

ASCENSION MEMORIAL CHURCH

A Parish of the
Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

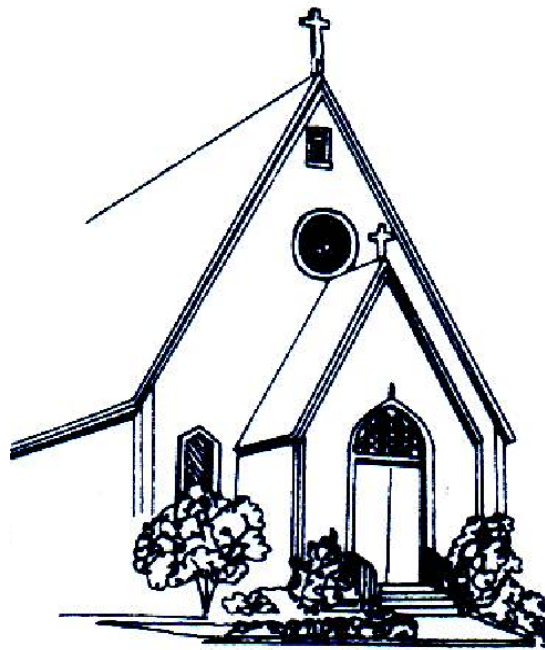
Flourishing ~ Family ~ Community

*To bear witness to the Spirit of God we see in Jesus as an Episcopal community
open to all, centered in worship, Christian education, table fellowship,
care for the environment, and compassion for neighbors local and global.*

December 24, 2023

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Holy Eucharist Rite I at 8:00 AM



P.O. 547, 31 County Street

Ipswich, MA 01938

e-mail: amcipswich@verizon.net

978-356-2560

www.amcipswich.org

Prelude

The Tower Bell

Opening Acclamation

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

The Collect for Purity

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

Trisagion

*Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.*

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Restore us, O God of hosts;
Show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

The Collect

The Lord be with you. *And also with you.*

We beseech thee, Almighty God, to purify our consciences by thy daily visitation, that when thy Son Jesus Christ cometh he may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The First Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

When the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you." But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

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

The Response: Canticle 15 - The Song of Mary Magnificat - Luke 1:46-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel,
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.

*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: Romans 16:25-27

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith-- to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

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

The Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.
Glory be to thee, O Lord.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel

said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise be to thee, O Christ.

The Homily – The Rev'd Bradford D. Clark

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost the Lord, and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets. And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church; I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

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;
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 Alan and Carol our Bishops, and for Brad, our Rector; and for all bishops and other ministers;
For all who serve God in the Church.

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life. In our own parish family, we pray for Ted and Sarah, our wardens; for the members of the Vestry, and for the staff of this parish. We give thanks and praise for those who celebrate birthdays this week: George Gorman, John Moberger, Anna Staubitz, and Patricia Campbell. We pray for those members of the parish serving in the armed forces: Jared Conway, Christopher Damon, and Aidan Tacheron. Today we offer our prayers in our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:

Episcopal Chaplaincy at Harvard, Cambridge, Lutheran Episcopal Chaplaincy at MIT, Cambridge, The Society of St. John the Evangelist, Cambridge, and Hospital Chaplaincies and Healthcare Chaplaincies. Today we offer prayers for the following Provinces of the worldwide Anglican Communion: The Anglican Church of Chile, The Church of England, and Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui. I invite your own thanksgivings now, either silently or aloud.

(pause for thanksgivings)

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation. In our own parish family, we pray for: **IRIS; SKYE; MARION A.; DJ** Asmutis-Silvia; **DANNY** Beaman; **JANICE** Bowers; **KRISTEN** Breen; **JOHANNA C;** **SARAH ANN** Coddling; **MARK** Cotton; **MARY ELLEN** Donahue; **MATTHEW** Doolittle; **TALIA** Duff; **MICHELLE F.;** **WILLIAM** Farefield; **ANDREA** French; **DAVID** French; **BOB** Godbee; **NANCY** Grace; **KATHRYN** Hanauer-Stanton; **JEFF** Hirbour; **CAROL** Horsman Swencki; **KEITH** Humphrey; **CAROL** Kingston; **KRISTEN** Leary; **ROSIE** Lepine; **GLENN** Lohnes; **PHOEBE** Lowell; **MIDGE** Manning; **PATRICK** McCoy; **ELIZABETH** Meffen; **CANDACE** Mesa; **FREDY** Montengro; **PATRICIA** Moody; **MARY O'Connor;** **KAROL** Ostberg; **ANDREW** Parsons; **JOE** Pickul; **DEBORAH** Porter; **MARYANN** Rohrer; **WILLIAM** Rohrer; **LEVI** Shaw; **JANET** Smith; **TONI** Talas; **JAMES** Todak; **SYDNEE** Trimberger; **GEORGE** Walker; **LAURA** Williams; **JULIE** Wilson; **DAVID** Winn; **STEPHEN** Woods; **and BIRTH TO THREE.** I invite your own petitions now, either silently or aloud.

