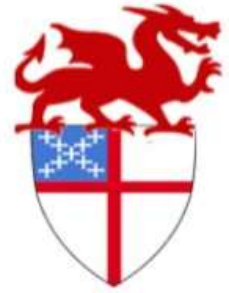


# THE SHIELD

January – February 2021



## THE MINISTER'S MESSAGE

I don't know about you, but I'm glad to see the end of 2020! Of course, all that has happened isn't really the fault of the year, but I'm sure we will all remember 2020 as having been a difficult time – perhaps one of the worst most of us have ever experienced.

And I hope we won't dwell on the challenges and worries of 2020. We must keep the past in our hearts and minds, not to relive the pain or scratch open old wounds, but rather so that we learn from the experience and use it to remind us that – through all we endured – God was with us, upholding and loving us. But we exist in the present, with our eyes on the future, and that is how God expects us to live.

At St George's, we continue to worship on Sundays with a tiny congregation of priest, assistant, organist, reader, and cameraman. Sometimes, a member of the altar guild is also present. But I am amazed and delighted to tell you that more than a hundred people view our service on [Facebook](#) each week, and the number keeps growing (and we hope to soon also be on YouTube), which means we are ministering to a much larger "congregation" than we could fit into our spacious building during this pandemic. God loves St George's, and God is blessing us with a means and the desire to bring the Gospel of love and peace to a wide community.

People ask me how long we will have to continue this way. The simple answer is, "until the Bishop tells us it is safe to gather indoors again." He is God's servant, and his primary concern is the health and well-being of all the souls entrusted to his care.

Sometimes, someone will say that such-and-such church is still (or again) worshipping indoors, so why can't we? There are multiple answers to that question. For one of them, see above – we are an "episcopal" church, which means we are under the oversight of a bishop (*episcopos* in Greek), and we owe him or her our obedience. Another reason is that we care deeply about the health, not just of our members, but also of their extended families and the wider community around us. To gather just because we want to or feel we need to, without regard for the impact it could have on countless others, would be a grave sin.

God willing, this pandemic will end soon, but right now, it looks like it rises and falls almost exactly in rhythm with holidays and times when people gather in numbers. We can't hide in our houses for months and years, but we owe it to ourselves and our families to exercise the greatest possible care and caution when we have to go outside, and not to do so unnecessarily.

This is how Christians behave. We put others' needs in the forefront. We keep the Great Commandment to love God and our neighbors. We pray for the sick, the dead, and those caring for them, as well as those working to find a cure and a vaccine.

And that leads me to the last thought today: when the vaccine is available, I sincerely believe it is our duty – as children of God and fellow members of the community – to get the shots unless our health situation prevents us from doing so. I recognize that there may be a risk in

that and hesitation to do so, but the power of God's love, not to mention the commandment to love our neighbor, tell me that we should accept the risk for the greater good.

I will close with a prayer from our Book of Common Prayer.

O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Savior, the Prince of Peace:  
Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions;  
take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatever else may hinder us  
from godly union and concord;  
that – as there is but one Body and one Spirit, one hope of our calling,  
one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all –  
so we may be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace,  
of faith, hope and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify you;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. [Prayer for the Unity of the Church, BCP page 818]

May God bless and keep us all!

Father Tom +

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## A Meditation of the Magi

Do you know what we gave him – that little boy in Bethlehem?

Go on, have a guess!

A rattle? A toy? A teddy bear?

No, nothing like that!

In fact, nothing you'd associate with a child at all,  
even if he was destined to be a king.

Gold, that's what I brought!

And my companions?

Wait for it!

Frankincense and myrrh!

Yes, I thought you'd be surprised,

for, to tell the truth, we're pretty amazed ourselves looking back,  
unable to imagine what on earth possessed us  
to choose such exotic and unusual gifts.

It wasn't so much that they were costly, though they were, of course –  
to a family like his they were riches beyond their dreams.

But we could more than afford it –

little more than small change to men of our means.

