

THE ANGELUS

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Christ Episcopal Church • Winchester, Virginia

December 2025

Dear People of Christ Church,

There is a phrase as a euphemism in the Bible for time some of you may be familiar with around the number 40. You may remember that it rained “40 days and 40 nights,” or “wandering in the wilderness for 40 years,” or “Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness.” These are not meant as specific or chronologically dated times. Instead, the number “40” means “a really long time.”

For us at Christ Church, we have been blessed and fortunate to have Margery Wingenbach serve as Director of Christian Formation for our children for 37 years. Not quite 40, but close. And I would bet if asked, Margery might say that serving in this parish seems like a “really long time” on some Sundays, and just “a long time” on other Sundays. However, no matter the time, her faithfulness to the children, to this parish and to our Lord has always been there with Margery.

Since my coming to serve at Christ Church, Margery has helped me to navigate the children’s ministry community of Christ Church, the ecumenical world of our Vacation Bible School Program with Grace Lutheran Church, and even helping learn about the public school system she served in when events around the community impacted our programs. One of the many gifts I have appreciated most working with Margery has been her willingness to try new curricula, ways of doing programming, and helping to reflect on how we might serve the children and families better in our ministries.

If anyone thinks that each church year is the same and each generation of children is the same, I can assure you that whoever thinks that has never been an educator. Technology has changed, sports and communal realities have changed, and no two generations are alike. All I have to do is remember that horrible time in the community with the pandemic. So many things had to change and our meetings around parish programming would start off with, “So, what do we do next? Any ideas?” Margery joined in the conversation and was willing to try new things as long as we saw benefit to the children. And best of all, Margery kept a sense of humor as we went through it.

Of course, there is also the rest of the Wingenbach clan helping out whenever they could. David was the Jr. Warden when I arrived and also during the pandemic, which was a huge gift. Joe was the camp director at St. George’s Camp when my kids were there. Joe came back home, fortunately with Caroline, and the next generation of Wingenbachs are serving in the parish.

Please join me on Sunday, December 21, for a festive Coffee Hour/reception after the 10:30 am service to thank Margery for her service to this parish. No, she is not going anywhere. However, yes, she is retiring. She certainly deserves it having put up with all of the clergy around this parish over the years. I can only say, “Thank you, Margery. It has been fun to serve our Lord, even when those unexpected twists of life messed up our plans through storms, pandemics and whatever else. You made sure the parish cared for the children.”

Faithfully,



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



JOIN US TO CELEBRATE MARGERY WINGENBACH'S
SERVICE TO CHRIST CHURCH & RETIREMENT

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025
FESTIVE COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWING THE 10:30 AM SERVICE
IN THE TILFORD ROOM

Christian Formation & Worship

Sunday School Notes

December is a wonderful time of worship and learning for our youngest parishioners. Here's what to expect.

Each Sunday, our children's Sunday School classes will begin with the lighting of the Advent candle(s) followed by a brief devotion focused on the gospel lesson for that Sunday. Two of the beloved saints of Advent will visit the classrooms bringing small tokens that are part of the traditions of Advent. St. Nicholas will be on hand on December 7th and St. Lucy will visit on the 14th.

Our **Christmas Pageant will take place during the 10:30 am service on December 21st**. All children are invited to take part including visiting cousins and friends. The narrators, Sunday School children, and children's choirs take us through the Nativity and the congregation joins with them in singing Christmas carols during the pageant. Children are provided with costumes and create the manger scene and sing Christmas carols as the pageant is narrated. Costumes to choose from include angels, shepherds, sheep, donkeys, doves, etc. We will get into our costumes in the Sunday School Commons beginning at 3:45 pm. There are parts for all children, so please sign up in Sunday School or contact Margery Wingenbach at 540-667-0386.

Another way for kids to participate this Christmas is the **Family Service and Christmas Gift Parade at the 4:30 pm Christmas Eve service**. While we use the word "family" in the title, everyone is welcome to attend this festive service, which includes children's and adult choirs, and Holy Communion.

The Christmas gift parade occurs at the offertory and all are asked to bring a canned food donation to the service. Any children who come to the service are welcome to come dressed in the costume of their favorite manger scene character. Costumes can be as simple or elaborate as the children want. (Please note that the parish will not provide the costumes at this service. We rely on your creativity!) At the offertory, the children will follow the leader from the rear of the church to the front and place the food in the manger. The children will then join in leading the congregation in a carol and then they will return to their seats. There is no sign up required to participate!

Children's choirs, Sunday School and Children's Chapel will not meet on Sunday, December 28th. Our Sunday morning choir practice, classes, and Children's Chapel will resume on January 5, 2026.

Adult Forum

Adult Forum, Sunday School for adults, is Sunday at 9:30 am in the Pilgrim's Chapel at the front of the Parish Hall at 132 W. Boscawen St. Bibles are provided. We hope that you will join us! On December 7 and 14, the topic is Advent Bible Study. Adult Forum will then pick up again in January.

