

# ***Christ Church***

## ***Good News and Notes***

**\* Please note that all new items for this edition are in red**

**Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!**

*...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.*

As I sit here, snowbound on the farm, I am ever aware of how even a short period in captivity can begin to play with the mind and it has only been four days! What began as a nice respite from the constant busy-ness of life is now, just a few short days later, become a maddening problem—oh to be free!

But, while my captivity is due to no fault of my own and does have an end in sight whether it feels like that or not, the people of Israel were in a long captivity in which no end was in sight and it was their own arrogance and hubris, or at least the arrogance and hubris of the kings they demanded from God, that had landed them far away from home, in a strange land, as captives. They were a people in lament.

As I said in my message last week, captivity and lament are deep themes of Advent. We are not in bondage to a foreign king, but we are held captive in so many other ways. We are captive to loneliness, to grief, we are held in bondage to old resentments, unhealthy behaviors, anger, worry...the laundry list is so long. Often our hearts and minds are trapped in a lament so long held that it has simply become a part of who we are. We are our pain, we are our own jailers.

Advent is also a time of hopefulness. As God watched the people in anguish, the heart of God could not bear it. Their longing and sorrow penetrated the Holy and God's promise of return was and still is ever present. Advent is a time when, no matter how deep the wound, or disabling the injury, God's longing for us to be free joins with our own, and new things—new acts of grace, the unfreezing of our fears, the release of our shame—are promised.

God cannot reach us in our pride or when our strength of will is working against God's hope. When we finally break, we can trust in God's promise and break open to new possibilities, new peace, new understanding.

Like Dorothy, who believes she is captive in Oz, the key to the freedom she seeks was hers all along. We too are a people already free, whole and capable of so much joy and love. That is precisely how God formed us. We were born out of God's cosmic explosion of love that was so vast and unstoppable that it is still creating today. Advent reminds us that the unfathomable depths of God's creation contain the seeds of promise. In God's eyes, we are beautiful and perfect.

As long as we can still love and have compassion for others, the world, which feels utterly tilted on its axis at times, will right itself. And in the beautiful mystery of God, something unique, something that makes you and the world a better place, can evolve out of our pain.

On the Third Sunday of Advent, we have the tradition of lighting a rose candle instead of the blue. God's promise through the prophet Zephaniah is a perfect choice to remind us that into the shadows of life, God's promise of hope and renewal are always breaking in. This rose candle is the visible symbol that tells us that God's joy is always throbbing through creation as a bulwark against our worst fears.

This is powerful stuff. This is the Key to the Kingdom, the Ruby Slippers, the road map out of wherever we are held in exile. Advent is our invitation to be restored, set free from shame and whatever ails, and come home to the heart of God's promise. God is still calling: please come home.

*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.*

Wishing You a Blessed Advent,  
Stephanie+

\* \* \*

**We did it! We surpassed our goal of 30 and helped 35 children for Christmas this year and got all the gifts wrapped & delivered before the big snow storm!**



What a joyous, festive, busy time we had last Friday wrapping gifts for the children we sponsored for Christmas this year! It was a true blessing to see our parish come together and extend this act of love toward our community, and it means that over 35 local children will have gifts this Christmas. To all who brought wrapped gifts to donate...thank you! And to all who made donations to sponsor children so that gifts could be purchased...thank you! An overwhelming amount of gratitude goes to **Cynthia Grant** for coordinating this and for being the "buyer" of the bulk of the gifts. Cynthia, we appreciate all your time and energy spent to bring this to fruition! And a special thank you goes out to **Phil & Deb Donaldson** for being the delivery people once we had all the gifts wrapped. What a wonderful way to kick off the holiday season!

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## **Inclement Weather REMINDERS**



When the weather outside is frightful...watch Channel 12 WXII for any delays or cancellations of our services. And be alert to phone messages or emails letting you know about the same. If you did NOT receive notification of this past Sunday's inclement weather cancellation of services, please contact the church office at [ccepiscopal@skybest.com](mailto:ccepiscopal@skybest.com) and have your name added to our call tree.

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## Altar Guild



The ministry of the Altar Guild is the preparing of our place for worship, in particular for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Members are responsible for setting the altar for each service and making sure the linens, silver, and brass are presentable. *Have you considered joining the Altar Guild?*

**The Altar Guild will meet January 9, 2019 at 11:30 AM in the sanctuary.** If you have interest in becoming an altar guild member, please plan to attend this gathering. Those of us who serve in this ministry find it very meaningful. You will be most welcomed!

