

**The Epiphany  
Agape Liturgy**  
10:30 a.m., January 5, 2025



**The Rt. Rev. Deon Johnson, Bishop  
The Rev. Nancy Emmel Gunn, Rector  
The Rev. Bethann Rohlfing, Deacon**

Welcome! We are blessed by your presence with us this morning and hope that you will find strength, comfort, and fulfillment through our worship. We welcome all seekers of God and look forward to meeting you in the future.

**St. John's Episcopal Church**  
3664 Arsenal Street, St. Louis, MO 63116  
[www.towergrovechurch.org](http://www.towergrovechurch.org) 314-772-3970

**Welcome** to worship at St. John's, Tower Grove! All Scripture readings and congregational responses are contained in this packet.

St. John's is a congregation of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri and is a Proud Parish Partner of **Integrity USA** and a **Believe Out Loud** congregation. We work and pray for the inclusion of ALL. We celebrate our diversity and are united as members of Christ's own body.

Weekly BIBLE STUDY (Lectionary Study) takes place every Sunday before service at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom. Details are in St. John's weekly newsletter. To receive the weekly newsletter contact the Parish Administrator at [office@towergrovechurch.org](mailto:office@towergrovechurch.org).

## **Agape Liturgy**

**Welcome**

**Opening Hymn.**  
**We Three Kings of Orient Are**



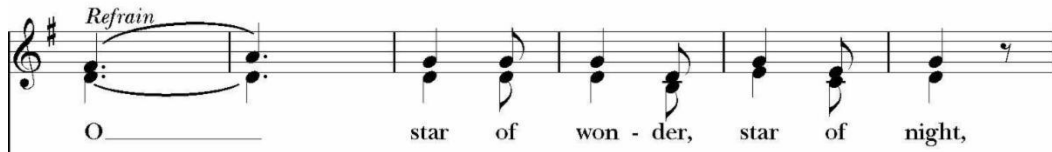
1 We three kings of O - ri - ent are, bear - ing  
2 Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I  
3 Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I: in - cense  
4 Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume breathes a  
5 Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and



1 gifts we tra - verse a - far, field and foun - tain,  
2 bring to crown him a - gain, King for ev - er,  
3 owns a De - i - ty nigh; prayer and prais - ing,  
4 life of gath - er - ing gloom; sor - rowing, sigh - ing,  
5 God and Sac - ri - fice; heaven sings al - le -



1 moor and moun - tain, fol - low - ing yon - der star.  
2 ceas - ing nev - er o - ver us all to reign.  
3 glad - ly rais - ing, wor - ship him, God Most High.  
4 bleed - ing, dy - ing, sealed in the stone - cold tomb.  
5 lu - ia: al - le - lu - ia the earth re - plies.



O star of won - der, star of night,



star with roy - al beau - ty bright; west - ward lead - ing,



still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy per - fect light!

*Celebrant:* Blessed be ~~the God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit~~ Holy One whose coming we welcome.

*People:* Blessed be ~~God's kingdom, now and forever~~ the One who has come to set all people free. Amen.

*Celebrant:* In the tender compassion of our God

*People:* the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

*Celebrant:* to shine on those who dwell in the shadow of earth,

*People:* to guide our feet into the way of peace.

*Celebrant:* Almighty God, to you all hearts are open,

*People:* **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.**

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1. Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and  
 peace to his peo - ple on earth. 2. Lord God, heaven - ly  
 King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we  
 give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry. 3. Lord Je - sus  
 Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, 4. you  
 take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy  
 on us; 5. you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re -  
 ceive our prayer. 6. For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One,  
 you a - lone are the Lord, 7. you a - lone are the Most  
 High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spi - rit, in the  
 glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

## The Collect of the Day

*The Celebrant says to the people*

The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Celebrant: Let us pray.

O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### A reading from the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 60:1-6)

Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.  
For darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and his glory will appear over you.  
Nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.  
Lift up your eyes and look around;  
they all gather together, they come to you;  
your sons shall come from far away,  
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.  
Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,  
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.  
A multitude of camels shall cover you,  
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come.  
They shall bring gold and frankincense,  
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

### Psalm 72:1-7,10-14

1 Give the King your justice, O God, \*  
**and your righteousness to the King's Son;**

- 2 That he may rule your people righteously \*  
**and the poor with justice;**
- 3 That the mountains may bring prosperity to the people, \*  
**and the little hills bring righteousness.**
- 4 He shall defend the needy among the people; \*  
**he shall rescue the poor and crush the oppressor.**
- 5 He shall live as long as the sun and moon endure, \*  
**from one generation to another.**
- 6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown field, \*  
**like showers that water the earth.**
- 7 In his time shall the righteous flourish; \*  
**there shall be abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.**
- 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall pay tribute, \*  
**and the kings of Arabia and Saba offer gifts.**
- 11 All kings shall bow down before him, \*  
**and all the nations do him service.**
- 12 For he shall deliver the poor who cries out in distress, \*  
**and the oppressed who has no helper.**
- 13 He shall have pity on the lowly and poor; \*  
**he shall preserve the lives of the needy.**
- 14 He shall redeem their lives from oppression and violence, \*  
**and dear shall their blood be in his sight.**

