



# Christ Episcopal Church

## 4th Quarter 2025 Chronicle

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When I arrived home from church last Sunday I noticed there were eight vultures sitting on the branches of a tree in our backyard. At first, I was a little concerned they knew something I didn't but I figured they must be waiting for their next meal. I decided to Google it and see what it means to see many vultures waiting in a tree. Oddly enough, it wasn't as bad of an omen, according to the internet. Spiritually it can symbolize transformation, purification, renewal, and death. It also states that vultures can represent patience and resourcefulness and letting go of the old to make way for the new.

I found this interesting given the fact that I had just left church and we are looking towards beginning a new year. Also, it had been a week of highs and lows and I wondered if maybe it was a message to me. Again, I also wondered if there was something dead in the woods behind my house or if they knew something I did not.

A new year is upon us now; it's a chance for transformation and renewal not just in our health journeys as many New Year's resolutions include, but in our own lives and relationships with God. May 2026 bring each of us closer to God. May we each remember the gift of Jesus Christ and his birth all throughout the year. May we remember the gifts that he gives each of us and share them with one another. May we experience patience that comes in the peace of knowing that God is at hand.

2025 was a year that Christ Church experienced the loss of two of its members and yet also rejoiced in the joy of baptism for our youngest member and the first communion for one of our youth members. In 2026, Christ Church will need to shift its focus a little more on the future. I was reminded recently that if the church is going to survive, it takes all of us to make it thrive.

I look forward to seeing our members come together at the Annual Meeting on January 18th to discuss the health and future of the church. Please continue to pray for our church in your prayers and your roles as church members.

Faithfully in His service,  
Kristi Ross, Senior Warden

On Sunday, October 5th Raylin Boyd celebrated her First Communion.

Raylin went through lessons during Sunday School class the weeks leading up to this date. She had been waiting and questioning the sacrament of Communion.

Raylin was joined by her family at the altar railing first to celebrate this special occasion.



# UPCOMING EVENTS



## Birthdays & Anniversaries



- Sun. Jan 11 Vestry Meeting following the service
- Tue. Jan. 13 Lunch Bunch 12:00 p.m. - Ciro's
- Sat. Jan. 17 Crafting Fellowship 10:00 a.m.
- Sun. Jan. 18 Annual Meeting following the service
- Sat. Jan. 31 Crafting Fellowship 10:00 a.m.
- Sun. Feb. 8 Vestry Meeting following the service
- Tue. Feb. 10 Lunch Bunch 12:00 p.m. - Santana's
- Sat. Feb. 14 Crafting Fellowship 10:00 a.m.
- Tue. Feb. 17 Pancake Supper 5-7 p.m.
- Wed. Feb. 18 Ash Wednesday 6 p.m.
- Sat. Feb. 28 Crafting Fellowship 10:00 a.m.
- Sun. Mar. 8 Vestry Meeting following the service
- Tue. Mar. 10 Lunch Bunch 12:00 p.m. - Captain Cook's
- Sat. Mar. 14 Crafting Fellowship 10:00 a.m.
- Sat. Mar. 28 Crafting Fellowship 10:00 a.m.
- Sun. Mar, 29 Palm Sunday

### January

Karla Brummett	8
Sherry Gott	19
Jerry Oakes	20
Janet Hamilton	28
Jordan Hall	28
Sally Vick	28
Donna Moroni	29
Faye Harbrant	30
Andy Sands	31

### February

Shane Hall	2
Zach Haney	4
Mollie Huemoeller	4
Melissa Brummett	10
Autumn Hall	10
Cheyenne Hall	10
Jake Howard	11
David & Bonnie Hill – Anniversary	17
Bonnie Hill	19
William Barksdale	23
Phil Huecker	24
Shane & Mikelle Hall – Anniversary	24
Kyle Pruitt	26

### March

Carl Rowe	1
Carl & Rev. Grayce O'Neill Rowe - Anniversary	5
Matthew Marlowe	10
Angie Daniel	16
Cathy Hyler	23
Selena Fifield	23
Jim Hall	26
Kathleen Hoffman	26
Jennifer Cuff	27
Brittany Barnett	29
Andy & Sharon Sands - Anniversary	30
Tom & Laura Sadler - Anniversary	31



Happy New Year from the Altar Guild! As we begin our New Year, I would like to thank our dedicated volunteers who help share in preparing the sanctuary for worship each Sunday.