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**The 2019 Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, January 20<sup>th</sup> following morning services**

All Ministry Team Chairs are asked to *email* their 2018 reports to the church office for inclusion in the Annual Meeting Report. **Reports are due no later than Monday, January 7<sup>th</sup>.** End-of-year ministry team accounting statements will be in your box on December 31<sup>st</sup> but if you'd like your to-date statement now to help with your report, please email Mary at the office

and she'll get that to you. If you have any questions, please email the church office at [ccepiscopeal@skybest.com](mailto:ccepiscopeal@skybest.com) or email Stephanie at [revsteph@skybest.com](mailto:revsteph@skybest.com).

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## **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.



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

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## **Have you been looking for our Elijah in downtown Sparta and couldn't find him??**

I have! And as it turns out, Elijah has had a couple of falls. We're happy to report he's not suffered any broken bones but his flowers didn't make it. Thanks to the watchful eye of Jann & Vilder Boggs, Elijah has been put back up twice and is very secure now! They also replaced his flowers so we can continue to encourage peace as this Christmas season progresses!





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**Mountain Soul presents The Faithful Four on Sunday,  
December 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm!**



The Faithful Four found its origin in the mid-1990s, when all four of the members were part of the New Covenant Baptist Association Youth Choir of North Carolina and Virginia. Then teenagers, Jeff, Ronalda, Derek and Daryl began singing together for “fun” which eventually led to singing in church services together as a group. The youngsters often practiced outside “under a tree” prior to engagements, as they were not yet old enough to provide their own transportation and schedule rehearsals. In many instances, the group would be called on to sing without notice. However, the enthusiastic and willing young people would always jump at the opportunity to glorify God in song. After several months, it was evident that they were an established “quartet” and needed a name. “The Faithful Four” seemed fitting as the high school students were always in church and were often called on—and willing—to sing!

Over the years, as those young teens grew into adulthood—graduating high school, attending college, and beginning their own families—they continued to sing and minister for various engagements. The group has been called to sing at many churches and venues in and around Sparta, N.C. and Galax, VA. The Faithful Four has also ministered in Albemarle, N.C., Bunn, N.C., Mount Airy, N.C., Wilkesboro, N.C., Wilson, N.C., Winston-Salem, N.C., Concord, N.C., Kimball, W.V. and Dublin, VA, to name a few.

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## End-of-Year Gifts and Reimbursements NOTICE!

As hard as it is to believe, we're now in the last month of 2018! End-of-year reports are beginning to take shape, and in keeping with that task, we ask that you **turn in all receipts for reimbursement no later than Monday, December 17<sup>th</sup> and make your end-of-year gifts no later than Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>**. This will allow us to complete the necessary end-of-year financial reports as well as finalize your 2018 contribution statements in a timely manner.

This year, we *emailed* your pledge/payments statement last week on Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup>; this will include all gifts made *through the end of November*.

**Your 2018 end-of-year contribution statement will be mailed to you after December 31<sup>st</sup>.**

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## Christ Church T-shirts are for sale!



**Front**



**Back**

We have Christ Church t-shirts for sale - \$15/shirt. The sizes we have left are L – 3X. If you're interested in purchasing a shirt, stop by the church



office during business hours and Mary will be glad to sell you a shirt. Cash or checks only.

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**Go to [www.authenticallleghany.com](http://www.authenticallleghany.com) for events happening in Alleghany County!**

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## **Ongoing Items Needed for the Food Closet**



### **The Food Closet needs:**

white rice (1 lb.)  
dry pintos (1 lb.)  
spaghetti (1 lb.)  
spaghetti sauce  
peanut butter  
canned soup (tomato, chicken)

**Any dry/can good you wish to donate will be appreciated.**

### **Personal items are always needed too:**

shampoo  
soap [laundry, dish soap, personal soap]  
toilet paper  
toothpaste etc.

Please put your donated items in the Food Closet wagon at the Church.

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

**Departed:**

**Birthdays:** Joe Smyrski (Dec 15), Martha Honaker (Dec 18), Judy Ritchie (Dec 18)

**Wedding Anniversaries and Other Thanksgivings:**

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## Schedule



### **Thursday, December 13**

1:00 pm – Finance Team meeting

### **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 pm – Vestry meeting

### **Sunday, December 23 – Fourth Sunday of Advent**

9:00 am – Adult Forum

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist

Christmas Decoration and lunch following the service

### **Monday, December 24 – Christmas Eve**

9:00 pm – Christmas Eve service

### **Tuesday, December 25 and Wednesday, December 26**

Church Office will be closed

**Wednesday, December 26**

No morning service

**Sunday, December 30 – First Sunday of Christmas**

No Adult Forum

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist

Soup Sunday immediately following the service

6:00 pm – Mountain Soul presents The Faithful Four

**Tuesday, January 1 – New Year's Day**

Church Office will be closed

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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](mailto:mlentz@skybest.com).



