

GOOD NEWS

STORIES FROM CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, DAYTON

Spring 2026 | No. 1 | Vol. 6



THE SHARED TABLE

page 7

The Episcopal Church Welcomes You
Loss, Resiliency, and Community
Finding Fellowship
Peace Like a River
Made Good

GOOD NEWS at Christ Church

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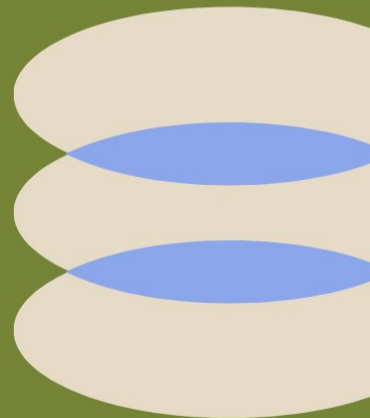
Christ Episcopal Church

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Dayton, OH 45402

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WELCOME TO OUR SPRING ISSUE

As we enter into a new season together, it brings me great joy to highlight the common life we've shared over the winter and spring months.

This issue is overflowing with stories of belonging, faith, community, and hope. I am so grateful to the members of our parish who said "Yes!" to writing pieces for this edition. What a gift it is to offer and receive these stories. In the second portion of this issue you'll find highlights of upcoming programs offered at Christ Church this spring and summer.

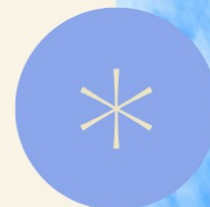


Whether you've been at Christ Church a short time, or for many seasons of life, we're so glad to be walking the journey with you.

Happy reading!

Director of Communication & Parish Life

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GO & MAKE DISCIPLES

In case you missed it: Highlights from winter & spring



172

Friends celebrated the Resurrection with us on Easter Sunday.



60

Care Kits made in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; given to the YWCA and CityHeart.



2

Parishioners joined The Episcopal Church; received and confirmed into the Body of Christ.



539

Neighbors served a warm, nutritious meal at St. Vincent shelter through our Take, Eat ministry.



2.6
thousand

Encounters with Jesus at our worship services this winter & spring.



76
thousand

Times the message of God's love reached the hearts of our neighbors through our social media presence.

WELCOME TO CHRIST CHURCH



“O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all.” Psalm 104:25

Earlier this year we rearranged the sanctuary for a season. In preparation for this change, we talked together about the sacred, the holy. Where have we experienced it in our lives? How did it make us feel? Listening to you, I heard one common response; We find and see the Divine in God’s creation, all around us.

As spring turns to summer, as the weather softens and the Earth ripens, we find more time to be outside. We hike, bike, garden, grill, camp, and just sit where we can be touched by the sun and the wind. The Church marks this change by entering the season of Ordinary Time, where faith matures through the rhythms and rest of everyday life. It is a green period for growth. It is a time for finding the special, the sacred, the holy, all around us. The extraordinary hidden in plain sight, right in front of us.

As this season unfolds for you, may you know the sacred. May you see it in the most surprising of places, your everyday life. And may this newsletter, full of the stories of those who have seen the Risen Lord, expand, inspire, and grow your own faith. For the wisdom of God, in all its manifold works, lies beyond our Sunday mornings.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter".

Rector, Christ Episcopal Church





FINDING FELLOWSHIP

By Leah Vanasdale

Faith has been one of the most steadfast constants in my life. In every season of my life, I have been able to find faith. What I have been unable to find, however, is a faith community. Fellowship is foundational to our faith, baked in from the very beginning, but it has always seemed to elude me. I grew up Roman Catholic and had a very solitary experience of church. Aside from a few one-off experiences, I wasn't involved in any youth groups or Bible studies as a kid. It was always me and God. Once I realized I was queer in my late teens, though, that solitude grew more pronounced. I felt safe in my relationship with God, but I no longer felt at home in church. Every Sunday, I felt more and more like the odd one out.

