

February 2026

The Guide

*We embrace all
as we journey
the way of Jesus*



CHRIST
CHURCH UCC

15 South Ft. Thomas Ave.
Ft. Thomas KY 41075

www.christchurchft.org
facebook.com/christchurchucft
[Twitter@ChristChurch_FT](https://twitter.com/ChristChurch_FT)

Office Hours:

Monday–Thursday
9 a.m.–4 p.m.
Closed on Fridays

Worship Schedule:

Check calendar on back for
worship, study groups, and
Youth & Children's Ministry

Christ Church Staff:

Rev. Diane Vego
Interim Pastor

Madeline Queen
Director of Christian Education

Max Gise
Worship Coordinator

Talia Zoll
Worship Coordinator

Danny Manning
Choir Director

Barb Walkenhorst Derby
Bookkeeper

Michele Wright,
Communications Director

Jeff Searcy
Custodian



Photo by Michele Wright

The Season of Lent

Contemplating the Mystery of Christ's Sacrifice

In February, we will move from the season of Ordinary Time to the Season of Lent. We will have a simple **Ash Wednesday Service at Christ Church at 4 p.m. on February 18.** I know this may not work for everyone, but for those who want to partake, please consider joining me at that time for a simple service.

Although many Christians consider Lent to be a Catholic Practice alone, this is not the case. The season of Lent can be a worthwhile time for **all** faithful Christians to deepen their relationship to Jesus Christ.

Lent is a sacred season in the Christian liturgical calendar, a time of spiritual renewal and preparation leading up to the joyous celebration of Easter. This period of 40 days (not counting Sundays) begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes on Holy Saturday, the day before

Easter Sunday.

The number 40 holds deep biblical significance, echoing the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness, as well as the 40 years the Israelites wandered in the desert. This parallel invites us to reflect on our own spiritual journeys and the ways we may be tested or called to grow in faith.

Historically, Lent emerged in the early centuries of Christianity as a time of preparation for baptism, which was typically performed at Easter. Over time, it evolved into a period of penitence and spiritual discipline for all believers. The Council of Nicaea in 325 AD formalized the 40-day observance, though practices varied across different regions and traditions.

Continued on next page

Jan. Attendance

	In Person	Online
1/4/26	100	N/A
1/11/26	72	N/A
1/18/26	48	N/A
1/25/26	Snow	N/A



Prayer Requests

Covenant Cluster Prayer Partner:
Washington UCC, Cincinnati, OH

David Hosea, Makayla, Kelly Greenwalt, Karma Klingenberg, Katie Leftin, Barb Stinnett, Suzanne Jones, Greg Vogel, Jim Rechtin Jr., Maggie, Sallie Schmidt, Jeff McCall, Marcia Storm, Chris P., Mike Bizzarro, Mark Helminiak, Tim Kennedy, Jim & Barb Korpik, the family of Marcia Hosea
(Underlining indicates anonymity)



Diapers! Diapers! Diapers!

Josh and Erin Vogel are having a baby in March! Excited grandparents are Ramel and Greg Vogel. Please support this mission by filling the bin in the Narthex with diapers and wipes.

Continued from front page

Psychologically, Lent serves several important functions. It provides a structured time for self-reflection and introspection, allowing us to examine our lives and our relationship with God. This process of self-examination can be deeply transformative, leading to personal growth and spiritual maturation.

The penitential nature of Lent also addresses our innate need for renewal and forgiveness. By acknowledging our shortcomings and seeking reconciliation with God and others, we can experience a powerful sense of liberation and spiritual rejuvenation.

The communal aspect of Lent fosters a sense of solidarity among believers. As we journey together through this season, we are reminded of our shared humanity and our common need for God's grace and mercy.

Theologically, Lent invites us to contemplate the powerful mystery of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection. It is a time to deepen our understanding of God's love and to align our lives more closely with the teachings of Jesus. Through practices such as prayer, fasting, and alms-giving, we seek to cultivate a spirit of humility and compassion, drawing closer to God and to one another.

