



THE MESSENGER

Summer 2026

Christ Church, King and Queen Parish

In the Episcopal Diocese of Washington
Serving ALL GOD's people since 1640

CHRIST CHURCH

25390 Maddox Road
Chaptico, MD

Office and Parish Hall
37497 Zach Fowler
Road

Mail
P.O. Box 8
Chaptico, MD 20621

Rectors Reflection

During this time of year, many people intentionally think about sabbath time. I am certainly doing so, with an anticipated week away in June around the birth of Marie's and my grandchild, along with some vacation time in July visiting family.

It is important, however, for us to consider sabbath time as a regular part of each month, week, day, and even hour. Wayne Muller, in his book *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives* (Bantam Books, 1999), provides a wealth of insight and ideas for discovering sabbath time that restores the soul.

One piece of wisdom that stands out, as I peruse the well-worn copy on my bookshelf, is the reminder that we spend so much time pursuing the future that we neglect seeing the grace present in the here and now. Summer, with its built-in sabbath rhythms, is a good time for all of us to create space in our lives for renewal of the soul.

For me, summer is not simply about fun, extracurricular activities, or travel. It is about connecting with rest and renewal in a spiritual manner. That is one reason I love the sabbath practice we embrace as a congregation through our Shortened Summer Sunday Services (June 14 – September 6).

These slightly adjusted services — one fewer reading, fewer hymns or verses, and a brief homily in place of a sermon — are a way of inviting us not to choose between worship and summer recreational activities, but instead to include worship as part of them.

As part of our summer covenant, the service is trimmed so that all may partake. Everyone is welcome to attend worship dressed for the rest of their day, so that faith and recreation, brought together, may create a meaningful sabbath experience for everyone.

As Muller writes in the aforementioned book, "a life of compassion must include compassion for all beings, including the giver" (p. 49). For all of us, this summer and always, I invite us to discover the meaning of holy sabbath time.

Yours in Christ,
The Reverend Peter K. Ackerman



Sunday Services

8:00 a.m.

Holy Eucharist
(Rite I)

10:00 a.m.

Holy Eucharist
(Rite II)
With Music

Contact Information

Phone 301.884.3451
Email: office@cckqp.net
Website: www.cckqp.net

Office Hours

Monday – Thursday
8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Parish Hall HVAC Overhaul

- Bob Donaldson

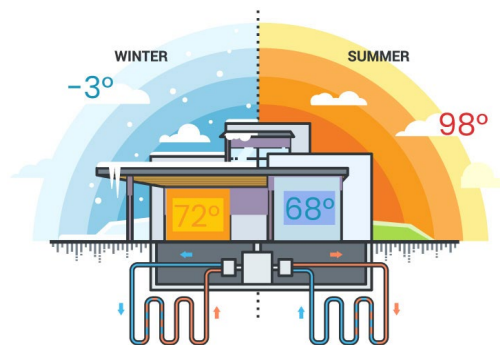


In the process of trying to reduce our operating costs, we found that our outdated HVAC systems in the Parish Hall cost an average of over \$ 25,000/year over the last three years, for oil, electricity and repairs. Replacement of the 7 HVAC systems in the Parish Hall would cost between \$ 119,000 for a conventional Heat Pump system, and \$315,000 for a much more efficient Geothermal Heat Pump system. We discovered that both SMECO and the Maryland Energy Administration were accepting applications for grants to defray the upfront costs of upgrading to more efficient systems. We applied for both grants at the end of January. In March we were notified by SMECO that we qualified for a grant of \$8,219.

On April 7, 2026, the Maryland Energy Administration awarded Christ Church, Chaptico a grant of up to \$ 273,888, or 83% of the up-front costs of installing a Geothermal Heat Pump system. The grant will be used to replace the aging HVAC systems in the Christ Church Parish Hall. The net result is that we will be able to install one of the most efficient HVAC systems in the world at less than half the cost of installing a conventional HVAC replacement. This investment will allow Christ Church to reduce its energy costs by over 80% and help ensure the financial stability of one of the oldest Episcopal Churches in Maryland.