(pause for petitions)

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. We especially remember today all those in whose member the Christmas Flowers adorn the altar. I invite your own remembrances now, either silently or aloud.

(pause for remembrances)

Lord, let your loving-kindness be upon them;
Who put their trust in you.

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart--especially hearts which choose war and self-interest over peace and service to others--that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace as your beloved community, through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

Let us confess our sins against God and one another.
Almighty God, Source of all that is, Giver of every good gift: we confess that we have failed to honor you in the great diversity of the human family. We have desired to live in freedom, while building walls between ourselves and others. Forgive us, Holy God. Give us eyes to see you as you are revealed in all people. Strengthen us for the work of reconciliation rooted in love. Restore us in your image, to be beloved community, united in our diversity, even as you are one with Christ and the Spirit, Holy and undivided Trinity, now and for ever. Amen.

The Absolution

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.***

The Peace

The Peace of the Lord be always with you. *And also with you.*

Announcements

The Offertory

The Doxology

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. *And with thy spirit.*
Lift up your hearts. *We lift them up unto the Lord.*
Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.
It is meet and right so to do.

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God. Because thou didst send thy beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing. Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying,

*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts:
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High.
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

All glory be to thee, O Lord our God, for that thou didst create heaven and earth, and didst make us in thine own image; and, of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to take our nature upon him, and to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption. He made there a full and perfect sacrifice for the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again. For in the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread; and when he had given thanks to thee, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Likewise, after supper, he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink this, all of you; for this is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me." Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, we thy people do celebrate and make, with these thy holy gifts which we now offer unto thee, the memorial thy Son hath commanded us to make; having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; and looking for his coming again with power and great glory. And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us, and, with thy Word and Holy Spirit, to bless and sanctify these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the Body and Blood of thy dearly-beloved Son Jesus Christ.

And we earnestly desire thy fatherly goodness to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, whereby we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies. Grant, we beseech thee, that all who partake of this Holy Communion may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, and be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction; and also that we and all thy whole Church may be made one body with him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord; By whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost all honor and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. **Amen.**

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

Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, ***have mercy upon us.***
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, ***have mercy upon us.***
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, ***grant us thy peace.***

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

The Ministration of Communion

As was the practice of Jesus, Ascension Church observes the practice of open table fellowship. Wherever you are in your spiritual journey, you have a place at the table with Christ. If you desire not to receive the Sacraments, but wish to receive a blessing, please come forward to the communion rail and cross your arms over your chest. The celebrant will pause and share a blessing with you.

*Please let it be known to the celebrant at the communion rail
if you wish to receive a blessed gluten-free wafer.*

Post-Communion Prayer

Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs, through hope, of thy everlasting kingdom. And we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

The Blessing

Life is short, and we do not have too much time to gladden the hearts of those who walk the way with us; so be swift to love, make haste to be kind, and may the Blessing of the One who created you, redeemed you, and who walks always with you, be with you and all those you love, this day and always. *Amen.*

The Dismissal

Go forth now into the world in peace to love and serve God and Neighbor.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

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Assisting at this morning's liturgy:

Altar Guild: Joan Williams

Lector/Acolyte: John Walker

Usher/ Teller: Jody Huffcut

Hospitality: Joan Williams

Audio/Visual Technician: Lucas Callahan

Ascension Memorial Church is grateful to all the people who participate in its many active groups and ministries and who serve on the various committees. Below is a complete listing of members of the Committees, Ministries, and Groups, as well as the Staff and Vestry of Ascension. If you would like to know more about Ascension Memorial Church's committees, ministries, and groups, please contact the parish office at **978-356-2560** or **amcipswich@verizon.net** and we will provide you with the contact information for our leadership team. You may also learn more about our ministries through Realm on our website at **amcipswich.org**.

THE STAFF

The Rev'd Bradford D. Clark, *Rector*

Dr. Frank Corbin, *Director of Music and Parish Business Administrator*

Chase Delano, *Coordinator of Communications, Community Engagement, and Special Projects & Programming*

Geraldine Ortez, *Bulletin Volunteer*

THE VESTRY

Ted Flaherty, *Senior Warden* ~ Sarah Churchill, *Junior Warden*

Kathy Dallos, *Treasurer* ~ Kristin Hertzog, *Clerk*

Lucy Jepsen, *Youth Representative*

Charlie Quimby, *Youth Representative*

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Paula Jones

Kathy Pischke-Winn

Class of 2024

Deborah Couture

Vicki Hughes

Kate Turner

Class of 2025

Jennifer Clark

Dawn Edwards

Eric Gedstad

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Kathy Dallos

Karen Esperson

Glenn Roundy

Beth Smith

ex officio:

