

THE ANGELUS

Volume 76 Number 7

Christ Episcopal Church • Winchester, Virginia

March 2026

Dear People of Christ Church,

I hope by now that you have caught up on all of the events of Lent as we move through a wintery season. The Rev. Canon Lee Hill spoke and preached on the first Sunday of Lent. We have the annual meeting on the second Sunday of Lent, and we have The Rt. Rev. Gayle E. Harris joining us for the Bishop's visitation on March 8. The other Sunday to make note of for March is the last Sunday of March, which is Palm Sunday.

For those new to the parish, Palm Sunday includes one of our largest ecumenical services in Winchester. Before the 10:30 am service, we join with the other denominations around Winchester on the downtown mall for the Blessing of the Palms. We meet in front of the parish hall and parade down to the mall at 10:15 am, perform the Blessing of the Palms, and head back to the church at 10:35 am to continue our Palm Sunday service, which has already begun for those not walking downtown.

We are fortunate to have a long tradition of ecumenical relationships around Winchester, which allow the Christian community to gather in worship at this important time of year. Not only do we have the annual ecumenical Blessing of the Palms, we also have our ecumenical Good Friday noon service, which will be at Christ Church this year. There is a beautiful (sometimes cold) ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service at 6:00 am on Easter Sunday at the wall of the old Lutheran church at Mt. Hebron Cemetery. All of these services allow the chance to hear the clergy from other downtown churches preach, and it is a good chance to catch up and worship with neighbors you may not normally join with in worship.

Noelle Creamer, our communications director, has also included in this issue of the Angelus the information for all of our Holy Week and Easter services, which you will want to note. Times for services vary from our normal schedules and people are known to miss church or show up very early for the service because they did not check! Also, this is wonderful opportunity to invite friends and neighbors who may have asked about our church. The various worship experiences and the wonder and intense drama of the season are a helpful way for people to encounter the meaningfulness of our Christian faith in the hope of the risen Lord.

Faithfully,



The Rev. Webster Gibson, Rector
rector@christchurchwinchester.org
540-662-5843, Ext 1 or 540-773-5562



Worship



2026 Holy Week & Easter Services at Christ Church

Palm Sunday—March 29, 2026

- 8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite I
- 10:15 am—Procession of Palms to the Downtown Mall
- 10:30 am—Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Maundy Thursday Service—April 2, 2026 at 7:00 pm

Good Friday Liturgy—April 3, 2026 at 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday—April 5, 2026

- 6:30 am Ecumenical Sunrise Service at Mt. Hebron Cemetery
- 7:30 am Easter Service of Holy Eucharist
- 9:00 am Easter Family Service of Holy Eucharist with children's choir
- 11:15 am Easter Service of Holy Eucharist

A Note on Easter Services

As you talk with neighbors, friends and family to invite them to join us for services this Holy Week and Easter, please know that you can find service times here, on the church website and on our Facebook page. Easter services are not our regular Sunday service times! The 7:30 am service on Easter is like our traditional Sunday 8:00 am service (no music). The 9:00 am and 11:15 am Easter services both have the adult choir and are similar in most ways except there will be children's choirs for the 9:00 am service. Our Music Director, Jean Lin, will have special solos and anthems sung by our choir and guest singers and musicians. Because of the children participating at 9:00 am, we see more families with young children at that service.

Christian Formation & Worship



Procession for the Blessing of the Palms on Sunday, March 29, 2026

On Palm Sunday, March 29, please plan to meet in front of the Parish Hall at 10:15 am for our traditional march to the downtown mall for a brief service of the Blessing of the Palms with other Winchester churches.

We will return to the church together and rejoin the 10:30 am service, which will begin at its usual time for those not walking to the downtown mall.

Sunday School will run only from 9:30 am until 10:00 am so parents can come upstairs and get their children for the procession. Children's Chapel will begin at 10:40 am.

Adult Formation in March

In the Ash Wednesday service, the Gospel reading from Matthew challenges everyone in the community to consider their life of prayer. On the one hand, Jesus talks about how not to pray. On the other hand, Jesus talks about how to pray. However, people still wonder what that means and how to go about praying as they should while avoiding what they should not do. And, they come back to the original question which is how to pray! While there is no one size fits all in the life and worship of the Episcopal Church, our Book of Common Prayer offers hundreds of years of experience to address this question. It also offers models to free us up to pray with or without the prayer book.

