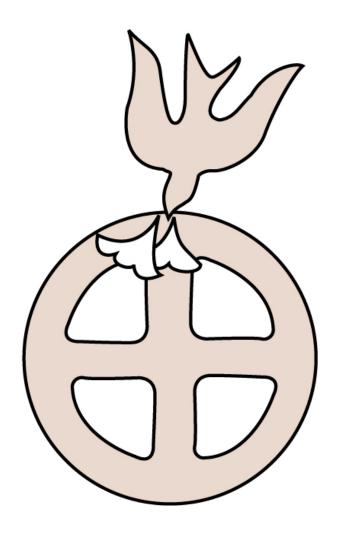
St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church



DECEMBER 17, 2023 Live Streamed on <u>YouTube</u>

10:30AM

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.

THE HOLY VIRTUAL EUCHARIST

The Third Sunday of Advent

THE WORD OF GOD

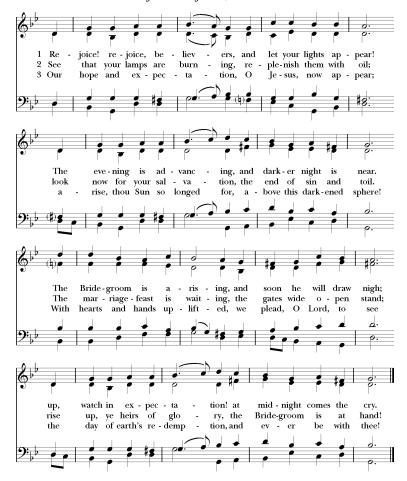
WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prelude Watching, waiting J. E. Kindermann

Processional Hymn 68

Rejoice! rejoice, believers

LLANGLOFFAN



OPENING ACCLAMATION BCP 351

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 Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

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

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 126

1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of / Zion, * then were we like those who / dream.

2 Then was our mouth filled with / laughter, * and our tongue with shouts of / joy.

3 Then they said among the / nations, *

"The Lord has done great things for / them."

4 The Lord has done great things for / us, * and we are glad in-/deed.

5 Restore our fortunes, O / Lord, *

like the watercourses of the / Negev.

6 Those who sowed with / tears *

will reap with songs of / joy.

7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the / seed, *

will come again with joy, shouldering their / sheaves.



© 1979, Robert Knox Kennedy

THE SECOND READING 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

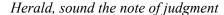
Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

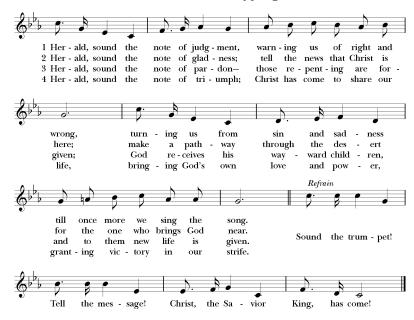
Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

Thanks be to God.

Sequence Hymn 70



HERALD, SOUND



THE GOSPEL John 1:6-8, 19-28

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Savior, Jesus Christ, according to John.

People: Glory to you, O Christ.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord," as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

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.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

BCP 360

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Celebrant and People: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name, Amen.

Celebrant: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen**.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE, Form I

BCP 383

The congregational response to "let us pray to the Lord" is "Lord, have mercy."

Final petition: In the communion of Mary, Gregory, and of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life, to Christ our God. **To thee, O Lord our God.**

Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.

THE PEACE

Celebrant: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: And also with you.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Anthem

The God Whom Earth and Sea and Sky

James J. Chepponis

The God whom earth and sea and sky adore and praise and magnify, whose might they claim, whose love they tell, in Mary's body comes to dwell.

O Mother blest, the chosen shrine wherein the architect divine, whose hand contains the earth and sky, has come in human flesh to lie!

Blest in the message Gabriel brought; blest by the work the Spirit wrought; most blest, to bring to human birth the long desired of all the earth.

O Lord, the Virgin-born, to you eternal praise and laud are due, whom with the Father we adore and Holy Spirit evermore.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING, EUCHARISTIC PRAYER B

BCP 367

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

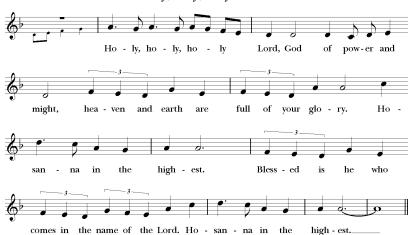
We lift them to the Lord.