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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](mailto:sspfaender@gmail.com).



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**If you have any questions regarding anything building or grounds related, please contact Phil Donaldson with your concern. He can be reached at 336.372.7573.**



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**For Urgent Prayer Requests...**

...contact Gary Medley. Please be sure to get permission to share any details for the prayers. Also, if you would like to be listed as an Urgent Prayer Partner, please let Gary now.

Great thanks & peace, Gary Medley



[gapdweller@gmail.com](mailto:gapdweller@gmail.com)  
336.372.7464

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**Please continue to donate your empty prescription pill bottles!**



Please continue to recycle your prescription bottles with lids and with the labels pulled off. The recycling box for the bottles is on the floor between the mail slots and the Information table.

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## Outside our Walls...



The **Camerata Concert** has been **rescheduled to next Tuesday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at the First Christian Church in Galax, VA beginning at 7:30 pm.** Our own Jann Boggs is part of the Camerata and the music is lovely so make plans to attend if you're able.



**Authentically Alleghany has posted a number of holiday events in the county...here's their list:**

**December 13, 2018**

Trivia Night- Laconia Ale Works  
433 North Main St.  
6:00 PM



Milk & Cookies with Santa!  
214 Glade Valley Church Rd.  
6:00 PM-8:00 PM

Resilience Documentary  
115 Atwood Street  
12:00 PM OR 6:00 PM

Open Mic Night  
60 South Main St.  
7:00 PM

**December 14, 2018**

Nice to Rice Soup Dinner  
559 Piney Creek School Rd.  
5:00 PM

Santa Clause is Coming to Town- Luke's Place, LLC  
1204 US Hwy 21 South  
6:45 PM

William Massey- Laconia Ale Works  
433 North Main Street  
7:00 PM

Ugly Christmas Pajama Party- Blue Ridge Grill  
583 South Main St.  
7:00 PM

Chad Barnard- Muddy Creek Cafe  
60 South Main St.  
8:00 PM

**December 15, 2018**

Happy Holly Days Reception- Alleghany County Library  
115 Atwood Street  
11:00 AM

Backwoods Bean Annual Holiday Gala Dinner  
21 North Main St.  
5:00 PM

Karlie Keeper- Alleghany Jubilee  
25 North Main St.  
6:00 PM

XcentriX- Muddy Creek Cafe  
60 South Main St.  
8:00 PM

**December 17, 2018**

December Lunch Brunch- Alleghany Extension Office  
90 South Main St  
2:00 PM

**December 18, 2018**

**Camerata Concert RESCHEDULED** – First Christian Church  
402 North Jefferson St, Galax, VA  
7:30 PM

**December 20, 2018**

Trivia Night- Laconia Ale Works  
433 North Main St.  
6:00 PM

Open Mic Night- Muddy Creek Cafe  
60 South Main St.  
8:00 PM

**December 21, 2018**

Polar Express- Luke's Place, LLC  
1204 US Hwy 21 South  
6:45 PM

Dallas Danger- Laconia Ale Works  
433 North Main St.  
7:00 PM

**December 22, 2018**

Gingerbread House Event- Becca's Backwoods Bean  
21 North Main St.  
9:00 AM

JAM CD Release Party- Alleghany Jubilee  
25 North Main St.  
6:00 PM

## Happy Holidays from Alleghany County, NC!

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### Prayer Requests from the staff and prisoners at River North Correctional Center, Independence, VA.



Thank God that God has given me another day to repent my sins.-AR

I ask God to continue to bless me by opening up new doors in my life and humble me and answer my brothers and sisters prayers. Love always.-MB

God, my heart strains with sadness. My soul cries in pain. My sadness is deep. So hurtful that my physical body no longer has expression. My eyes no longer shed tears. My mouth no longer has words to pray. Jesus help me.-J

Pray for my three sons and my family, the RN church and guests and for the word that is given today, the prayer team, and the world. May God bless us all. Whatever God does is best. Love always. -SC

Pray for all my Christian brothers here at RN. Pray that we are able to serve the Lord no matter where the Lord has us go.-DH

Lord keep us in Your watchful eye, hold us in Your mighty hand, and embrace us in Your tender mercy. Amen.-IH

Pray for the nation and its leaders. Pray for the nation to have a wide revival. Pray for our families.

Pray for my family.-LN

Pray for unity of purposes in the bottom and for worship of love.

