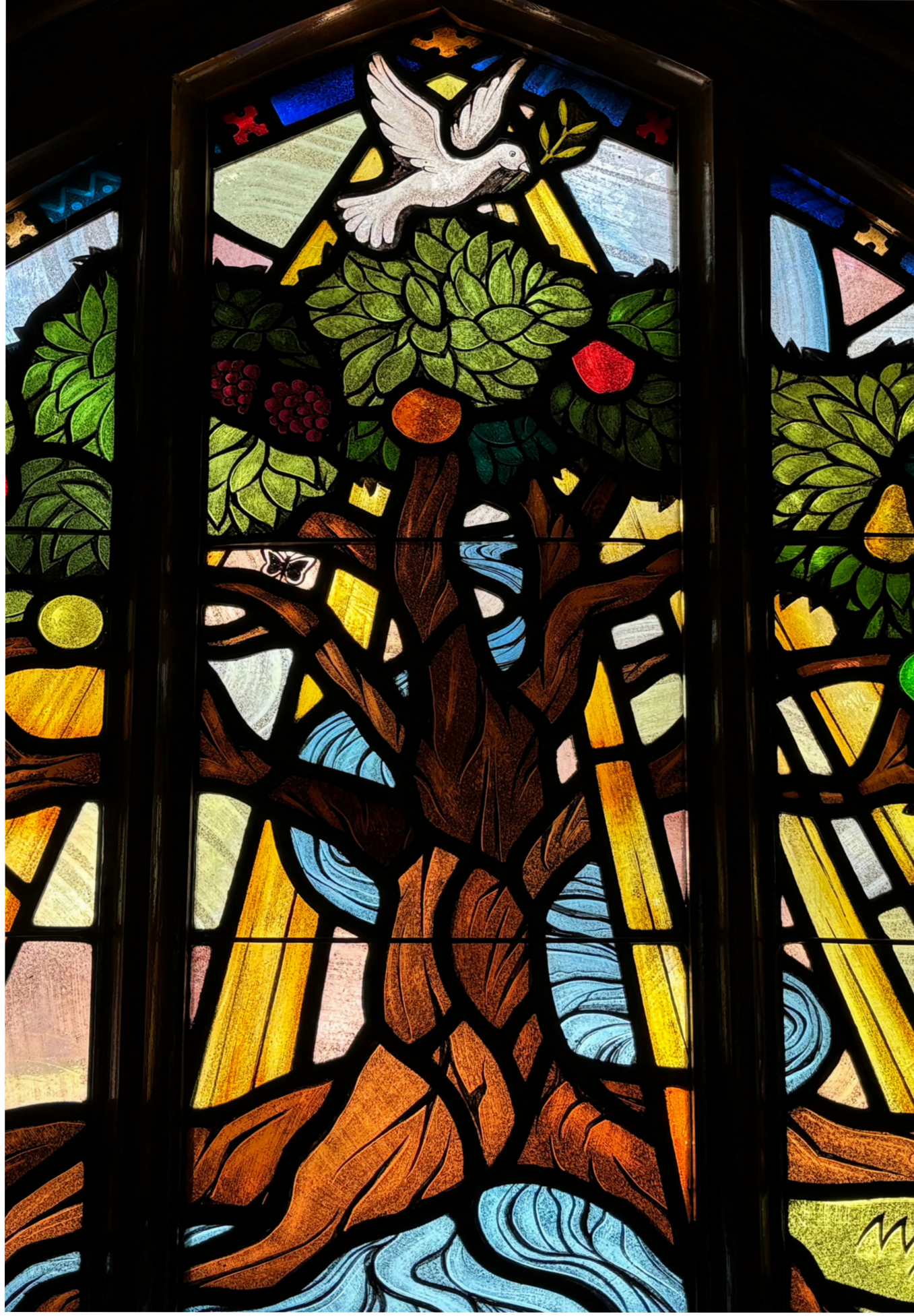


6 PM CHRISTMAS EVE: A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS



EPISCOPAL CHURCH of the
HEAVENLY REST
God's Love. For All.

