave it to them, and said:
“Drink this, all of you:
This is my Blood of the new Covenant,
which is poured out for you and for all
for the forgiveness of sins.
Whenever you drink it,
do this for the remembrance of me.”

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation,
and remembering Christ, crucified and risen,
who was and is and is to come,
we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine,
and ourselves, a living sacrifice.
Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts
that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ.

Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth
and make us your new creation,

the Body of Christ given for the world you have made.
In the fullness of time bring us,
with all your saints,
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
to feast at the banquet prepared
from the foundation of the world.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray,

**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.**

Fraction Anthem: S154 (*sung by all*)

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
therefore let us keep the feast.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

The Invitation to Communion

Presider: The gifts of God for the People of God; God's holy food, for God's holy people.

All who seek God and are drawn to Christ are welcome at the Lord's Table.

If you are gluten allergic, please ask for a rice wafer at the distribution.

Communion Music:

Betty Upchurch

Surely the Presence of the Lord

*Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place,
I can feel His mighty power and His grace,
I can hear the brush of angels' wings,
I see glory on each face.
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.*

Stand or sit, as able.

Post Communion Prayer

BCP 365

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing

May God who conquered darkness with light,
give peace to you.

May God who conquered death with life,
give peace to you.

May God who conquered loneliness with love,
give peace to you.

And the Blessing of God Almighty, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, be upon you and
remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

Recessional Hymn #59

Hark a thrilling voice is sounding

The Dismissal

Presider Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia.

People Thanks be to God, Alleluia, alleluia.

Postlude

Prayer List

Intercessions: Ben D., Chuck B., Jann B., Jim D., Jon, Julie O., Laura D., Linda W., Stella D., and Ted Y.

Departed:

Birthdays: Martha Honaker (Dec 18), Judy Ritchie (Dec 18)

Wedding Anniversaries:

Coming Lessons

Micah 5:2-5a
 Hebrews 10:5-10
 Luke 1:39-55
 Psalm 80:1-7

The Following People are Assisting with the Services

Role	This Sunday	Next Sunday
Altar Guild	Bruce Smith	Louise Law
Chalistic I	Bruce Smith	Frances Buckle
Chalistic II	Nancy Wilson	Bruce Smith
Crucifer	Nancy Wilson	Bruce Smith
Lector I	Bruce Smith	Louise Law
Lector II	Phil Donaldson	Cynthia Grant
Prayers of the People	Bruce Smith	Louise Law
Oblations Bearers	Phil & Deb Donaldson	Louise Law
Greeters/Ushers	Hal Wilson & Phil Donaldson	Cynthia Grant & Jann Boggs
Book Bearer	Bruce Smith	Frances Buckle
Sanctus Bell	Nancy Wilson	Bruce Smith

Schedule

Sunday, December 16 – Third Sunday of Advent

9:00 am – Adult Forum

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, December 19

10:00 am – Holy Eucharist

12:30 – Vestry meeting

Sunday, December 23 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:00 am – Adult Forum

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist

Monday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

9:00 pm – Christmas Eve service

Tuesday, December 25 – Wednesday, December 26 – the Church Office will be closed.

Announcements

Upcoming opportunities to enjoy some Food & Fellowship:

December 23rd - We observe the fourth Sunday of Advent on this date and will be decorating the sanctuary for Christmas immediately following the morning service. The members of the Food & Fellowship team will bring sandwiches, drinks and cookies into the sanctuary to enjoy while we work together to transform Christ Church into the Spirit of Christmas. Please join us for this annual fellowship opportunity NEXT Sunday.

December 30th - We will end 2018 with another soup luncheon while breaking bread together. Many thanks to Deb Donaldson for making this lunch possible.

Mountain Soul presents The Faithful Four on Sunday, December 30th at 6:00 pm. *Read the GN&N for more details.*

Food & Fellowship Person of the Month for December is: Marybeth Lentz. She can be reached by telephone at 336.657.7088 or by email at mlentz@skybest.com.

Vestry Person of the Month for December is: Sheila Pfaender. She can be reached by telephone at 336.200.1164 or by email at sspfaender@gmail.com.

For any building or property issues, please contact: Phil Donaldson with your concerns.

Christ Episcopal Church
2543 US Highway 21 South, PO Box 1866
Sparta, North Carolina 28675

Office: 336-372-7983; Rector cellphone: 336-363-4141

Email: ccepiscopal@skybest.com

Website: christchurchallegghany.org

Office hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-1:30 pm

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Prayers of the People adapted from Intercession for God's People. Gail Runshaw.

Today's bulletins are printed in color due to an anonymous donation.