



April 2026

A Letter from Fr. Paul

A warm welcome to the month of April and the arrival of spring! It's great to see all the flowers and blossoms again. Seeing them as I walk my neighborhood in the morning puts a smile on my face. Warmer days are here.

With the coming of spring, comes the Easter season. We began our Holy week with Palm Sunday on March 29 with Bishop Matthew. It was a glorious event as we celebrated the grand entrance of our Lord Jesus the Christ, heard His Passion and then welcomed twelve new members into our faith family. What a joy!

Here, at Christ Church, we offer many special services during the Holy Week between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday; There will be a Maundy Thursday service at 7 p.m., April 2 with Liturgy and the stripping of the altar. On Good Friday, April 3 there will be two services: Stations of the Cross at noon and Liturgy and the reading of the Passion of our Lord according to John at 5:30 p.m. followed by Stations. On Palm Sunday we observed the Blessing of the Palms Liturgy and heard the Passion of our Lord according to Matthew. On Good Friday at the 5:30 service, we will hear, which is our custom, the Passion according to John. On Easter Sunday, April 5, there will be one service at our regular time, 10:00 am. Please, check out the church activities calendar on our website and attached to the weekly email newsletter and here in The Rainbow. With all these special services and Holy Days, make your plans to attend as often as you can!

We remain in our Lenten journey to Holy Week, and along the way we are inwardly reflecting on our lives, repenting where needed, observing some form of self-denial and sacrifice, engaging in God's word more deeply and practicing acts of kindness and service to our neighbors. We are preparing our spirits, our minds and our bodies for new life at Easter in Christ's Resurrection and to celebrate at the Paschal Feast. Stay steady in your discipline, continue to pray for one another and continue to give thanks and praise to God for the many blessings and gifts in your lives. Continue to attend worship. Keep looking for Christ's presence in all people and in all places.

My prayer is for a happy and healthy April for everyone as we welcome spring, Easter, and the season of longer, warmer days.

May God bless you with his grace. Paul+

MONTHLY MINISTRY REPORT

FOOD PANTRY

January 15, 2026

17 degrees

Number of bags distributed: 51

\$20 Gift certificates to Grants Supermarket: 47 given away; 3 given to Emma

Jim Pulse and crew served breakfast.

Volunteers: Jim Pulse, Bill Denny, Jerry Wood, Betty Nash, Barbara and Bob Eichel,
Nancy and Chuck Stark, Todd Taylor, Patricia and Peter Taylor, Linda Gillespie

February 19, 2026

Number of bags distributed: 74

50 Gift certificates to Grants were given away

Jim Pulse and Jerry Wood prepared breakfast consisting of pancakes and sausage

Volunteers: Betty Nash, Jim Pulse, Jerry Wood, Todd Taylor, Patricia and Peter Taylor, Barbara and Bob Eichel, Linda Gillespie

March 19, 2026

Number of bags distributed: 73

50 Gift certificates to Grants were given away

Jim Pulse, Nancy Stark, Sandy Moir, and Barbara Eichel prepared and served breakfast.

Volunteers: Todd Taylor, Betty Nash, Charlie Blevins, Jim Pulse, Sandy Moir, Linda Gillespie, Bob and Barbara Eichel, Chuck and Nancy Stark, and Peter and Patricia Taylor.

UNION MISSION

Wednesday, January 14

A total of 112 meals were prepared and packaged. Church volunteers served 60 and the remaining 52 meals were served by Mission staff, 27 that evening and the other 25 the following morning. The menu was American Chopped Suey, salad, a roll, and a fruit cup. The Chopped Suey was prepared from scratch that day, January 14, in the Union Mission kitchen by Chuck and Nancy Stark. A surplus of candy and Reser's potato salad held by the Mission was also given out with the meals.

A RECORD NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS showed up to help: Sheila Brooks, Elizabeth Clement, Bob and Barb Eichel, Art Mead, Shirley Ofsa, Patty and Peter Richardson, Nancy and Chuck Stark and Peter Taylor from Christ Episcopal Church, Bluefield, and Betty Watson, a Presbyterian from Bluefield, Va.

Special Note: Spanning across 16 feedings at the Union Mission 2,168 meals were served in 2025 by Episcopalians.

The January 28, 2026, feeding at the Union Mission by Episcopalians was cancelled.

Wednesday, February 15

A total of 102 meals were prepared and packaged. Church volunteers served 58 and the remaining 44 meals were served by Mission staff that evening and the following morning. The menu was lasagna with a roll, salad, Oreo cookies and a soft drink.

Volunteers who helped were Sheila Brooks, Elizabeth Clement, Art Mead, Patty and Peter Richardson, Nancy and Chuck Stark from Christ Church in Bluefield, and Betty Watson, a Presbyterian from Bluefield, Va.