Adult Faith Study Continues in January

In January, the Adult Faith Study group will begin to study the book of Judges. Using the study guide from the *Anglican Association of Biblical Scholars: Conversations with Scripture* series, the group will look at this Old Testament book in its historical and theological setting. One summary describes this study guide: "Heller explores how Judges can shape our understanding of our world, our relationships, and can provide a path to a deeper appreciation of the ways of God among people. Far from seeing the book as either simplistic or cruel, Heller allows this odd text to speak to us anew about God, sin, relationships, and justice."

The faith study group meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month from 10:00-11:00 am in conference room of the Smith Building (upstairs at 114 W. Boscawen St.). We also offer a hybrid component on Zoom for those who may not be able to attend. Any questions, please contact Pat Shaner or Webster Gibson.

Christian Formation & Worship

Our Christmas Services

The Children's Christmas Pageant: This will be on Sunday, December 21, at the 10:30 am service of Holy Eucharist. Our Sunday School children and children's choirs take us through the wonderful events of the manger scene and the congregation joins with them singing hymns about each step of that glorious event. See more on the previous page about how children participate.

Christmas Eve 4:30 pm Family Service and the Christmas gift parade: While we use the word "family" in the title, everyone is welcome to attend this festive service, which includes children's and adult choirs, and Holy Communion. The Christmas gift parade occurs at the offertory and all are asked to bring a small canned food donation to the service. Please see the note on the previous page for children participating.

Please join us at 9:30 pm this year for **Anthems and Carols** prior to the later service of Holy Eucharist at 10:00 pm. The choir and featured soloists will sing beautiful anthems of the season, and the congregation will also be able to join in singing additional Christmas Carols as part of that prelude.

The service of Holy Eucharist will start at 10pm. This later service has fewer children present and can be described as a more contemplative experience as we gather to welcome the Christ child.

Christmas Day Service at 10:00 am: We gather on Christmas morning to celebrate Jesus' birthday with our sacred meal together and hymns to mark the occasion. There will not be a choir, just the voices of the congregation. It's a wonderful service for those who do not want to be out in the dark on Christmas Eve, or who prefer a less crowded, simpler service.



Sundays of Advent · 8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite I & 10:30 am Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Evening Prayer · Monday/Wednesday/Friday (ends Dec. 19) at 5:30 pm in the Pilgrim's Chapel

Sunday, December 21 · Children's Christmas Pageant at the 10:30 am service

Wednesday, December 24 · Christmas Eve Services

4:30 pm Family Eucharist

9:30 pm Anthems & Carols

10:00 pm Celebration of the Holy Eucharist

Thursday, December 25, Christmas Day · 10:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Sunday, December 28 · 8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite I & 10:30 am Lessons & Carols

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	4th Wed: 4:00 pm (No meeting this month)
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



The Angelus is a monthly publication of Christ Episcopal Church.

Church Calendar

December Birthdays

- 1 Mary Margaret Applin
- 4 Betty Futral
- 6 Pam Friestad, Peggy Dowd
- 7 Harry Poling
- 8 Lelia Wingenbach
- 10 Rob Ross, Gary Sheppard
- 13 Dana Shook
- 17 Terri Cluss, Bruce Schower
- 19 Eleanor Thomson
- 21 Bill Pifer
- 25 Evan Francis
- 26 Christopher Turnbull
- 28 Ashley Futral, Jr.
- 29 Carole Ann King
- 30 Sarah Roberson, Sam Worsley
- 31 Rob Boyd



December Anniversaries

- 4 James & Marsha Baden
- 8 Stephen & Suzanne Pettit
- 18 Bill & Gail Walsh
- 18 Steve & Ashley Haines

celebrate!

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.



Shop at the Treasure Box Thrift Shop!

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

Last day to shop before 2026
is December 20th.

Hosts needed in
the new year!

Sign up on the
church website!



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

Parish Life Committee

New Social Program at Christ Church

The Stewardship and Parish Life Committees would like to invite you to participate in the newly formed **Community Table**. The Community Table is a purely social group that gets together to share food, fun, and fellowship. With new parishioners joining our services every month, this is a great way to meet one another. It is designed solely to foster community and form personal bonds amongst parishioners outside of church wide events.

Signup Genius will be used to collect names. Those names will be randomly selected to form groups of 6 to 8 people. All are included, i.e., singles, couples, people with school-aged children or toddlers, empty nesters, people of all ages. In other words, a cross-section of our community. Each month, the group rotates responsibility to host a gathering of their choice. A different member(s) will host each month. Table can be a dinner table, restaurant table, card table, bowling alley table, or picnic table. It will be up to that month's host to decide.

Signup Genius will be open until December 10. Groups will be notified by December 12. The program runs January through April. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask Barbara Downs.