No, it wasn't the price that troubled us afterwards, but the associations,  
the possible meaning his parents might have read into our presents when we'd gone.

Not the gold, there was no problem there –

a gift fit for a king and designed to say as much, of course.

But frankincense?

Well, the main use his people have for that, as we learned later,

is to sweeten their sacrifices, to pour out on to their burnt offerings  
so that the fragrance might be pleasing to their God.

Hardly the most appropriate gift for a baby.



But compared with myrrh!  
Don't tell me you don't know?  
It was a drug used to soothe pain,  
    either for that, or as a spice for embalming – more fitting for a funeral than a birth,  
    having more to do with suffering and death than celebration!  
So what were we thinking of?  
What possible significance could gifts like those have for a little child?  
Frankly, I have no idea.  
Yet at the time the choice seemed as obvious to us as following the star,  
    as though each were all part of some greater purpose,  
    which would one day become clear to all.  
Were we right?  
Well, after all I've said, I rather hope not,  
    for if this king was born to die,  
    to be offered in sacrifice rather than enthroned in splendor,  
    then his must be an unusual kingdom,  
    very different from most we come across –  
    **in fact, you might almost say, not a kingdom of this world at all!**

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## PRAYER AS I PUT ON MY MASK

Creator God, as I prepare to go into the world,  
    help me to see the sacrament in the wearing of this cloth –  
    let it be *an outward sign of an inward grace* –  
    a tangible and visible way  
    of living love for my neighbors as I love myself.



Christ Redeemer, since my lips will be covered, uncover my heart,  
    that people would see my smile in the crinkles around my eyes.  
Since my voice may be muffled, help me to speak clearly, not only with my words ,  
    but with my actions.

Holy Spirit, As the elastic touches my ears, remind me to listen carefully –  
    and full of care – to all those I meet.

May this simple piece of cloth be shield and banner,  
    and each breath that it holds be filled with your love.

In your Name and in that love, I pray. Amen

– Rev. Dr. Richard Bott, Moderator of the United Church of Canada

PLEASE NOTE: If you would prefer to receive this newsletter by email,  
    rather than postal mail, please call or email the office.

## THE WOMEN OF ST GEORGE'S

Because of the pandemic (and restaurants being closed) we had to cancel our annual Christmas gathering. Hopefully we will be able to gather this spring.

## MOUNT SAVAGE FOOD PANTRY

The Pantry was able to deliver gift cards for Christmas on an individual basis. Unfortunately the Hall at the Methodist Church doesn't have heat, so we have been unable spend any amount of time there to prepare boxes of food for distribution. Please remember to have anyone in need contact any of the local churches, and that information will be forwarded to the Director of the pantry. We hope to be "back in business" when the weather improves.

## FROM THE JUNIOR WARDEN

Thanks to everyone who took part in decorating St. George's for the Christmas Season! The church was beautiful and inspiring, despite the pandemic restrictions.

## LITURGICAL CALENDAR

January 3	Feast of the Epiphany ( <i>transferred from January 6</i> )
January 10	First Sunday After the Epiphany - The Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ
January 17	Second Sunday After the Epiphany
January 24	Third Sunday After the Epiphany
January 31	Fourth Sunday After the Epiphany
February 7	Fifth Sunday After the Epiphany
February 14	Last Sunday After the Epiphany – The Transfiguration of Christ
February 17	Ash Wednesday – <i>see note below</i>
February 21	First Sunday in Lent
February 28	Second Sunday in Lent



**At this time it appears that we will not be able to hold a public service on Ash Wednesday.**

**Therefore – weather permitting – Father Tom will distribute "ashes to go" from 11:00 AM until 1:00 PM on February 17.**

**Please enter via the upper entrance of the parking lot on the cemetery side of the church, and remain in your vehicle to receive the ashes.**

## FATHER TOM'S BIBLE STUDY ❖ THE EPIPHANY



Ironically, given all that happened this year on January 6th, that day has long been a holy day in our Church – **the Feast of the Epiphany**.