From caring for the seasonal changes of the church, cleaning the vessels and linens, and preparing the lovely flower arrangements, serving on the altar guild is truly a spiritual ministry. Know that new members are always welcome.

In closing, an Altar Guild prayer: *As we handle holy things, grant that our lives may be illuminated and blessed by you, in whose honor we prepare them, and grant that the people who shall be blessed by their use may find their lives drawn closer to Jesus Christ our Lord, whose Body and Blood are our hope and our strength.*

—Amen

Sarah Oakes,  
Altar Guild Member



The ECW meets once a month after the Church service. We usually have ten or eleven members present. ALL women in our church are members of the ECW.

In November, we had a White Elephant Silent Auction. Wonderful things were donated to the auction! Thanks to all who made donations. The items that weren't won will be used for another White Elephant sale at the Pancake Supper. The annual ECW Christmas party scheduled for December 5th had to be postponed due to bad weather and was held on December 12th. The party was well attended, despite another threat of bad weather, and everyone had a great time. We had delicious baked chicken from Mt. Hermon Meat Market and lots of wonderful side dishes from the members. Christ Church certainly has terrific cooks!

At our February meeting, we will be voting on officers for 2026. The nominations are Lu Sullivan, president; Sherry Gott, vice president; Marge Fifield, secretary; and Sarah Oakes, treasurer. We are still taking nominations. If you are interested in one of these positions, please let one of us know so that we can add you to the nominations.

Finally, instead of having a blood drive at the church this year, we are asking that people go to The Blood Connection (159 Executive Dr.) and credit the blood donation to Christ Church. Thank you!

Lu Sullivan, president, and Sherry Gott, vice president





There were a few more in attendance at the October 5th Sunday Service this year as families were joined by their four legged family members. The animals or pictures of family pets were blessed at the altar. This is always a Sunday that brings extra fun and smiles as we celebrate the animals that bring us love and friendship.

Thanks to member donations. We were able to collect several bags of food and enough money to allow a \$200 donation to Pennsylvania Pet Center and a \$200 donation to the Martinsville SPCA.



## Sunday, November 23 was our Annual Giving Sunday Service and Thanksgiving Meal.

The loose collection for this Sunday goes to the Sullivan Music Fund and we celebrate all those who serve our church.

During the month of November we collected several hundred pounds of food that was donated to God's Storehouse along with \$250 to purchase turkeys and ham.

This Sunday also marks the beginning of our pledge campaign as we look forward to the new year upon us. Thank you to everyone who pledged and turned their cards in.

Following the service we gathered in Barksdale Hall for a wonderful Thanksgiving Meal. A big thank you to all who brought dishes to share, helped set up and clean up. As always the food and fellowship were wonderful. We have so much to be thankful for at Christ Church.



A heartfelt thank you to all who helped make this year's Angel Tree a big success! We chose the National Center for Healthy Veterans to reach out and help our heroes in need.

On December 21st, Jake Corwin, General Manager of Valor Farm, picked up our donations and was amazed at the amount of donations, gift cards, hams, turkeys and even a very gently used flat screen tv, courtesy of Cathy Hyler!

On December 4th, Cleon Ross, Sarah Oakes, Kathy Hoffman, Karla Brummett and Marge Fifield visited the facility in Altavista and were given an extensive tour by Paulette Bailey-NCHV Coordinator and Volunteer. We toured their beautiful tiny house villages, large equestrian arena, and community center and spoke with several of the volunteers. They are building a Family Lodge for veterans' families to be able to visit and support their loved one. They are also in the process of rebuilding their main barn that sadly burned down on November 10, 2024 and are hoping to have it reopened in the Spring.

