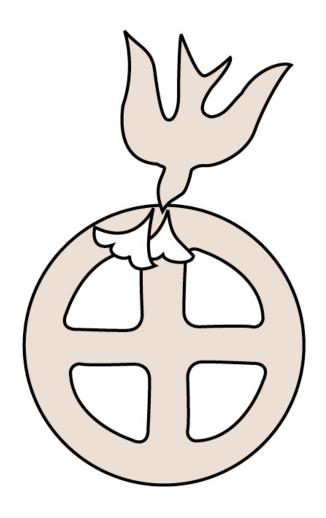
# St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church



DECEMBER 12, 2021 Premiered on <u>YouTube</u>

10:30AM

## THE HOLY VIRTUAL EUCHARIST

The Third Sunday of Advent

#### THE WORD OF GOD

#### SPIRITUAL COMMUNION \*

What happens when you are spiritually prepared and desire to receive communion, but can't? Such a case is referenced by a paragraph in the 1979 Prayer Book:

If a person desires to receive the Sacrament, but, by reason of extreme sickness or physical disability, is unable to eat and drink the Bread and Wine, the Celebrant is to assure that person that all the benefits of Communion are received, even though the Sacrament is not received with the mouth.

A nation-wide shut down due to a pandemic fits, I'm sure we'll agree, with the words "by any other impediment" listed in the first Prayer Book. Our Lord will not cut us off from his grace. If we truly desire him, he will come to us, even if we cannot receive the Sacraments he has instituted so that we may receive his grace. This is not a new idea. St Thomas Aquinas, writing nearly 800 years ago, said:

before receiving a sacrament, the reality of the sacrament can be had through the very desire of receiving the sacrament. Accordingly, before actual reception of this sacrament, a man can obtain salvation through the desire of receiving it, just as he can before Baptism through the desire of Baptism, as stated above (Summa, III.73.iii)

Desiring to receive the spiritual grace of the Most Holy Eucharist (and being prevented from receiving it sacramentally) is known as Spiritual Communion. It is so very important to note that this gift is given to us when we cannot, for very good reason, be present at mass.

When you are watching a live-stream or recording of our liturgies, any of the following prayers may be said at the moment of communion when you would normally leave your pew and make your journey to the altar:

In Union, dear Lord, with the faithful at every altar of Your Church where Your blessed Body and Blood are being offered to the Father, I desire to offer You praise and thanksgiving. I believe that You are present in the Holy Sacrament. And since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, I ask You to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to You, and embrace You with all the affections of my soul. Let me never be separated from You. Let me live and die in Your love. Amen.

OR

Faithful God, in the wonder of your wisdom and love, you fed your people in the wilderness with the bread of angels, and you sent Jesus to be the bread of life. Though I cannot physically consume these gifts of bread and wine, I thank you that I have received the sacrament of Christ's presence, the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of Christ's passion. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may I embody your desire, and be renewed for your service, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen. (from Enriching Our Worship 2)

OR

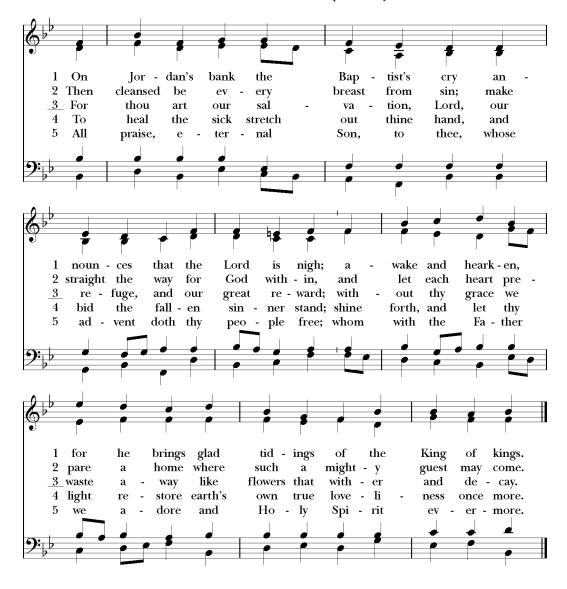
"My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire you with all my heart. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already in my heart and unite myself to you completely. Please do not let me ever by separated from you." (by St. Alphonsus Liguori)

\*Except where otherwise indicated, the whole of this article (with only very little amendment) is taken from the website of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where it was posted on April 5, 2020. No author was specified.

