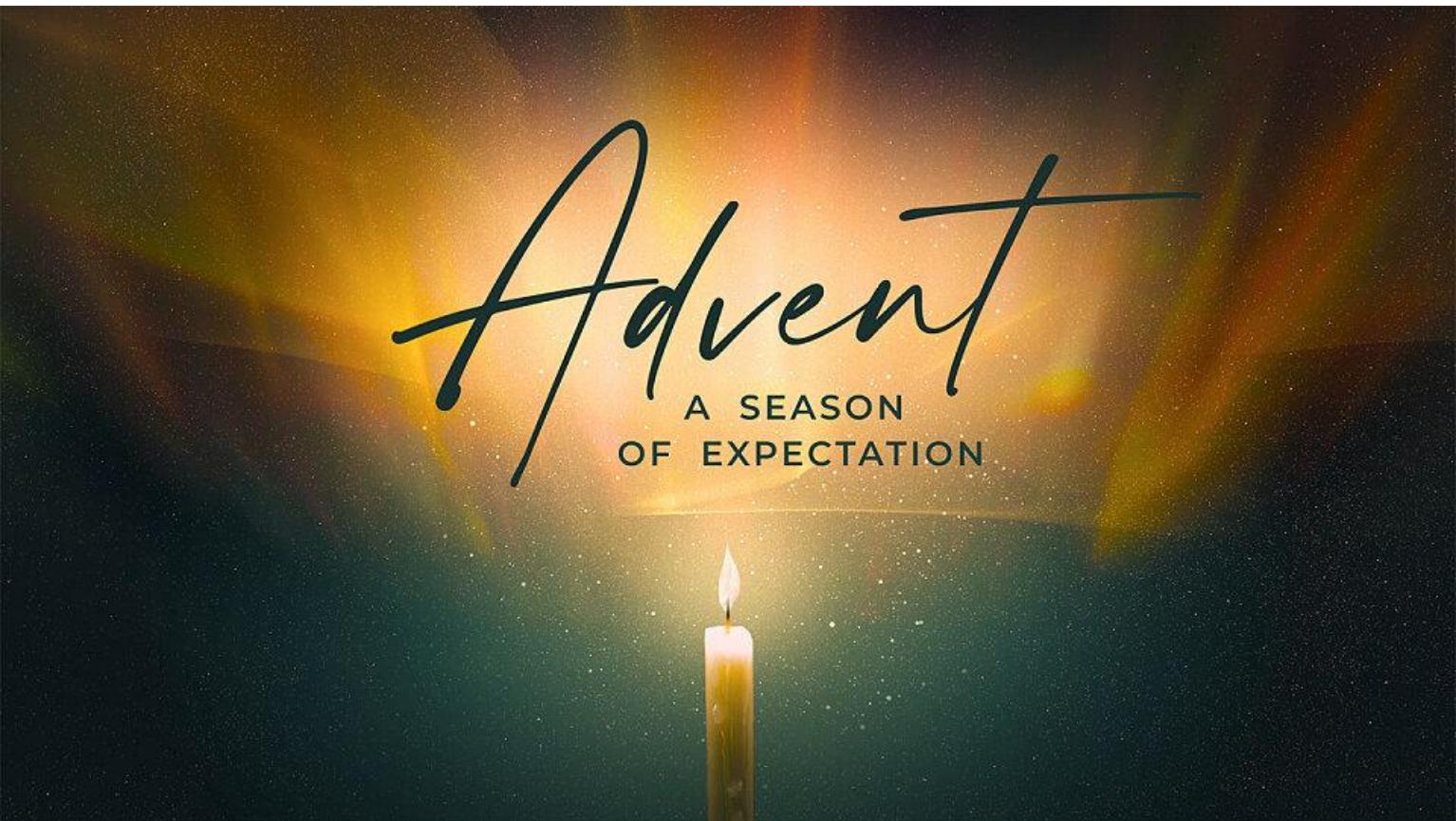


Christ Episcopal Church
Sparta, NC

A home to all sharing God's unconditional love.



Advent
A SEASON
OF EXPECTATION

Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 21, 2025

The Rt. Rev José McLoughlin
Bishop of Western North Carolina

The Rev Karla Woggon
Priest in Charge

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 worshiping with us for the first time? We would love to get to know you! Please email our office at christchurchspartanc@gmail.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 christchurchspartanc@gmail.com.

Do you need prayer? We have an active prayer ministry here at Christ Church. If prayer would be helpful to you, please fill out a prayer request card (found in the pew back), making sure you include your name and contact information (email and/or phone). We'll include you in our weekly prayers. Just complete the card & put it in the offering plate during the Offertory or share your request with the greeter.

We extend special thanks today to:

Jonathan Halsey for serving as musician and for being so generous with his talents.

Please enter the Sanctuary in silence to respect those who are preparing for worship. Save conversations, whispered or out loud, for outside or Coffee Hour.

