HIGHIGHTS

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE of HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

We Remember the Departed

Lit candles on the altar on All Saints Sunday ... see page 6

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Friday, December 8 7:30 p.m.*

Procession of Advent Readona & Carola

Join us for this favorite annual holiday event that features Holy Trinity's vocal choir. We are joined by area clergy, including NE Ohio Synod Bishop Laura Barbins, who will lead us in readings and prayers.

We hear the powerful story of salvation from Bible readings, anthems and congregational hymns — that moves us from darkness to light, Advent to Christmas.

*Prelude begins at 7 p.m.

WATCH THE LIVE STREAM artsholytrinity.org

ATTEND IN-PERSON Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Doors open 30 minutes prior. For details, visit artsholytrinity.org.



artsholytrinity.org

Funding for the 2023-2024 Arts @ Holy Trinity provided in part by



A Coming into Being

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; Dear desire of even nation, joy of every longing heart. (Charles Wesley, 1744)

The Christmas season is the high point of the year for many of us. The preparation for Christmas - the decorating, the celebrations, the music and worship observances, the giving of gifts and gathering of families – all these rituals mark this important event in the life of our faith.

At this time of year, I often find myself saying, "It can't be December!" or "How can another Christmas be upon us?" I feel like I am not ready for it all – the increased stress, the overly-full calendar, the crowds, the frantic feeling that I can't get it all done or that I'm going to forget something or someone important. The demands of our culture and my own expectations overwhelm me at a time when I want to be more focused on God and the sacred events of Christmas.

I guess that's why I really like Advent, the season of the church year preceding Christmas. Advent, liturgically speaking, is the beginning of the Christian year. It includes the four Sundays before Christmas during which we prepare our hearts, minds, and spirits for the Advent, the birth of the Christ child and his return.

Webster's Dictionary defines the word **advent** as "*a coming into being*." A coming into being. That's what I'm in need of right now. I need this time of Advent to bring me into being. I need to slow down, to live in the moment, to appreciate the small things – the warmth and light of a candle flame, the quiet stillness of the dawn, the enthusiastic smiles of children. I need to prepare my heart, to make my spirit ready for the birth of the Messiah.

We all need this time of Advent to slow us down, to open our ears to God's quiet voice, to guide us through the chaos of the consumerist culture that Christmas has become. As we make our way through this busy season let us allow God to shape our minds and hearts – to become a part of God's *"coming into being"* in Jesus' birth. +

Blessings! Pastor Becki



Pastor on Vacation: Pastor Becki will be on vacation Friday, December 29 through Friday, January 5. Please contact Rachel Núñez if you have an emergency in which pastoral care is needed. +



Pastor Becki Verbridge



Christmas Poinsettias

Order a Christmas poinsettia to help decorate Holy Trinity's chancel this Christmas Eve! Fill out the form below and place in the offering plate or mail it to the Church. Or you may use the red labeled envelopes by the Flower Chart. There will be a receptacle in the lobby for the envelopes. Make your check out to *Holy Trinity Lutheran Church* and mark "poinsettia" on the memo line. <u>All orders must be placed</u> by noon on Monday, December 18. Thank you for this offering! You may pickup your poinsettia following the 7 p.m. Christmas Eve service on Sunday, December 24. The remaining poinsettias will be delivered by our Friendly Visitors to Trinity members who are shut-in, hospitalized or recovering in their homes from a hospital stay. For more information, please contact Debbie Ickes at (678) 353-7444. †

Order Form

I would like to order _____Christmas Poinsettias priced at \$15 each. NOTE: All poinsettias will be red.



Name
Phone
Envelope #
Amount Enclosed
Please check one of the following and print clearly. I give my poinsettia(s):
in memory of

_ in honor of __

_____ to the glory of God.



Calling All Bakers!

If you love to bake Christmas treats, cookies, and pastries, we have a great way for you to serve doing something you love ... bake and donate your favorite sweet treats for the in-person reception that follows the Procession of Advent Lessons & Carols concert on Friday, December 8.

If you wish to donate, please sign up on the sheet at the Welcome Center. You may also contact Lesli Eisenhart at leisenhart@hotmail.com or at (330) 696-7460. Baked goods are needed by December 6 - they can be placed in Room 202 (labeled L&C).

And speaking of the reception, if you are available to help set up, clean up or serve beverages and monitor the various dessert stations, please contact John Catlos at (330) 376-5154 or at jcatlos@holytrinityakron.org or Frederica Cohen, Chair of the Worship & Music Ministry Team. Thank you, in advance, for your time, talent and generosity! †



Help Decorate a Tree and Donate to DLM

The Ladies of the Altar Guild invite the Congregation to join in the decorating of the Christmas tree in the Chapel Lounge. Bring lights, ornaments, tinsel ... anything you like to decorate the tree. Your donations will result in a beautiful tree.

