



CHRIST  
THE REDEEMER  
—PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
December 14, 2025

## Welcome to CHRIST THE REDEEMER...

We're glad you've joined us. Whether you have followed Jesus your whole life or you can't remember the last time you stepped foot in a church, we want you to feel welcome to come as you are and worship with our church family. If you have any questions about our church or where to find something, please don't hesitate to ask. We're excited about what God is doing among us as we seek to live, grow and serve as followers of Jesus in Portland and in our surrounding neighborhoods. So, welcome to CTR, we'd love to have you as part of our family.

During our service, our nursery is open for babies who are crawlers through 3-year-olds. If you need help finding the nursery area, please ask any of our greeters!

Children's Church is in session. After the blessing each week, children age 4 – 1<sup>st</sup> grade are welcome to go to Children's Church. They will re-join their families after the sermon.

→ You may use this QR code to link  
to the lyrics in our worship service today.



### THE RHYTHM OF OUR WORSHIP

On the road to Emmaus (Luke 24), when Jesus' disciples found themselves troubled and confused, Jesus met them along the way. When they confessed their troubles and doubts to Him, His words and presence began to change them. He unfolded God's Word to them, pointing to His own person and work. He dined with them, giving thanks and breaking bread. The disciples recognized their Lord's presence with them and hurried to tell others the good news.

In the Emmaus story, we recognize the pattern of historic Christian worship as it began to take shape. Our worship liturgy at Christ the Redeemer moves through a specific rhythm: God **SUMMONS** us as His people, God **SANCTIFIES** us to Himself, God **SPEAKS** to us in His Word, God **STRENGTHENS** us at His table, and God **SENDS** us into the world to share His grace.

The emphasis throughout our worship is upon God's action and our appropriate response. In worship, we rehearse the gospel message of Jesus' death and resurrection and are caught up into the mission of the Triune God. The flow of our liturgy aims at drawing us further into the life of the Trinity as children of God and then impelling us outward into our world.

*-adapted from City Church Philadelphia Guide to Our Worship*

P R E L U D E

*“Canon in D”*

Katie & Ruthie Kirby

W E L C O M E

G O D S U M M O N S

[ P R A I S E ]

SONG

O COME, O COME EMMANUEL

A D V E N T C A N D L E R E A D I N G

Readers: Brian & Emily Way

Reader 1      Today we light the Candle of Joy, —yet our reading draws us first to an unexpected place: the quiet doubt of Zechariah.

Reader 2      In Luke 1, Zechariah is visited by the angel Gabriel with a promise so good it is hard to believe: he and Elizabeth, long barren and now advanced in years, will have a son. This son—John—will prepare the way for the Lord. But Zechariah cannot see past his longing, his disappointment, his questions.

“How can I be sure of this?” he asks.

His doubt leads to silence—months of waiting with nothing but the memory of God’s promise.

Reader 1      And yet, this is where joy begins.

Not in certainty.

Not in flawless faith.

Not in easy praise.

But in the tender place where God meets us even in our disbelief.

Reader 2      During Elizabeth’s pregnancy, Zechariah carries both his doubts and his hope in silence. But when the promise is fulfilled and he names the child John, his voice returns—not with complaint, but with overflowing joy.

“Praise be to the Lord... because He has come and has redeemed His people.”

Reader 1      Zechariah’s story reminds us that God’s joy does not wait for perfect faith.  
Joy can bloom in the soil of our questions.  
We can rejoice even when we are unable to speak.  
We can rejoice even while we are still waiting in the dark.

Reader 2      As we light the Candle of Joy, we remember:  
  
Joy is a fruit of God’s Spirit  
Joy grows slowly, often quietly, through seasons of uncertainty.  
Joy breaks forth because God keeps His promises—always.  
  
Let us pray:

All              **God of Joy, meet us in our doubts as You met Zechariah.  
Grow joy within us even when we cannot see the way forward.  
Turn our silence into praise, our questions into hope, and our waiting into  
deep and lasting joy. Amen.**

Readers  
1 & 2          We light the Candle of Joy.

## CALL TO WORSHIP

[L]      The Lord has done great things for us!