Christ Church's share of the project will be over \$50,000. We have already established a Hall Energy Fund to raise money for the project with several large contributions already. The fund is available on-line through the Donations links on the website, with mobile Pew Cards, plate donations or by mailing a check to the office. Please specify it is for the Hall Energy Fund.

As a sign that this was the right decision, one of the Compressors that cool the Parish Hall failed a few weeks ago. It would cost \$3,400 to repair and we would still have an outdated, inefficient and failure prone system. We hope to begin work in early July and finish before September. 12 geothermal wells will be drilled in the lower parking lot and covered back up. Then each existing system will be replaced, one at a time, to reduce disruption in the building.





We welcome and congratulate Seth Thompson on being received into the Episcopal Church on May 9, 2026, at the Washington National Cathedral.

SPOTLIGHT



Cecilia Owens

Cecilia began attending Christ Church with her family when she was just four years old. She participated in the Sunday School program, where she learned much from her teacher, Laura.

Over the years, Cecilia has been a dedicated volunteer at the Strawberry Festival, helping to dip and sell chocolate-covered strawberries. For the past several years, she has also worked on the serving line. Each week, Cecilia serves Christ Church as our livestream host, ensuring that Sunday services are broadcast to all who benefit from hearing the Word of God, wherever they may be. She also assists our rector and lay leaders with their microphones, helping ensure that everyone can clearly hear the service from the altar.

Cecilia is a junior at Chopticon High School, where she serves as the Wind Section Leader in the marching band and performs in both the symphonic and jazz bands. She is also a member of the tennis team and the National Honor Society.

We are grateful for Cecilia's faithful service to Christ Church and proud of her many accomplishments both in our parish and in her school community.

In Remembrance

Our beloved parishioner, Ben Pecson passed away recently. Please keep his wife Dottie and their family in your prayers.



Tending Our Soil

Sunday, May 31, the **Tending Our Soil Team** was De-Commissioned. Fr. Peter Ackerman, Amy Topolski, Donnie Morgan, Sara Frawley, Robbie Loker, and David Simmons (not pictured MaryAnn Oliver)

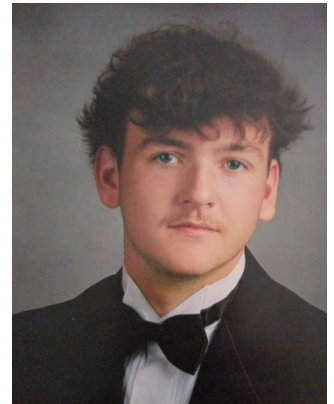
Thank you for your dedication!





Parish Life

Graduations and Promotions



Emily Bolton graduated from the University of Maryland with double degrees: Bachelor of Arts in Spanish Language, Literature, and Cultures and a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature. She plans on becoming a teacher.

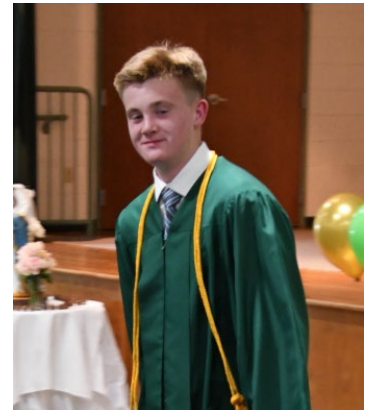
Lindsay Bolton graduated from Chopticon High School. She plans on attending the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. She wants to major in Public Health and will eventually go to dental school.

Both graduated Summa Cum Laude. The each had straight A's all the way through school! So proud of them both!

Gavin Downs
Graduated from Chopticon High School and will be joining Local 26 Electrical Apprenticeship program!

↑ **Henry Shupe**
promoted from Dynard Elementary 5th grade to Middle School, here he comes.

↓ **Katie Shupe**
promoted from 8th grade at Margaret Brent Middle School next step High School



Zachary Pettigrew
promoted from 8th grade at ArchBishop Neale School. Off to High School he goes!



Recently, Robbie Loker was able to visit **Suzanne Smith** and her companion, Dakota, at her home in Keedysville. We hope that she will be able to travel to Chaptico and join us for a worship service soon.

