

LEADERSHIP

Session

Jim Plunk, Moderator
Tim Chapman, Clerk
Chas Emerson, Treasurer
Bob Barber
Scott Sartor
Shaun Sipe*

*Sabbatical

**Emeritus

***Deacon on duty

Diaconate

Andrew Duff, Chairman***
Chris Tingle, Secretary
Nick Manley
Robert Massey
Charlie Smith

Chris Lyons*

David Wright*

Dick Brankstone**

Christ Covenant Church (PCA)

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Jamie Frank, Office Administrator, office@christcovenantms.org

Sue Tarver, Pianist



"For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord,

with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake."

2 Corinthians 4:5

Third Sunday of Advent

12.14.24



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Notes

If you are new to church, the notes in this margin are a way to help you understand and follow along through each aspect of today’s service. If you like, use the free space to take your own notes about anything you find interesting or thought provoking. If you have additional questions, you can talk with a church officer after the service.

Congregational Standing

Throughout the bulletin the asterisk * denotes congregation standing

We encourage you to use this bulletin during the week to reflect on what you have heard and experienced during worship. You can use the prayers, confessions, and scripture for personal worship and devotional time at home

WELCOME!

Thank you for joining us for worship today. Here at Christ Covenant, we seek to celebrate God’s grace through Jesus Christ, who came to give us life today and for eternity. We also seek to cultivate a safe environment for the convinced and unconvinced to hear the free offer of the gospel in Jesus Christ. Whether you are a follower of Jesus, or it has been a while since you’ve considered your relationship to Him, or you are exploring His claims for the first time, we are delighted to have you with us today. We would love to be able to connect with you and share with you more about the ministry of our church. If you are a visitor, please take a moment during the service to fill out a Visitor Card located in the back of the chair and put it in the offering plate. We have a visitor bag for you in the lobby with a mug, coffee, pens and Dane Ortlund’s book, “Gentle and Lowly, The Heart of Christ for Sinner’s and Sufferers.”

Ushers: Andrew Duff & Nick Manley

A/V Assistant: Matthew Frank

Communion & Coffee: Chas & Jennifer Emerson

Hosts: The Tingle Family

Nursery Helpers:

Church hour—Taryn Jones, Maggie Manley & Mills Emerson

Sunday School—Resumes 1.11.26!

For Your Children: We welcome children to attend and participate in the corporate worship by singing, praying, and offering responses as they are able. A nursery is provided for infants through toddlers to age 4.

CHURCH CALENDAR

Be sure to sign up on our website to receive the weekly E-news which is sent every Wednesday with the latest up-to-date information.

THIS WEEK AT CHRIST COVENANT CHURCH

Sunday—December 14th

9:00am—Preservice prayer

9:15am—Coffee & Conversation

9:30am – Sunday Worship w/ Holy Communion

4:00pm—Women’s Christmas Tea

Monday – December 15th

No activities planned

Tuesday—December 16th

5:30pm—Men’s bible study

Wednesday—December 17th

6:30am—Men’s bible study

Thursday—December 18th

No activities planned

Friday—December 19th

No activities planned

Saturday—December 20th

No activities planned

Looking Ahead

- Sunday school resumes—1.11.26
- Wednesday activities resume—1.14.25
- Spring Community Group spring dates—1.18, 2.1, 2.15, 3.1, 3.29, 4.12, 4.26
- Holiday office closures—12.25-26, 1.1.26
- Missions Emphasis Week—2.22-3.1

PRAYER NEEDS

Praying for the families of Christ Covenant 12.13-12.20
Monte & Helen Morgan • Michael, Paula & Henry Murphree

Illness/Medical Prayer Needs: Helen & Monte Morgan • Dick & Emily Brankstone • Lin Newton Smith, Jodi’s mom, hospitalized in the UK

Prayer Requests: Land and Building Committee • Assistant Pastor search • Officer training • The Newton family, welcomed baby Mabel Ann last week

OUR LOCAL & WORLD MISSIONS

Please pray for these local and world missions and our missionaries.

Peru Mission (Chimbote Church Plant) • Bill Berry (Christ Redeemer in Jonesboro) • RUF: John Craft (Rhodes College), John Crosby, Spencer Sipe (University of Memphis), Justin & Carey Helms (LSU) • Jermaine Van Buren Jr., (Jackson State) • Reclaimed Ministry • Ricky Kroeger (Wycliffe Bible Translators—Mexico)

Sermon Preview

12.21.25	Matthew 7:7-12	Living in the Kingdom: Prayer II
12.28.25	TBD	TBD
1.4.26	TBD	TBD
1.11.26	Matthew 7:13-20	Living in the Kingdom: Two Choices

ORDER FOR THE CELEBRATION OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

Gospel Welcome

Prelude
Lighting of the Advent Wreath—The Shepherd’s Candle
Psalm 146:4-9 (p. 492) Tyler & Brooke Mitchell
James 5:7-10 (p. 952)

READER: We light the third candle, the Shepherd’s Candle, to remind us that the announcement of Christ’s birth was made to humble ordinary men, for God came and called the meek of the earth.
ALL: Thanks be to God.