[P]      **And we are filled with joy!**

[L]      Our God has turned our weeping into singing,

[P]      **our tears into songs of joy!**

[L]      O Christ of God, come anew in our hearts this day,

[P]      **and remain in us forever.**

SONG

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

**G O D   S A N C T I F I E S**

[ R E N E W A L ]

C O N F E S S I O N   O F   S I N

[All]   **God of salvation, in Christ you have done great things--our hearts are filled with joy. By your power, you lifted us out of the wasteland of sin and brought us with joy and laughter into your kingdom. Salvation is your gift to us.**

**But we confess that often we try to replace your gift with our own efforts. We try to complete what is already perfect; we try to add to what is already full; we try to earn what we already have.**

**Forgive us for our foolishness. Help us to focus on your grace. Help us to live grateful lives in return. For Jesus' sake alone. Amen.**

T I M E   O F   S I L E N T   R E F L E C T I O N   A N D   C O N F E S S I O N

W O R D S   O F   C O M F O R T   A N D   A S S U R A N C E   O F   P A R D O N

[L]   **Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior, Jesus Christ, came among us in great humility, will sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin.**

[All]   **Amen.**

SONG

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

LIFE OF THE PEOPLE  
[ANNOUNCEMENTS]

NEW TO CTR? Welcome! If you would like to connect, learn more about our church or subscribe to our weekly announcement email, please use this QR code.



RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

David Amagyei-Antwi  
Cheryl Mitchell  
Raphael Mawunyo Nyawuto  
Michael R. Pock & Faith D. Pock  
Lindsay Rylander  
Clint & Jackie Thames  
Brian & Emily Way [Darcey, Boaz & Ezra]  
Mack Whittier

VOWS for the NEW MEMBERS:

*Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving his displeasure, and without hope save in his sovereign mercy?*

*Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered in the Gospel?*

*Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the follower of Christ?*

*Do you promise to support the church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?*

*Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the church, and promise to promote its purity and peace?*

VOW for the CONGREGATION:

*Do you, members of Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church, acknowledge your need for these brothers and sisters in Christ and commit yourselves to their growth in holiness by God's grace?*

P R A Y E R

Led by Elder Matt Reid

T H E P E A C E O F G O D

and T H E B L E S S I N G O F T H E C H I L D R E N

[L] May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

[P] **And also with you.**

[L] People of God, what is our prayer for these and all our children?

[All] **May the Lord be with you.**

[Children] **And also with you.**

*After the blessing each week, children aged 4 – 1<sup>st</sup> grade are welcome to go to Children's Church downstairs in The Commons. They will re-join their families after the sermon.*

SONG

LORD, I NEED YOU

**G O D   S P E A K S**

[ W O R D ]

**S C R I P T U R E**

Luke 1:57-80 ESV

Read by David Dyke

*The Birth of John the Baptist*

<sup>57</sup> Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. <sup>58</sup> And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. <sup>59</sup> And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, <sup>60</sup> but his mother answered, “No; he shall be called John.” <sup>61</sup> And they said to her, “None of your relatives is called by this name.” <sup>62</sup> And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. <sup>63</sup> And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is John.” And they all wondered. <sup>64</sup> And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. <sup>65</sup> And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, <sup>66</sup> and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, “What then will this child be?” For the hand of the Lord was with him.

*Zechariah's Prophecy*

<sup>67</sup> And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

<sup>68</sup> “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has visited and redeemed his people  
<sup>69</sup> and has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David,  
<sup>70</sup> as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,  
<sup>71</sup> that we should be saved from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us;  
<sup>72</sup> to show the mercy promised to our fathers  
and to remember his holy covenant,  
<sup>73</sup> the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us  
<sup>74</sup> that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,  
might serve him without fear,



<sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.  
<sup>76</sup> And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,  
<sup>77</sup> to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
in the forgiveness of their sins,  
<sup>78</sup> because of the tender mercy of our God,  
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high  
<sup>79</sup> to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

<sup>80</sup> And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

[L] The grass withers and the flower fades,  
but the Word of God stands forever.

Isaiah 40:8

The Word of the Lord.

[P] **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon Series:

THE SONGS AND STORIES OF CHRISTMAS

Sermon:

THE DOUBT OF A PRIEST

Rev. Sean J.S. Roberts

*Lead Pastor*

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Apostles Creed

[L] Christian, what do you believe?