#### **Opening Hymn 76**

### On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry

WINCHESTER NEW



## **OPENING ACCLAMATION**

BCP 355

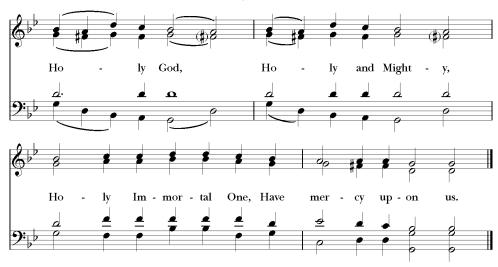
Celebrant: Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People: And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

## **COLLECT FOR PURITY**

BCP 355

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.



#### THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

#### THE FIRST READING

#### read by Anna Hiers

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

Thanks be to God.

Canticle 9 The First Song of Isaiah

Isaiah 12:2-6

Surely, it is God who saves me; \* I will trust in him and not be afraid.

For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, \* and he will be my Savior.

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing \* from the springs of salvation.

And on that day you shall say, \* Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;

Make his deeds known among the peoples; \*

see that they remember that his Name is exalted.

Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, \*

and this is known in all the world.

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, \*

for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*

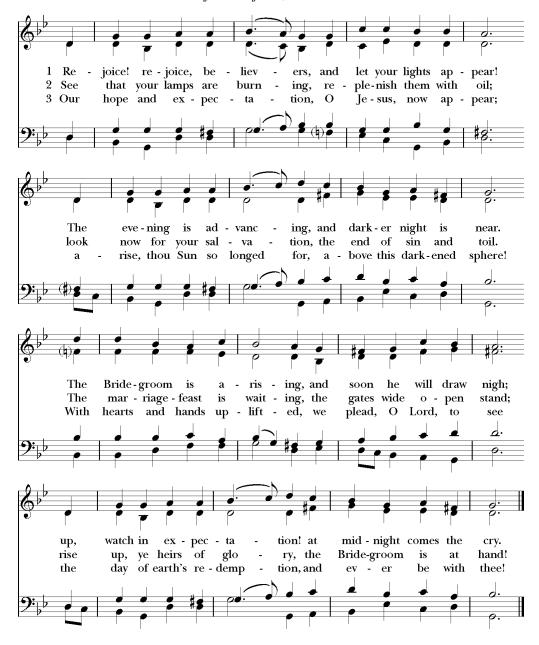
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

#### THE SECOND READING

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people. Thanks be to God.



THE GOSPEL Luke 3:7-18

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Savior, Jesus Christ, according to Luke.
People: Glory to you, O Christ.

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages." As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his

threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The people are seated at the invitation of the preacher.

THE SERMON: The Rev. Nikki Mathis

THE NICENE CREED BCP 358

(said by all)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE, Form VI

**BCP 392** 

In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

For all people in their daily life and work;

For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.

For this community, the nation, and the world. We pray for our President, Joseph, our Governor, Brian, and our Mayor, Kellv.

For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

For the just and proper use of your creation;

For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;

For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.

For Michael, our Presiding Bishop, and Rob, Don, and Paul, our Bishops;

and for all bishops and other ministers, especially Nikki, our priest, and Christina, our deacon;

For all who serve God in his Church.

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation. We pray especially for ( ... ) *silence* 

Hear us, Lord;

For your mercy is great.

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life. We give thanks for (  $\dots$  ) silence

We will exalt you, O God our King;

And praise your Name for ever and ever.

We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom. Lord, let your loving-kindness be upon them;

Who put their trust in you.

*Deacon*: We pray to you also for the forgiveness of our sins.

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; in your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone; and so uphold us by your Spirit that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honory and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE PEACE

Celebrant: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: And also with you.