For the Adult Forum on March 15 and 22, we will learn the generational and practical aspects of prayer offered by the prayer book. You just need to grab a cup of coffee and a prayer book (provided) to be part of our discussion. This will not give all of the answers about prayer, but it will be a good way to begin or refresh our consideration of a life of prayer. We will meet in the Pilgrim's Chapel (on the right as you enter the parish hall at 132 W. Boscawen Street).

On March 8, we will not have Adult Forum. Instead, the Bishop will speak at Coffee Hour in the parish hall.

On March 29, we will have a shorter Adult Forum to learn about Palm Sunday right before we celebrate the Blessing of the Palms and have our Palm Sunday service.

Come and join the discussion. Adult Forum is Sundays at 9:30 am in the Pilgrim's Chapel at the front of the Parish Hall at 132 W. Boscawen St.

Registration for 2026 Shrine Mont Camps is Open!

Visit www.shrinemontcamps.org and learn about all the camps offered! The clergy at Christ Church is committed to helping every child attend camps, so there are scholarship funds available for those needing assistance from the diocese and the parish. If there are any questions about the camps or scholarships, please contact Webster Gibson (rector@christchurchwinchester.org).



Outreach Committee

WATTS 2026 Recap

January 31 through February 7 was Christ Church's annual hosting of Winchester Area Temporary Transitional Shelter (WATTS). We opened our doors to 267 guests over seven nights, including a peak total of fourteen women. We had 55 volunteers that filled 126 slots, with a total of 467 total volunteer hours. Thank you to every one of those volunteers and to all in our parish family and community friends and businesses who otherwise supported our host week!

It's nice to note that Christ Church is the only church in the program that offers a separate space for women. We use the Sunday School Commons for women, while men are downstairs in the Tilford Room. We are also one of three churches that holds up to 45 guests. That large number is the main reason our week is always in the coldest months of the winter.

WATTS changed their name in the past year, replacing Thermal with Transitional. The WATTS mission is "to break the cycle of homelessness one life at a time. We empower individuals to re-enter the workforce and connect individuals to the resources needed to be as self-sufficient as possible while providing a safe temporary shelter during extreme weather."

WATTS staff works with guests on applying for medical coverage, job applications, and housing opportunities. In the past year, WATTS opened a transitional home that provides a safe environment as individuals learn how to operate in a very different and confusing environment. They are taught important communication skills, how to pay bills, how to manage money, and more. In the past year, six people moved into the transitional housing and off the streets.

Christ Church, along with 20 other churches, provides overnight shelters from November to March each year. We are one of the stepping stones on the path to bring folks out of the shadows and into the light, so they can be seen and heard.

During the WATTS host week, there are several ways to support our guests on that path. At the door, you can greet them with a smile and help them, if needed, to their established cots. The intake duties are extremely important as that step establishes a welcoming, non-threatening environment. When the door closes and intake is complete, the guests settle their belongings and partake in the available snacks. All the while, the kitchen is bustling with activity. All the meals are provided by volunteers — from outside the church, as well as inside the church. If you sign up to help with dining, you will work with four or five other volunteers to prep food, drinks, and the tables, serve the meals, and clean up after dinner. To say our guests are grateful is an understatement! All night you will hear, "thank you ma'am/sir," "I really appreciate it," and "You're very kind." We encourage our volunteers to break bread with the guests. Most love to talk and laugh with us.

There are many other ways to serve at multiple comfort levels. You can help prepare and serve breakfast, hand out lunches and clothing, knit "prayer squares," help the Sunday School students prepare friendship cards, help set up and break down on either Saturday, contribute money or new warm weather clothing. So many simple ways that anyone can help...

When I attended my first WATTS introduction meeting four years ago, someone said, "It was the most fulfilling thing they'd ever done." In my eyes and heart, truer words were never spoken. As I said in my article last year, amongst all the controlled chaos, I felt grounded, reminding me that I'm on this earth to serve. I invite you to join me next year and enjoy the controlled chaos of love. ~ Barbara Downs



Outreach Committee

Supporting Bright Futures This Spring



This spring, the Outreach Committee seeks to support the work of Bright Futures in two ways.

The first is by collecting cases of granola bars throughout March. We want to stack them up HIGH in the front of the church!

