



Cross Current

December 2024—January 2025



May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13 NIV

Christ Episcopal Church

35350 E. Division Road, St. Helens, OR 97051

(503) 397-1033

find us on



The Incarnation of Christ

A reading from the Book of Wisdom

“...While all the world slept in most profound silence, and that night was in the mist of her swift course; the Royal Majesty from on High leapt down from its Royal Throne and dwelt with men...”

This very short lesson was used as the first lesson for the ancient Dawn Mass of Christmas. While it is very short it has something very important to say to us. The much more familiar Christmas lessons focus on the humanity of the Christ Child, this one focuses on the Divinity of the Christ Child. The lesson contrasts sharply with our secularized and commercialized celebrations. Its quiet witness to the Nativity is far from everything we experience in this season.

Look; no cattle, no angels singing, no shepherds, no star, no Magi. It speaks of the Glory of the Divinity from heaven and the Child who in years to come will right our broken world. The reading speaks clearly of the “otherness” of the event.

As serious believing Christians, we need to be reminded of this aspect of the Nativity. It makes us take a break from the hustle and bustle of the season. It causes us to forget, for a bit, the shopping, parties, and gifts of the season. Rather, it focuses on the true gift of Christmas: our God in Flesh, born as we were and living our life.

When seen through this lens, the joy and wonder of the event comes into sharp focus. Is it any wonder that angels sing, shepherds leave their flock and the Magi make the long journey and go in search of the child? Can we then not see the difference that has made in our world?

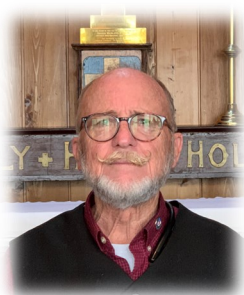
May this Holy Season bring you joy and peace.

Blessings,

Br. Kevin, SSAE

In Memoriam

On October 13, our friend and fellow parishioner Nate McCord passed away due to a tragic motorcycle accident. To say it was a shock is an understatement. Nate was very active here at Christ Church, most recently being on the BAC and serving as Junior Warden. He was a Veterans' Employment Counselor for the State of Oregon.



Nate's memorial service was held here at Christ Church on November 11 on Veteran's day and the church was packed with friends, family and fellow veterans.

He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Sunday Summer; his father, Roger McCord; brothers Timothy, Mark, Peter and sister Melanie; sons Kye, Noah and Nate Jr.; and four grandchildren.

Nate is interred at Willamette National Cemetery.

Nate will be missed.

The following prayer was specifically written by *Rebecca Freidenburg*, a fellow cursillista of Nancy and Jennifer last spring, specifically for Nate:

'For we are confident, I say, and willing, rather, to absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.'

(2Corinthians 5:8)

For just a moment tonight, I ask that we pause, if only for a heartbeat or two...I ask us to stop whatever chore holds our attention and in these few spaces of quiet, honor Nate, who lost his life Sunday in a crash.

Author of life and Sustainer of mystery... we know that Your ways are not our ways, nor Your thoughts our thoughts. We ask that in this time of sorrow over the loss of Nate, we remember, too, the joy of this time as You welcome him into Your eternal place of love and peace that transcends all understanding. We ask that Your presence enfold his family, that Your spirit be there to bring their hearts gently through this season of transition from physical presence to the warmth of memory. Lovingly care for those left behind, even as You guide Nate to his place at Your table.

'O Lord, You have been our refuge in every generation. Before the mountains that came into being, before You brought forth the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity You are God.'

Rebecca Freidenburg, Vancouver, WA.

We Have a New Vicar!

The Profile/Search Committee has had a pretty busy past few months. All the effort was worth it, however, as we have found our new Vicar.

The Profile Committee consisted of Kathryn Brittain, Pamela Vetsch, Nancy Tarnai, David Cook, Kathy King, Nate McCord and Committee Head, Theresa Muth. Together we put forth a parish profile including who we are, who we are looking for and what we want our future to look like with our new priest. This was a very worthwhile endeavor as we realized how truly special our parish is, and how valuable our parishioners are and what we have to offer. Parishioners were also asked for feedback and we added quotes to our profile. Christopher Craun, Canon to the Ordinary, helped guide us through this process.

Once our final profile was finished, we sent it off to Chris Craun, and then the Bishop to approve. After approval, our profile went out for consideration of applicants.