**Epiphany** means *appearance, manifestation, revelation*. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, it is known as **Theophany**, meaning *God speaks*. By either name, it celebrates the revelation of God **incarnate**—*made flesh, become a human being*—as Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of God.

In Western Christianity, Epiphany commemorates the visit of the **Magi** (Wise Men) to the Christ Child – Jesus' physical manifestation to the **Gentiles** (non-Jews). In fact, it is called **Three Kings' Day** in some European countries, while in others, it is known as **Little Christmas**.

In the Church of England, the feast of the Epiphany begins the liturgical season called **Epiphanytide**. And the evening of January 5th is celebrated as **Twelfth Night** – the end of the Twelve Days of Christmas. The Monday after Epiphany is known as **Plough Monday**—the traditional start of the agricultural year, when the fields were plowed to make them ready for the planting of seeds after the last frost.

There are always between five and nine Sundays After the Epiphany, depending on the date of Easter and working backward to Ash Wednesday. There are quite a few significant events in Jesus' life commemorated on the Sundays of the season of Epiphany. They begin with the **First Sunday After the Epiphany**, when we celebrate the **Baptism of Jesus**. This event, described in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry of preaching the Kingdom of God. It is followed immediately by his forty days spent in the desert, where he contends with temptations.

After his baptism, Jesus calls disciples, beginning with Andrew (one of the disciples of John the Baptist) and his brother, Simon Peter, then Philip and Nathaniel. Our Lord invites them to "come and see," and to travel with him as he goes from village to town, healing, working miracles, and proclaiming the Kingdom of God. In some years, we also hear about Jesus' first miracle at the wedding feast in Cana, where he turned water into wine.

Regardless of the number of Sundays, the season always ends with an event that happened shortly before the events of Holy Week – the **Transfiguration of Jesus**, when Peter, James and John accompanied him to a mountaintop where Moses and Elijah appeared with him.

The whole Epiphany season, and in fact Jesus' public ministry, are enclosed in the "bookends" of two theophanies, in which the voice of God speaks much the same words. As Jesus comes up out of the River Jordan after being baptized by John, he hears God say, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." At the Transfiguration, the disciples hear God say, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

We rarely have all nine Sundays After the Epiphany, so I will close with the Collect for the 8th Sunday – words that I find especially helpful this year:

Most loving God, whose will it is for us to give thanks for all things,  
to fear nothing but the loss of you,  
and to cast all our care on you who care for us:

Preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties,

that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested to us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

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## Information from Our Parish Nurse

As the COVID-19 vaccine becomes available to the general public, please contact and discuss with your primary care provider whether you should take the vaccine. Remember, this vaccine works much the same as a regular flu shot. The vaccine is free to everyone, regardless of insurance (or none).

Even after receiving the vaccine, we must continue following the COVID precautions.

- Masks that cover both the mouth and the nose, worn properly
- Handwashing at least 20-30 seconds, scrubbing all surfaces
- Social distancing when in public
- Continue limiting social gatherings to household members

It has been noted in studies that those who are smokers suffer from a wider range of symptoms and a much longer recovery time.

And, if you still haven't done so, be sure to also get your flu shot.

As the parish nurse I urge everyone of the congregation to call and keep in touch with others.

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## YOU ARE MY CHILD, WITH YOU I AM WELL PLEASED – REACHING THOSE WHO LONG TO BE LOVED

By Timothy G. Warren ✕ January 10, 2015

In the gospel reading for the First Sunday After the Epiphany, God says to Jesus, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” Mark’s account of the baptism of Jesus marks the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry, but first our Lord must go through baptism and face 40 days of temptation in the wilderness. Jesus starts his ministry and ultimate journey to Calvary with the reassuring words of his Heavenly Father ringing in his ears.

What encouraging words these are: “With you I am well pleased.” When spoken to a child by his or her parents, these words can evoke a deep sense of assuredness in one’s self worth. Sadly, many children and teens never receive words of encouragement from their parents or caregivers. They only know what it feels like to be reminded of their failures or ridiculed for their shortcomings. Unfortunately, neglected and abused children often repeat the same behavior when they become parents.