My road to fellowship has been circuitous. I

switched back and forth between churches in college, never finding a place that felt right. I moved to Dayton last July after I graduated from college, and God has led me to a faith home where I have found the community I have been lacking. For the first time, I have felt motivated, welcomed, and safe to attend church events outside of Sunday services, to

get involved beyond a superficial level, to get to know my fellow parishioners in deeper, more meaningful ways—things I have always wanted out of my church home but that I have not been able to find.

These feelings led me to join the Episcopal 101 class. I have known for several years now that there was not a long-term future for me in the Catholic Church, but I have

not felt fully certain about officially being received before being at Christ Church. I've made the decision to be received into the Episcopal Church now, though, because in this church, I see a church that wants me, wants to know me, wants to stand with me, as I am, imperfect though I may be. I see a church that is the hands and feet of Christ at work in this world, a

***“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer”
(Acts 2:42)***

church that has deepened my relationship with God by experiencing Him through the faith and lives of those around me. In this church, I see Jesus, who spent his time with tax collectors, prostitutes, and sinners and loved them just the same.



THE SHARED **Table**



March serving reflection from "Take, Eat" our shelter feeding ministry

By Gary Kuziinsky

Our servers—Martha Thomas, Emily Sexton Joyce, Greg Cleary, Karla Miles, Joy Witt, and I—were prepared to serve our regular menu of meatball subs, baked beans, potato salad, and cookies. Then the menu change started when one of the mothers asked for five bag lunches for her family. Bag lunches contain a sandwich, corn or potato chips, some fruit, and a bottle of water. Then family after family began asking for bag lunches instead of the meatball sub menu and we happily honored all their requests.

I was curious about what we had just witnessed because I always look for the presence of Jesus among us. Did this menu shift have a theological significance? So, I said, "Hey Google, what just happened here?"

From a theological perspective, what we witnessed at the St. Vincent de Paul Homeless Shelter on Apple Street was a profound

illustration of "active hope" and the Vincentian charism, which emphasizes seeing the face of Jesus in every person and responding to their concrete, individual needs with "inventive" love.

From a theological perspective, this "interesting day" reflected several key spiritual truths:

1. The Charism of "Love is Inventive to Infinity": St. Vincent de Paul famously taught that "Love is inventive to infinity." This means charity is not a rigid program but a dynamic response to people's actual, evolving needs.

- **Adapting the Menu:** Our team's willingness to shift from the planned meatball sub menu to bag lunches embodies this spirit. We moved beyond "mummified" practices to interpret the "signs of the times"—in this case, the specific needs of families.



- **Respect for the Person:** By honoring the mothers' requests, we practiced "epistemic humility," recognizing that the guests know their own needs best. This aligns with St. Vincent's view of the poor as "our lords and masters."

2. Divine Interruptions and Proverbs 16:9 - The abrupt change in our plans can be seen as a "divine interruption".

- **Man Plans, God Directs:** While our team "planned our course" with meatball subs, the Lord "established our steps" through the mothers' requests (Proverbs 16:9).
- **Flexibility as Worship:** True biblical hospitality (Greek philoxenia, meaning "love of strangers") often requires spontaneous sacrifice. Choosing to respond rather than react transforms a simple meal service into a genuine act of worship.

3. Sacramental Encounter in the Mundane - In the Vincentian tradition, personal contact with those in need is considered a sacramental meeting with Jesus Himself.

- **Serving Christ in the Mother:** When we fulfilled the request for five bag lunches, we were not just changing a menu; we were responding to Christ's own hunger (Matthew 25:35-40).
- **The Shared Table:** The move toward bag lunches—likely for portability or children's preferences—reflects an "open table" theology where hospitality is defined by the guest's comfort and dignity, not the host's convenience.