Wednesday, March 11

A total of 107 meals were prepared and packaged. Church volunteers served over 80 of 98 meals that were distributed by closing time. The remaining 9 meals were distributed by Mission staff the following morning. The menu was lasagna with a roll, salad, applesauce, and a soft drink.

Volunteers who helped were Sheila Brooks, Shirley Ofsa, and Art Mead of Christ Episcopal Church; James Fisher, a former member of St. Mary's Episcopal Church of Bluefield, Va., and Betty Watson, a Presbyterian from Bluefield, Va.

Wednesday, March 25

A total of 172 meals were served. Church volunteers prepared and packaged 128 dinners. An additional 44 meals were taken from the Union Mission inventory and consisted of subs and wraps. The menu was BBQ on a bun, coleslaw, baked beans, a brownie and soft drink.

Volunteers who helped prepare and serve the meal were Sheila Brooks, Art Mead, Patty Richardson, and Nancy and Chuck Stark from Christ Episcopal Church; Charlie Helmandollar, Senior Warden at Christ Episcopal Church, Pocahontas, Va., and his wife, Freda; and Betty Watson, a Presbyterian from Bluefield, Va.



MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE VESTRY OF CHRIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH-BLUEFIELD-March 18, 2026

A regular meeting of the Vestry was held on March 18, 2026. Present were Father Paul Barker, Jim Pulse, Darla Olson, Art Mead, David Kersey, Rob Merritt, Ted Lewis, Bill Denney and Peter Taylor. Dee Puckett was absent.

Father Barker called the meeting to order, declared the presence of a quorum. The meeting was opened with a devotion by Rob Merritt—a reflection on Lenten silence and quietness.

The minutes from the February 18 meeting were reviewed and upon motion of Peter Taylor and second of Ted Lewis were unanimously approved.

Treasurer Don Kersey had provided a written summary of his financial observations for the month, along with the balance sheet and income statement. After review and discussion, the treasurer's report was approved unanimously, upon motion of Ted Lewis and second of Bill Denney.

Ted Lewis gave the Senior Warden report. Lenten lunches are being well attended, with good representation from Christ Episcopal. The next one is scheduled at First Presbyterian. Electronic supply will come to the church on April 9, to review our current sound system, nave and to make recommendations. We have had our current system for approximately 25 years. We have had a general discussion with Generis Group, which is assisting the diocese with a capital campaign. Father Paul reported that he attended a meeting at Sandcrest and, since there is/was a March deadline to join the campaign for this year, recommended that we pass. There will be an opportunity to join in next year's round. He instead suggested we consider an annual capital improvement project, tied in with our Fall stewardship campaign.

David Kersey gave the Junior Warden report. The front door on Duhring Street was sticking but has been repaired. An error code on the main thermostat in the nave showed an error code. A compressor has gone bad, on Tazewell Street side. S&R Refrigeration will replace/repair at no charge. We received a 10 year warranty at the time the new system was installed.

Darla Olson gave the parish life report. The Bishop's visit is scheduled for Palm Sunday. David is catering for the luncheon. We are planning on approximately 75-80 people and have received donations to cover most of the cost. John Paine passed away and a memorial service will be held in the near future.

Bill Denney submitted the report on Outreach. 74 food bags were distributed at the February food pantry, along with \$50 food cards from Grant's. There is \$7,700 currently in the food pantry account. The next food pantry is tomorrow.

Father Paul gave the Rector's/Worship report. He has met with those who are being received and confirmed by the Bishop at his visit and they are prepared. Dr. Jacob Womack will be playing the piano for our Sunday service, in Terry's absence. We have approximately 10 people in attendance for our Lenten Evening Prayer services, except had 25 when the Mainlands provided music. Susanne Pulse has been hired to assist with office matters, while Emma is out, but doing better and working from home. Linda Ammar is also volunteering one day a week. The Parochial Report has been submitted and a hard copy will be mailed. Upon motion of David Kersey and second of Bill Denney, the report was approved and the execution by the Senior, Junior Wardens and priest was authorized. Art Mead abstained. There will be a meeting of the Vestry with the Bishop after the reception on Palm Sunday.

There being no other new business or old business, Father. Paul adjourned the meeting with a closing prayer. The next meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, David M. Kersey

PALM SUNDAY by Mimi Merritt

Christ Episcopal Church celebrated a grand slam on Sunday morning, March 29, with three deeply moving Episcopal ecclesiastical events: a Service of Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation; Palm Sunday; and the Bishop's Visit with the Rt. Rev. Matthew D. Cowden as celebrant.