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 everywhere 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:



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;

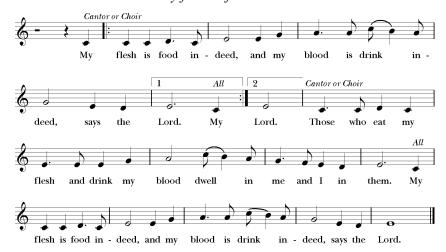
And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

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 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.



THE COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

Communion Hymn 72

Hark! the glad sound!

RICHMOND



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.

VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN

Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

THE BLESSING

Closing Hymn 74



THE DISMISSAL

Deacon: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

f

About today's music...

There may be some in the congregation who will be struck by a sense of "Palm Sunday" as the final hymn is introduced. In fact, the tune we have long associated with "All glory Laud and Honor" was found by the The Hymnal 1982 committee to be the perfect vehicle for a new but surprisingly complementary text. "Blest be the King whose coming" (#74) is a translation from the original Spanish by Uruguayan writer Federico Pagura (1923-2016). In this Advent text the entry proclaimed is not the one of Jesus entering Jerusalem, but rather his entry into the hearts of all who heed the Christ child.

This creative sharing of a hymn tune by text from different liturgical seasons is a wonderful example of how music can highlight theological connections and thematic ties within our church year.

Prayers of the People

In our Parish we pray for Billy Hale, Kyra Madden, Eddie Bennett, Jim Klippel, Jackie Dorsey, Denise Glynn, Cecil Hudson, Jean Estes, Elmer Clark, Nancy Carter, Randy Harrelson, Teri Bouknecht, Kara Russe, Ellen Kappel, David Kirshenblatt, Cayden Mitchell, Bill Alworth, Stephen Morris, Barbara Johnson, Sue Bush, Janice Rusk, Jennifer Polzin, Susan Williams, Pat MacKinnon, Don Downie, Angie Defalco, Ken Packer, Michael, Rachel, Christy, Rosina, Eliot, Patricia, Ben, Scott, and Lynn.

In thanksgiving for those celebrating their birthday this week: George Braman, Carolyn Clarke, Karen Radde, Frankie Cook, Jonathan Frye, John Bray, Karen Shetterley, Janie Reynolds, Jo Benton, Anna Streeter, and Clare Baeckeroot; and for those celebrating anniversaries: Caley & Amelia Ross.

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

BAND OF BELIEVERS

Band of Believers! We practice for the Christmas pageant this morning from 9:45-10:30AM in the Children's Chapel. We accept all folks who have ever played an instrument. All means all! If you want to play with the Band of Believers let me know at vtavernier@aol.com. Vicky and Mark Tavernier

ADULT FORMATION ADVENT PROGRAM | DEC. 3, 10, 17 @ 2-5PM

On December 3, 10, and 17, from 2-5PM, the Adult Spiritual Formation committee will be hosting a Bibliodrama class, much like the one that we hosted during VBS 2022. Matt Rodgers will be returning to lead us as we use collaborative storytelling techniques and improvisation to explore Advent relevant themes found in *Psalm for the Wild-Built* by Becky Chambers. Though reading the book is not required, it is strongly encouraged for any who plan on participating. We will provide more details in the coming weeks for this program.

YOUTH EYC EVENT | 7PM

Tonight at 7PM, our youth program will be hosting a "DnD Night!" If you already enjoy playing DnD, or if you have never played before, you should feel free to join us! Contact Wade (770-624-4837) if you plan on attending.

ATHENS MASTER CHORALE CONCERT | 4PM

The Athens Master Chorale cordially invites you to experience a beautiful compilation of great music from prestigious composers. Come and hear in The Classic Center Atrium this afternoon at 4PM. We passionately devote our energy to prepare and present these magnificent gems of classical music.

THIS WEEK

POINSETTIA DEDICATIONS - Deadline Wednesday

If you wish to give a poinsettia in honor or memory of a loved one, the deadline for ordering will be **Wednesday**, **Dec. 20.** The suggested donation this year is \$15 per dedication. Please place your completed form (see red forms in the narthex) and your check in the offering plate on Sundays, Kendall's office door, or mail it to the parish office. You may also contact the office by phone, 706-546-7553 or email, office@stgregoryathens.org.