Our Profile Committee transformed into the Search Committee, with Peggy Rolf stepping in for Nancy (as Nancy could not choose her new boss) and after the passing of Nate, Norm Keck kindly stepped in. I can't stress enough how greatly our profile benefitted by Nate's suggestions and input.

Very quickly, we received two applications: One, a gentleman from Portland, and the second, a woman from southern California.

Before the interviews, however, another applicant expressed interest, so when our committee met in person to go over our impressions of the applicants via Zoom, we had a total of three very capable applicants with strong backgrounds and impressive resumes. Ultimately our committee unanimously chose one of the applicants.

Next, our recommendation was handed to the BAC for their approval. The BAC was updated on our progress and recommendation, and the BAC also unanimously chose the same applicant.

The next step was to go through all the hiring steps for our new priest, and our Senior Warden, Rebecca Fowler, took the lead on this, with help from Cindi Caruso. It truly was a team effort.

Continued on page 5....

We Have a New Vicar! continued



It was a very special service on Sunday, November 10th, when Rebecca was able to finally introduce our new priest, Mother Esme Culver! Mother Esme, our Transition Priest, has become our Priest for Christ Church.

Mother Esme, having met the congregation and “fallen in love”, changed her mind about retirement, luckily for us, and found the calling to lead us as our priest. She brings experience, wisdom, wit, thoughtfulness and a host of other qualities to this position. We couldn’t be more thankful. God truly does work in mysterious ways.

Thanks to all who helped with this process. It truly was a joy to work with people who are so deeply committed to the future of Christ Church.

Theresa Muth
Search Committee

...From the Treasurer



Financial Facts—October 2024

	October Actual	2024 YTD Actual	2024 YTD Budget
Income			
Contributions	\$5,540.00	\$72,813.00	\$63,066.66
Other Income	\$180.00	\$13,699.00	\$13,666.67
Total Income	\$5,720.00	\$86,512.00	\$76,733.33
Expenses	\$6,627.04	\$76,750.94	\$78,696.08
Net (Deficit)	(\$907.04)	\$9,761.06	(\$1,962.75)

Thank you to everyone for keeping your pledges current . You can always mail your pledge to: Christ Church, PO BOX 478, St. Helens, OR 97051

Transition News

This is our last “Transition News” for the foreseeable future! We welcome Mother Esme as Christ Church’s new Vicar! This year, Advent will mark not only the beginning of the next liturgical calendar year but also our first year led by Vicar Esme. We anticipate a time of growth, building on what we already do well and new activities that nurture us and invite newcomers in.

A big “Thank You” to the Search Committee for crafting our Parish Profile to invite applicants to our priest position. Next, the committee prepared for, participated in and reflected on the interviews. Finally, they were flexible to consider an unplanned third choice. Great work by our team of church members!

Cindi Caruso and I joined Mother Esme at the annual convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Oregon, held in person, at the Salem convention center, for the first time since the pandemic. We sat with the delegates from St. Aidan’s in Gresham, Mother Esme’s former parishioners and on-going friends. No surprises, well-organized. Next year we will bring our church banner to display with banners from all the other churches. Christ Church will host the convocation meeting of churches from Portland to Astoria and Seaside, on 9 March. They look forward to our baked treats!

This year we will change the time of our Christmas Eve service to 4pm. We hope this may be easier for folks who avoid driving at night. We also aim to coordinate graciously with our neighbor’s light show, which draws viewers to our parking lot in the evening. We have some ideas for celebrating the season in our Blessing Woods, inviting people who don’t know Christ Church to explore.

Dates to mark on your calendar

Carol Sing & Christmas Eve service, 24 Dec at 3:30 pm

Christmas Day service, 25 Dec at 10 am

2025 Annual Meeting and Potluck, 2 Feb after church

New Year’s Day Peace Service, 1 Jan at 10 am

Transition News *continued*

Stewardship

If you haven't yet returned our pledge form for 2025, please do! Cindi is compiling our budget for next year. Mail the form to Christ Church, PO Box 478, St Helens OR 97051 or drop in the offering plate. We enjoyed each other's cooking for our stewardship lunch on 17 Nov. Jennifer Anderson head of the local, independent Habitat for Humanity, inspired us with photos and stories of how contributions from Christ Church have helped neighborhood families. A mom with her daughter joined us and shared her own story. We aim to rejuvenate our support for Habitat, raising funds for smaller projects like ramps and railings.