[P] **I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

SONG

ADVENT DOXOLOGY #1

**G O D   S T R E N G T H E N S**

[ T A B L E ]

## C E L E B R A T I N G   H O L Y   C O M M U N I O N

*A Word about Communion:* *Communion is the family meal of Christians. Baptized believers actively looking to Jesus as their hope for salvation are warmly invited to share in this meal with us as our brothers and sisters.*

- *Please follow the directions given by the pastor in how to come to the front to receive the elements and then return to your seat.*
- *Once you receive the bread and wine/juice, please hold on to it as you return to your seat. We will partake together as one body after everyone has received the elements.*
- *Children and those who are not partaking are also welcome to approach the servers for a prayer or word of God's blessing. We ask that you fold your hands as you approach so the server is aware.*
- *Please dispose of your communion cups and any other trash in the wastebasket located at the back of the sanctuary as you leave today. Thank you!*

## W O R D S   O F   I N V I T A T I O N   &amp;   I N S T I T U T I O N

## P R A Y E R   O F   T H A N K S G I V I N G

## P A R T A K I N G   O F   T H E   E L E M E N T S

## S O N G

A D O R E

## PRAYERS OF REFLECTION

### PRAYER FOR THOSE SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the Way, the Truth and the Life. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. Give me an understanding for you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life that you promise. 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 to 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 my Savior. Amen.

### PRAYER FOR 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 only to you, the author and finisher of my faith. Amen.

### PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

Lord Jesus, you have called us to follow you in baptism and in a life of committed discipleship in your church. Grant that I may take the necessary steps to be one with your people and live in the fullness of your Spirit. Amen.

## G O D   S E N D S

[MISSION]

R E S P O N S E S   O F   J O Y

## O F F E R I N G   O U R   L I V E S   A N D R E S O U R C E S

[our tithes and offerings]



If you would like to give online, please use this QR code:  
This takes you to our online giving portal.

SONG

H Y M N   O F   J O Y

## B E N E D I C T I O N   a n d   S E N D I N G

[L]     In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, let us strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying: Come, Lord Jesus!

[P]     **Thanks be to God.**

# HIGHLIGHTS

December 14, 2025

NEW TO CTR? Welcome! If you would like to connect, learn more about our church or subscribe to our weekly announcement email, please use this QR code.



## ON THE CALENDAR

### ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

*SUNDAY, DEC 14 – 11:45 AM | 61 Neal St, Portland*

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A reminder that our annual meeting will take place *immediately after the service* today. We'll review the Elder, Deacon, and Financial Reports and hold our annual election of Trustees.

The Session is also unanimously recommending Rev. Alden Groves for promotion from Assistant Pastor to Associate Pastor, which requires a vote of the members. This reflects both our affirmation of Alden's ministry and his family's desire to continue serving at CTR long-term. We look forward to your participation in this important meeting.

Childcare will be provided for our youngest CTR members.

### WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

*MONDAYS – 6:00 PM | 29 Lilac Lane, New Gloucester*

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Our fall Women's Bible Study has begun. Supper will be provided as we gather each week. Together we'll walk through 1 Samuel using *At His Feet Studies*—a rich and accessible guide to help us grow in God's Word and encourage one another in faith.

**Questions?** Contact Laura Wiersma at [lwiersma@ctrportland.org](mailto:lwiersma@ctrportland.org) or 603.566.7746.

## ✦ LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

*SUNDAY, DEC 21 – 7:30 PM | 61 Neal St, Portland*

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The Christmas season is full of joy for many, but not for all. For those experiencing grief of whatever kind, this service provides a space to give voice to sorrow without abandoning hope. We will gather on the (literal) longest night of the year for a simple liturgy of lament in the darkness and longing for the light. *[There is no childcare for this service.]*

## 🕯 CHRISTMAS EVE LESSONS & CAROLS SERVICE

*WEDNESDAY, DEC 24 | 4:30 PM | 61 Neal St, Portland*

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We hope you'll join us this Christmas Eve for one of the most beautiful services of the year — our Lessons and Carols Service, held this year at the earlier time of **4:30 PM**.

This treasured service weaves together Scripture readings and well-loved carols to tell the story of God's promise and the birth of Jesus. From the prophets' longing to the angels' song, each lesson and each carol invites us to slow down, listen, and experience the wonder of Christ's coming.

