

Anticipate & Celebrate

Advent 2025 Sermon Series

I Believe: Authentic Faith in an Artificial World

What does it mean to believe in Jesus? It means a lot more than just intellectual agreement with a few doctrinal statements on a church website. It involves a personal trust and vibrant commitment to Jesus Christ as the Son of God—the one who died for our sins and rose again from the dead for our salvation.

It is a genuine reliance on his sacrifice alone for eternal life, one that leads to a transformed (and transforming) life expressed in acts of love, mercy, kindness, and grace. True belief, then, is never static. It's always on the move, pulsating with divine life.

Join us this Advent season as we explore the New Testament readings from the Year A lectionary cycle. Prepare for the coming of Christ by walking with Christ.

NOVEMBER 30

Believing Means Behaving

Romans 13:11-14

DECEMBER 7

Believing Means Trusting

Romans 15:4-13

DECEMBER 14

Believing Means Waiting

James 5:7-10

DECEMBER 21

Believing Means Obeying

Romans 1:1-7



Celebrate the Birth of Christ at the 2025 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

The Christmas Eve candlelight service at Christ Community Church is one of the highlights of our church year. Our theme for the 2025 celebration will be **"I'll Be Home for Christmas"** from Luke 15:11-24. You won't want to miss it!

The service will be held at **7:00 p.m.** and will feature traditional Christmas carols, a brass ensemble, an inspiring message, and the lighting of candles during "Silent Night." Plates for a **benevolence offering** will be available at the back of the sanctuary to help needy families in our community.

Invite a friend to come find hope and encouragement in the good news of Jesus Christ at Christ Community Church.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES AT CHRIST COMMUNITY

SUNDAY

December 14

Sign up now for the **Church Family Luncheon** to be held after the worship service.

WEDNESDAY

December 24

The **Christmas Eve candlelight** service begins at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Invite a friend!

SUNDAY

December 28

The **continental breakfast** and **cookie exchange** begins at 9:00 a.m. in Zinn Commons.

www.christcomm.church



November 17, 2025

Dear Friend of Christ Community Church,

Before we get overwhelmed by everything associated with the world's "Christmas season," I wanted to remind us of the rich and meaningful time that the 4-week season of Advent can be for believers. To Christians around the world, it is a time of preparation and anticipation. To that end, I will be preaching a sermon series called **"I Believe: Authentic Faith in an Artificial World"** each week until Christmas Eve as we prepare for the coming King, Jesus Christ. We in the church believe strongly that the same God who once entered Bethlehem's manger will come again to this world to establish his kingdom forever. This great truth itself should give us all the joy and anticipation necessary for Christmas 2025.

Enclosed in this mailing is a flyer summarizing the events and services that are planned, along with an invitation card about our **Christmas Eve candlelight service**, which can be shared with a neighbor, friend, or family member. Also included is a Christmas devotional I wrote for our contemplation as we head into this special time of the year. Finally, also included is a church family data form so that we can update our records with your current information if any of it has changed recently.

Blessings,
Pastor Tim Valentino

Sunday, November 30 First Sunday of Advent	10:30 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary and via Livestream
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Sunday, December 7 Second Sunday of Advent	10:30 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary and via Livestream
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Sunday, December 14 Third Sunday of Advent	10:30 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary and via Livestream 12:00 p.m. Church Family Christmas Luncheon in Zinn Commons (Ground Floor)
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Sunday, December 21 Fourth Sunday of Advent	10:30 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary and via Livestream
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Wednesday, December 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	7:00 p.m. Candlelight Worship Service in the Sanctuary and via Livestream
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Sunday, December 28 First Sunday after Christmas Day	9:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast & Cookie Exchange in Zinn Commons (Ground Floor) 10:30 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary and via Livestream
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Sunday, January 4 Second Sunday of Christmas	10:30 a.m. Worship Service with HOLY COMMUNION in the Sanctuary and via Livestream
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The Wonders and Wizards of Christmas

TIMOTHY R. VALENTINO

God has landed. Right in a manger. Right on top of cow spit and barnyard bacteria. Jesus came a long way to save us. Two thousand years ago, the eternal Son of God stepped across the stars of the universe to become a zygote in the womb of the Virgin Mary. And then **he was born as one of us**. “Manhood and deity in perfect harmony—the Man who is God,” wrote Graham Kendrick.

Christmas, then, is the ultimate display of **meekness and majesty** in one person. “Glory to God in the highest,” was the angelic response. They easily could have said, “Glory to God in the lowest,” too. God is with us now in the person of Jesus Christ. On earth.

Magi from the east were among the first to welcome him, perhaps several months after the shepherds. Following the natal star, they set out on a journey to find the newborn king. I have a hunch it was more than curiosity that drew this caravan of dignitaries and polymaths to Jesus. It was God himself. They saw him at work in the sky—speaking their language—and they wanted to go meet with him.

No doubt they connected the Hebrew prophecies left in their own towns during Israel’s exile with the celestial phenomenon they were observing. God is beautifully sneaky that way. We often hear it said, “Wise men still seek him,” but **it was God who was seeking them**. Sometimes he stirs things up, even to the point of rearranging his universe because he has something vitally important to tell us. Are we listening?

The Magi were listening, and that’s why they traveled hundreds of miles across the desert to go see the Christ. They were men of wisdom and learning. They were into math, medicine, astronomy, and human nature. Some of them were superstitious. We get our word “magic” from their title. Call them “wizards” if you like. It was basically **the cast of Harry Potter** who came to see Jesus.

For the most part, Magi just wanted to know the Power behind the universe. They pondered the great questions of life: “Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? Why is there something rather than nothing?” And because the Magi were so into the stars, God put **a fantastic light in the sky** on that first Christmas to get their attention—a star unlike anything else they had ever seen before.



We’re fascinated by the natal star, but a good sign always points *away* from itself to something else, so Matthew doesn’t go into detail about it. Besides, it’s not the stars that direct the course of history, but **the Maker of the stars**. He’s the director of the show. And it’s a transformational show for souls on a quest for spiritual truth. Indeed, God tends to meet people at the level of their deepest longings. As G. K. Chesterton wrote:

*Men are homesick in their homes
And strangers under the sun...
But our homes are under miraculous skies
Where Christmas was begun.*

If the Magi teach us anything, it’s that it’s never enough for us to just be amazed at the wonders of God; **we have to set out on the journey and follow him**. Our calling is not just to stand in awe of creation but to get to know the Creator.

God wants everyone to come and worship his Son. He wants you to worship his Son. Even if you’re a wizard.