This year, I am choosing the book, **Seven Miracles by Gina Anderson-Cloud** to be our companion through Lent. *Seven Miracles* invites readers on a transformative Lenten Journey through the Gospel of John. In the pages of Rev. Anderson-Cloud's book, we will encounter seven miraculous signs of Jesus—not simply as stories of supernatural wonder, but as windows into the heart of

God's love and the abundant life Jesus offers.

It is my hope and prayer that these miracle stories will inform us and inspire us in these difficult and challenging times within which we live.

To make it easy, we will purchase a few copies for you, and you can pick them up at the church office, or you can easily order a copy online. They are \$21.95 each.

Finally, I have chosen this book because the Lenten Gospels on Sunday will **all** come from John, and reflecting each week on a miracle story might make a BIG difference in your personal prayer life and on your journey to Easter.

In the meantime, I am holding you, our community, our nation and our world in prayer. I believe Christ will help us find a way forward, but in the season of Lent, that way is through the tomb.

With Grace and Gratitude,

Pastor Diane



Marcia Hosea

Service of Remembrance

Date: Friday, February 6

Visitation: 10 a.m.-Noon

Service is at Noon

We will provide drinks and snacks in the Parlor.

Christian Education Update

From Madeline Queen

Director of Christian Education

January was a joyful and meaningful month for our Children's Ministry! We finally celebrated our beloved and belated Christmas pageant, and what a blessing it was. Even with the delay, the children brought the story of Jesus' birth to life with so much heart and enthusiasm. Everyone did such a wonderful job, and we have to give a special shout-out to our sweet Baby Jesus, who absolutely stole the show!

In our weekly lessons, the children have been learning about the baptism of Jesus and the important role of John the Baptist. They've been discovering how John prepared the way for Jesus and how he faithfully pointed his own

followers toward Christ. Through stories, discussions, and activities, the kids are beginning to understand what it means to follow Jesus and share His love with others.

We're also excited to share that we are planning a **Church-wide Game Night** for late February (date TBD). This will be a fun evening for all ages to gather, laugh, and build community together—so keep an eye out for more details soon!

We are so proud of our children and grateful for the joy, curiosity, and faith they bring to our church each week. Thank you to



our volunteers and families who continue to support and nurture these young hearts as they grow in God's love.

Please contact Ms. Madeline if you are interested in helping!

Recycling Information

The very first instructions God gave Adam and Eve were to be good stewards of the earth.

(See Genesis 1:28)

We have been blessed with a world of beauty like no other. Even though astronomers are able to see millions of planets, so far few have the possibility of any life, and nothing like what we have here.

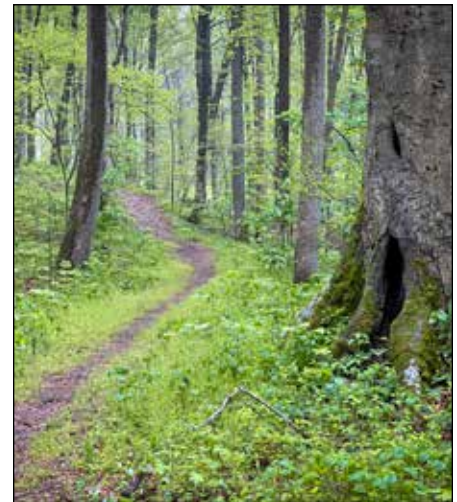
There are many things you can choose to do for this precious planet, but an important opportunity is to recycle.

- **Recycling conserves natural resources** like forests, while recycling metal, glass, and plastic reduces the need to mine or extract new raw materials.
- **You can save energy and reduce emissions** since manufacturing products from recycled materials requires significantly less energy

than creating them from scratch, reducing greenhouse gases.

- **When you reduce landfill waste and pollution**, you keep trash out of landfills and incinerators which reduces harmful pollution and methane emissions.
- **It supports the economy** since the recycling industry creates jobs and boosts economic growth, providing a steady supply of materials for manufacturing.
- **And it protects wildlife and ecosystems.** When you reduce the demand for raw materials and lessen waste, it helps protect natural habitats from destruction.