They are nonprofit and their funding comes from a mix of private donations, foundation grants, corporate support,



individual giving and its parent nonprofit, New Horizons Foundation. We are hoping to be able to continue giving back to these brave heroes who sacrificed so much for our freedom. We are planning to have someone come and speak with us and will plan another trip to see their new barn in the Spring! I hope you will plan to join us!

Again, thank you and God Bless you all for your kindness and generosity.

Marge Fifield – Outreach Coordinator



## National Center for Healthy Veterans

### Mission:

### Return Healthy Veterans to America

*Our veterans have pledged their lives for our freedom, security, and prosperity. Healthy veterans are productive members of society, good employees, and positive role models, but not all of our veterans are healthy.*

*To accomplish **our tactical MISSION of "Returning Healthy Veterans to America,"***

*NCHV engages with Veterans through virtual interaction, case management of walk-ons and referrals, and a one-year residential program at its Virginia Valor Farm. It integrates **Christian best practices** one veteran at a time 1) to heal the mind, body, and spirit; 2) to defeat isolation in community living, 3) to provide dignified work on active farm, ranch, and construction projects; 4) to deliver Christian trauma recovery and life skills programs, 5) to enhance career preparation and skills training, and 6) ultimately to prevent Veteran suicide.*



This year two of our teenage members read the story of the First Christmas while other youth members of the church brought the pieces of the Nativity forward and placed them on the side altar. Sunday, December 21st, the fourth Sunday in Advent, is usually reserved for this tradition. Together with the congregation singing the first verse of several Christmas Hymns we filled the church with Christmas joy. This is always a great way for our youth to be able to participate and share with the church.



Thank you to all those who stayed after church on Sunday, December 21 to get the church decorated for Christmas. Also, thank you to all those who donated money for Christmas Flowers this year.

A big thank you to Sherry Gott and Cleon Ross for all of their hard work to find, purchase and decorate with flowers this year for Christmas. Thank you to our Altar Guild for getting things in the church set up and ready for the service. Our church always looks so beautiful at Christmas.



## Christopher James Smith

November 8, 1949 - October 22, 2025



A memorial service was held at Christ Church on Thursday, October 30, 2025, at 1:00 PM. Chris's ashes were laid to rest next to his wife Vickie in the Holy Spirit Prayer Garden

Christopher James Smith of Blairs, Virginia, passed quietly on Wednesday, October 22, 2025. He was reunited with wife of 52 years, Vickie Lynn Smith, who preceded him in passing. He also is preceded by his parents, James "Smitty" Smith and Virginia "Kay" Smith. Native to Goodland, Kansas, he is survived by his siblings Cindy Smith of Denver, Colorado, and Jeff Smith, of Cathedral City, California.

With his wife "Vic", he raised his adopted children: daughter, Janel Nichole (John) of Providence, North Carolina, and his son, Samuel Jordan of Callands, Virginia, both surviving. Most of all, he is survived by his only grandson, Christopher Jordan. Chris served his community as a speech therapist for Pittsylvania County Schools. Following retirement, if he wasn't holding a fishing rod next to a pond, he was swinging a golf club on the green. He was an avid gardener. On fall Saturdays, he would channel surf SEC football games, and Sundays, he would watch the Dallas Cowboys. He was also a dog lover, never living without a four-legged companion. He often attested to wanting to be the person his dog thought he was. He can now walk forever along the shores in Carolina Beach.

## John Benz

January 13, 1942 - November 29, 2025



A memorial service was held at Christ Church on Friday December 12, 2025, 11:00am. John's ashes were laid to rest in the Holy Spirit Prayer Garden

John was born January 13, 1942, in Chester, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Saint James High School and received an associate's degree from Pierce Business School of Philadelphia, PA.