Granola bars are a staple in the food bags that Bright Futures prepares for children in Frederick County and Winchester public schools. You can bring donations to church on Sundays in March or drop off at the Church Office on Wednesdays from 10-2. Please see the church website to learn more about our commitment to Bright Futures, and visit Bright Futures online to learn more about what they do.

The second way we will support Bright Futures is through our annual **Apple Blossom parade seating fundraiser** in April. Each year, by virtue of our location along the parade routes, we participate in this wonderful community tradition by selling reserved parade seating. The proceeds raised by our volunteer efforts will support our ministry with Bright Futures. Usually several thousand dollars are raised, so it's impactful. The Outreach Committee will explain more in coming weeks how you can help with this project, but the bottom line is that this is an important event in our community AND for our parish, and we should all come out and do our part to support it—by selling tickets or helping organize if you prefer not to be downtown for the fun or by working during the parades if you love the Bloom!



Church Calendar

Services at Christ Church

8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite I
10:30 am Holy Eucharist, Rite II
in the Sanctuary

Holy Eucharist at Westminster-Canterbury
Every 1st & 3rd Thursday at 10:30 am



Look for
Christ Episcopal Church Winchester
and like us to stay up-to-date on the latest news!

The Church Office is open Tuesday—Thursday
from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.
Call ahead before you visit!

Committee & Group Meetings

Adult Forum	Sun: 9:30 am
Choir Rehearsal	Wed: 6:00 pm
Bible Study	Wed: 10:30 am via Zoom
Outreach Committee	1st Tues: 6:00 pm
Common Ground Discussion Group	Currently On Hold
Properties Committee	3rd Tues: 7:00 pm
Vestry	2nd Tues: 7:00 pm
Faith Study	2nd & 4th Mon: 10:00 am
Treasure Box	Wed & Fri: 10 am—4 pm Sat: 10 am—1 pm
Women's Book Studies	Tues: 1:30 pm—at Westminster- Canterbury OR First & Third Thursday at 5:30 pm —Parlors



CHRIST EPISCOPAL
CHURCH WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA



The Angelus is a monthly publication of Christ Episcopal Church.

Church Calendar

March Birthdays

- 1 Janie Mohn
- 2 Sandra Armstrong
- 3 Michael Roberson, Jack Kalbaugh,
Charlie Kalbaugh
- 6 George Glass, Kent Stevens
- 11 Susan Sheppard
- 12 David Lewis
- 13 Steve Cluss, Landon Haines
- 15 Mary Stevens
- 16 Elijah Painter
- 19 Eddie Richard
- 26 Zoe Lowrey
- 27 Lori Ellington, Jack Nelson
- 28 Ann Thomas
- 31 Deanna Stouffer



March Anniversaries

- 16 Jim & Rebekah Wiedower
- 25 Ron & Tonia Graves

Please Note:

We will publish birthday and anniversary information only with explicit permission. Please contact the Church Office if you wish to be added to or deleted from these lists. Please keep the Church Office informed of any changes to your address, phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

celebrate!



Shop at the Treasure Box Thrift Shop!

Open on Wednesdays and Fridays
10—4 & Saturdays 10-1
at 114 W. Boscawen St.

Donations accepted
during business hours.

*If you need a copy of the parish directory,
please email Noelle at
communications@christchurchwinchester.org
to make arrangements
to pick one up in the Church Office.*

**To submit a prayer request, please visit the
website and click on
“Add a Name to the Prayer List”
in the Quick Links section.**

Finance Committee

Budget News: Overview of 2025

The year 2025 has concluded, and we are pleased to present the final financial results. This year marked a significant achievement for our organization, as our total revenue surpassed expectations and goals set at the beginning of the year.

The combined revenue generated from both pledged and unpledged sources exceeded our planned budget by an impressive margin of nearly \$41,000. This accomplishment reflects the generous support and commitment of our community and contributors.

In addition to contributions, other incomes, specifically, revenue from plate offerings, the use of the Baden Center, interest earned in our bank account and other miscellaneous items — also surpassed the budgeted amounts. This additional \$10,000 contributed positively to our overall financial position.

Collectively, these strong performances resulted in total revenues that were 8% higher than our original budget projections. This favorable outcome demonstrates the dedication of everyone involved. Congratulations to all for your hard work and commitment. Your efforts were instrumental in achieving these outstanding results for 2025.