Remembering what can be recycled and where can be confusing. **To see what Rumpke recycles**, go to: <https://www.rumpke.com/residential/recycling-services/acceptable-items>
For information about Rumpke's



orange bag program created by Hefty, go to: <https://www.hefty.com/hefty-renew/accepted-items>
Items Rumpke doesn't take can be dropped off at Cincinnati Recycling and Reuse Hub. They now charge \$10 per month for individual households. Their information can be found at: <https://www.cincinnati recycling and reuse hub.org>



Schedules for February

Liturgists

February 1	Barry Petracco
February 8	Marcia Storm
February 15	Carolyn Tyler
February 22	Jane Petracco

Deacons

February 1	Jean Braun
February 8	Jack Hurtt
February 15	Greg Vogel
February 22	Jean Braun

Ushers

February 1	Jean Braun Gordon Braun Nancy Pinguely Jeff Pinguely
February 8	Jack Hurtt Ellen Turner Scott Turner Marcia Storm
February 15	Greg Vogel Patti Miller Mike Evans Andy Borah
February 22	Jean Braun Gordon Braun Ellen Turner Scott Turner

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

— Isaiah 6:8 NIV

Hallelujah!

Pop the champagne bottle and say, "Hallelujah!" The new blinds have been installed in Hoffman Hall, the chairs are in place, and the fans, light fixtures, and inside of windows cleaned. Please let Nancy and Bob Witte know your appreciation of their gracious gifts.

To complete the hall, the baseboard needs to be attached plus decorations (ie paintings artificial foliage, etc.) We will confer with our decorator, Shari (Witte) Thompson. Our main goal for our beautiful hall is to rent it out to bring extra income to our church.



Remodeling Projects

With the completion of Hoffman Hall and the outside painting of the foundation, as promised in the fall, we shall now put our time and energy to the inside of the church.

Nancy, Greg, and Linda will take an inventory of the areas inside the sanctuary and the education building, create a list, and set up several workdays in the spring. I'm sure you have seen doors, walls, banisters that are chipped, and baseboard in the upstairs wall (by the history room) that needs to

be attached. Please feel free to mention any concerned areas to one of organizers.

We continue to accept donations plus gift cards to Lowes and Sherwin Williams. Please mark on your check "painting projects." **We are so grateful to anyone who has given and to anyone who plans to give.** Please note this is in addition to your regular Stewardship gift. If you would like to be on the "work crew," please let Nancy, Greg, or Linda know.



Church Council Meeting Notes

1/26/2026

In Attendance by Zoom:

Pastor Diane, Snezana Tenhundfeld, Bert Bathiany, Beckie Borah, Linda Gracey, Jen Korpik, Debbie Paillette, Jane Petracco, Greg Vogel, Josh Woodward

• *Gathering/Centering Prayer*

Pastor Diane

• *Approval of Minutes*

Minutes from November 25, 2025, meeting approved.

• *Financial Report*

- The Finance committee is still working on the budget for next year.
- We were ~\$8,000 short from last year's budget.
- Bert will have a full report in next month's *Guide*.
- Greg made a motion to approve the Financial Report, Jane seconded. **Report approved.**

• *Pastor's Report*

- Diane gave us a report on all the pastoral visits she has made
- Members of the Transition Team have been meeting and will have suggestions for Council next month.
- Madeline is looking into having a church-wide game night.
- Ellen Turner has filled the open Christian Education position on Council. There will be a committee started to support Madeline with the Christian Education program.

- The coffee hours with the Pastor will not be happening going forward but members are encouraged to contact Diane if they need time to talk.
- **The Annual Meeting has been set for March 15.**

• *Building and Grounds*

- Greg Vogel is going to put a Rental Committee together to facilitate renting out parts of the church. If you are interested, please see Greg.
- A big thank you to all who have donated their time, skills and funds for the Hoffmann Hall project. The space looks amazing!
- There are some more inside projects that can be tackled by our congregation during these winter days. We will be planning another workday soon!