*Call to Worship Rev. Jim Plunk
PASTOR: I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
PEOPLE: My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad.
PASTOR: Oh, magnify the Lord with me, let us exalt his name together!
Psalm 34:1-3

*Song of Adoration *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel #194*

*Invocation (concluded by the Lord’s Prayer)
ALL: Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Preparing for Worship
With so many distractions vying for our attention, this is a time to listen to the prelude music, read of Vision Statement on the front cover, and get ready for the service.

Call to Worship
If worship is offering all that we are to all that God is, then this call is a way to proclaim this movement, while also challenging us on what we worship daily.

Why we sing
We sing in order to remember the stories of how God has worked in our loves. Singing takes the truth of who God is and what He is doing, and applies it into our lives.

Prayer of Invocation
Is from the Latin *invocare*, meaning “to call on.” God has called us to worship—and now, in grateful response, we cry out for His presence among us.

The Lord’s Prayer
Jesus gave this example in the New Testament (Matthew 6:9-13) to show us how to pray. We use this prayer corporately each week as a reminder.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday School: Resumes 1.11.26! Communicants class will begin in the new year during the Sunday school hour. Dates to come!

Interfaith Council on Poverty: Thank you to all who participated!

Peru Mission - Christ Kids Ministry: Christ Kids is a Child Sponsorship program within Peru Mission and is focused on children from underprivileged backgrounds. For \$50 per month, a sponsorship helps to provide the following life-changing benefits to a child: Education, supplies, Bible club, nutritious meals, health and dental care, pastoral care. Further information as well as ornaments with kids currently available for sponsorship are located on the tree by the church office.

Men's Bible Study: *Forging Our Faith In Scripture* begins next semester starting 1.14 at 6:30am and continues for four weeks. Also, men’s study will not meet 12.23 & 30. Please use the sign up link on our website to register so we can plan for space and class materials: www.christcovenantmr.org/signup

Christmas Services: We will have a Lessons and Carols service Sunday evening, 12.21 at 5:00pm. Christmas Eve candlelight service will be Wednesday, 12.24 at 5:00pm. We will be taking up our annual donation benefitting the PCA Ministerial Relief Fund which benefits retired and disabled pastors, missionaries, church lay workers, pastors without a call, and their widows and dependent children who may have financial need. There will be no nursery offered Christmas Eve.

Women's Winter Retreat: *Stay Salty, Burn Bright!* January 30-31 at Camp Hopewell in Oxford. Tickets on sale now on our website: \$85 or \$100 (inc. Linens): www.christcovenantms.org/signup

Year End Giving: Please remember the church in your year-end giving this month. You can give securely online through our website, app, or mail a check by December 31st. Please give regularly to the general fund, but gifts beyond your normal tithe and offering can now be sent to our "Land and Building Fund" or “Deacon Fund” available online or if written on the memo line of your check.

RYM 2026: RYM registration deposits are due January 8th. \$150 per person to hold your spot. Save your spot and pay using the sign up page on our website: www.christcovenantms.org/signup

Confession

is the time when we are honest about ourselves with each other and with God. As we admit our misplaced affections, we are called to reorder our lives. Only by being honest will the good news of grace be significant and needed.

Confession of Sin

PASTOR: Let us now humbly confess our sins together:

ALL: And we were dead in our trespasses and sins in which we once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Ephesians 2:1-3

Silent Confession

Song of Confession

Come, O Redeemer, Come

Assurance of Pardon and Comfort

PASTOR: But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved.

Ephesians 2:4-5

ALL: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is well-pleased.

Luke 2:14

*Song of Renewal

What Child Is This #213

Assurance of Pardon and Comfort

are encouraging words which is what we need to hear after the honesty of our confession

COMMUNION GUIDELINES AND PRAYERS

Bread: Each tray contains gluten-free bread in the brown cup.

Cup: Each tray has wine in the outer rim. The pink cups in the center are filled with grape juice.

When we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, we are gathering around the table of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore, we invite all followers of Jesus Christ to partake of this wonderful sacrament: those who are baptized members of a congregation which proclaims the gospel, who are at peace with God and neighbor, and who seek strength to live more faithfully for Christ. If you are not a Christian, or if you are not prepared to share in this meal, we encourage you to spend this time in prayer. We hope that this time is helpful to you as you consider your relationship with Jesus Christ and with his church.