Please consider an unwrapped gift for a child to put under the tree. DLM Food & Resources will make distribution to the children.

Thank you for helping!! +



So Much Peanut Butter!

Thank you to everyone who donated jars of peanut butter for OPEN M's holiday food baskets. Our goal was 200 jars, and as usual, Holy Trinity stepped up and surpassed the goal! Final number was 201 jars donated! *Pictured is Gregg Loesch*. +



We welcomed guest preacher **Pastor David Williams** on Christ the King Sunday, November 26. His message focused on the importance of investing in others. He was in town visiting family and celebrating his mother's birthday. Pastor Williams is the brother/brother-inlaw and Rich Williams and Amy Indorf. †



On All Saints Sunday, November 5, we remembered those who have gone before us in faith. We remembered members of our congregation who have died this past year. We lit a candle and tolled a bell in memory of:

Richard DeBerry - January 24, 2023 Fletcher Carroll - March 6, 2023 Duane Aller - March 31, 2023 Lorraine Fair - May 31, 2023 Tom Lawson - July 24, 2023 Carol Holm - September 11, 2023

We also remembered others we have loved. A three-wicked candle was lit and a bell was tolled in their memory (names were spoken aloud or silently).

- We remembered other members of this congregation who have gone before us in faith.
- We remembered members of our families who have died this past year.
- We remembered friends and neighbors who have died this past year. +



Christmas Eve at Holy Trinity Sunday, December 24, 2023

Prelude at 6:30 p.m. featuring Chancel Choir, Bell Choir, Organ, & String Ensemble

Service of Word and Sacrament at 7 p.m.

Christmas Eve at Holy Trinity has been long considered one of the most beautiful worship experiences of the year. This year, a musical prelude featuring the Chancel Choir, Bell Choir, and a String Ensemble, will begin at 6:30 p.m. The Service of Word and Sacrament - including many of our most beloved carols, a children's message, and candle lighting - will begin at 7 p.m. Plan now to worship with us this most holy night of the year! +

Service of the Word & Carols Sunday, December 31, 2023

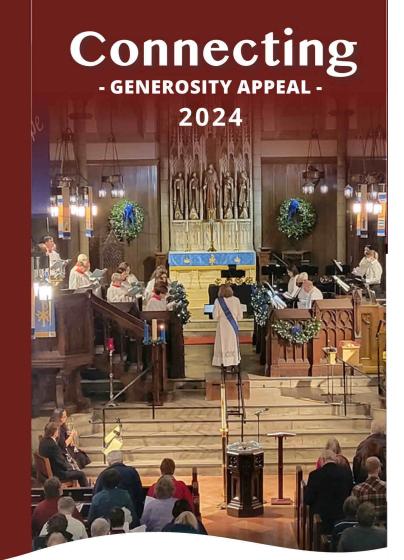
The celebration of Jesus' birth has inspired a tremendous variety of music and song throughout the centuries and in every land. We will sing many of the best-known and mostbeloved Christmas carols at our Christmas Eve service. This year, however, we have planned a special Service of the Word & Carols for Sunday, December 31st at 9:30 a.m. Join us on this First Sunday of Christmas as we continue to sing more beloved carols and learn the stories behind them! +

Invitation and Response COMMITMENT SUNDAY: December 10, 2023

You will be invited to offer your intent card, along with your gifts, during our worship service on Sunday, December 10th. In the event you are unable to join us in person, you may mail your commitment card to the church office or complete an intent card on-line at:

www.holytrinityakron.org

We will announce the results of our commitments on January 7th, including the number of commitment cards received and the faithful response of the congregation. We will celebrate the results together at a special after-worship coffee hour. Come and connect!



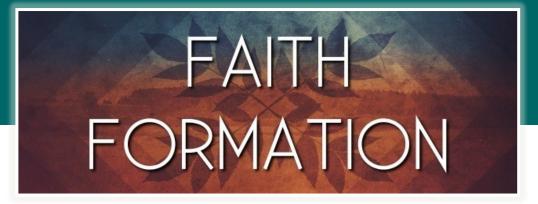
Stewardship Committee at Holy Trinity is Excited, Expecting You will be Also

Why in the world would a Stewardship Committee be excited ... all they do is ask for money? Well, there is a simple answer, and it's Holy Trinity's fresh focus on ministry. Founded 155 years ago by Akron notables John F. Seiberling, Charles Miller and J.H. Hower in 1868, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church has been home to many of Akron's prominent business and civic leaders. Today, members of Holy Trinity share God's word with the expectation that members will step up and provide spiritual support to our member families as well as to those throughout the community. Holy Trinity members can provide opportunities to restore the lives of others.