#### **A reading from letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 3:1-12)**

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles-- for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! \_\_\_\_\_

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## The Gospel

*Please stand, if able.*

*Deacon:*           **The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.  
(Matthew 2:1-12)**

***People:***    ***Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

*Deacon:*    The Gospel of the Lord.

***People:***    ***Praise to you, Lord Christ.***



## Sermon

The Rev. Nancy Emmel Gunn

Deacon: Let us profess our faith using the words of the Nicene Creed.

### The Nicene Creed

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.

### The Prayers of the People

Deacon: Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

We rejoice in the revelation of Jesus Christ to the earth and its peoples, whom you love without partiality and with a fierce love, seeking and finding and refreshing hearts through your presence:  
***Arise, shine; for your light has come!***

Fix our minds on Christ the Day Star that we might learn the mystery being made known to humankind, share in the promise made manifest, and serve the grace and wisdom illumining the world:  
***Arise, shine; for your light has come!***

All things come from you; so inspire us to return to you from all that we have received, even as the Magi offered their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh:  
***Arise, shine; for your light has come!***

~~We all fade like the leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. None of us have sought after you as we ought, nor have our eyes rightly perceived your ways. Yet you, O Lord are the potter and we are the clay:  
***Restore us, O God of hosts!***~~

~~We have been enriched in speech and knowledge of every kind, given spiritual gifts and strengthened to make testimony to Christ; for God is faithful to those called into the fellowship of the Son. Fashion us into vessels of honor, and make us useful for your work:  
***Show the light of your countenance and we shall be saved.***~~

~~Be with your Church this Advent Season, remembering our leadership (*intercessions for the Church may be offered*) and all the people of God (*prayers for the congregation may be offered*):  
***Restore us, O God of hosts!***~~

Keep us awake for the tasks of our generation, swift in service to justice, alert to the needs of the poor, attentive to the hungry and the migrant, and sensitive to the promptings of your Holy Spirit:  
***Show the light of your countenance and we shall be saved.***

~~You who dwell in the darkness and the light, in the silence and in the sound; dwell in the hearts of your people that in hope, peace, joy and love, we may be agents of your heavenly reign as we welcome Christ the Morning Star. Christ be our light.  
***Shine in our hearts.***~~

~~You who framed the brightness of the first light in creation; dispel the arrogance, animosity, and anger that shatters the unity of your holy Church. Fill our faithful people with the radiant light of truth, that we may be made one in faith, hope, and love. Christ be our light.  
***Shine in our hearts.***~~

~~Be with those who are lonely as the holidays arrive, granting them the solace of your presence, the gladness of community, and the sustenance of Christian fellowship. We intercede also for those who are ill or in any kind of trouble (*the people may offer their petitions*) that your mercy might shine bright in their lives:~~

~~***Show the light of your countenance and we shall be saved.***~~

~~Make us to keep watch over those things placed into our spiritual care, vigilant in stewardship, alert for the times and seasons, attuned to the Gospel, always quickening to your work in the world and ready in your service:~~

~~**Restore us, O God of hosts!**~~

We pray for the Church and for all the people of God who labor for good, remembering especially Presiding Bishop Sean, our Bishop Deon, our Rector Nancy, our Deacon Bethann.

***We are your servants, and you have freed us from our bonds.***

God of liberation, you are the hope of the weak and the needy. Rescue those who suffer poverty, war, injustice or oppression when they cry out. We pray especially for the people of Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Israel and for the people of Ukraine. Open the ears of our hearts to hear and quicken in us the fire to respond in love.

***Revive us O Christ.***

We pray for those who are ill, those in pain, those under stress, those who have asked for our prayers, and those who are lonely, Frank; John; Sylvia; Janet; Dawn; Therese; Darrell; Olivia; Billie; Lukas; Susie; Christine; Joe; Michelle; Mark; Diane; Martha; Claire; Bill; Crystal; Richard; Rachel; Thomas; Sandy; Lin; Susan; Gary; Ofelia; Teresa; Kyle; Bethany; Keta; Richard; Brian; Debbie; Stephanie; Tim; Wren; and all those affected by the Covid-19 virus and those affected by severe weather. We pray for the people killed or injured in the recent event in New Orleans. Jesus, Lord of Life,

***In your mercy, hear us.***

Jesus, the resurrection and the life, we give you thanks for all who have lived and believed in you. Raise us with them to eternal life. We pray for those who have died, especially Ken Ludwig, Marjie Murphy and those who have entered into the land of eternal Light and your abiding peace. Jesus, Lord of Life,

***In your mercy, hear us.***

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart and especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Celebrant: O God of Love, hear the prayers of your people. Enliven us by your Spirit, to live into the fullness of your reign. We pray through Jesus, our life and our hope. **Amen.**

## **The Confession**

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins to God.