This shift from a "regular menu" to an individualized response is a classic example of "effective charity"—love proven through the "strength of our arms" and a willingness to get one's "hands dirty" for the sake of others. Thank you, Lord, for such an interesting day!

LOSS, RESILIENCY & COMMUNITY



By Barb Cerny

In September 2025, my life's brightly colored bus flung open its door and unceremoniously kicked me off the bottom step along a long, dusty road in the middle of a desert. I landed flat on my face and in some respects, I still feel like I am lying there eating the dust of sorrow and disbelief.

Up until that point, my bus, full of laughter, family, and good fortune, was lolloping along at a brisk pace toward a future full of festivals, travel, cruises, and pool sides in the Bahamas. A goofily weird husband nearing retirement was destined to skip into that unfettered future with me. But suddenly, without warning, I found myself, in a lifeless, wind swept, eerie and unknown land of sand dunes, rocky plains, and salt flats, a far cry from the green and verdant fields of a long and solid marriage. The extreme

fluctuations of heated loss and frigid loneliness in that barren landscape make it near unbearable to go on.

But then, like a Phoenix rising from the ashes, my community--Christ Church and the family Charles and I cultivated over the last 33 years--took me in its arms and helped me move forward. You were all quick to rally around my now tiny family and hold us up. I found myself surrounded by other congregants who had experienced the same loss as I - the sudden lack of a spouse causing constant emotional and physical suffering. Each relayed their own struggle, their experience in the same desert being virtually devoid of any way forward. But like the widow who lost a husband in the Vietnam War, our own priest who lost his wife shortly after coming to CEC, or the widower still reeling from the loss of his better half and career partner; they showed me what resilience could look like.

They said put one foot in front of the other and allow the tears to come. I cry frequently so there is no lack of waterworks even in the dry desert that still snatches at my ankles. In the stages of grief, I think I skipped denial as I was holding Charles' hand when he breathed his last. But the anger, bargaining, and depression come and go in waves, spurts, starts, and gushes. Sometimes I emote them all in a few minutes. I am nowhere near acceptance. That bumpy desert road stretches too far for that. My bus has so far refused to come back to this forsaken land of loss to pick me back up.

They said to share memories and stories. The best are of how Charles made people laugh with his very "dad-joke"-like sense of humor, how he taught the high-school Sunday classes, and how he stunned people with his incredibly low singing voice. I tended bar at A World A'Fair in May, a task Charles loved to

do, in honor of him and drank a shot of Slivovitz for him (nasty plumb Czech liquor). So many folks came up to me and talked about Charles and his impact on them over the years. Several had not heard the news, so I had to relay the story more than once. The telling gets easier every time, thankfully.

They said to practice self-care. I try to sleep but it still evades me. Charles was the cook

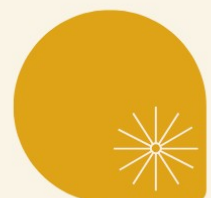
in the family, and I struggle the most with feeding Audra and I on a daily basis, so I find us sitting at too many restaurant tables. I made chicken the other night and use my own canned tomatoes weekly for spaghetti. It ain't much, but it is a start.

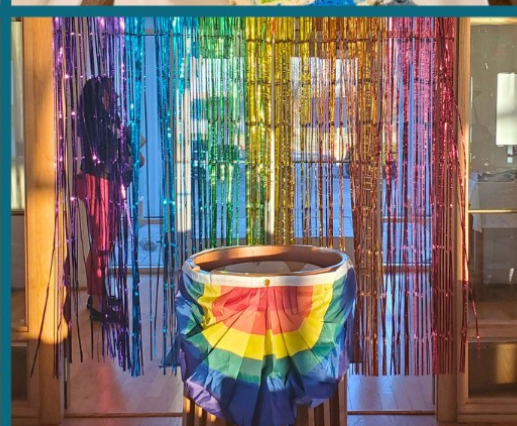
They told me to engage in rituals. So, I go to events at the Czech Club, had my annual booth at the Viking Festival, spent three days at A World A'Fair, go to lunch with friends, attend CEC and choir practice (so hard without him), and garden - all those things that make me roll out of bed in the morning. All those things that feel "old normal" as I build a new normal as a widow. We have one more ritual to accomplish for Charles - we will bury his ashes at sea in July. I hope the desert shrinks a little more at that time.