Pray for the sick that need the word of God blessing in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.-CW

Pray for all of God's children to see the light and walk the righteous path God has for us. God bless.-KG

Pray for the RN family of believers; for all our families, friends, and loved ones this holiday season; for the men and women fighting for our freedoms; for all the offenders who just came to Christ so that they may receive the guidance of the Spirit.-NW

I cannot ask for anything because I have been blest so much by God. Amen. Sending God's blessing to others.-TH

Pray for my sister as she needs them. I have been blest by God by so many things. I am so happy I have God in my life.-DF

Pray for the men and women serving overseas fighting for our country. Pray for their families. Pray for all those that are lost; for those that are searching; for those stumbling down the path.-CD

As God smiles down upon us there are still things I would like to ask for the church to pray dealing with me. Pray for attention to my father. He is dealing with an ailment that has him incapacitated. He has heart problems. Pray for my father.-DH

I just want to thank the Lord Jesus for my family and friends and for the great mercy toward us. Pray that not only my brothers but all the lost will open their eyes and be wise about their salvation.

Pray for the chaplain, all the volunteers and their families throughout the holidays.-JS

Pray for those on the outskirts of society looking in at our holiday celebrations that they may be invited in and included.

Thanks Lord for this day, yesterday, and the days to come. Pray that I know I can put all my trust, belief, and faith in God and that all things work for good. Thank You Jesus for all things and being in the house of the Lord today. Amen.

Help me with my unbelief that I may find peace in the Lord.-EC

Pray for my family and children and help my father get past the loss of my mom. Help all men to come into Your fold.-KS

Pray for me, my brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, mom with cancer, uncles, aunts, friends, and for my federal habeas to go through.-JO

Pray for all. God is good.

God I ask You to forgive me and for my family.

Help me with my unbelief that I may find peace in the lord.-EC

God thank You for never forsaking me and just loving me and my family and the church. Amen.

God, thanks for all my brothers in Christ Jesus and for all the blessings You have for my brothers. Thank You for the new year.

Help me to pray for my family and myself. Pray for my case. I have faith that something better will come. Thanks and God bless you.

Pray for baby – who is sick and in the hospital. Pray for my family, friends, brothers and sisters in Christ, the volunteers, the ones who are lost and those saved, my children and me.-DR

Pray for me that I stay strong and through my studies the Lord reveals the scriptures and the messages. Pray for the sick, the weak, the poor, and the lost souls.

Give thanks for a new full year of blessings for all my family. Pray for our nation and our leaders, the homeless and the lost.-HO

Pray God will bless me to get a job.-WB

Pray for all, the mind, body, and souls. Amen.

I pray I do not transfer until after Christmas. I pray that God's will be done.

Pray for all the troops, police officers, firefighters, cab drivers, pizza delivers, those on death row, and everybody else that is alive on this earth.-MJ

I am asking for prayers for strength to stay strong and I ask for God's hand to guide my family through these troubles.

Pray for all.

Pray for my family that God will protect them. Pray for me and that God will keep you. FS

Pray for kids and family and that I continue to do God's bidding. Stay strong and true in God's name.

I just want to thank You Lord.

God open peoples' eyes so that they can see Jesus for whom God really is. God in the flesh and they will turn from their sins and turn to Christ. Amen.-YF

Prayers to all at RN.-WG

Hey church, this is – and I need a prayer for my weakness, for my emotions and my faith that God will working in my life.

Pray for my health and that I am able to sleep better.-JC

Thank You Lord. Remove all the problems from my life. Keep me safe and away from trouble. Watch over my family and friends. Protect them.-MS

Lord I ask that You continue to give me strength. Keep a shield of protection around my family. I ask that you pray for my wife and I to have good communication with her and work together to raise our children. Bless loved ones, family.-LW

Glory be to God. Prayers for all those who lift up in our prayers.

Thank You Lord for waking me up this morning. Now Lord let us pray for all of us here at RN.



Pray for our families and overcoming my situations we are in.

Lord, I come to You this morning to thank You for everything that You allow me to have. I ask You for protection for all those who love and for those who not love. In the name of Jesus I pray. Amen.-RJ

Pray for my families and friends and pray for the desire of their heart and for the people that have need of God. Thank You. God bless.

Pray for the lost, unsaved folks at RN and all who are not connected to God.

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- Church Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8:30 am to 1:30 pm.
- The *Good News & Notes* is updated/reviewed/finalized on Wednesdays prior to being emailed on Thursdays. If you have a submission, please make sure you email it to Mary **no later than Wednesday at noon.**