#### THE HOLY EUCHARIST

## **Offertory Hymn 14 LEVAS**

Soon and Very Soon

Andrae Crouch



The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

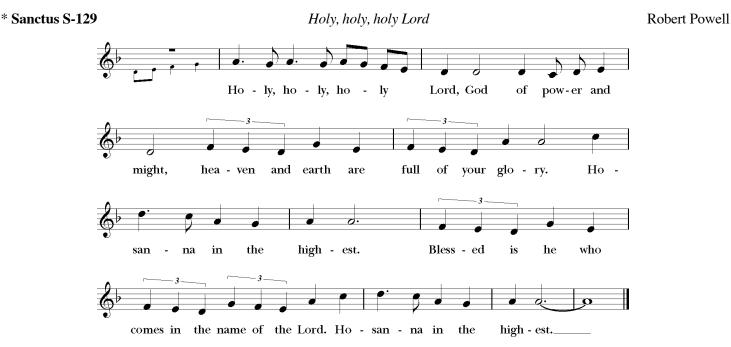
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and every- where to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. (Here a Proper Preface is said)

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:



#### Celebrant continues

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People We remember his death,

We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

#### The Celebrant continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with Mary, St. Gregory the Great, and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen.** 

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say

THE LORD'S PRAYER BCP 364

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

\* Fraction Anthem S-164

Jesus, Lamb of God

Franz P. Schubert



## THE COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

#### SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER

Enriching Our Worship 2

Faithful God, in the wonder of your wisdom and love, you fed your people in the wilderness with the bread of angels, and you sent Jesus to be the bread of life. Though I cannot physically consume these gifts of bread and wine, I thank you that I have received the sacrament of Christ's presence, the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of Christ's passion. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may I embody your desire, and be renewed for your service, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### THE BLESSING

#### **Closing Hymn 72**

Hark! the glad sound!

RICHMOND



#### THE DISMISSAL

Deacon: Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

## **Fellowship Postlude**

## Prayers of the People

In our Parish we pray for Carol Whitson, Tom Sturgis, Diane Miller, John Granrose, Don Mushholt, Ralph Beckworth, Tammy Bowman, John Gay, Cameron Steele, Nathan Parrish, Ed Spivey, Hannah Bennett, Anna Thornton, Sheryl King, Ellen Peck, Bill Alworth, Charles Thornton, James Morris, Tom Hiers, Jane Bowen, Marge Massey, Pat Irby, Pat Titus, Stephanie Gamble, Stephen Morris, George Watson, Tina Carlson, Shelby Welch, Roger Swagler, Stanley Armour, Cindy Beagle, Bill Beagle, Sally Stuckey, Diane Holcomb, Stephen Corn, Ken Packer, Robby, Cecil, Brooke, Dianne, Peter, Jason, Lynn, Pete, Sophia, Samantha, Jennifer, and Buddy.

In thanksgiving for those celebrating their birthdays this week: Sam Preston, Cynthia Hoover, Henry Scott, Betty Littleton, George Braman, Victoria Knowlton, and Carolyn Clarke; and for those celebrating anniversaries: Ken Packer and Rhonda Hefner-Packer.

The people listed here are prayed for by name at each Sunday service. To request prayer for yourself or someone else, please call the office (706-546-7553). If at the beginning of the next month the person needs to remain on the list, please call and give the office an update.

# **TODAY**

## DIOCESAN CONFIRMATION | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12 @ 4PM

Three of our St. Gregorians will be going to the Cathedral on Sunday, December 12 at 4PM to be confirmed. They are: Wade McGlamery, Tristen Webb, and Christine Colbert.

## **WEDS & SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER**

#### ADULT SPIRITUAL FORMATION ADVENT PROGRAM

This Advent season you are invited to join us in an Adult Spiritual Formation program of reflection on what the past two years have been like for us and our own Beloved Community at St. Gregory's. Life has changed for each and all of us, and we hope that by offering some time together with selected Psalms and poems, readings from the Book of Lamentations, and a selection of traditional Spirituals, we will be inspired to embark on some honest conversation about our sadness, our anger and our hope for what lies ahead. We will meet for the three session program at St. Gregory's in Parish Hall on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 7:30 on December 1, 8, and 15. The same three session program will be offered on Sunday mornings (Dec 5, 12, 19) from 9:15 to 10:15. You can come to either, both, or a mix as your schedule permits. At both times there will be water and coffee available and feel free to bring along your dinner, breakfast or a snack as you need or desire. As per St. Gregory's current protocols, masks will be required by all participants.

