

Christ Episcopal Church

Sparta, NC

*Christ Church is an active, joyful, transforming, faith community that practices radical welcome.
Together we feed our minds, souls, and bodies with study, worship, and hospitality.
We are a growing fellowship of people who seek to love like Jesus.*



Third Sunday of Advent

December 13, 2020 – 10:30 AM

The Rt. Rev José McLoughlin
Bishop of Western North Carolina

The Rev. Mike Tanner
Guest Presider

Jann Boggs
Senior Warden

Welcome to Christ Episcopal Church

We are delighted God has brought you to this special place.

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 email our office at ccepisopal@skybest.com with your name and contact information, and 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.

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

We extend special thanks today to:

The Rev Mike Tanner, for leading us in worship this morning,

Laura Davis, for serving as musician and for being so generous with her talents, and

The Altar Guild, for providing the arrangement at the altar.

Social media: Please join us for online worship by visiting our Facebook page or our YouTube page at Church Episcopal Church – Sparta, North Carolina.

And for more information about Christ Church, please visit our website – christchurchallegghany.com.

Christ Episcopal Church
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Email: ccepisopal@skybest.com
Website: christchurchallegghany.org
Office hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 am – 12:30 pm
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The Gathering

Prelude

Laura Davis

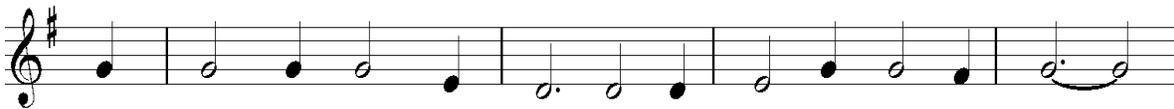
Announcements

Processional Hymn #65

Prepare the way, O Zion



1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!
2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.
3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sa - vior's rule em - brace.



Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.
His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.
His tid - ings of sal - va - tion pro - claim in ev - ery place.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.
Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.
All lands will bow be - fore him, their voic - es will a - dore him.



Oh, blest is Christ that came in God's most ho - ly name.

Please stand, as able.

Prayers at the Lighting of the Advent Candle

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!

Leader May God wrap us in integrity,
clothe us in salvation,
and adorn us with beauty and joy.
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.

Please remain standing, as able.

Opening Acclamation

Presider Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
People And blessed be God's kingdom now and for ever. Amen.

The Collect

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.**

Please be seated.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;

all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

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

The Response

Psalm 126

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, *
then were we like those who dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, *
and our tongue with shouts of joy.

Then they said among the nations, *
"The LORD has done great things for them."

The LORD has done great things for us, *
and we are glad indeed.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD, *
like the watercourses of the Negev.

Those who sowed with tears *
will reap with songs of joy.

Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, *
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

The Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

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

People **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand, as you are able, for the Gospel.

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

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

The Gospel

John 1:6-8,19-28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Presider The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Please be seated.

The Sermon

The Reverend Mike Tanner

A time of silence following the sermon.

Please stand, as able, for the Nicene Creed.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven:

by the power of the Holy Spirit

he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again

in accordance with the Scriptures;

he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Remain standing or kneel, as able.

Prayers of the People

Leader Let us pray for the Church and for the world.
 Create in us a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right Spirit within us. Remind
 us of the joy of your salvation and sustain us with your love and grace.

God of Forgiveness and Compassion,
Thank you for your mercy.

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in
their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation, especially...

God of Forgiveness and Compassion,
Thank you for your mercy.

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may
honor one another and all people, friend and enemy, and serve the common good. We pray
especially for the health of the global economy and for all people who are suffering the pain of
poverty, war and violence.

God of Forgiveness and Compassion,
Thank you for your mercy.

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we
pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom, especially...

God of Forgiveness and Compassion,
Thank you for your mercy.

Open our eyes to see the destruction we cause by our careless consumption; open our ears to hear
the groaning of all creation and the cries of your creatures without voice; open our hearts to feel
remorse for our unfaithful care of your creation; inspire us to a greater love and wonder for the
care of your natural world.