TENDING OUR SOIL INITIATIVE COMPLETION SUMMARY

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, CHAPTICO, MD

A Three-Year Journey of Listening, Discernment, and Living Our Faith

Over the past three years, Christ Church has been engaged in a thoughtful and intentional initiative called *Tending Our Soil*; a diocesan program designed to help congregations renew and deepen their faith, strengthen community, and discern how God is calling them to serve—right where they are. Commissioned by the Vestry and supported by the Diocese of Washington, our team began meeting regularly to pray, learn, and reflect together. Our purpose was to better understand who we are as a church, who our neighbors are, and how we, at Christ Church, are called to live out our faith in meaningful and connected ways.

Listening to Our Story

The journey began with intentional observation, first within our own congregation. Through shared stories and reflection, the team explored what draws people to Christ Church, what fosters a sense of belonging, and how relationships shape our life of faith. This work came to life in a powerful way during the Storytelling Eucharist on January 7, 2024, where parishioners shared their experiences during worship. Words like *faithful, welcoming, hospitable, caring, compassionate, supportive, prayerful, community, friends, and family* were used again and again - revealing a clear and consistent identity. This experience affirmed something deeply important: Christ Church was already a place of connection, belonging, and love, and God was actively at work in this community.

Learning and Looking Outward

Alongside this inward reflection, the Tending Our Soil team participated in diocesan learning labs and completed guided modules focused on congregational vitality and discernment. The team also looked outward—seeking to better understand the surrounding community within a ten-minute or ten-mile radius. By examining demographics and local context, we worked to ensure that future ministry efforts would be grounded in real understanding.

From Discernment to Direction

Through this process, we developed and adopted shared Mission and Vision Statements to guide our work:

Our Mission: *We live the message of Jesus Christ as a Godly presence, influencing and encouraging all persons to gather in community for worship, service, and play.*

Our Vision: *Christ Church expresses God's love by being welcoming and attentive to individuals and the wider community, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.*

These statements now serve as a foundation for how we live, serve, and grow together as a church.

Putting Faith into Action

With this renewed foundation in place, our focus shifted toward action. Three key goals emerged:

1. Increasing personal connection and engagement among worshipers
2. Developing and communicating clear pathways of discipleship
3. Expanding participation in community service beyond the walls of the church

Over the past year, meaningful progress has been made in each of these areas. Efforts to strengthen connections have included hospitality initiatives, fellowship opportunities, and the sharing of parishioner stories to deepen relationships and understanding of one another. This was illustrated through the experiences of Shared Coffee Hours between the two Sunday services. An experience that has been consistently successful and extraordinarily connecting.

Tending Our Soil Initiative Completion Summary - Continued

To support discipleship, the Tending Our Soil team worked with the Vestry and ministry leaders to identify and organize the many ministries already active within Christ Church. This resulted in the creation of a ministry brochure and the launch of a Ministry Fair on Homecoming Sunday, September 7, 2025, helping parishioners and newcomers more easily find ways to connect, serve, and grow. Additional expressions of this work have included the use of TOS authored interactive *Prayers of the People*, inviting greater congregational participation, and the emergence of new, member-led ideas for ministry and fellowship.

A Culture of Participation and Connection

One of the most meaningful outcomes of this process has been a visible shift toward greater participation and shared ownership of the church's life and mission. Members of Christ Church are increasingly stepping forward—sharing ideas, engaging in ministry, and building authentic connections. In many cases, the congregation has exceeded expectations, actively living into the mission in ways that reflect individual gifts, talents, and passions. This can clearly be seen by looking at the St. Francis Day Pet Blessing Event, Prayer Group, Women's Bible Study, expansions in the Greeter Ministry, and even the recently improved organization of the Buildings and Grounds Committee and supporting work crew. This is the Church at its best—not simply organizing programs but being a community that lives its faith together.

Honoring Our Past, Living Into Our Future

As we reflect on this journey, we are reminded that the story of Christ Church did not begin with us. It is built on generations of faith, tradition, and community—stories of founding families, meaningful ministries, and individuals who shaped the life of this church. Traditions such as fellowship meals, seasonal celebrations, outreach efforts, and shared worship practices continue to ground us, even as new ideas and expressions of ministry take root.

We now find ourselves in a unique moment—called to carry forward what has been entrusted to us while also shaping what comes next. This requires both creativity and courage: creativity to imagine how our traditions can grow, and courage to try new things, trusting that God meets us in the process.