The Bishop's Visit had been rescheduled from December 21, 2025, due to a family illness, which also had necessitated rescheduling the Service of Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation – a not uncomplicated task involving 14 people and their families.

At the March 29 service, the following were confirmed: Tricia Hein-Brewster, Keisha Harmon, Elizabeth Hart, Selena Bennett-Chafins, Brandon Stark, and Jim Pulse.

The following were received, which means that they previously had been baptized and confirmed at a church other than an Episcopal church: Nancy Stark, Chuck Stark, Todd Taylor, Barb Eichel, Bob Eichel, David Chafins, and Jerry Wood.

Roger Harmon was reaffirmed.

Assisting Bishop Cowden, who delivered the sermon, were our Rector, the Rev. Paul Barker, and the Rev. Brother Ray Escott, Deacon. Lectors for the service were Ted Lewis, Becky Beckett, and Rob Merritt. Acolytes were Bill Denny, Becky Kersey, and Jerry Wood, aspirant.

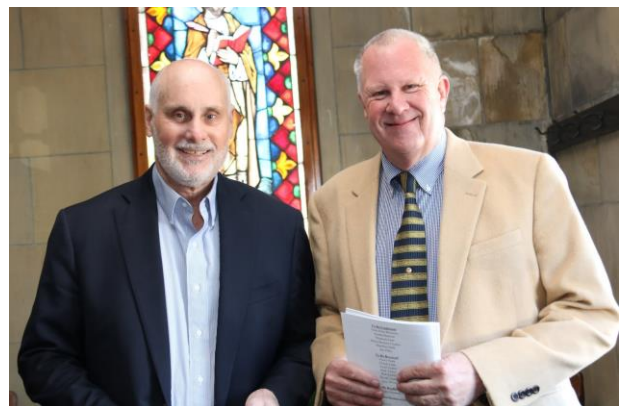
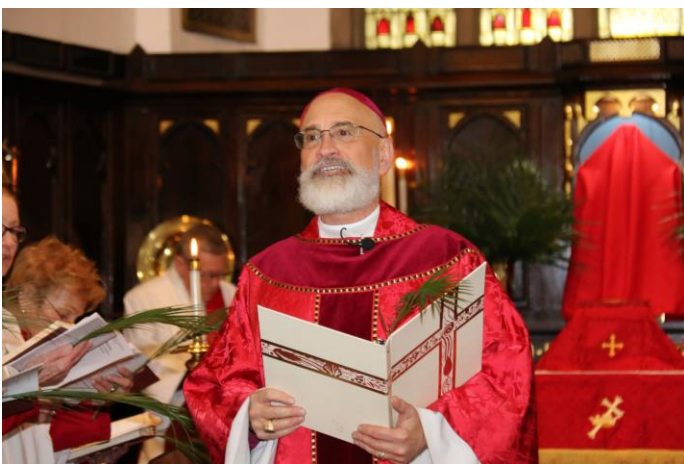
Bishop Cowden called our attention to the service for Holy Saturday on page 283 in the Book of Common Prayer and asked that we read it to ourselves on Quiet Saturday.

Following the service, Christ Church members and friends celebrated another beloved ritual – a beautiful luncheon reception catered by our own David Hardin of David's Downtown. Thanks to donations made by multiple Christ Church members, a buffet of favorites was served, including ham, chicken casserole, mashed potatoes, green beans, green salad, cranberry congealed salad, rolls, desserts, and wine. Stunning arrangements of roses in full bloom adorned each table.

Following lunch, Father Paul presented Bishop Matthew with a gift from Christ Church: three stained-glass ornaments – an angel, a star, and a cross – made by local artist Becky Stowers from glass in the original windows in Rowley Hall. The glass was salvaged following the 1920 fire that destroyed the original church on Christmas Day.

After lunch, Bishop Matthew met with Father Paul and the Christ Church Vestry.





April 2026						
◀ March						May ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK	2 MAUNDAY THURSDAY 7:00 Service	3 GOOD FRIDAY Noon Stations of the Cross 5:30 Liturgy Passion	4 HOLY SATURDAY
5 The Sunday of the Resurrection EASTER SUNDAY 10:00 Holy Eucharist	6	7	8 4:00 Union Mission	9	10	11
12 The Second Sunday of Easter 10:00 Holy Eucharist	13	14	15 5:00 Vestry 6:00 Men' Dinner	16 9:00 Food Pantry	17	18
19 The Third Sunday of Easter 10:00 Holy Eucharist	20	21 10:30 DOK	22 3:30 Union Mission	23	24	25 SAINT MARK THE EVANGELIST
26 The Fourth Sunday of Easter 10:00 Holy Eucharist	27	28	29	30		

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
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To our friends and family:



April 2026

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