“You are my son, the Beloved.” These six simple words from the gospel message speak volumes. To be called someone’s beloved child creates a deep, unshakable sense of belonging and acceptance. But to those who have never experienced the enduring love of a parent, these

words can bring up a sense of deep longing and emptiness. Such folks can only barely imagine what it must be like to be loved by a father or mother, let alone comprehend what it means to have a parent say, “With you I am well pleased.”

Oh, to live with the knowledge that someone is well pleased with you just because of who you are! That’s the basis of God’s grace to us—God’s unmerited favor. We don’t earn it; we can only accept it. God’s grace is given to us at birth and sealed by the Holy Spirit at baptism. Without God’s grace, we have no hope; but once this grace is realized in our lives, we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.



Sadly, many children today struggle through life without ever knowing the love of a parent, often with tragic results. According to research, fatherless boys face an extra challenge in life. Young men who grow up in homes without fathers are twice as likely to end up in jail as those who come from traditional two-parent families. Boys whose fathers were absent from the household had double the odds of being incarcerated. Children from fatherless homes represent well over half of youth suicides, youth with behavioral disorders, high-school dropouts and juvenile detainees. This is cause for concern when one considers the inordinate percentage of poor homes where

children are growing up without a father figure. Who is there to call them “beloved,” and tell them that someone is pleased with them?

But just because a child grows up in a fatherless home doesn’t mean he or she is doomed to a life of despair or failure. Far from it—it is safe to say that most children raised in loving single-parent homes headed by a mother or mother figure grow up to lead successful and productive lives. Never underestimate the importance of a mother’s love. And many uncles, brothers, family friends, teachers and mentors act as father figures in children’s lives in the absence of their biological fathers.

The church’s calling is to help support single-parent families—and all families for that matter—and ensure they don’t have to raise these young people alone. Parental love isn’t dependent upon biology, but comes from the love that God has freely bestowed upon us. But where are the father figures? Where are the big brothers, uncles, teachers, and neighbors—the men who can take a stand in a child’s life and be a dad who can help raise the child? Who is around to say, “You are my beloved son; with you I am well pleased”?

In our Baptismal Covenant, we promise to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves. One way we do this is by reaching out to the unloved, the hard to love, and the rejected in our midst and loving them, emulating our Heavenly Father’s love for us who are called by His name. It doesn’t matter if we’re related or not, the only requirement is that we love them as God loves us.

You see, all of us were once fatherless in a manner of speaking, before we entered into covenant with God through the waters of baptism. If we were destined to be adopted as God’s own children through Christ, then are we not also called to be fathers and mothers to those

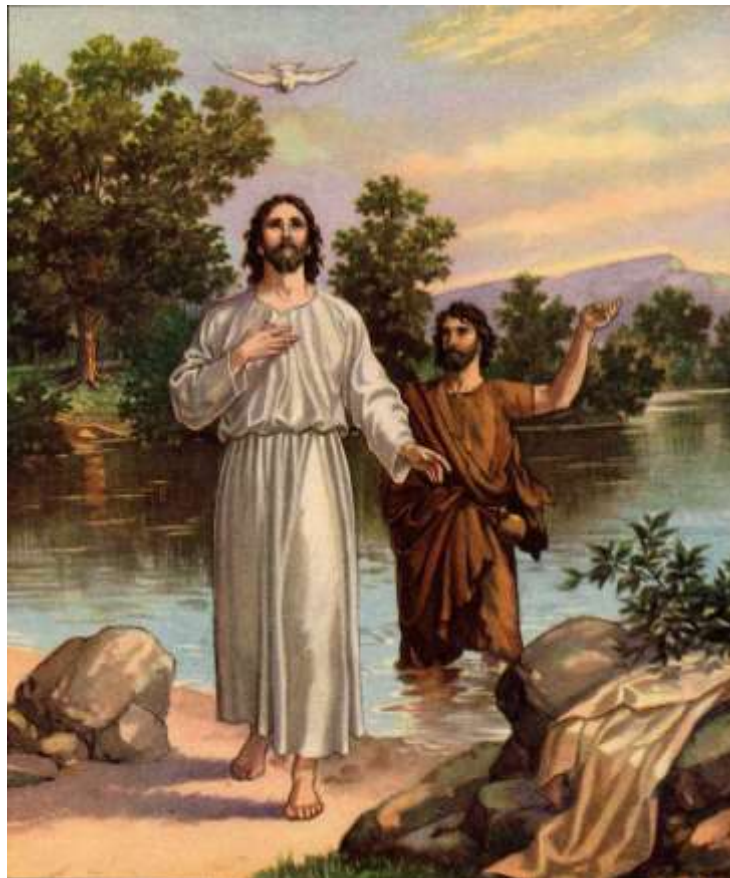
who have none? Are we not loved by our Heavenly Father so that we can in turn love one another? For what is love if it is not freely received and shared with those around us?