Parents, your children are welcome to partake, if they have been baptized and been received as a communing member of the church to which you belong. If you think your child is ready to become a member, please speak to one of the elders.

Prayer for Covenant Children (not yet a communing member)

Lord Jesus, thank you for placing me inside your family, the church. Help me more and more to know you, to love you, and to follow you as your faithful disciple. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but through you, I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as Savior and Lord. I now resolve in humble reliance on the Holy Spirit to seek to walk in a manner pleasing to you. Amen.

Prayer of Those Struggling with Sin

Lord Jesus, grant that I may see in you the fulfillment of all my needs and may turn from every false satisfaction to feed on you, the true and living bread. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely and run with perseverance the race set before me, looking to you, the pioneer and perfecter of my faith. Amen.

We confess our faith as an act of worship, together with Christians in all times and places. “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Offertory is a time for prayerful reflection and response by considering how to be generous with your time, talents and resources. If you are new to our church, or exploring Christianity, please don’t feel obligated to give. Instead, please be sure to fill out a visitors card which can be put in the offering plate. Also, you can give securely on our website : <https://christcovenantms.org/online-giving/>

Doxology We sing this short hymn of praise to thank and adore our God of glory.

The Sermon is a teaching based on the passage from the reading of God’s Word. The role of the sermon is to make real truths of the Gospel. It is not just an intellectual function. Rather, using the imagination, our hearts are to be affected by the text.

COMMITTING TO GOD’S KINGDOM

***Confession of Faith** Elder Chas Emerson

LEADER: What is the chief end of man?

ALL: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

LEADER: What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

ALL: The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Westminster Shorter Catechism 1-2

Kingdom Prayers of the People

Offertory *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly #216*

***Doxology** (*Children under 4 dismissed at this time*)

LISTENING TO GOD’S WORD

***Prayer for Illumination**

The Reading of God’s Word *Matthew 7:1-8 (p. 762)*

READER: The grass withers, the flowers fade

ALL: But the word of our God will stand forever. *Isaiah 40:8*

The Sermon Rev. Jim Plunk

“Living in the Kingdom: Judging”

COMMUNING WITH GOD

The Great Thanksgiving:

Following the pattern of Jesus, this prayer of thanksgiving reminds us this is a meal offering thanks to God for all he has done as we bring our whole selves to him with the communion of the saints.

Words of Institution: These words recorded in the synoptic gospels and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 are words from Jesus setting this meal apart from every other meal as a holy sacrament for God’s people.

The memorial acclamation reminds us of the center of history and our lives; the death, resurrection, and return of Jesus.

The Lord’s supper: God meets us not only in hearing the Word, but also in visible, tangible form—uniting us with himself spiritually by faith in Christ

The Great Thanksgiving

PASTOR: The Lord be with you

PEOPLE: And with your spirit

PASTOR: Lift up your hearts

PEOPLE: We lift them up to the Lord

PASTOR: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

PEOPLE: It is right to give Him thanks and praise

PASTOR: Through the words of the prophets you promised your people the Redeemer, and gave hope for the day when justice shall roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. We rejoice that Jesus Christ, your Son, the Savior has come and that he will come again in power and glory to make all things new. Therefore, with angels and arch-angels and all the company of heaven we praise and magnify your glorious Name, evermore praising you and saying...

ALL: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Prayer of Consecration

Words of Institution

PASTOR: Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us!

PEOPLE: Hallelujah!

PASTOR: Let us proclaim the mystery of the faith:

PEOPLE: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Hallelujah!

PASTOR: The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you and feed on him in your hearts by faith and with thanksgiving.

Holy Communion

Prayer of Dedication

GOING OUT WITH GOD’S BLESSING

*Song of Sending

Angels We Have Heard On High #214

*Benediction

PASTOR: Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

Hebrews 13:20-21

ALL: Amen!

*Gloria Patri

Sermon Notes

Continuing the series: The Mission of Jesus in the Kingdom of God: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew “Living in the Kingdom: Judging” Matthew 7:1-8 (p. 762)

The complexity of judging

The right balance in judging

Receiving wisdom in judging

The Benediction

is how we close our time of worship. It is not a prayer but rather a blessing with a charge to go beyond our church into the world carrying the hope, joy and love of the Gospel.

Gloria Patri

We have heard and witnessed God’s glory. Now we leave singing His glory that others might know His glory.

Sermon Audio

If you want to listen to any archived sermons, please visit the sermon page on our website www.christcovenantms.org or subscribe to our podcast on your smartphone. All music used by permission. CCLI License #3258262

Practical Needs and Prayer

If you have questions or would like to pray with someone, our officers can be available after the worship service, or you may call the church office and leave a message for a deacon at 662.469.9330 and someone will get in touch with you. You can also send prayer requests to office@christcovenantms.org.