Rebecca Fowler
Senior Warden

Feast of the Epiphany Potluck and Celebration

Join us for a potluck celebrating Mother Esme as our new Vicar and the Feast of the Epiphany on Sunday January 5 after the church service. There will be a signup sheet with categories of food to bring such as main dish, salads and desserts.



50th Annual Arts & Crafts Faire



The 50th Annual Arts & Crafts Faire was held on Saturday November 9th. The theme was “Celebrating 50 Years of Local Artistry”. This year we had 4 new artists in addition to the returning artists from past years. Thank you to everyone who helped plan, setup, decorate, bake, cook soups and chili, advertise, accounting, work the day of and take down. It was a successful year. We made \$1,600 and of that amount, \$800 will be distributed by our Outreach Committee with input from the congregation.

The Arts & Crafts Committee is already planning for next year so if you are interested in helping, let a committee member know.

Arts and Crafts Fair Financial Results 2024					
Beginning Balance					299.23
beginning book balance					299.23
Artist Activity	Expenses		Revenue		
Table Fees			225.00		225.00
Sales			6,360.75		
85% of Sales pd to artists	5406.64		(5,406.64)		954.11
Donation by Ill Artist			20.00		20.00
					-
cash box shortage/lost tickets					(52.78)
Increase in Fund for Artist's activity					1,146.33
Donation- Kitchen					0.00
Kitchen Sales	(34.65)		252.00		217.35
Bake Table			304.00		304.00
other donations			0.00		0.00
Raffle Basket			123.00		123.00
expenses	(21.00)				(21.00)
merchant fees	(112.45)				(112.45)
bank fees	0.00				-
advertising	(95.00)		0.00		(95.00)
Paid to Christ Church	0.00				(1,600.00)
Ending Balance					261.46

50th Annual Arts & Crafts Faire



The Epiphany



The manifestation of Christ to the peoples of the earth. The winter solstice was kept on Jan. 6 at some places during the first centuries of the Christian Era. In opposition to pagan festivals, Christians chose this day to celebrate the various manifestations, or "epiphanies," of Jesus' divinity. These showings of his divinity included his birth, the coming of the Magi, his baptism, and the Wedding at Cana where he miraculously changed water into wine. The day was called "The Feast of Lights." Celebration of the Son of God replaced celebration of the sun. Baptisms were done, and a season of preparation was instituted. It was later called Advent.

The solstice was kept on Dec. 25 by the fourth century. Jesus' birth was celebrated on this day in both eastern and western churches. The western church commemorated the coming of the Magi on Jan. 6. The eastern church continued to celebrate the Baptism of our Lord and the Wedding at Cana on Jan. 6. In the east the day was called "Theophany" (manifestation of God).

The coming of the Magi is celebrated on the Feast of the Epiphany, Jan. 6, in the Book of Common Prayer. The Baptism of our Lord is celebrated on the First Sunday after the Epiphany.

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/epiphany-the/>

Giving Tree Returns

You'll notice a Christmas tree in the corner of the narthex. Yes, we know Episcopalians don't decorate for Christmas this early but this is a special tree! We will once again participate in the Daybreaker Kiwanis giving tree program. On the tree are "ornaments" representing holiday requests for at-risk (often unhoused) youth in our community. Kiwanians work with the school district social worker to ascertain needs and maintain confidentiality. So please grab a tag or two and return the UNWRAPPED gifts to the tree by December 10. Thanks!



New Bishop Watch Party!



On Saturday November 2, several of us gathered at 8 am for a "Watch Party" and potluck of the Investiture of The Right Reverend Sean Rowland as the Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church.

Parish Health Ministry

Why Be Concerned about High Blood Glucose?

In continuing my series of Why Be Concerned....., this issue's topic is about blood glucose.

Let's face it: you have to have sugar in your blood (in the form of glucose). Your brain runs on glucose, and only glucose—it's brain food! So what's the problem with that?

The problem is with too much glucose in the blood. Think about the difference between cleaning up spilled water, versus spilled maple syrup. The water comes up quickly and cleanly, but the maple syrup is sticky and wants to cling to the counter and your fingers and the sponge. So what?

When your blood has a lot of glucose, like the maple syrup, it becomes thick and sticky. Instead of moving easily through the small vessels in your system (capillaries), the sticky blood tears the delicate walls of the blood vessels apart, causing lasting damage over time. This is why people with diabetes tend to develop kidney problems, blindness and nerve damage in the feet, leading to amputations.