Please silence your cell phone, too.

Social media:

For more information about Christ Church, please visit our website –
www.christchurchalleghany.org

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Website: www.christchurchalleghany.org

Online giving link: <https://onrealm.org/CCEpiscopal/give/now>

Office hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:00 am – 1:00 pm

Music used by permission CCLI License #11138616

The Gathering

Prelude

Jonathan Halsey

Announcements

John Franck

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Rod Pace & Louise Law

As we light this candle of love, we thank You for sending Your Son, a gift of unconditional love. Let Your love fill our hearts this season and help us to love others as You have loved us. May Your love guide us and shine brightly through us in all we do. **Amen.**

We light the pink and three blue candles.

Please stand, as able.

Processional Hymn #56

O come, O come, Emmanuel

Remain standing, as able.

Opening Acclamation

Celebrant Blessed are you, holy and living One.

People You come to your people and set them free.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Kyrie: S96 (*sung by all*)

The musical notation consists of two staves of music in G major (two sharps) and common time. The top staff is for the soprano and the bottom staff is for the bass. The lyrics are as follows:

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.
Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy. Lord,
Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy. Lord,
 Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy, have mer - cy.
 Lord, have mer - cy, have mer - cy.

The Collect

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray,

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

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

People **Thanks be to God.**

The Response: Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *
 shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *
 stir up your strength and come to help us.

Restore us, O God of hosts; *
 show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

O LORD God of hosts, *
 **how long will you be angered
 despite the prayers of your people?**

You have fed them with the bread of tears; *
 you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

You have made us the derision of our neighbors, *
 and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

Restore us, O God of hosts; *
 show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, *
 the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.

And so will we never turn away from you; *
 give us life, that we may call upon your Name.

Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; *
 show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

The Second Reading

Romans 1:1-7

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

Please stand, as able.

Gospel Hymn

If in your heart

*If in your heart you make a manger for his birth,
then God will once again become a child on earth. (Jonathan only, twice)*

*If in your heart you make a manger for his birth,
then God will once again become a child on earth. (repeat 4 times)*

*Love will come,
love will come,
love will come.*

Please remain standing, as able.

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

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

The Gospel

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Presider The Gospel of the Lord.

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

*If in your heart you make a manger for his birth,
then God will once again become a child on earth. (repeat 2 times)*

*Love will come,
love will come,
love will come.*

All are seated.

The Sermon

The Rev Karla Woggon

A time of silence following the sermon.

Please stand, as able.

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.

Please stand or kneel, as able.

Prayers of the People (*all sing the bold responses*)

Leader: With confidence in the One who came, who is to come, and yet is already here, we gather our prayers into one. We pray for **Antje, Bill, Bob, Brenda, Kelly, Carl, Carol, Charles, Christine, Chuck, Sally, Diane, John, Donna, Mike, Dottie, Emily, Frank, Ann, Hal, Nancy, Isabel, Janice, Jean, Jesse, Jim, Libba, JoAnn, Jonathan, Liz, Lucy, Lynn, Ajit, Margaret, Maria, Martha, Rita, Angelia, Rudy, Savany, Vanita, and Willie.**

For Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah; our Presiding Bishop, Sean; our Bishop, José; and for our Priest-in-Charge, Karla.

For our neighbors worried about detention, and the staff, volunteers, and inmates at River North Correctional Center.

For Christ Church, its leaders & ministry teams, the Anglican Church of Burundi; Holy Family in Mills River, St Mary's & St Stephen's in Morganton, and Sparta Presbyterian Church.

In peace, in peace we pray to you: **God of mercy, hold us in love.**

For peace and salvation, we pray to you: **God of mercy, hold us in love.**

For peace between nations, peace between peoples: **God of mercy, hold us in love.**

For we who are gathered to worship and praise you: **God of mercy, hold us in love.**

For all of your servants who live out your gospel: **God of mercy, hold us in love.**

For all those who govern that justice might guide them: **God of mercy, hold us in love.**

For all those who labor in service to others: **God of mercy, hold us in love.**

Grant weather that nourishes all of creation: **God of mercy, hold us in love.**

Keep watch on our loved ones and keep us from danger: **God of mercy, hold us in love.**

For all the beloved who rest in your mercy: **God of mercy, hold us in love.**

Help us, comfort us, all of our days: **Keep us, hold us, gracious God.**

Confession of Sin

BCP, pg 360

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

All **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.**

Please stand, as able.

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.

Please be seated.

Offertory Music

Jonathan Halsey

Please stand, as able.

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. Amen.*

Please remain standing, as able.

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharist Prayer B, BCP

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. 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. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Sanctus: S130 (sung by all)

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and
might,
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,
God of power and might, hea - ven and earth are

full, full of your glo - ry. Ho -
 san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na
 in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
 in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na
 in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Please stand or kneel, as able.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,
We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine. We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

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.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray,

The Lord's Prayer

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.

The Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

Fraction: S164 (sung by all)

Je - sus, Lamb of God: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, bear - er of our sins: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, re - deem - er, re - deem - er of the world:
give us your peace, give us your peace.

The Invitation to Holy Communion

Please be seated.

Communion Music

Jonathan Halsey

Surely the Presence of the Lord

*Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place,
I can feel God's mighty power and God's 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.*

Please stand or kneel, as able.

Post Communion Prayer

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

Please stand, as able.

Recessional Hymn #59

Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding!

The Dismissal

Postlude

Jonathan Halsey

Coming Lessons

Isaiah 9:2-7

Psalm 96

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-20

The following people are assisting with the services

Role	This Sunday	Christmas Eve
Altar Guild	Marybeth Lentz	Marybeth Lentz
Chalice bearer	Jeanne Green	Nancy Wilson
Lector I	Elizabeth Barr Bryant	Mary Lee Joines
Lector II	Elizabeth Barr Bryant	Mary Lee Joines
Prayers of the People	Elizabeth Barr Bryant	Mary Lee Joines
Greeter(s)/Usher(s)	Barbara & Jim Halsey	Jann Boggs & Les Colvard

If you would like a copy of today's sermon, please ask Karla or Mary Lee and they'll make a copy for you.

Monthly Altar Flowers and Coffee Hour sign-ups:

Date	Altar Flowers	Coffee Hour
Dec 21	Altar Guild	<i>Decorating with snacks</i>
Dec 24	Altar Guild	<i>No coffee hour following this service</i>
Dec 28	Poinsettias	
Jan 4	Poinsettias	

Prayer List

Intercessions:

Antje & Bill, Bill (Ruthie's brother), Bob Bamberg, Brenda & Kelly Weems, Carl & Carol Greer, Charles & Christine McKelvy, Chuck & Sally Besaw, Diane & John, Donna & Mike Hohnstine, Dottie Maddock, Emily Buck, Frank & Ann W, Hal & Nancy Wilson, Isabel Tomé, Janice Harrison, Jean Callison, Jesse James, Jim Lambie & Libba Evans and family, JoAnn Andrews, Jonathan, Liz (Doris' family friend), Lucy, Lynn Ellis, Lynn & Ajit, Margaret, Maria Chance, Martha A, Rita Woodruff & Angelia Miller, Rudy McKnight, Savany Demmink, Vanita (Ruthie's sister), and Willie Coleman. We also pray for local neighbors that fear detention, and we pray for Christ Church, its leaders & ministry teams.

Departed:

Birthdays:

Wedding Anniversaries & Thanksgivings:

Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah, Presiding Bishop, Sean, our Bishop, José, and our Priest-in-Charge, Karla

In the Anglican Community: The Anglican Church of Burundi

In the Diocese of WNC: Holy Family in Mills River, and St Mary's & St Stephen's in Morganton

In Alleghany County: Sparta Presbyterian Church

Schedule

Sunday, December 21 – The Fourth Sunday of Advent

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist with The Rev Karla Woggon

Decorating for Christmas follows the service

Tuesday, December 23

1:00 pm – Centering Prayer group

2:00 pm – Book Discussion group

Wednesday, December 24th – Christmas Eve

4:00 pm – Christmas Eve service

Thursday, December 25 – Christmas Day

The Office will be closed today for the holiday

Sunday, December 28 – The First Sunday after Christmas

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist with The Rev Karla Woggon

Coffee hour follows the service

Monday, December 29

11:30 am – Ladies Lunch Out with Karla meets at Barbara's house

Tuesday, December 30

1:00 pm – Centering Prayer group

2:00 pm – Book Discussion group

Thursday, January 1 – New Year's Day

The Office will be closed today

Sunday, January 4 – The Second Sunday after Christmas

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist with The Rev Karla Woggon

Coffee hour follows the service

Tuesday, January 6

1:00 pm – Centering Prayer group

2:00 pm – Book Discussion group

Announcements

We will be decorating the church following THIS morning's service. This includes putting bows on the wreaths and decorating the Christmas tree. Please join us for a time of fellowship

as we work together to get the church ready for the Christmas Eve service and the weeks after Christmas Day. *Light refreshments will be available.*

Wednesday, Dec 24 – Christmas Eve

4:00 pm – Christmas Eve service with The Rev Karla Woggon

Thursday, Dec 25th is Christmas Day – the Office will be closed for the holiday.

Monday, Dec 29th is the next Ladies Lunch Out (LLO) with Karla at Barbara's house. If you signed up, please plan to gather at Barbara's house around 11:30 am. It is not too late to sign up! The sign-up sheet is on the information table. For more details, read the GNN.

Karla would love to get to know everyone! If you'd like to meet for coffee or lunch, meet in her office, or meet at your home, call her at 828.638.0533. She'll reach out on Sunday or Monday to schedule. Priest email address for Karla is: priest.christchurchspartanc@gmail.com.