• *Nominating Committee*

- Those going off Council will form a committee for next year. Positions available are:
 - Moderator
 - Secretary
 - Councilor (head of Personnel committee)
 - Worship
- Please see Snezana, Jen, Jane or Debbie if interested.

• **The next Council meeting will be February 23, 2026**

- *Meeting ended with prayers for members in need and the Lord's prayer.*



Lunch and Learn

Because of the winter storm, our January speaker was moved to **Tuesday, Feb. 24 at 11:30 a.m.** Our guest presenter for Lunch and Learn will be **Michelle Snodgrass Demling**. A graduate of Western Kentucky University and Salmon P. Chase Law School, Michelle became the first Female Commonwealth Attorney for Campbell County. During her 26 year career as a prosecuting attorney, Michelle prosecuted thousands of felony cases including murders, sexual assaults, child abuse, robberies and burglaries. Several of her cases garnered national attention. Join us and learn about her illustrious career and how the justice system works in the State of Kentucky.

Reservations are Required for Lunch. Please join us!

Lunch begins at 11:30 a.m. followed by the presentation at noon. **For lunch reservations call Nancy Hunter.**

Lost and Found

If you've left anything at the church, you may find it in our lost and found basket located in the Parlor. Thank you!

Your Church Family Needs You!

If you've ever considered helping out in some way, we can always use your talents and energy. Here are some reasons people enjoy volunteering:

"I volunteer at Christ Church to show my life-long gratitude to those that brought my family and me to safety. Christ Church followed in their faith and opened their hearts and arms to those in need, when they could have just simply looked the other way. I choose to walk the same path."

Snezana Tenhunfeld

"Volunteering in one of the many opportunities available at Christ Church is a great way to get to know people of the congregation better in smaller settings. There are so many ways to serve!"

Debbie Paillette

"I feel blessed to be part of such a wonderful church family and volunteering is my way of expressing my thanks and giving back to Christ Church."

Patti Miller

"Volunteering, giving, and sharing, whether for my Church Family or others, make my heart swell."

Linda Gracey

"I have volunteered in part because of being a former pastor who knows how volunteers are essential for a healthy church. It is also my way of thanking God for my many blessings, of which the church, especially Christ Church, is one."

Jim Korpik

"I volunteer at Christ Church because I love the people in the congregation. I feel it brings us all together when we help each other. I enjoy writing letters to people who need encouragement or congratulations. Also, delivering food to new parents, the ill, or those who can't get out for some reason, makes me feel needed. When I see their grateful faces and hear thank you, my heart feels grateful that I could help."

Carolyn Honchell

"My reason is simple. I like to feel needed."

Gordon Braun

"I believe strongly in 'The cost and joy of Discipleship.' I cannot receive unless I, in turn, give."

Jean Braun

"Church is always an outlet for me to sing without an audition and the stress of being the best. It's a place where I can sing beautiful songs for an audience that truly appreciates it no matter who's voice their hearing."

Laura Petracco

"I ask myself the question, 'How do you consider yourself a member of Christ Church UCC?' and I answer, 'I'm not really a member unless I help keep this church a beacon for the city of Ft. Thomas.'"

Donna Hoffman

"As an usher, I like greeting church members and guests as they enter the sanctuary, passing out the bulletin, helping with communion, and catching up with folks I normally don't see during the week. Being a liturgist, I get to be a part of the service and look out at all the faces of the congregation."