I am thankful every day for my community at Christ Episcopal Church teaching me

"I am thankful every day for my community at Christ Episcopal Church teaching me resilience in the face of great loss, surrounding me with hugs"

resilience in the face of great loss and surrounding me with hugs and Charles stories. I know I will survive, I will come out of the desert, a little scorched around the edges, but healed and able to move onward. Now where is that damn bus!





THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH WELCOMES

YOU

By Jen Sammons

The first time I hesitantly spoke the words, “I think I might be gay,” I was sitting in the grass with my friend Becca under a starry summer sky at Gordonwood Episcopal Camp and Conference Center in Ortonville, Michigan. Becca and I had been friends for a long time. We were campers together, moved up through the counseling staff ranks together, and were now both on the leadership staff. At this announcement, Becca turned to me and smiled. “Congratulations!” she said. That’s what Gordonwood was like in the late 1990’s and early 2000’s— a place where everyone was welcome, accepted, loved, and honored for who they were.

However, as anyone who has felt the very real post-camp-letdown knows, camp and the rest of the world are not the same place.

This was summer 2001:

8 years before the General Convention passed a resolution which allowed bishops to authorize same-sex *blessings* in their individual dioceses.

11 years before liturgical rites for the *blessing* of same-sex marriage were passed.

Two years later, my girlfriend and I had a beautiful commitment ceremony at an Episcopal Church in Michigan, surrounded by our family and friends and blessed by a priest who just decided not to ask anyone for permission and was happy to officiate as long as we didn’t call it a wedding.

This was summer 2003:

The same year that the election of the first openly gay bishop threatened to cause a schism in The Episcopal Church.

12 years before the canons were formally changed to include same-sex *marriage rites* following the Supreme Court marriage equality ruling.

23 years before I arrived at Procter Camp and Conference Center on Friday, March 26th, 2026, for the 2nd Annual Diocese of Southern Ohio LGBTQ+ Retreat and saw the Pride Progress Flag flying, its colorful striped presence boldly proclaiming the message that for so long I did not think fully applied to me: The Episcopal Church Welcomes You.

“The Pride Flag,” Rev. Phil Hooper said in the Friday night opening plenary session, “is a sacrament.” A sacrament, as you may remember from Sunday School, is *an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace* .

The multi-layered rainbow cake that Procter’s extraordinarily talented chef served at dinner that evening? A sacrament.

Each retreat workshop of music-making, collage-pasting, poem-writing, farm-visiting, and around-the-lake-hiking? A sacrament.

A closing Eucharist in a rainbow-filled chapel with our Bishop (our BISHOP!) presiding, communing, and blessing? A double sacrament.

Our queer bodies fully embracing and radically proclaiming queer joy in an often hostile world? A sacrament, a sacrament, a sacrament.

The date for next year’s retreat is, as Rev. Peter says at the Table each Sunday, set. The rainbow cake and trans flag brownies will be prepared.

Come and be fed. Whoever you are, wherever you are on your journey of faith, you—wonderful, queer you, fully and joyfully made in God’s image—are welcome here.