BLUE CHRISTMAS | WEDS., DEC. 20

To Those for Whom Christmas Hurts: You are not alone. You are invited to our Blue Christmas Healing Eucharist. St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church invites you to a special holiday service of worship designed for those for whom the holidays might be difficult. This Eucharist will include laying on of hands and anointing for those who wish to receive this particular sacrament. And wherever you are in your faith journey, all are welcome to receive communion. If you have undergone a painful loss, transition, life change, or if life has simply been hard for a while, the church cares about you and invites you to a special time for healing and peace, on Wednesday, December 20 at 6PM.

PAGEANT/BAND OF BELIEVERS PRACTICE | SATURDAY, DEC. 23

We will have one non-Sunday rehearsal in the Sanctuary to practice with The Band of Believers on Saturday December 23 from 2-3PM.

NEXT WEEK

PAGEANT REHEARSAL | SUNDAY, DEC. 24

We will have rehearsal Sunday at 9:15AM. Then please meet in the Children's Chapel at 4PM to get into costume and go through a final rehearsal.

THE 4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT | TIME CHANGE FOR MORNING SERVICE

The 4th Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve fall on the same day this year, so we will combine our 2 morning services into 1 and meet at 10AM for Advent 4.

CHRISTMAS EVE RECEPTIONS

Christmas Eve is nearly here! What could be better after the Christmas eve services than greeting friends and sharing a lovely treat? If you would like to share a plate of your own special Christmas cookies or savories just pop it on the table in the parish hall before either service! The elves will really appreciate your help!

CHRISTMAS DAY

Join us at 10AM on Monday, December 25 for Holy Eucharist & Carols!

ONGOING

HOLY EUCHARIST & HEALING SERVICE | WEDNESDAYS

Please join us on Wednesday evenings at 6PM in the sanctuary for eucharist and prayers for healing.

BLINDSPOT GROUP | THURSDAYS

Our 20s and 30s group meets on the last Thursday of each month at 6:30PM for dinner and a small group study (usually off-site of the church). We also meet at least once a month for game nights, dinner and drinks, movie nights, and more. Newcomers are always welcome! Contact Wade McGlamery, 770-624-4837 for more information.

NOTES

ALTAR FLOWERS

The 2024 flower dedication sign-up sheet is up in the Christian Education building. If you wish to dedicate flowers this year, please sign your name next to the date, and fill out one of the yellow-orange sheets hanging below it and leave in Kendall's office. Suggested donation is \$50/dedication.

THE LITTLE RED WAGON

The Athens Area Emergency Food Bank needs snacks (sweet & salty), cold cereals, and dried pasta! Please help us fill the Little Red Wagon!

CHRISTMAS AT ST. GREGORY'S

Sunday, December 24: 10AM (only) Advent 4 Holy Eucharist *

(no Sunday school; nursery opens at 9:30AM)
5PM Children's Pageant & Holy Eucharist *

Reception

9:30PM Music Prelude *

10PM Festival Eucharist & Choir *

Reception

Monday, December 25: 10AM Holy Eucharist & Carols *

Sunday, December 31: 8AM Holy Eucharist

10:30AM Holy Eucharist *

(no Sunday school; nursery opens at 10AM)

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

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

Wade McGlamery Youth Minister

 $wwmcglamery@gmail.com \mid 770\text{-}624\text{-}4837$

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

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

Anthony Barkdoll Livestream Coordinator anthonybarkdoll@gmail.com

Terri Tillman WebMaster/Social Media *ttillman@gmail.com*

Danielle Vogt Coffee Host danielle 1784@gmail.com

Peachy Green Clean Co-op Sexton

Nursery Attendants: Missy Hamlin, Jude Red Bear, Willem Swindler

Vestry Members: Kate Avinger, John Barrett; John Bray; Stacie Court; Gail Eilers; Anna Hiers; LeeAnne Krause, *Sr. Warden*; Lane Norton; Maggie Reinberger; Mark Richardson, *Jr. Warden*; Shelby Welch; Anna Thornton, *Clerk*; Les House, *Treasurer*

Vestry Person of the Day/Week: Maggie Reinberger mmreinberger@gmail.com

Vestry: Maggie Reinberger

Reader: Michael Castengera (8AM);

George Krause (10:30AM)

EMs: Jane Hudson & Karen Hankins

Crucifers: Maggie Reinberger

Torches:

Flowers: Flower Guild

Altar Guild: Carol Flenniken, Lin Kromhout, Jennifer Caplinger, Mary Ann Caplinger

Ushers: Anthony & Deb Garner Counters: Lois Alworth & Katie Hein

Livestream: Ron Balthazor

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