What are normal blood glucose levels? The glucose in your blood fluctuates throughout the day to meet the needs of your brain and your body. These days, your health care provider is most likely to order a test called a hemoglobin A1c. This test measures the amount of glucose bound to your red blood cells, and reflects your average blood glucose level for the past two to three months.

Here are the generally acceptable numbers:

Normal range is less than 6%.

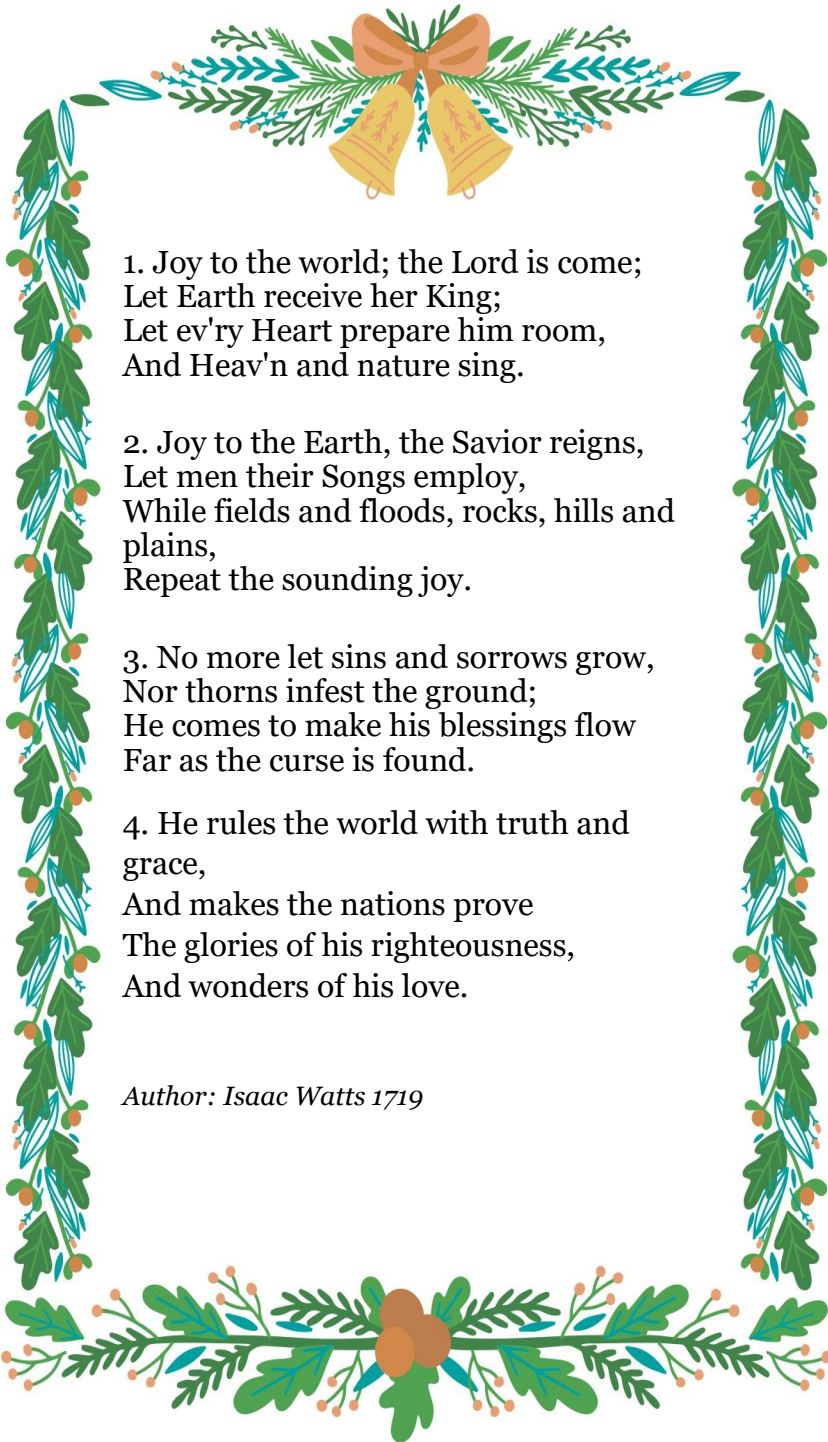
A level between 5.7 and less than 6.5% indicates prediabetes.

A level of 6.5% or higher indicates diabetes.