On the expense side of the ledger, the news is not as good. Most categories of expenses were close to or below the budgeted amount. The Properties total is over because of absorbing the sanctuary HVAC system repair (\$23k), roof repair (\$7k), etc. We managed to absorb significant Properties repairs, to the tune of \$39,000.

Despite these higher expenses within Properties, there was no need to draw from the operating surplus in the investment account. This demonstrates effective management of repairs and maintenance without compromising other financial resources.

During the pandemic, our church received valuable support from the government through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Employee Retention Credit program. In January 2023, we received our final check of \$55,470.51 from the ERC program.

The government funding had a direct and positive impact on our financial health. Each of these years, 2023-2025, surpluses were only possible due to this assistance. This government assistance enabled us to record a surplus of \$12,809 in 2023. The Vestry decided to apply this surplus to the 2024 fiscal year. As a result, we ended 2024 with a surplus of \$25,683, which the Vestry then applied to the 2025 budget. Continuing this pattern, the surplus for 2025 amounted to \$19,930, which the Vestry is now allocating toward the 2026 operating budget.

2025	Actual	Budget	Difference
Revenues	\$658,511	\$607,740	\$50,771
Expenses	\$664,265	\$632,694	\$31,571
Operating Total	(\$5,754)	(\$24,594)	(\$19,250)
Prior Year Carryover	\$25,683	\$25,683	0
Net Surplus/Deficit	\$19,930		

Finance Committee

Budget News: Preview of 2026

The Finance Committee convened to draft a budget for 2026, drawing on their experience from the prior year. They carefully reviewed financial trends, including the increase in utility and office expenses observed in 2025. To address inflation, the budget includes a modest pay raise for the church clergy and staff, in line with guidance provided by the Diocese. The completed budget was subsequently presented to and approved by the Vestry on January 11th.

The budget's revenue projections are based on anticipated pledge contributions of \$529,000, supplemented by \$79,000 in unpledged contributions. At present, the church has received pledges totaling \$494,421 from 120 pledge units. This represents a decrease from 127 pledge units in 2025, resulting in a projected shortfall of approximately \$35,000, or 7%, in pledged revenue. Last year, however, the church received about \$30,000 more in pledged contributions than was budgeted, and there is hope that this positive trend will continue in 2026.

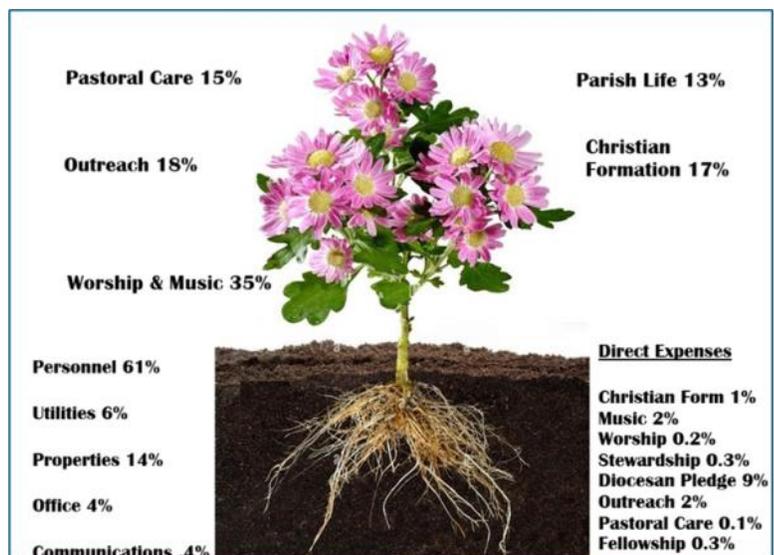
The operating budget anticipates a deficit of \$19,997 for the year. With this optimistic estimate of pledged donations and after applying the 2025 surplus carryover of \$19,930, there remains a deficit of \$67. Essentially, we anticipate breaking even.

Given this current pledged shortfall of \$35,000, it is important for all members to review their pledge contributions and consider increasing them, if possible. Those who pledged in 2025 but have not yet pledged for 2026 are especially encouraged to make a commitment. Pledging allows the church to operate in a financially responsible manner; it is not an invoice or bill, but rather a projection of stewardship and a commitment to the careful, responsible management of the resources entrusted to the church.