## **NEXT WEEK**

#### WILL DROSOS' ORDINATION | SUNDAY, DEC. 18

Will Drosos will be ordained to the transitional diaconate on December 18th at 2pm at the Cathedral in Atlanta. Will was our Youth Minister in 2018 before heading to seminary. St. Gregory's has sponsored Will throughout his seminary education. Masks are required for in-person attendance. You may also support by joining the live stream <a href="https://episcopalatlanta.org/event/dec-18-ordination">https://episcopalatlanta.org/event/dec-18-ordination</a>

#### **NOTES**

#### POINSETTIA DEDICATIONS

If you wish to give a poinsettia in honor or memory of a loved one, the deadline for ordering will be **Friday, Dec. 17.** The suggested donation this year is \$15 per dedication. Please include your name, how many poinsettias you would like, and details such as "in memory of \_\_\_\_\_/in thanksgiving for \_\_\_\_/ in honor of \_\_\_\_\_\_ and mail it to the parish office. You may also contact the office by phone (706-546-7553) or email, office@stgregoryathens.org.



#### **COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS**

Community Christmas of Oglethorpe County, Inc. is a local non-profit that helps struggling families at Christmas, and also throughout the year with power bills, rent, etc. Gifts of new toys and other fun items for boys and girls ranging in age from infants to high schoolers can be dropped off *before December 15th* at the main office of the Oglethorpe County Recreation Department Monday – Friday, 9-5, at any of the area schools, at the Crawford branch of The Commercial Bank, or with Toys for Tots. If you would like to help with the toy collection and distribution, please contact Catherine Drewry with a text at

706-201-7241 or email OglethorpeCommunityChristmas@gmail.com . If you know local families with children who need assistance this year, please ask them to consult our webpage for application information.

#### **CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES**

2022 contribution envelopes are available on the dresser in the Parish Hall entrance way. We have not ordered many because history has shown very few St. Gregorians use them. If you wish to use these next year, please write your name next to the # of box that you take. Please note people last year already have boxes spoken for. Leave those boxes for them. If you had a box of envelopes last year and do not want/need them this year, please cross off your name so we know that box is available.

# **CHRISTMAS AT ST. GREGORY'S**

Friday, December 24: 5PM Children's Pageant & Holy Eucharist

9:30PM Music Prelude

10PM Festival Eucharist & Choir

Saturday, December 25: 10AM Holy Eucharist & Carols

Sunday, December 26: 9AM Holy Eucharist Sunday, January 2: 8AM Holy Eucharist 10:30AM Holy Eucharist

## **Clergy and Staff**

**The Rev. Nikki Mathis** Rector rector@stgregoryathens.org | 706-546-7553 x2

**The Rev. Christina Dondero** Deacon *christinadondero@gmail.com* | 404-918-7248

**Terri Tillman and Dallas Bono** Audiovisual Technicians *ttillman@gmail.com*; *dallasbono@gmail.com* 

**Kendall M. Kookogey** Parish Administrator/Bookkeeper *office@stgregoryathens.org* | 706-546-7553 x1

**Jonathan Klein** Music Director/Organist *jonathanfk@gmail.com* | 706-296-8102

**Joseph Napoli** Choir Director awn1984@att.net | 706-546-6638

**Catherine Drewry** Director of Children's Ministries *cbdrewry@gmail.com* | 706-201-7241

**Wade McGlamery** Youth Minister www.cglamery@gmail.com | 770-624-4837

**Jude Red-Bear** Nursery Director *juderedbear@yahoo.com* | 706-614-0008

**Mark Hein** Buildings/Grounds *markehein@gmail.com* | 706-549-3239

**Allena Armour** Sexton allenaarmour57@yahoo.com | 706-614-3704

Nursery Attendants: Missy Hamlin, Jude Red Bear

*Vestry Members:* Jane Hudson, *Sr. Warden;* Kelly Black, *Jr. Warden;* Julie Worley; LeeAnne Krause; John Bray; Anna Hiers; Blaine Everson; Eddie Bennett; Caley Ross; Chrissy Moffett, *Clerk;* Les House, *Treasurer* 

Vestry Person of the Day/Week: Anna Hiers aldhiers@gmail.com