**God of all mercy,  
we confess that we have sinned against you,  
opposing your will in our lives.  
We have denied your goodness in each other,  
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.**

**We repent of the evil that enslaves us,  
the evil we have done,  
and the evil done on our behalf.**

**Forgive, restore, and strengthen us  
through our Savior Jesus Christ,  
that we may abide in your love  
and serve only your will. Amen.**

*The Celebrant says*

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**

Celebrant: The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

**People: And also with you.**

## **The Agape Meal**

*The Officiant and People give thanks for the gift of our daily bread.*

*Officiant* Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe.

*People* **You bring forth bread from the earth; we long for the day when we may once again partake of the bread of life, the Body of your Son Jesus Christ. As grain scattered upon the earth is gathered into one loaf, so gather your Church in every place into the kingdom of your Son. Glory to you for ever and ever. Amen.**

*The Officiant and People give thanks for the gift of wine.*

*Officiant* Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe.

*People* **You create the fruit of the vine; we long for the day when you will once again refresh us with the cup of salvation in the Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Glory to you for ever and ever. Amen.**

*The Officiant and People give thanks for the gift of food.*

*Officiant* Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe.

*People* **You have blessed the earth to bring forth food to satisfy our hunger. Let this food strengthen us in the Eucharistic fast that is before us, that following our Savior in the way of**

the cross, we may come to the joy of his resurrection. Glory to you for ever and ever. Amen.

*Officiant* And now, as Jesus taught us, let us pray:

*People* **Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.**

*Officiant* God of all creation, we gather on this first day of the week made holy by the resurrection of Christ, your Son. In the waters of baptism we were buried with him so that we might also rise with him and so share his victory over sin and death.

*People* **You have transformed our lives into the living stones that form your Church with Christ as the foundation stone. Strengthen our community's bond of communion and peace and deepen our solidarity with your Church throughout the world.**

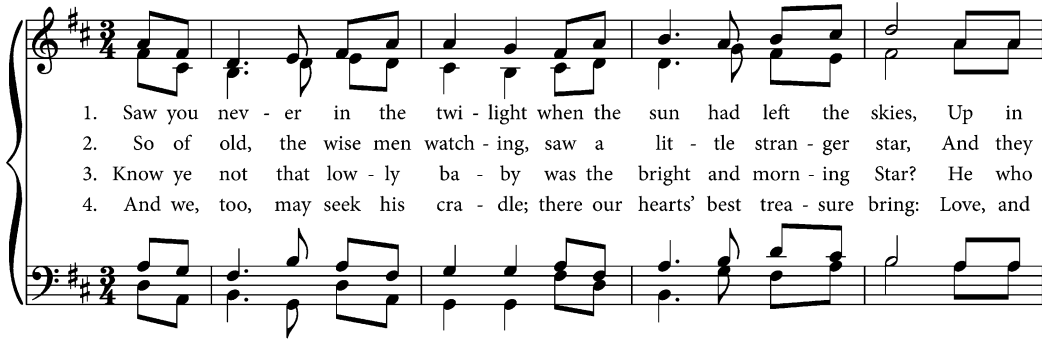
*Officiant* Rekindle within us this Sabbath day the vision of your kingdom so that our daily concerns and labor may find their proper perspective.

*People* **Fill our homes with the spirit of the Gospel and give us the grace to see the face of Christ in the people with whom we live. We raise our voices in praise and thanksgiving to you, O God; that we who have celebrated Christ's resurrection share in his eternal glory where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen**

## Saw You Never in the Twilight

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818 - 1895)

Dr. Jeffrey Richard Carter  
WINSTON



1. Saw you nev - er in the twi - light when the sun had left the skies, Up in  
2. So of old, the wise men watch - ing, saw a lit - tle stran - ger star, And they  
3. Know ye not that low - ly ba - by was the bright and morn - ing Star? He who  
4. And we, too, may seek his cra - dle; there our hearts' best trea - sure bring: Love, and



heav'n the clear stars shin - ing through the gloom like sil - ver eyes?  
knew the King was giv - en, and they fol - lowed it from far.  
came to light the Gen - tiles, and the dark - ened isles a - far.  
faith, and true de - vo - tion for our Sav - ior, God, and King.