We live in a world of fatherless children, sons and daughters who have been rejected by their parents because of sexual orientation, teen pregnancy, disability, substance abuse or just because of the parents' own selfish narcissistic interests. These young people often lead very solitary lives and are easy prey for society's predators. When faced with life's temptations, they often make wrong choices because there is no one there to guide them. If we truly take our Baptismal Covenant seriously, we must do all we can to protect those least able to protect themselves and help them find their inheritance awaiting them in God's family, our family.

Every time we who are baptized into the Body of Christ approach the Eucharistic table, we are reminded of God's love for us. It is around the holy table, gathered with our brothers and sisters in Christ, that our Heavenly Father graciously accepts us as living members of his own Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and feeds us with spiritual food in the Blessed Sacrament.

In the Sacrament of Baptism, we welcome new believers into the family we call the Body of Christ. As they pass through the waters of baptism, we are asked to do all in our power to support them in their life in Christ. All of us have an important role to play in their spiritual development. It is no small thing what we do around the baptismal font, since all of us take solemn vows for which God will hold us accountable.

God is saying to us, "You are my beloved sons and daughters; with you I am well pleased." Embrace each other in the love God has freely given us, and reach out to those who long to be loved. Go and spread the good news that the Kingdom of God has come near!





# Saint George's Prayer List

Joshua Abbot  
Ruth Beal  
Porter Beard  
Harold Bishop Jr  
John Bridges  
Rusty Bridges  
Shirley Bridges  
Bud Bridges  
Dennis Carder  
Emily Carnell  
Jerome Cassidy  
Ellen Jenkins Davis  
Dawn Downey  
Cindy Emmerick  
Robert Flynn  
Clarence Finzel  
Rita Frankenberg  
George Frankenberg Jr.  
Charles Glass  
Darrell & Mary Sue Glass  
Evelyn Hausrath  
Angela Hill  
Harvey Hogamier  
Susan Jones  
Tammy Kern  
Tyler Kisamore  
Grace Lepley  
Carol McCleaf  
Diana Michael  
Carolyn Monahan  
Frank Morgan  
Janet Reynard  
Henry Snyder  
Sandra Swanger  
Janie Taccino  
Grayson Turano  
John J. Watts, Sr  
Grayson Turano



## Prayer for the Sick

O God of heavenly powers, by the might of your command you drive away from our bodies all sickness and all infirmity: Be present in your goodness with your servants for whom we pray, that their weakness may be banished and their strength restored; and that, their health being renewed, they may bless your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Prayer for Those Who Care for the Sick

Sanctify, O Lord, those whom you have called to the study and practice of the arts of healing, and to the prevention of disease and pain. Strengthen them by your life-giving Spirit, that by their ministries the health of the community may be promoted and your creation glorified; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