2026 Budget	Budget	Change from 2025
REVENUE	\$650,200	\$42,460
EXPENSES	\$670,197	\$37,435
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	(\$19,997)	\$4,957
PRIOR YEAR CARRYOVER	\$19,930	\$25,683
NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT	\$67	\$19,930

As we look over the budget, we see revenues and expenses and property maintenance and utilities. We must remember that these are just the inputs needed to do the mission of the church. It is the programs we accomplish with these resources that are really important.

~ Bob Puttock, Treasurer



Stewardship Committee

Defining Stewardship

The Meriam Webster dictionary defines stewardship as “the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.” The Episcopal church says that stewardship is about being grateful, responsible stewards of the gifts we receive from God.

At the parish level, stewardship is often thought about as the fall pledge campaign. Frequently, stewardship is referred to simply as “time, talent, and treasure.” But this phrase does not capture its full scope and depth of its meaning. It is much, much more. At its core, stewardship is managing the gifts we receive from God to fulfill our Baptismal covenant by contributing hours of service, skills and expertise, and financial support. Our stewardship commitment extends far beyond a single event or season, encompassing an ongoing dedication to the well-being and mission of the community.

Stewardship highlights the importance of volunteering and participating in church activities and outreach to the broader community. Our time here on earth is a valuable gift from God. We are responsible for using it wisely, which involves prioritizing activities aligned with God. Our Baptismal covenant repeatedly uses the words “will you,” such as “Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?” To which we respond with “I will, with God’s help.” Sharing ourselves with others in the community is clearly an important part of this covenant. We not only strengthen the bonds within our community but also live out the commitment to love and support our neighbors.

God has given each person unique abilities which we are to use for His glory and the benefit of others. Our natural talents and spiritual gifts are meant to be shared. Developing and applying these talents, not solely for personal advancement, but to help others and deepen spiritual growth, forms the foundation of a meaningful life. When you use your unique skills and expertise, you contribute in a way that is distinctive to you. By sharing your abilities and uplifting those around you, you contribute to a stronger, more compassionate community while deepening your own sense of fulfillment and sense of purpose.

The Episcopal Church encourages its members to recognize their role as stewards, not owners, of what they possess. This perspective fosters a sense of gratitude and responsibility. Stewardship is practiced through regular giving, volunteering, and participation in various church ministries. By engaging in these activities, we contribute to the spiritual and practical needs of the church, ensuring its continued growth and ability to serve others.

Be Christ Episcopal Church! Be a steward for God! ~ Bob Puttock



Parish Life Committee

Coffee Hour is More than Just a Cup of Coffee

Coffee hour is more than just sharing a cup of coffee—it's an opportunity to foster meaningful connections and create a sense of community. Here at Christ Church hosting Coffee Hour brings people together in a relaxed, welcoming environment.

Strengthening Relationships

Hosting Coffee Hour provides a casual setting for people to meet, chat, and get to know one another. These interactions can break down barriers, encourage friendships, and build trust which filters into all the work we do at Christ Church.

Building Community

Regular Coffee Hours can help create a stronger sense of belonging. They encourage participation, boost morale, and make newcomers feel welcome. Over time, these gatherings can transform groups into supportive communities.

Encouraging Collaboration

Informal conversations over coffee often spark creative ideas and problem-solving. Coffee Hour can lead to new collaborations, improved communication, and a more positive organizational culture within our committees and ministries. As people get to know one another and feel more comfortable with each other, our committees and ministries can become stronger and more productive.

Promoting Well-being

Taking a break for coffee and fellowship helps people relax and recharge. It can reduce stress, improve mood, and contribute to overall well-being. Hosting Coffee Hour demonstrates care for others' mental and emotional health. We may not know what someone else is experiencing or feeling but welcoming them to share fellowship after the Sunday morning service sends a message that they are part of a loving family here at Christ Church.

Easy and Inclusive

Coffee Hour is simple to organize, and instructions and guidance are readily available. It requires minimal resources and is inclusive of all members of the congregation, making it accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

Hosting Coffee Hour is a small gesture that yields more significant benefits than we may realize. By creating space for connection, conversation, and community, Coffee Hour helps build an environment where people feel valued and engaged. So, sign up to host, brew a pot, invite others, and enjoy the rewards of coming together and strengthening our Christ Church family. ~ Jody Wall



Scenes from WATTS Host Week 2026