## The Blessing

*The Celebrant blesses the people.*

Celebrant: God bless you with a restless discomfort about easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships, so that you may seek truth boldly and love deep within your heart.

God bless you with holy anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may tirelessly work for justice, freedom, and peace among all people.

God bless you with the gift of tears to shed with those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, or the loss of all that they cherish, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and transform their pain into joy.

God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you really can make a difference in this world, so that you are able, with God's grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.

And may the blessing of God the Almighty, and the grace of Christ the Son, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you, upon you, in you, and through you, now and for ever more. **Amen.**

### **Announcements**

Are there any birthdays we are celebrating this week; anniversaries; other special events?  
Are there any announcements for the benefit of the community?

### **Closing Hymn**

**Go Tell it on the Mountain**

**Lift Every Voice and Sing #21**

Go, tell it on the moun - tain o - ver the hills and ev - ery - where;

go, tell it on the moun - tain, that Je - sus Christ... is born. **Fine**

1. While shep - herds kept their watch - ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,  
 2. The shep - herds feared and trem - bled, when lo! a - bove the earth,  
 3. Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,

1. Be - hold through - out the heav - ens there shown a ho - ly light...  
 2. Rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed the Sav - ior's birth...  
 3. And God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ - mas morn... **D.C.**

**Dismissal**

Deacon: Go into the broken places of this world, to sow the compassion of Christ. Go into the hurting places of this world, to share the wellspring of the healing of Christ. Go into the lonely places of this world, to be the love of Christ. Go in peace. Go in hope. Go in love. Go! Alleluia, Alleluia.

People: **Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia.**



## LITURGICAL MINISTERS

*Celebrant and Preacher:* The Rev. Nancy Emmel Gunn

*Deacon:* The Rev. Bethann Rohlfing

*Lector:* Tony Balsamo

*Zoom manager:* Jeff Strasburg

### Serving Sunday 10:30 a.m., January 12, 2025

*Celebrant and Preacher:* The Rev. Nancy Emmel Gunn

*Deacon:* The Rev. Bethann Rohlfing

*Lector:* Susan Brower-Toland

*Acolyte:* Jessie Brower-Toland

*Communion Ministers:* John Eads and Mary Anne Pikrone

*Greeter:* Lorie Kintz

*Usher:* Judy Headley

*Altar Guild:* Ann Quay McColloch

*Video Streaming:* Keith Morehead

*Making Coffee:* Mary Anne Pikrone

*Bringing Treats:* Anna Hall

*Clean Up:* Anna Hall

### Readings for next Sunday – First Sunday after Epiphany

- [Isaiah 43:1-7](#)
- [Acts 8:14-17](#)
- [Luke 3:15-17, 21-22](#)
  - [Psalm 29](#)

## St. John's Episcopal Church

AN OPEN AND INCLUSIVE CONGREGATION

3664 Arsenal Street, St. Louis, MO 63116

### OUR MISSION

St John's Episcopal Church has existed since 1841 as a witness to God's grace. We worship in an

open, welcoming environment and serve the community with hospitality, gratitude, and generosity as we continue to grow in our faith and commitment to Jesus Christ.

WE BELIEVE our worship and prayers connect us to God and each other, that we are called and blessed to be attentive to the needs and strengths of our neighbors, that each person brings beauty and gifts that reveal God's goodness, and that all are welcome at God's table.

WE WORSHIP in a traditional form that provides a safe, inclusive culture for all who seek Christ, welcoming everyone at our Communion table for a shared meal.

WE SERVE God by serving each other, our neighbors, the hungry, the seekers and those who yearn for justice.

“St. John’s, Tower Grove” on Facebook,  
“Stjohnstowergrove” on Instagram,  
Website: [www.towergrovechurch.org](http://www.towergrovechurch.org)

**Rector: The Rev. Nancy Emmel Gunn**

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**Deacon: The Rev. Deacon Bethann Rohlifing**

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**Parish Administrator: Bob Emert**

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**Music Director: Joseph Eckelkamp**

[joseph.w.eckelkamp@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.w.eckelkamp@gmail.com)

#### **The Vestry of St. John’s Church**

Senior Warden: Ronya McCool – [seniorwarden@towergrovechurch.org](mailto:seniorwarden@towergrovechurch.org)

Junior Warden: Correne Murphy – Worship and Music

Ann Balsamo – Fund Raising

Mary Anne Pikrone – Buildings and Grounds

Jeffrey Carter - Finance

Paul Freeman

Jonathan Cureton

Dawn Indelicato-Faw