Outreach Committee

Ministry Updates

Members of the Outreach Committee have the privilege of receiving the compliments for the efforts of this congregation from the non-profit groups being served. Let us share some of what we hear:

"God bless you for providing food for our families. These families are using what is given to feed their children and themselves." ~ **Salvation Army**

"Do you know how much these canned foods collected by your congregation add to the nutrition of families suffering from food insecurity in our community? Thank you so very much." ~ **CCAP**

"Thank you again for your congregation's generous monthly donation. We are able to provide weekend food packs for over 1,500 students weekly; give out school supplies as needed; support families with hygiene items and household necessities. You make it possible to fulfill our mission of 'togethercommitting all that we are to enrich the life of a child.'" ~ **Bright Futures**

"Partnering with Rise Against Hunger assembles and eventually distributes on a global basis, packets of nourishing food to children and families in poverty. Thank you for taking a step toward ending hunger." ~ **Rise Against Hunger**

"Christmas will be brighter and children will be warmer with the gifts your congregation is providing through the Angel Tree Program. God bless you and thank you for your continued support of this program and your generosity." ~ **Salvation Army**

"That was delicious --- thank you so much and may I have a second helping." ~ **Winchester Rescue Mission**

Let's continue to make a difference by contributing and volunteering! You are always welcome to participate.

Stewardship Committee

Update on Campaign for 2026

The Stewardship campaign has been going on for a month. At this point, approximately 50% of our congregants have renewed or initiated a new pledge for 2026. This is good news in that it is a higher rate than we have had in previous years. Additionally, about 45% of these have increased their pledge. This is all very encouraging, and I want to say thank you to all those who have increased their pledges. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. To those who have yet to pledge, and history tells us that many of you will, I'd like to remind you of a few things.

- While we are pledging to donate money to the church, actually we are contributing to the Worship and Music, Pastoral Care, Parish Life, Christian Formation and Outreach programs that the church promotes. These are the important programs that our money supports.
- Inflation is real and the church is not immune from it. Being able to conduct these programs at their current levels means that we must be able to stay up with the inflationary pressures that affect everyone. Being able to expand the existing ministries and broaden them into new areas will require giving even more.
- The Social Security cost of living adjustment for 2026 is 2.8%. This makes a good number to use for inflation. Looking at the mean pledge of \$3570, 2.8 % is just \$99.96 a year, or \$1.92 a week. A cup of coffee at local restaurant costs \$3.50. (And that's not Starbucks.)
- The Finance Committee is meeting in December to plan the budget for next year. With only about 50% of the pledges that we historically expect, they are forced to make guestimates as to what and how to fund the ministries. It also restricts other committees from considering new initiatives. This is why we conduct Stewardship in the fall. It's so planning the next year can be done reasonably without overspending or short-changing our programs come January. Submitting your pledge in a timely manner is important.

I had an occasion recently to review our Baptismal Covenants. Webster periodically leads us through these on Sunday mornings. But in this case, I had the opportunity to read and consider them at a slower, more meditative pace. Each covenant starts with "Do you" or "Will you" and we respond with "I will, with God's help." It made me realize that being a Christian is not a passive activity. Saying "I will" means that I am promising to actively participate; to support the church in many ways by sharing my wealth, my time and my skills and live my life according to these covenants.

~ Bob Puttock, Treasurer



Properties Committee

Updates on Projects

Keep Day, our semi-annual clean-up effort, was held on November 8, 2025 and, by all accounts, was a success. Thirty plus volunteers were spread among the courtyard, Parish Hall, and Baden Center doing chores. As one volunteer said, "We got a lot done." Thanks to all who attended. Please watch for the announcement of our spring 2026 Keep Day.

And, if you have not recently visited the courtyard, please stop by to view the results of the Property Committee's recent initiative to renew the columbarium (pictured below). The work was performed by Rose Restoration of Fairfax, VA, under a contract to repair, clean and seal the vault, including resetting stone, mortar and caulk replacement in its entirety.

The Properties Committee is always seeking new members to help maintain the church and grounds. No specific expertise is required. Please contact Dan Wall (DanWall12@gmail.com) if you are interested in learning more. The committee meets monthly on the third Tuesday at 7:00 pm.



Notes from the Bookkeeper

Pledge envelopes for your 2026 pledges will be available for pick-up in the back of the church now until December 22nd. Thereafter, please arrange to pick up your envelope book at the Church Office, but call ahead to make sure someone we are available. If you did not request envelopes when you submitted your pledge, but would like a set, please contact our Bookkeeper, Theresa Seitz, at 540-773-5566 or email tseitz@christchurchwinchester.org.

2025 Pledge Contribution Statements will be mailed the week of January 12th. The statements can be used for charitable tax contribution purposes. Per IRS Guidelines, only those with contributions of \$250 or more will be mailed a statement. If your contribution was less than \$250, but you would like a statement, please contact our Bookkeeper, Theresa Seitz, at 540-773-5566 or email tseitz@christchurchwinchester.org.