Brad Clark

Frank Corbin

Ted Flaherty

Stewardship

Brad Clark

Joel Barrett

Warren Jaferian

Cindy Cedrone

Paula Jones

Beth Smith

Steve Suomi

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Ralph Johnson

Sam Otis

Tom Parkins

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Rosemary Attridge

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Charlie Quimby

Steve Suomi

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Charlie Quimby

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Lucy Jepsen

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Kristin Hertzog
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Gail Lull
Jennifer Reed
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Bob Brown
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Sarah Churchill

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Erica Fuller
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Eric Gedstad, Coordinator

Paul Damon
Karen Esperson
Ted Flaherty
Glenn Gibbs
Mark Godin

Hospitality - Coffee Hour
Katie Finch & Rosemary Attridge

Co-Chairs

Richard Attridge
Tyler Berube
Marge & Bob Brown
Deborah Couture
Kathy Dallos
Karen Esperson
Jody Huffcut
Ralph Johnson
Paula Jones &
Robert Spurrier
Debbie Moore
Suzanne Nolan
Alura & R.J. Ollio
Joan Williams
David Winn &
Kathy Pischke-Winn
The Vestry

Becoming Beloved

Community

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Rev. Brad Clark
Debbie Moore
Jane Carolan

Bible Study

Carol Kingston, Chair

Education for Ministry

Vicki Hughes, Chair

Book Group

Brad Clark, Chair

Women's Group

Beth Smith, Chair

Men's Group

Brad Clark, Chair

Rick Attridge
Eric Gedstad
Glenn Gibbs
Mark Godin
George Gorman
Charlie Moore
Bryan Townsend
Steve Wilson

Worship

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Lucas Callahan
Frank Corbin
Dawn Edwards
Ted Flaherty
Caroline Jepsen
Carol Kingston
Paul Philpy
Robert Spurrier

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**Jennifer Clark,
Chair**

Jennifer Clark, Chair
Dan Alexson
Doug Brendel
Linda Brown
Marge Brown
Heather Campbell
Christine Day
Ted Flaherty
Glenn Gibbs
Laura Gresh
Ed Rauscher
Lillian Reilly

Judith Grant Scholarships

Brad Clark
Trish Everitt
Lucy Martineau
John Moberger

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Jennifer Clark
Karen Esperson
Suzanne Nolan

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Doug Brendel
Linda Brown
Brad Clark
Jennifer Clark
Jim Di Napoli
Karen Esperson
Jim Field
Paula Jones
Carol Kingston
Deborah Lindahl
John Moberger
Anne O'Mara
Dottie Phillips
Paul Philpy
Joanne Ventola
John Walker

Music
Frank Corbin, Chair
Doug Brendel
Brad Clark
Trish Everitt
Sonja Dahlgren Pryor
Kate Turner
Jane Wolff

The Choir
Frank Corbin,
Lucas Callahan
Lori Coppen
Christine Day
Trish Everitt
Marisa Exelby
Roxy Giddings
Ralph Johnson
Penny Jones
Carol Kingston
Hugh McCall
John Moberger
R. J. Ollio
Tom Parkins
Sherrill Pierce
Thomas Schmidt
Marion Sokolov
Judith Thurston
Tanya Tupper

Altar Guild 8:00
Joanne Ventola, Chair
Jody Huffcut
Paula Jones
Dottie Phillips
Joan Williams

Acolytes/Lectors 8:00
Richard Ostberg
Edward Rauscher
Michael Smith
Robert Spurrier
John Walker

Ushers 8:00
Karen Esperson
Margot Hayden
Jody Huffcut
Rick Ostberg
Mike Smith
Steve Ventola

Tellers 8:00
Karen Esperson
Rick Ostberg
Dottie Phillips
Stephen Ventola
Joan Williams

Altar Guild 10:15
Joanne Ventola, Chair
Marge Brown
Phyllis Greene
Linda Messer
Debbie Moore

Acolytes 10:15
Tyler Berube
Jane Carolan
Charlie Jepsen
Caroline Jepsen
Lucy Jepsen
Ralph Johnson
John Moberger
Paul Philpy
Charlie Quimby

Lectors 10:15
Tyler Berube
Doug Brendel
Jane Carolan
Kathy Dallos
Dawn Edwards
Ted Flaherty
Eric Gedstad
Glenn Gibbs
Vicki Hughes
Ralph Johnson
John Moberger
Jack O'Mara
Paul Philpy

Ushers 10:15
Joel Barrett
Jane Carolan
Jennifer & Tim Clark
Ted Flaherty
Ralph Johnson
Glenn Roundy
Kate Turner

Tellers 10:15
Donald Cheney
Jennifer Clark
Ted Flaherty
Ralph Johnson
Kate Turner