Scott Turner

Bless the Beasts



Photos by Michele Wright

Christ Church End of year Report 2025

Bert Bathiany, Treasurer

Welcome to 2026! It seems like the days go by so much faster. This is the year end report on the church's finances. First of all, the Finance Board would like to thank everyone who graciously gave to Christ Church last year. We talk about Outreach, Mission, Worship, Church Community, and Faith throughout the year in worship, classes, and at committee meetings. But, without the generosity of you, the congregation, none of it would be possible. **Thank You!**

We finished 2025 in good shape and paid all of our bills. Yeah! Our wonderful staff managed to curtail expenses such that we had \$30,000 less in expenses than we had budgeted. We also were able to complete much needed repairs/improvements to the physical church. Hoffman Hall was painted, the outside foundation was repaired and painted, concrete work on the steps to Hoffman Hall, and general clean-up of the outside appearance.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who did that work. Also a huge thank you to Bob and Nancy Witte, who generously paid for the new chairs and window coverings for Hoffman Hall. Our goal is to now be able to rent it out for receptions and celebrations. We would also like to thank Dave and Marcia Hosea for their end of year donation for the special music during the holiday season. I am sure everyone would agree that our music program is **out-standing** and adds so much to our worship service.

We also had a late surge in giving by the congregation. We received \$10,000 more in donations than were budgeted. Congrats to you all! We had an ambitious budget presented last year of \$355,500, which was almost \$30,000 over

our projected income. Thanks to our staff's diligence and your generous giving, we were only \$10,000 under in cash flow. We were able to make that difference up from some of our reserves. We don't like to decrease those reserves but find it necessary at times. We did not have to touch our Legacy Fund. We are also reducing our debt monthly and currently that balance is down to \$150,000 from \$350,000.

We will be presenting a new budget for 2026 at the congregational meeting. If you have not submitted your pledge, please do so. It is hard to estimate giving to create a realistic budget. If you have any questions, please contact me. For those of you who like numbers, they are below:

Income Pledged	\$226,000	Actual Income	\$236,320
Total Income Budget	\$324,000	Actual Income Total	\$315,367
Expenses Budget	\$355,500	Actual Expenses	\$325,550
Deficit	<\$10,200>		

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Linda Griffith
Ben Petracco
Timothy Borah
Carolyn Tyler
Isaac Lyman
Ellie Jager
Audrey Jager
Brynn Draper
James Long
Nancy Barre
Steve Kappesser

Donna Stinson
Laura Petracco
Daniel Tenhunfeld
Ruth Rowe
Austin Huelsman
Barbara Walkenhorst-Derby
Ellen Turner
Jane Petracco

Stanley & Joyce Grau

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:30 am –Fellowship 10:30 am –Children's Christmas Pageant 10:30 am –Worship	2 10 am – Bloom Homeschool	3 1:30 pm – Art Group 7 pm – Overeaters Anonymous	4 3 pm –Small Group Zoom Link is: bit.ly/ccwednesday 7 pm – AA Group	5 12 pm – Study Group	6	7
8 8:30 am –Fellowship 10:30 am –Children's Christmas Pageant 10:30 am –Worship	9 10 am – Bloom Homeschool 7 pm – Survivors of Suicide 7 pm – Finance Meeting	10 12 pm –Green Team 1:30 pm – Art Group 7 pm – Overeaters Anonymous	11 3 pm –Small Group Zoom Link is: bit.ly/ccwednesday 7 pm – AA Group	12 12 pm – Study Group 7 pm – Doll Group	13	14
15 8:30 am –Fellowship 10:30 am –Children's Christian Education 10:30 am –Worship 11:30 am –Mission Team	16 President's Day OFFICE CLOSED 10 am – Bloom Homeschool	17 1:30 pm – Art Group 7 pm – Overeaters Anonymous	18 3 pm –Small Group Zoom Link is: bit.ly/ccwednesday 4 pm –Ash Wed. Service 7 pm – AA Group	19 12 pm – Study Group	20	21
22 8:30 am –Fellowship 10:30 am –Children's Christian Education 10:30 am –Worship	23 10 am – Bloom Homeschool 6 pm – Church Council	24 11:30 am –Lunch and Learn 1:30 pm – Art Group 7 pm – Overeaters Anonymous	25 10 am – Moms Group 3 pm –Small Group Zoom Link is: bit.ly/ccwednesday 7 pm – AA Group	26 12 pm – Study Group	27	28