### January

#### *Birthdays*

Peggy Hess  
Sarah Johnson  
McKenzie Glass  
Kay Wade  
Kenneth Preston, Jr.  
Holly Warne  
Carol Harr  
Kristi Downey  
Bob Kreiger  
Joseph Neder  
Macy (Beal) Eichhammer  
Carla Kaufman  
Alice Stevens  
Lauren Elizabeth Kreiger-Soles  
Lydia Martin  
Steven Natolly  
Rick Neder  
Krista Imes Sweitzer  
Lauren Krieger  
Rebecca Stevenson  
Alice Neder  
Denis Brion  
Taylor Logue  
David Festerman

#### *Anniversaries*

Dee & Elliott Stallings  
Sarah & Rob Johnson  
Harold & Virginia Bishop  
Jim & Lydia Martin

### February

#### *Birthdays*

Judy Hudson  
Abigail Hall  
Marie Ellis  
Rebecca Short  
Beth Durst  
J.D. Durst  
Becky Weatherholt  
Taylor Downey  
Drake Downey  
Virginia Bishop  
Ethan Tummy  
Kenneth Preston  
Hope Stevens  
Pam Neder  
Mary Ann Yutzky  
Clarence Finzel  
Bev O'Donnell

#### *Anniversaries*

(None this month)

You may purchase the 2021 Parish Calendar of Birthdays, Anniversaries, and Memorials for \$1.50 from the Women of St George's. Please call the office if you would like a calendar mailed to you.

**God's Blessings!**

# A Prayer for Sound Government

*From the Book of Common Prayer, page 821*

O Lord our Governor, bless the leaders of our land, that we may be a people at peace among ourselves and a blessing to other nations of the earth.

*Lord, keep this nation under your care.*

To the President, the Vice President, and members of the Cabinet; to Governors of States, Mayors of Cities, County Commissioners; and to all in administrative authority, grant wisdom and grace in the exercise of their duties.

*Give courage to your servants, O Lord.*

To Senators and Representatives, and those who make our laws in States, Cities, and Towns, give courage, wisdom, and foresight to provide for the needs of all our people, and to fulfill our obligations in the community of nations.

*Give grace to your servants, O Lord.*

To the Judges and officers of our Courts give understanding and integrity, that human rights may be safeguarded and justice served.

*Give wisdom to your servants, O Lord.*

And finally, lovingly teach our people to rely only on your strength and to accept our responsibilities to our fellow citizens, that we may elect trustworthy leaders and make wise decisions for the well-being of our society; so that we may serve you faithfully in our generation and honor your holy Name.

*For yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Amen.*



*The Transfiguration of Christ by Giovanni Bellini (1480)*

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12811 Saint George's Lane NW  
P.O. Box 655  
Mount Savage, Maryland 21545



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*Links are active in PDF version only*

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*Web Page*

[www.stgeorgesmtsavage.org](http://www.stgeorgesmtsavage.org)

*Mailing Address*

PO Box 655  
Mt Savage, MD 21545

*The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland*  
[www.episcopalmaryland.org](http://www.episcopalmaryland.org)  
1-800-443-1399

### The Anglican Communion

The Most Rev. and Right Honourable  
Justin T. Welby, *105th Archbishop of Canterbury*

### The Episcopal Church

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, *27th Presiding Bishop*

### The Diocese of Maryland

The Right Rev. Eugene T. Sutton, *14th Bishop of Maryland*

The Right Rev. Robert W. Ihloff,  
*Assisting Bishop, 13th Bishop of Maryland*

### Parish Officers, Staff & Volunteers

Dee Stallings	Senior Warden, Organist, Vestryperson (2022) Treasurer of the Women of St George's
Jim Rice	Junior Warden, Worship Leader, Acolyte Leader, Vestryperson (2021)
Ken Preston	Treasurer
Lynda Folk	Assistant Treasurer, Vestryperson (2021)
Peggy Hess	Registrar, Eucharistic Visitor, Secretary of the Women of St George's
Karen Bonner	Altar Guild Chairperson, President of the Women of St George's, Vestryperson (2022)
Sharon Logsdon	Parish Nurse, Eucharistic Visitor, Parish Secretary
Jeff Hall	Vestryperson (2023)
Karen Preston	Vestryperson (2023), Parish Secretary