God of Forgiveness and Compassion,
Thank you for your mercy.

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and
love one another as he loves us, especially...

God of Forgiveness and Compassion,
Thank you for your mercy.

We thank you for all the blessings of this life, especially...

God of Forgiveness and Compassion,
Thank you for your mercy.

Presider O God, mercifully hear the prayers of your people who call upon you; grant that we
 may both see and know the things we need to do and that we may also have the
 grace and courage to do them faithfully, through Jesus 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 not 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 be seated.

Offertory Music

Laura Davis

Please stand, as able.

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

The Great Thanksgiving

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

Presider The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Presider Lift up your hearts.
People We lift them to the Lord.

Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph 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 mother cares for her children,
you would not forget us.
Time and again you called us
to live in the fullness of your love.

Because you gave Jesus Christ, your only Son,
to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us
heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall
come again in power and great triumph to judge
the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to
behold his appearing. 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 [say]:

Sanctus: S125

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

Hosanna in the highest.

Hosanna in the highest.

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

Hosanna in the highest.

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 reveal the depths of your forgiveness
as he gave himself freely to death on the cross,
offering the sacrifice of his life, that we might be free to love completely.

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 in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

Fraction Anthem: S154 *(said by all)*

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

The Invitation to Communion

Presider Jesus, our Advent hope, we come to this table as your Body: those of us gathered here and those who are sheltered in safety. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, unite us and feed us with your presence.

People Beloved Jesus,
I believe that you are present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, come spiritually into my heart. I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you. Let me never be separated from you in this life or in the life to come. Amen. *

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

Communion Music

Laura Davis

Please stand or kneel, as able.

Post Communion Prayer

BCP 365

Presider Let us pray,

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.**

Please stand, as able.

The Dismissal

Presider Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God!**

Postlude

Laura Davis

Prayer List

Intercessions: Amy Jones, Ben & Laura Davis, Brenda Weems, Chuck & Sally Besaw, Donna Hohnstein (Jann Bogg's cousin), Frank Withrow (Laura Davis' brother-in-law), Jann Boggs, Jean Callison, Jonathan, Julie Ottesen, Laura, Lorene Ramsey, Margaret Blanck, Marybeth Lentz, Martha Willie Coleman, Nancy Meredith (Laura Davis' sister), Sandra, and Smitty Hughes (Chuck Besaw's friend). Also, pray for all those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and all the natural disasters around the world. And we pray for Christ Church, its leadership & ministry teams.

Departed:

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

Wedding Anniversaries & Thanksgivings:

Coming Lessons

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38

Schedule

Sunday, December 13 – The Third Sunday of Advent (recorded)

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist with The Rev Mike Tanner – via YouTube & Facebook

Sunday, December 20 – The Fourth Sunday of Advent (recorded)

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist with The Rev Martha Honaker – via YouTube & Facebook

Thursday, December 24 – Christmas Eve (recorded)

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist with The Rev Martha Honaker – via YouTube & Facebook

Announcements

Office and Church Guidelines during Phase III of COVID-19:

As you know, our in-person services are suspended for now. We will hope, along with you, that the Governor will be able to increase our indoor numbers back to 25. We will keep you posted! Meanwhile, all other COVID-19 restrictions remain in place here.

Scheduling update...

The Vestry met on Wednesday, December 2nd, and after discussion decided to suspend Morning Prayer services as an offering for worship beginning December 4th until further notice. We will continue to record services with supply clergy twice a month for the foreseeable future. The schedule will be updated in the bulletin and in the weekly Good News & Notes.

The Church Office has moved upstairs to the former Rector's office, and the entire downstairs is closed until further notice due to mold/mildew. Signs are on the Parish Hall doors directing parishioners and visitors to the red door upstairs to access the church.

Please read the Good News & Notes weekly for more updates.