A Shared Calling

Tending Our Soil has never been the work of a single team alone. It is the work of the entire congregation. Each of us has a role to play—through our presence, our gifts, and our willingness to connect. Whether by joining a ministry, sharing an idea, or simply reaching out to someone new, every action contributes to the life of Christ Church.

Tending Our Soil is not a finished project, but an ongoing journey of listening, discerning, and responding to God's presence in our midst. As we move forward, we do so with gratitude for where we have been, clarity about who we are, and hope for where God is leading us next. With a strong foundation of love, belonging, and shared purpose, Christ Church is well-positioned to continue growing in faith, deepening connections, and serving our community with intention, as the Holy Spirit guides us.

Our Charge

May we move forward with courage, creativity, and trust—knowing that God is already at work among us. May we each, individually, make our best efforts to share God's love and live the message of Jesus Christ in every endeavor.

May we listen and watch for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to nudge us and may we courageously step out in faith towards the unexpected and uncomfortable.

Thank you, Christ Church, for entrusting this initiative to our care.

Robbie Loker * Donnie Morgan * Mary Ann Oliver * David Simmons
Amy Topolski * Fr. Peter Ackerman * Sara Frawley



Years ago, one of our younger parishioners, Ava Ciabattoni, approached her then rector with a simple but meaningful question: could Christ Church help support the Food Pantry at Ascension Church in Lexington Park? Thanks to her initiative, our congregation has been able to contribute to this important ministry.

The Food Pantry at Ascension is open every Monday and Thursday and serves a growing number of individuals and families in our community. Last month alone, 1,890 people received food assistance through the pantry. Many of those served are families with young children.

The need is great, and every donation makes a difference.

A collection basket is located at the back of the church for food donations. In addition, several members of Christ Church faithfully provide monthly financial contributions by writing checks directly to the Food Pantry. These gifts are a tremendous help in meeting the ongoing needs of our neighbors.

Phyllis Greer, who manages the pantry alongside Fr. Greg Syler, Rector of Ascension and St. George's, has shared the pantry's current wish list:

Food Pantry Wish List

- Ramen noodles
- Canned Sloppy Joe Mix
 - Bananas
- Canned hot dog chili
 - Loaf bread
 - Canned fruit
- Children's snacks
- Saltine crackers
- Hamburger Helper

Thank you for your generosity and for helping us care for those in need throughout our community.

Community Outreach (Continued)**STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL 2026**

On May 17, Christ Church held its 32nd Annual Strawberry Festival. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who volunteered, attended, donated, and helped make this cherished community event a success.

We were able to raise a total of over \$3,000.00, which will be divided evenly to each charity below.

The Strawberry Festival is an important outreach ministry that supports local charities serving the people of St. Mary's County, including:

- ACTS (A Community That Shares)
- Hospice of St. Mary's
- Clements Cuties Foundation

Through your generosity and participation, these organizations can continue their valuable work in our community. Thank you for helping make a difference.



CHRIST CHURCH

King and Queen Parish

A Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington... Living the way of Love since 1640

Church: 25390 Maddox Road
Parish Hall: 37497 Zach Fowler Road
Mailing: P.O. Box 8, Chaptico, Maryland 20621
Phone: 301-884-3451
Email: office@cckqp.net
Website: www.cckqp.net

Sunday Services

8:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist
10:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist with Music

Our Leadership

The Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde – Bishop of Washington
The Reverend Peter Ackerman – Rector
Jennifer Groht – Parish Administrator
Robbie Loker – Senior Warden
Donnie Morgan – Junior Warden
Seth Thompson – Music Director & Organist
Bob Donaldson – Treasurer
Beth Fitch – Registrar

Members of the Vestry

Class of 2027: Diane Donahue, Greg Penk
Class of 2028: Shelby Opperman, Donnie Morgan, Robbie Loker
Class of 2029: Mary Simmons, Beth Fitch, Betsy Franklin

Mission Statement:

We live the message of Jesus Christ as a Godly presence, influencing and encouraging all persons to gather in community for worship, service and play.

Vision Statement:

Christ Church expresses God's love by being welcoming and attentive to individuals and the wider community, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.