SUMMER CALENDAR

MAY

Wednesday Worship 12pm

Sunday Worship at 8am & 10:30am

5/24 Adult Forum “Prophetic Practice & Prophetic Witness”

5/24 Final Day of Spark Family Programs until fall

5/24 Pentecost Sunday, Recognition Sunday

5/25 Church Office Closed for Memorial Day

5/27 The Path Bible Study Group

5/28 Parish Game Night

5/31 Adult Forum “Prophetic Practice & Prophetic Witness”

5/31 Young Adult Gathering “Free Play in the Park”

JUNE

Wednesday Worship 12pm

Sunday Worship at 8am & 10:30am

6/02 Pride Volunteer Zoom Meeting

6/06 Christ Church Celebrates at Dayton Pride Parade & Festival

6/8-12 Vacation Bible School “Peace Like A River”

6/13 Creating Community Craft Gathering

6/14 Healing Prayers at Worship Services

6/16 Vestry Meeting

6/17 Wednesday Noon Worship

6/19 Church Office Closed for Juneteenth

6/21 Blessing of Food Donations | Ice Cream Sunday Coffee Hour

6/27 Made Good: an Episcopal Celebration of Queer Joy | Brunch & Worship

JULY

Wednesday Worship 12pm

Sunday Worship at 8am & 10:30am

7/11 Creating Community Craft Gathering

7/12 Healing Prayers at Worship Services

7/19 Blessing of Food Donations | Ice Cream Sunday Coffee Hour

7/21 Vestry Meeting

7/28 Ordination of The Rev. MaryJane Plote to the Priesthood

AUGUST

Wednesday Worship 12pm

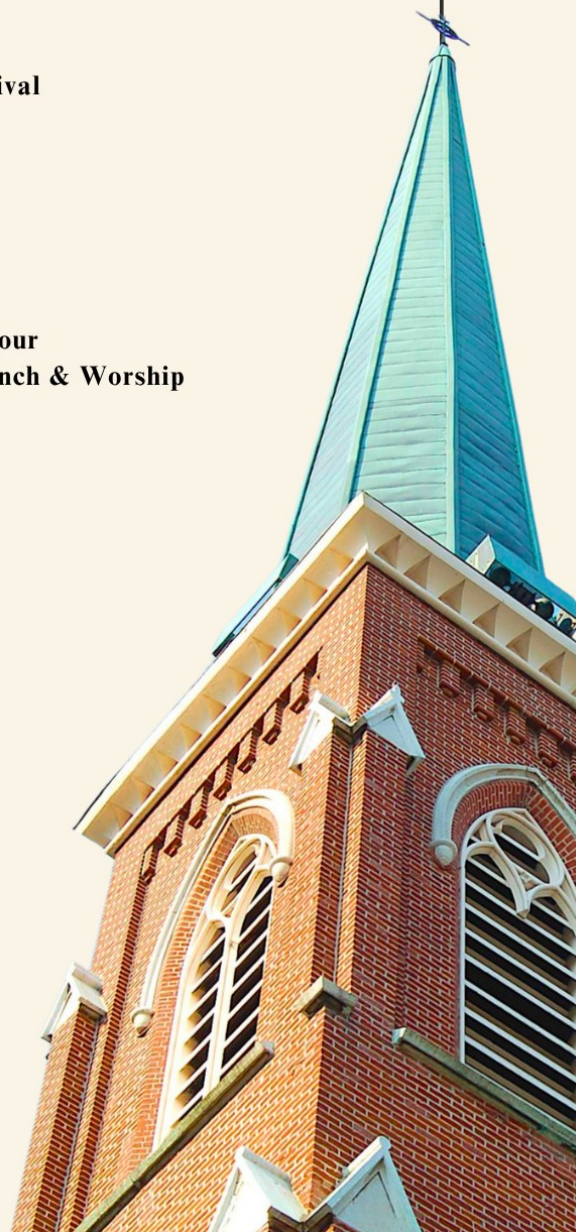
Sunday Worship at 8am & 10:30am

8/08 Creating Community Craft Gathering

8/09 Healing Prayers at Worship Services

08/16 Blessing of Food Donations | Ice Cream Sunday Coffee Hour

08/18 Vestry Meeting





save the date! **JUNE 6: DAYTON**

PRIDE PARADE & FESTIVAL



We've got a message that all people need to hear:

You are a Beloved Child of God!