The family relocated to Danville VA in 2002 where John became warehouse manager of Unique Industries. He retired from Unique in 2012.

John was an avid golfer and hockey player. He managed and coached several amateur hockey clubs in the Philadelphia area. He also enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren.

John was devoted to his church family and was always one of the first to arrive to put on the coffee.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years Margaret Joy Benz, his daughter Donna Pitricia Benz Moroni, his sons Matthew Edward Benz, Mark David Benz, his brother Monsignor David Benz, son-in-law Michael Moroni, granddaughter Natalie Jade Benz. He is also survived by Kelly Benz Chattin and many loving nieces and nephews.

# January-February-March 2026 Service Assignments

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reader</b>	<b>Chalice</b>	<b>Elements</b>	<b>Servers</b>	<b>Ushers</b>	<b>Altar</b>	<b>Hostess</b>
<b>January 4 10:00 am HE</b>	Jason Hall	Shaun Anderson & John Ross	David & Bonnie Hill	Brantley Boyd	Jake Howard	Allen Riley	Janis Chenery
<b>January 11 10:00 am HE</b>	Allan Hoffman	Bob & Janis Chenery	Jerry & Sarah Oakes	Catherine Daniel	Jerry Oakes	Lu Sullivan	Rena Howard & Kristi Ross
<b>January 18 10:00 am HE</b>	Kathy Hoffman	Sarah Oakes & Allen Riley	Shaun & Dinah Anderson	Abigail Ross	John Ross	Marge Fifield	Reception
<b>January 25 10:00 am HE</b>	Sherry Gott	Shaun Anderson & Marge Fifield	Bob & Janis Chenery	Brantley Boyd	David Hill	Sarah Oakes	Bonnie Hill
<b>February 1 10:00 am HE</b>	Lu Sullivan	Bob & Janis Chenery	Michael & Cathy Hyler	Catherine Daniel	Shaun Anderson	Allen Riley	Marge Fifield
<b>February 8 10:00am HE</b>	Shaun Anderson	Sarah Oakes & Allen Riley	Marge Fifield	Abigail Ross	Jake Howard	Lu Sullivan	Pauline Ross
<b>February 15 10:00 am HE</b>	Bob Chenery	Shaun Anderson & Marge Fifield	David & Bonnie Hill	Brantley Boyd	Jerry Oakes	Sarah Oakes	Dinah Anderson
<b>February 18 Ash Wednesday 6 pm HE</b>	Marge Fifield	Bob & Janis Chenery	Jerry & Sarah Oakes	Catherine Daniel	John Ross	Marge Fifield	
<b>February 22 10:00 am HE</b>	Janis Chenery	Sarah Oakes & Allen Riley	Bob & Janis Chenery	Abigail Ross	Shaun Anderson	Allen Riley	Cathy Hyler
<b>March 1 10:00 am HE</b>	Sherry Gott	Shaun Anderson & Marge Fifield	Michael & Cathy Hyler	Brantley Boyd	David Hill	Lu Sullivan	Janis Chenery
<b>March 8 10:00 am HE</b>	Jason Hall	Bob & Janis Chenery	Shaun & Dinah Anderson	Catherine Daniel	Jake Howard	Marge Fifield	Bonnie Hill
<b>March 15 10:00 am HE</b>	Allan Hoffman	Sarah Oakes & Allen Riley	David & Bonnie Hill	Abigail Ross	Jerry Oakes	Sarah Oakes	Marge Fifield
<b>March 22 10:00 am HE</b>	Kathy Hoffman	Shaun Anderson & Marge Fifield	Jerry & Sarah Oakes	Brantley Boyd	John Ross	Allen Riley	Rena Howard & Kristi Ross
<b>March 29 10:00 am HE</b>	Marge Fifield	Bob & Janis Chenery	Shaun & Dinah Anderson	Catherine Daniel	David Hill	Lu Sullivan	Pauline Ross