As always, it's important to know your numbers and to keep track of them. Rising numbers mean you need to give your diet and exercise routines a hard look, and to follow a plan to bring them back down. Remember that maple syrup....

Carol Craig

Parish Health Ministries



1. Joy to the world; the Lord is come;
Let Earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry Heart prepare him room,
And Heav'n and nature sing.

2. Joy to the Earth, the Savior reigns,
Let men their Songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and
plains,
Repeat the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

4. He rules the world with truth and
grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love.

Author: Isaac Watts 1719



Columbia County Habitat for Humanity Updates

We've had **TWO** graduates this past month from our IDA matched savings program! One is a house-bound disabled senior who began in April of 2022. She has been saving diligently since that time and used her funding for a new roof, siding, exterior painting as well as new gutters. What a difference this makes for this home, the second oldest standing home in Columbia City! These projects were in cooperation with help from Community Action Team, J&K Roofing and Owens-Corning. Susan is so relieved now that her house is no longer leaking water through the walls! She commented, "This program is one of the only ones that is all about helping people, and then you are taught or reminded that you can save. With that, you can do what you want to do. And, for that, I am grateful."



Before



After

Our other IDA graduate we met at the Senior Fair in September. Although Audrey reported many repair issues needed for her Scappoose home, it turns out she and her husband also been without heat in their home for at least two years now! We got special permission from Neighborhood Partnerships to access her funding without the minimum 3-month waiting period. Randy Lucas from NP told her, "I think this is a perfect example of the flexibility of this program." Audrey finished her education requirements in October then scheduled with Columbia NW Heating and called us practically dancing the first week in November to say how excited she was to have heat in every room in her house at long last! She is so grateful for the experience with the Oregon IDA!

If you know of anyone saving for a home purchase or working to save money for a home repair, please let us know if this program could make a difference for them too!

*Angela Carlson
Administrative Assistant
Columbia County Habitat for Humanity*

Stewardship Potluck and Habitat for Humanity Presentation

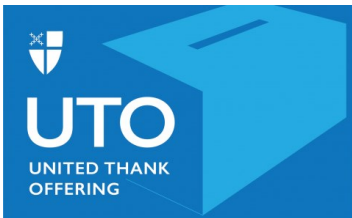
On Sunday November 17 we had a potluck followed by a presentation by Jennifer Anderson, Executive Director of Columbia County Habitat for Humanity. Jennifer presented information on their "Individual Development Account" program which qualifying individuals can sign up to save for home purchase or home repairs. For every dollar saved, there is a \$5 match. Natasha who went through the IDA program and her daughter Isabella talked about their experience with this program.



Jennifer also talked about how Christ Church has supported Habitat for Humanity in the past with contributing to several ramp projects in Columbia county as well as providing lunch for a couple of house builds.

If you are able to contribute to Christ Church Habitat fund, we are still interested in contributing to some projects. Just mark Habitat for Humanity on your check.

United Thank Offering



November is the month of Thanksgiving, when we celebrate, recognize, and give thanks for all our blessings. So, it was a perfect time to turn in our UTO boxes. These boxes are a way to be thankful daily and show gratitude by putting coins in these blue boxes. These boxes come from Episcopalians all over the US. The combi-

nation of these funds can be over a million dollars. They are distributed to episcopal programs that are designed to promote Christian charities, grants for seminary, and around-the-world Christian programs. This year, Christ Episcopal Church's contribution was \$174.68. Thank you to all who participated. If you are interested in starting your box for the Spring, UTO giving boxes are available on the table under the stairs in the narthex.

Kathryn Brittain

Blessing Woods Nature Park Update



BLESSING WOODS
NATURE PARK & LABYRINTH

We did an “about turn” in the nature park meadow recently. After deciding the long prairie grass wasn’t ideal, the landscapers mowed, thatched and re-seeded the area with a shorter variety of native grasses. We think the results will be pleasing.

That said, we hope people understand this is a long-term project, not an instantaneous one by a long shot. We have done a lot of work but there is much more to be done; with time and attention to detail, it will happen. By about year three we should have more of our vision in place, as the plants and trees grow and the park gets more established.

We plan to keep a “conventional” lawn in the area between the church and the playground.

This winter please take time to notice the seasonal wetland pond near the labyrinth as the rushes thrive there and waterfowl may appear for a visit.

Ending on a positive note, I was making sure the grounds were good after two big church events in mid-November and the neighbors across the street came over to me and offered to plant some excess yarrow they have in our pollinator garden!

