First Christian Church

Weekly Worship

love all • live spiritually • rejoice in hope • show hospitality

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Week of November 29, 2026

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Lighting the Advent Wreath

One: The Gospel of John speaks of Christ as the true light coming into the world. In commemoration of that coming, we light candles for the four weeks leading to Christmas and reflect on the coming of Christ. It is significant that the church has always used that language -- the coming of Christ -- because it speaks to a deep truth. Christ IS coming. Christ IS ALWAYS coming, always entering a troubled world, a wounded heart. And so, today, we light the first candle, the candle of HOPE, and dare to express our longing for peace, for healing and the well-being of all creation.

Many: Loving God, as we enter this Advent season we open all the dark places in our lives and memories to the healing light of Christ. Show us the power of HOPE. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you that we may walk in the light of Christ.

One: Take time, in the busyness of this season, for quiet reflection, for the light of God's love is discernible everywhere. Welcome Christ into your heart this season and go forth with the knowledge that Christ is coming and is our Hope.

Sermon

From The Rev. Dr. Jane Holtzclaw

Mark 13:24-37

We Welcome The Rev. Dr. Jane Holtzclaw to the Pulpit

This week our guest preacher is The Reverend Dr. Jane Holtzclaw: Reverend Holtzclaw is an ordained pastor in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and serves as a chaplain at St Elizabeth Hospital. She is also a physician and a retired Air Force officer. She enjoys cross country skiing, running, backpacking, and plays flute in the Lincoln Community Concert Band.



Song of the Week

People, Look East

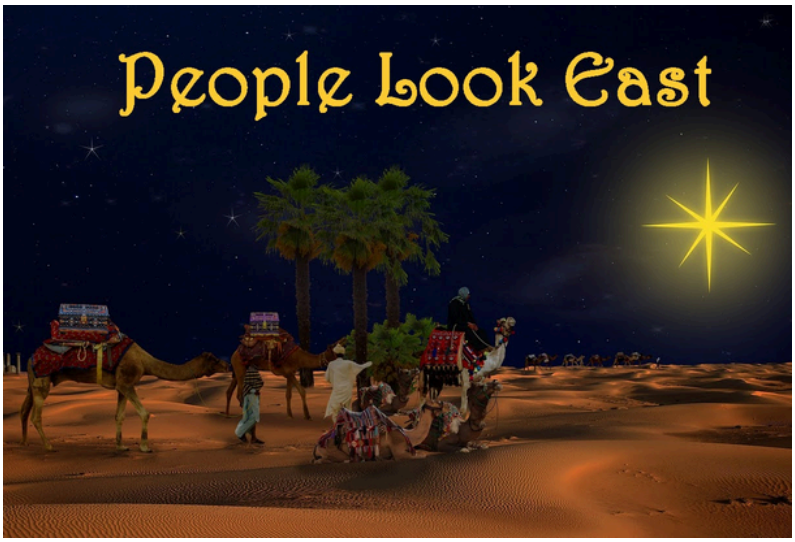
People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year. Make your house fair as you are able; trim the hearth and set the table. People, look east: Love, the Guest, is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there. Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish. People, look east: Love, the Rose, is on the way.

Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be filled. Even the hour when wings are frozen God for fledging time has chosen. People, look east: Love, the Bird, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim, shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together. People, look east: Love, the Star, is on the way.

Angels, announce with shouts of mirth Christ who brings new life to earth. Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming. People, look east: Love, the Lord, is on the way.



Scripture Reading

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

"Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us! Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved. O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers? You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in full measure. You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves. Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.
But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one whom you made strong for yourself. Then we will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will call on your name. Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved."



Mark 13:24-37

" 'But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in clouds" with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake-- for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.' "

Prayers & Praises
November 29, 2026

In Our Church Family:

- Donna Baker
- Cec Burkhart
- John Burkhart
- Joan Dietrich
- Ron Hile
- Polly Putney
- Bob Throop
- Marvin Thurber
- Phyllis Thurber
- Jessica Vocasek
- Roger Vocasek

Prayers for Ron Hile, after a visit to Bryan Hospital he is now at Hillcrest Firethorn for rehab. He is having a lot of pain issues.

Prayers for Elaine Clayton, mother of Diane Zabokrtsky, who suffered a stroke and is now back home receiving therapy.

Prayers for Sheryl Stanley, Kristi Bowker's sister; she suffered a stroke and is dealing with other health concerns.

Sympathy to the Foster family in the recent deaths of parents John and Ann Foster.

Prayers for Rhonda Ball's son, Andy Ball, recently diagnosed with bladder cancer and is receiving treatment.

Prayers for Rev. Bruce Frogge, Stephanie Frogge's brother; he has been approved for a bone marrow transplant. There are some matches; Bruce is being tested to make sure he is a strong host site.

Prayers for Jim Christ's nephew, Dennis Christ; he has been moved back closer to home for continued treatment. *Pray for Jim's brother John,* who was recently hospitalized with a possible heart attack.

Prayers for healing for Vince Ortega's sister, Linda De Los Santos, who has been diagnosed with liver cancer.

Prayers for Bob Throop for the sale of his former home before the end of the year.

Prayers for Katelyn Long for continued healing and strength.

Friends:

- Former member Susan Corr, *prayers for her and her family as she has gall bladder cancer, is on hospice and has been given only weeks to live.*
- Ron Collamore, *prayers for his health.*
- Kelly, mutual friend of Donna Ruhl & Elaine Parman, *prayers for her 19 year old son Hendrix who is dealing with undiagnosed heart issues.*
- Cece Robinson, mutual friend of Stephanie Frogge & Elaine Parman, *her 19 year old son Mason Krupka was killed in a car crash in Lincoln.*

Our Timothy

- Rev. Bruce Frogge, Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX

In the Nebraska Region: Center on Church Leadership - Tim Adams

Our Global Ministries in: Palestine

"God of hope and peace, teach us to recognize your presence in small acts of kindness, in people who choose to help one another, and in every effort toward peace and justice. When we become tired, renew our hope. When we are afraid, give us courage. When we feel powerless, remind us that our actions and our prayers matter. Amen."

For more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners visit www.global ministries.org

Community Prayer

Creator of the world, you are the potter, we are the clay, and you form us in your image. Shape our spirits by Christ's transforming power, that as one people we may live out your compassion and justice, whole and sound in the realm of your peace. Amen.

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ADVENT

Call to Confession

One:

If we are to welcome the Child into our hearts, we must speak of all the ways we have hardened ourselves against the good news he brings. Let us confess how we have missed the mark, praying together, saying:

Prayer of Confession

Many:

Holy One of Advent, we put the powerful on pedestals, but you send the lowly to remind us of our call to be servants. We store up more and more, but you remind us that you alone can fill the empty spaces within us. Forgive us, Lord, that we so foolishly put our needs ahead of your grace. Help us to be like those wise people of so long ago, who found hope, based not on what the world had to give, but on the unexpected joy of your love alone.

Good News of God's Grace

One:

If we believe the songs of the angels, then we must go out and tell others this good news.

Many:

We will go: glorifying God, praising the Lord, and confessing to everyone we meet how we have been richly blessed and forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.



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