Whether this is a yearly tradition for your family or your first time joining us, it's a joyful and reverent way to enter into Christmas together as a church family.

Childcare will be provided for the youngest members of our congregation, making it easier for families to participate in the service.

Come, bring friends or neighbors, and celebrate the light that shines in the darkness. We look forward to worshiping with you on Christmas Eve.





# DEEP ROOTS CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

As part of our **Deep Roots Capital Campaign**, we've invited everyone in our community to prayerfully consider how they can support the next chapter of our church's life together.



TO  
PLEDGE  
ONLINE

If you would prefer to make a pledge online, please visit our **online pledge form**—and feel free to share the link with friends, family, or others in your circle who believe in the mission of our church.

Every gift, every conversation, and every step of faith helps us put down deep roots for generations to come.

## COMMUNITY GROUPS

*Belong. Lean in. Launch out.*

Whether you're brand new to CTR or have been here for years, **community groups are for you!**

These smaller gatherings meet regularly in homes throughout Greater Portland. Together we:

- Form friendships
- Share meals
- Pray for and engage one another throughout the week
- Encourage one another to live on mission in our everyday contexts

### Why join a group?

Community groups are the primary way we care for and grow with one another at CTR. No matter your age, stage, or point in your faith journey, you'll find a place to belong, be challenged, and grow as a disciple of Jesus. We'll learn to keep asking each other: *Where has Christ placed you to serve him this time tomorrow?*

For any questions or concerns, email: [amckrell@ctrportland.org](mailto:amckrell@ctrportland.org).

**New to CTR or to community groups?** We would love you to join us!

Scan the QR code to sign up or email [amckrell@ctrportland.org](mailto:amckrell@ctrportland.org).



# SERVE...

At CTR, we believe that part of what makes the church a beautiful place is that it draws people with various passions and gifts into one body. Below are some opportunities to use your passions and gifts to serve one another and our local community.

CHILDREN’S MINISTRIES .....Abby Reid  
Phone: 404.723.4448  
E-mail: areid@ctrportland.org

GREETER MINISTRY ..... Abby Reid  
Phone: 404.723.4448  
E-mail: areid@ctrportland.org

MEALS MINISTRY ..... Tammy Locke  
Phone: 207.671.0936  
E-mail: tam74maine@gmail.com

MUSIC..... Kendra Hollen  
Phone: 207.272.4104  
E-mail: khollen@ctrportland.org

SET-UP ..... EJ Kruse  
Phone: 814-392-4810  
E-mail: ejkruse89@gmail.com

SPECIAL EVENTS.....Claire Roberts  
Phone: 956.270.2565  
E-mail: clerkus@gmail.com

# How Do I Get and Stay Connected at CTR?

*At CTR we long for clear communication and deep bonds. We are excited that you're interested in being more connected and involved. The following is a list of our communication channels and their purpose in the life of our body:*

## 1. EMAIL NEWSLETTER (*Keeping in Touch*)

**This is the primary vehicle** by which we communicate regarding the life of our church. Most weeks you will receive an email with announcements and upcoming events. From time to time, our elders will also use this vehicle for church-wide or members only correspondence. **NOTE:** *If you are not regularly checking your email from CTR, it will be difficult to feel and be connected in the life of our church.* [Use this QR code to sign up for the email.]



## 2. CTR APP & TEXT MESSAGES

**The CTR App** is designed to help those in our church interact with each other. It is largely crowd sourced and includes information on informal meetups, prayer requests, live and past sermons/services, different hobby groups, ways to give, etc. [See page 18 to download the App.]

**Text Messages** are sent exclusively as reminders about events in the days/hours immediately beforehand.

## 3. SUNDAY MORNINGS

Sunday mornings employ several communication methods, including written **announcements in our Order of Worship**, verbally highlighted **announcements**, and (new) **projected announcements** running before and after the service. Sunday Morning announcements are focused on pointing people to events and ministries that help them explore or integrate more fully into the life of our church. Given the diverse backgrounds and circumstances of those attending Sunday Morning Worship, only on rare and exceptional occasions will these vehicles be used by leadership for information that is primarily member focused.