You can help us share the Good News of God's liberating love at Dayton Pride. We march in the parade and then host a booth during the festival.

Visit our website for information about volunteering or walking with the Episcopal Churches in the Parade! www.daytonchristepiscopal.com/pride

FOR THE
WHOLE FAMILY!

JUNE 8TH-12TH



PEACE LIKE A RIVER

6:00-7:30 PM

SUPPER
SERVED AT
5:30PM

Vacation Bible School

at Christ Episcopal Church - Dayton
20 W 1st St, Dayton OH



FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES WITH THEIR CAREGIVERS



MARK YOUR CALENDARS: JUNE 8-12, 2026



EARLY-BIRD REGISTRATION OPENS MAY 15

Questions? Email Jen Sammons, Director of Children & Youth Ministry at christdaytonsammons@gmail.com



MADE GOOD

an Episcopal Celebration
of Queer Joy

✧ June 27, 2026 ✧

11AM Brunch
12PM Worship Service



Christ Episcopal Church
20 W 1st St., Dayton, Ohio 45402

Experience fellowship, worship and
communion with a God who is expansively
queer and lavishly welcoming.



MAY 30
CAMP PREVIEW DAY



2020

PROCTERCENTER.ORG



**JUNE
4-7**

**SILVER &
GOLD**

CAMP FOR ADULTS

**JUNE
10-13**

**JR COUNSELOR
TRAINING CAMP**

RIISING 10TH-12TH
GRADE

**JUNE
14-19**

**YOUTH
CAMP 1**

AGES 9-15

**JUNE
25-27**

FAMILY 1

MOST FUN FOR
FAMILIES WITH KIDS
AGES 0-10

**JUNE
28-
JULY 1**

**CAMP
ELEVATE**

RIISING 10TH-12TH
GRADE



**JULY 5-
10**

**YOUTH
CAMP 2**

AGES 9-15

WITH CONCURRENT CONFIRMATION CAMP

**JULY 12-
JULY 17**

**YOUTH
CAMP 3**

AGES 9-15

**JULY
23-26**

FAMILY 2

MOST FUN FOR FAMILIES
WITH KIDS AGES 10 AND UP

**JULY 29
- AUG 1**

**FAMILY 3
CONSERVATION
FAMILY CAMP**

FOR FAMILIES WHO LIKE TO BE OUTSIDE!



AUG 2-5
RIISING 2ND-4TH
GRADE

**PRIMARY
CAMP**

**AUG
6-8**

**LGBTQ+
CAMP**

FOR ALL AGES, UNDER 18 MUST HAVE CHAPARONES



**END OF CAMP
CELEBRATION AUG 8**

JOIN US: FALL FUN

We love entering new seasons with you!
We already have some exciting events
on the horizon.

Mark your calendars!

- **September 7**
Parish Outing: Dayton Dragons Game
- **September 20**
Parish Picnic & Outdoor Worship
- **September 27**
Return of Spark Family Programs
& Adult Forum. Premiere of the
2026-2027 Great Lady Concert Series



YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS . . .

Ordination of the Rev. MaryJane Plote to the Priesthood

By the Grace of God and with the consent of the People, The Rt. Rev. Kristin Uffelman White, Tenth Bishop of Southern Ohio, will ordain The Rev. MaryJane Plote to the Sacred Order of Priests in Christ's One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

Tuesday, July 28th, 2026 at 6:00 pm
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
2151 Dorset Rd. Columbus, OH 43221

MaryJane started her ministry journey with us here at Christ Church! Your prayers and presence are requested. A livestream will be available and shared to the Diocese of Southern Ohio Facebook Page. A reception will follow the service.



**Get more of our
content online**

BE PART OF THE *GOOD NEWS*

- Follow us on Facebook & Instagram @christchurchdayton
- Keep up with our mission & ministry at daytonchristepiscopal.com
- Worship with us anytime, anywhere youtube.com/@christchurchdayton