A Service of Lessons and Carols
Wednesday, December 24th, 2025
6:00 in the evening

A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

PRELUDE

Pastorale from The Christmas Concerto
Noël, Grand Jeu et Duo

Archangelo Corelli (1653-1713)
Louis-Claude Daquin (1694-1772)

CAROL IN PROCESSION *Once in royal David's city*

Hymn 102
Tune: *Irby*

THE BIDDING PRAYER

Beloved in Christ, on this Christmas Eve, let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the Angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this holy Child; and let us make this Church glad with our carols of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for the mission and unity of the Church for which he died, and especially in this country and within this city of Abilene.

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one. These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us:

Officiant and People

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.

Officiant

The Almighty God bless us with his grace; Christ give us the joys of everlasting life; and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all. **Amen.**

THE FIRST LESSON

Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19

God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.

Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate." The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CAROL *Creator of the stars of night*

Hymn 60, stanzas 1-3
Tune: *Conditor alme siderum*

THE SECOND LESSON

Genesis 22:15-18

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore. And your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CAROL *Of the Father's love begotten*

Hymn 82, stanzas 1-2
Tune: *Divinum mysterium*

THE THIRD LESSON

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE FOURTH LESSON

Isaiah 11:1-3a, 4a, 6-9

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. With righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CAROL *Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming*

Hymn 81, stanzas 1-2
Tune: *Es ist ein Ros*

THE FIFTH LESSON

Luke 1:26-35, 38

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name 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 father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" And 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 called holy, the Son of God. And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CAROL *The angel Gabriel from heaven came*

Hymn 265
Tune: *Gabriel's Message*

THE SIXTH LESSON

Luke 2:1-7

Read in Swahili

Mtakatifu Luka anasimulia kuzaliwa kwa Yesu.

Siku zile amri ilitoka kwa Kaisari Augusto ya kwamba iandikwe orodha ya majina ya watu wote wa ulimwengu. Watu wote wakaenda kuandikwa, kila mtu mjini kwao. Yusufu naye aliondoka Galilaya, toka mji wa Nazareti, akapanda kwenda Yudea mpaka katika mji wa Daudi, uitwao Bethlehemu, kwa kuwa yeye ni wa ukoo na jamaa ya Daudi; ili aandikwe pamoja na Mariamu mkewe, ambaye amemposa, naye ana mimba. Ikawa, katika kukaa huko, siku zake za kuzaa zikatimia, akamzaa mwanawe, kifungua mimba, akamvika nguo za kitoto, akamlaza katika hori ya kulia ng'ombe, kwa sababu hawakupata nafasi katika nyumba ya wageni.

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CAROL *O little town of Bethlehem*

Hymn 79, stanzas 1-3
Tune: *St. Louis*

THE SEVENTH LESSON

Luke 2:8-16

The shepherds go to the manger.

And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CAROL *While shepherds watched their flocks*

Hymn 94
Tune: *Winchester Old*

THE EIGHTH LESSON

Matthew 2:1-12

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'" Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

OFFERING

At Heavenly Rest, we believe that we are called to respond to God's grace and generosity by giving of our time, talent, and treasure. The work of this church community is made possible by the financial contributions of those who worship here and participate in the life of this place. There are several ways to make a financial gift to Heavenly Rest: you may place cash or a check in the alms basin as it goes by; use the "Give" tab in the ChurchCenter App; or visit our website by using the QR code. Merry Christmas!

Scan for online giving.
Thank you for your generosity!



During the carol, an offering will be collected.

OFFERTORY CAROL *In the bleak mid-winter*

Hymn 112
Tune: Cranham

THE NINTH LESSON

John 1:1-14

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. 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. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CAROL *O come, all ye faithful*

Hymn 83, verses 1-3, 6
Tune: *Adeste fideles*

THE COLLECT FOR CHRISTMASTIDE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

May Christ, who by his Incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with his joy and peace; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

1 Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King! Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled! Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic hosts proclaim Christ is born in Bethlehem! Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!

3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness! Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings. Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die, born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth. Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!