## 4. CTR WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

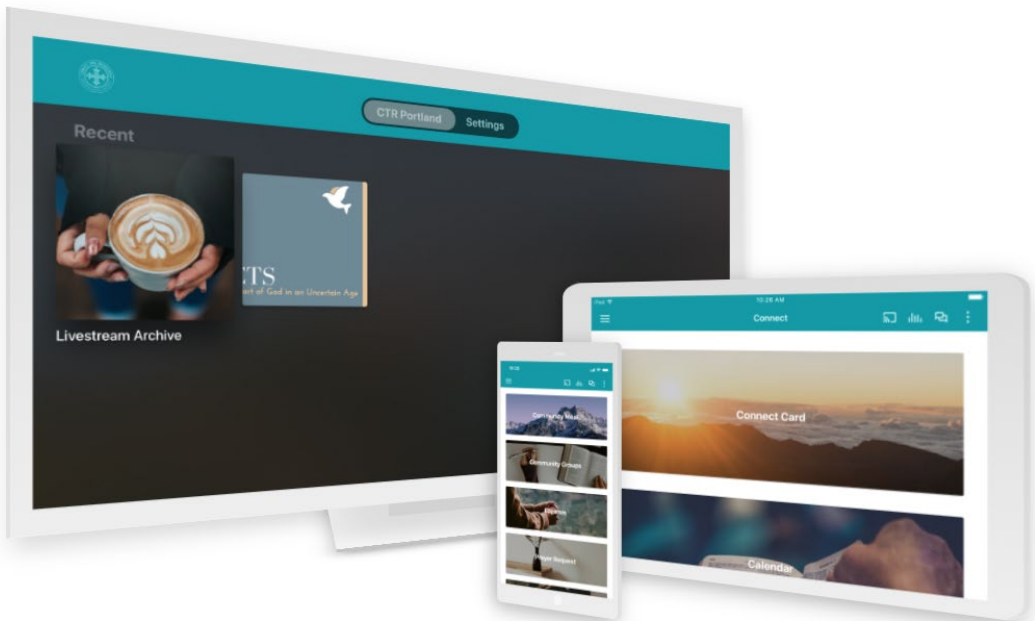
Both mediums are designed to be primarily outward facing.

**The CTR Website** [ctrportland.org] is designed to be our front door– a welcoming place for new people to discover and learn about our church. It is minimal in announcements and church life information.

**Social Media [Instagram & Facebook]** is used for promotion of church events. People are encouraged to “re-post” as a way of sharing with and inviting their friends. [@ctrportland]

*If you would like to access or have had difficulty accessing any of these vehicles, please contact [ctr@ctrportland.org](mailto:ctr@ctrportland.org). Our admin, Cheryl Sullivan, is happy to help you get integrated into our communication systems.*

# DOWNLOAD THE CTR APP!











**CHRIST  
THE REDEEMER**  
—PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—

Christ the Redeemer Presbyterian Church  
longs to be a diverse people who gather around  
and extend the table of God's grace.

**SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:00 AM**

**Reverend Sean J.S. Roberts, Lead Pastor**

E-mail: [SRoberts@CTRPortland.org](mailto:SRoberts@CTRPortland.org)  
Tel. 956.207.1398

**Reverend Alden D. Groves, Assistant Pastor**

E-mail: [AGroves@CTRPortland.org](mailto:AGroves@CTRPortland.org)  
Tel. 215.704.0132

**Kendra Hollen,  
Music Ministry Director**

[E-Mail: [khollen@CTRPortland.org](mailto:khollen@CTRPortland.org)]

**Amanda McKrell,  
Director of Community Development**

[E-mail: [amckrell@CTRPortland.org](mailto:amckrell@CTRPortland.org)]

**Abby Reid,  
Children's Ministry Director &  
Connections Coordinator**

[E-Mail: [areid@CTRPortland.org](mailto:areid@CTRPortland.org)]

**Cheryl Sullivan, Administrator**

[E-Mail: [ctr@CTRPortland.org](mailto:ctr@CTRPortland.org)]

*In need of assistance?*

If you're experiencing a material need beyond what you can manage, the CTR Deacons may be able to help. Please call them at 207-331-1304 or email [deacons@ctrportland.org](mailto:deacons@ctrportland.org). All inquiries will remain confidential, and you will receive a reply within twenty-four hours.

CTR is located at  
**61 NEAL STREET, PORTLAND, ME 04102**  
207.878.1211 | <https://ctrportland.org>