

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021

SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTMAS SERVICES

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 9 P.M. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24

LESSONS AND CAROLS SERVICE 10 A.M. SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

(Church office closed December 27 – 31.)

REMINDER:

Contributions received by Sunday, December 26 will be included on your 2021 Contribution Statement. If you have questions regarding amount owed on a pledge, please contact the church office 733-7202.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Pledge packets were distributed to 114 Christ and Grace Parishioners over the past couple of weeks. If yours did not reach you or has been misplaced, please pick one up at the church office or call 804-733-7202 to be mailed another. Your pledge enables us to plan for 2022. Please return your pledge card as soon as possible. Thank you for your support.

Pledges received: **48 Pledges totaling \$118,884.00**

PRACTICING PATIENCE

This Advent we will practice patience as we wait for the coming of the Christ Child. An Advent devotional book for each family will be available at church. Each Wednesday of Advent you are invited to come practice patience at Advent Prayers for the Evening at 5:30 pm. We will gather to reflect on scripture, for prayers with candles, and quiet music.

SO MUCH CHRISTMAS JOY

Thank you to everyone who helped to make our Christmas Joy Project a huge success! We are especially grateful to Amanda Lupold and Debbie Newman for planning and organizing volunteers to make this project possible. Most of all, thanks to each of you whose generosity ensures that over 65 people will experience Christmas Joy through our offerings of gifts and meals this year. You all are amazing!

PRAYER LIST

We beg you to feed the hungry, protect the refugee, embrace the distressed, house the homeless, nurse the sick, and comfort the dying. Especially we pray for Susan Amos, Vaughan D., Melba Felty, Carol Ferrell, Michael Fowler, Robin Jane, Heydon Lewis, Clyde Mosley, Bill Owen, Shelley Richardson, Mark Sheffield, and Mary Villeponteaux

CHRISTMAS FLOWER DEDICATIONS

A special arrangement will adorn the altar and red poinsettias will beautify the sanctuary on Christmas Eve and on Sunday, December 26 for our Lessons and Carols service. Please help the sanctuary come to life for Christmas! Dedication forms are available in the church office as well as enclosed with these announcements. Completed forms should be returned by Sunday, Dec. 19 for inclusion in our Christmas Eve bulletin.

HOPE CENTER LUNCHESES

Mark your calendar for the 2022 Hope Center Lunches. Find additional information in the upcoming weekly eNews. The dates are: Jan 12th, Feb 9th, Apr 13th, June 29th, Aug 10th, and Oct 12th.

SOME EXTRA WARMTH SERVED WITH LUNCH

Our next Hope Center lunch will be in January. We would love to give a scarf or a hat with each meal, as these items are a much-appreciated gift in cold weather.

If you are a knitter who would like to knit a few items, a yarn gatherer who could donate yarn for our knitters, or if you have gently used scarves and hats for men and women that you can donate, please contact Elayne Pagano or Nancy Holden, or drop items off at church. There will be a collection box on the stage in Lackey Hall.

For any questions please contact: Elayne Pagano 804-586-2951
Nancy Holden 804-712-7492

2022 SIGNUPS ARE NOW OPEN!

New for 2022:

- We will be using an online form rather than our hall flower calendar to sign up for altar flower dedications. If you are unable to access the online form, contact Lee to sign up for your dedication - shakubuku42@gmail.com or the church office for assistance.
- We are no longer able to honor requests for specific flowers or colors.
- The cost is \$55. Please make your check to 'Christ and Grace' with 'altar flowers and date' on the memo line.

Please be aware that either greens or a special arrangement will be used during Lent and Advent. Dedications are still welcomed on these Sundays.

Thank you for your support for beautifying the altar to the glory of God.

THE COLLECT

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.

Micah 5:2-5a

You, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
 who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
 one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
 from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time
 when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
 to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
 in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
 to the ends of the earth;
and he shall be the one of peace.

Luke 1:39-45(46-55)

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

[And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."]

MESSAGE FROM ROBIN+

Greetings Favored Ones –

On the Fourth Sunday of Advent we focus on Mary and her part in God's great plan. We don't hear the whole story of the Annunciation in our assigned Gospel this year, which instead focuses on Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth, who is also pregnant. Each part of the story has something to teach us about how God works through us to accomplish great things. We will hear more about Mary and Elizabeth on Sunday but as we wait, I invite you to take some time with Mary. Notice how she trusts that God is with her, how she accepts what God seeks to make of her life, how she moves fully into her future knowing that all of it is in God's hands, not hers.

In the poem "Gabriel's Annunciation" by Jan Richardson, even Gabriel confesses that placing everything into God's hands is a daunting decision, knowing as he does that it will change everything, it will mark the point when the days before are divided from all the ones to come.

May we, like Gabriel and Mary and all the faithful, place our trust in God for the days to come!

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Gabriel's Annunciation by Jan Richardson

For a moment
I hesitated
on the threshold.
For the space
of a breath
I paused,
unwilling to disturb
her last ordinary moment,
knowing that the next step
would cleave her life:
that this day
would slice her story
in two,
dividing all the days before
from all the ones
to come.

The artists would later
depict the scene:
Mary dazzled
by the archangel,
her head bowed
in humble assent,
awed by the messenger
who condescended
to leave paradise
to bestow such an honor
upon a woman, and mortal.

Yet I tell you
it was I who was dazzled,
I who found myself agape

when I came upon her—
reading, at the loom, in the kitchen,
I cannot now recall;
only that the woman before me—
blessed and full of grace
long before I called her so—
shimmered with how completely
she inhabited herself,
inhabited the space around her,
inhabited the moment
that hung between us.

I wanted to save her
from what I had been sent
to say.

Yet when the time came,
when I had stammered
the invitation
(history would not record
the sweat on my brow,
the pounding of my heart;
would not note
that I said
Do not be afraid
to myself as much as
to her)
it was she
who saved me—
her first deliverance—
her Let it be
not just declaration
to the Divine
but a word of solace,
of soothing,
of benediction
for the angel
in the doorway
who would hesitate
one last time—
just for the space
of a breath
torn from his chest—
before wrenching himself away
from her radiant consent,
her beautiful and awful yes.