POSTLUDE *Postlude on MENDELSSOHN*

David Willcocks (1919-2015)

ABOUT THE COVER IMAGE

The Tree of Life is one of the most resonant images in Scripture. Interestingly, it appears at both the very beginning and very end of the Bible. The Book of Genesis indicates that the Tree of Life was planted in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:22-24), while the Book of Revelation describes the tree of life planted in the New Jerusalem: “On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:2). The image of the Tree of Life points to God as the source of healing and wholeness, the one who sustains our life and the life of the world.

One of the more interesting Christmas carols in the literature is a text called “Jesus Christ the Apple Tree” written by the Calvinist minister Richard Hutchins in the 18th century. The text describes the poet’s longing for the Tree of Life and all its benefits, ultimately concluding that it is Jesus who is the source of that healing and wholeness. It might seem to be an unusual text for a Christmas carol, until one considers the ways the story of the Nativity and the story of the Fall are intertwined. Medieval theology posited that sin entered into the world when Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; it stands to reason that sin will be redeemed through another tree, the Tree of Life. One of the most beautiful settings of this text is by the 20th century English composer Elizabeth Poston. Our choir will sing Poston’s setting of this text at the IOPM service on Christmas Eve.

In the narthex (6th Street entrance) of Heavenly Rest, there is a window above the red doors depicting the Tree of Life. Situated as it is alongside a river, the image seems to refer primarily to the Tree of Life in Revelation. If you look closely at the image, you will see a variety of fruits, the most obvious of which are a pear and a bunch of bananas. The window was given in memory of Austin Denny, beloved son, brother and uncle who died in 2011, as well as Gerri and Bruce Denny, who were longtime members and leaders in this parish.

In a world that can often feel chaotic and uncertain, the image of the Tree of Life reminds us that we are rooted in a faith that sustains us through all the challenges of life. May this reminder comfort us this Christmas, and throughout the coming year.

*The tree of life my soul hath seen, laden with fruit, and always green:
The trees of nature fruitless be compared with Christ the apple tree.*

MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

Officiant - The Rev. David F. Romanik, *Rector*

Readers - Kimberly Brumley, Terry Young, Brandon Martin, Summer Casey, The Rev. Karen Boyd, Bikole Mulanda, The Rev. Joe Biles, The Rev. Ashley Powers, The Rev. David F. Romanik

Organist - Thomas Pavlechko

Acolytes - Emily Brumley, Bristol Musick

Sound - Yvonne Batts



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CLERGY AND STAFF

The Reverend David F. Romanik, <i>Rector</i>	Carol Ann Weston, <i>Director of Children & Family Ministries</i>
The Reverend Ashley Powers, <i>Associate Rector</i>	Thomas Pavlechko, <i>Organist and Director of Music</i>
The Reverend Amanda Watson, <i>Assistant Rector for Community Life</i>	Elizabeth Knauer, <i>Music Assistant, Choristers</i>
The Reverend Karen Boyd, <i>Assisting Priest</i>	Laura Dickson, <i>Music Assistant, Children's Choir</i>
The Reverend Dr. Doug Thomas, <i>Priest in Residence</i>	Jen Rogers, <i>Director of Communications and Stewardship</i>
The Reverend Dr. Russell Dickerson, <i>Deacon</i>	Lydia Hurt, <i>Parish Manager</i>
The Reverend Joe Biles, <i>Deacon and Pastoral Assistant</i>	Brenda Fisher, <i>Parish Accountant</i>
Bikole Mulanda, <i>Swahili Minister</i>	Robert Becerra, <i>Sexton</i>
Luke Teten, <i>Verger</i>	Dorothy Guerra, <i>Housekeeper</i>
	Anne Jones, <i>Nursery Manager</i>

VESTRY AND APPOINTED OFFICERS

Kate Haney, *Senior Warden*; Harry Hurt, *Junior Warden*; Sharon Lawler, *Secretary*; David Christianson, Michael Christie, Dru Hall, Diane Stearns, Kimberly Brumley, Jay Hardaway, Norene Mansell, John Nichols, Mary Reyes, Elizabeth Niblo Wallace, *Chancellor*; and Sam Cutbirth, *Treasurer*