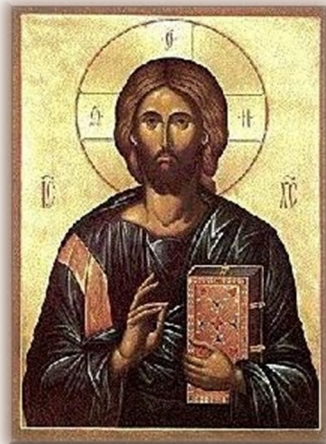
Thanks to Patrichia and Tom Altimus for donating and planting oak trees, and to Karen Van Winkle for realizing I needed to cordon off some areas that visitors to the Faire may have found irresistible to park on. And super shout out to Cindi, Peggy and Kathryn for their watering efforts over the long, hot summer and to Cindi and Peggy for rolling up hoses to store for the winter.

Nancy Tarnai
Blessing Woods Coordinator

The crew from Native Plantscapes NW re-seeded the grassy area near the labyrinth for a better look for that area.



Advent Study: The Many Names of Jesus



Welcome to the first Sunday of Advent and our preparatory look at the many names of Jesus as we await the celebration of His birth! Before He arrives, it makes sense that we should get to “know” and recognize Him by the many names that illustrate the fullness of who He is. The wide variety of names by which He is referred, help us to express more fully the all-encompassing reality of Jesus. Each week we name Jesus by other names in our Creed, in the Lord’s Prayer, in our post-Communion prayer, and many more. Can you find them?

You probably already know there are 50 names and titles of Jesus, especially found in the New Testament. Yet, while the differences between a “name” and a “title” might be nuanced a little differently and viewed from various perspectives, never fear, there are close to 200 different names and titles attributed to Jesus in the Bible.

We’re going to look at just a few of them and think about which particular names resonate with us individually and as a community. This Sunday, the first Sunday of Advent, we’ll take a look at some of the names with which we are most familiar and maybe find a name we’ve never noticed before. What do they, or will they, mean to you and will you find new meaning in the day we call “*Christ-mas*” by knowing Jesus by yet another name?

I invite you to join me this coming Sunday, December 1st after coffee hour for this conversational, relaxed time together. We’ll gather for about an hour for this and for each Sunday in Advent. You might like to bring a note pad and pen and do feel free to bring your coffee and/or refreshment with you.

I’m looking forward to this time with you. See you there!

Mother Esme+

Christmas Services

Please Join Us

Dec. 24 *Christmas Eve Carol Sing & Service* 3:30 p.m.

Dec. 25 *Christmas Service* 10 a.m.
(Spoken Eucharist)



Church Buildings for Rent

Do you know of any nonprofits seeking space for meetings or events? We are making the Parish Hall and other spaces (including outdoors) available for rent for reasonable prices. Please contact Nancy Tarnai, socialmedia@sthelenschristchurch.org if you have ideas or questions.

Calendar



Sunday Services - Eucharist Sundays 10 am or Morning Prayer on the Fourth Sunday at 10 am.

Men's Fellowship Breakfast—First Saturday of the month at Warren Country Inn 9 am.

Advent Study—"The Many Names of Jesus" - Sundays December 1, 8, 15, 22 after the service.

Christmas Eve Carol Sing & Service—December 24 at 3:30 pm

Christmas Day Service—December 25 at 10 am with Spoken Eucharist

New Year's Day Peace Service—January 1 at 10 am

Feast of the Epiphany Potluck & Party—January 5 after the service

Annual Meeting & Potluck—February 2 after the service

Prayer Requests

Send requests to Kathryn Brittain by email at kathjbritt@gmail.com or phone 503-543-6870 or cell phone 503-438-5908.

FYI



Our Website is: www.sthelenschristchurch.org

Email: office@sthelenschristchurch.org

Phone: (503) 397-1033

Search Facebook: Christ Episcopal Church

Mother Esme's email: esmejrculver@gmail.com

To receive the "Cross Current" newsletter via email rather than printed or "snail mail" email us to be put on the list.

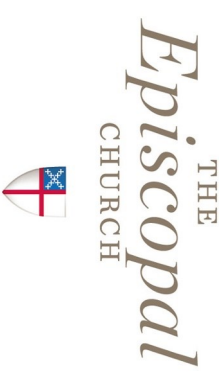


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Home of:



BLESSING WOODS
NATURE PARK & LABYRINTH



welcomes you