By now you have heard about the work of the INVITE WELCOME CONNECT Ministry team. Their work provides each of us as members an opportunity to choose which of the ministries are most important to us, renewing our commitment to the work of the Holy Spirit in ministry that is exciting to you. More information on this new and important ministry is coming soon!

Our **Generosity Appeal** this year will provide the weekly resources required to <u>Connect with Our Neighbors</u> in order to change lives and give hope to others. There will be funds for you to <u>Connect with God & One Another</u>. It will give us a real feel of the excitement for God's ministries and for each other. You will see how these ministries blossom brightly by changing hope into action and by changing the future to honor the past. Finally, and more importantly, **Sustaining Ministry Excellence** provides Holy Trinity direction to reflect on how we are currently doing ministry and how we can do it better.

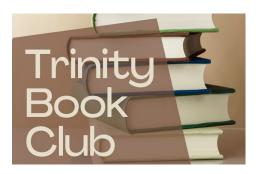
All of this will be going on as Holy Trinity begins a search for a new Called Pastor. +





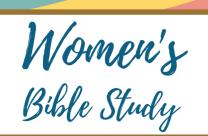
Faith5 Fridays @ 9 a.m. via Zoom

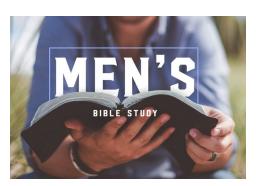
We check-in with each other and **SHARE** our prayer concerns, **READ** a scripture passage or poem, **TALK** about it and how we can apply it to our lives, **PRAY** for our concerns, each other, and Holy Trinity, and end our time with a **BLESSING** for the day ahead. Our time together lasts between 20-30 minutes. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with people as we encourage one another and pray together! Because it is a Zoom meeting, you can invite friends and family that live locally or out of the area. All are welcome! For Zoom information, contact Rachel Nunez at rnunez@holytrinityakron.org or call/text (330) 634-6597. †



Sunday, December 10, around 11 a.m. after worship in Room 202

All are welcome to join us as we discuss *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan. All are welcome ... bring a bag lunch if you like. Questions? Contact Amy Indorf or Diane Chambers for more information. +





Saturday, December 16 @ 9 a.m.

Velma Pomrenke will be hosting breakfast & devotions for the group this month. We will gather at Rockynol Independent Apartments (Ohio Living), 1150 W Market Street, Akron, OH 44313

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Rachel Núñez, Director of Faith Formation at (330) 634-6597 or email rnunez@holytrinityakron.org. +

Saturday, December 16, 9 a.m. Main Office Meeting Area, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Bring a friend and enjoy time together as we study, talk, and pray! Donuts and coffee provided. Tom Baumgardner & Jack Harig serve as facilitators. If you have any questions, please contact the church office at (330) 376-5154. +



Morning Devotions

Join us for Morning Devotions via Facebook LIVE each Wednesday at 9 a.m. to focus on God and what He has in store for your life. †

Sunday LIFT (Living In Faith Together) during the Season of Advent

Stop by the Chapel Lounge for a cup of coffee and fellowship and then join Rachel Núñez, Director of Faith Formation and members of the Faith Formation Ministry Team in the library for the following:

Sunday, December 3

An introduction to the New Church Year – Advent. What is Advent? Why does the church year begin with this season?

Sunday, December 10

What do I wonder about Advent Trivia and other fun conversations about this season of waiting and anticipation.

Sunday, December 17

An opportunity to serve. We will be filling food boxes for Robinson CLC and also making candy bags to distribute following Christmas Eve Worship. †



Wednesdays during Advent @ Holy Trinity Lunch & Study @ 11:30 a.m.

We gather in Room 202 for a hot meal together, conversation around the table, and study.

Bless the Advent We Actually Have by Kat Bowler

Here we are at the precipice of Christmas...The busyness. The hustle. The last-minute-wrapping. The beauty of the first snowfall (or at least the cinematic version on the Hallmark Channel). The delight of Christmas lights...We dream of creating a glistening Christmas for our families or friends that makes us tired even before we're finished imagining it.

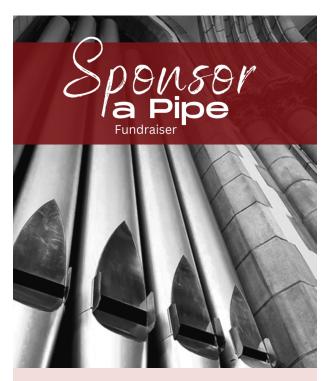
What if we could take all those ideals and see what's underneath, at the root of it all? It's our hopes for peace and joy and love for ourselves, our people, and for our world. And we say, God, show us again how this goes. How do we bless the Christmas we actually have? Perhaps we can practice blessing our actual lives together this Advent.

November 29 – Bless this *Hope-Filled* Advent December 6 – Bless this *Peace-Filled* Advent December 13 – Bless this *Joy-Filled* Advent December 20 – Bless this *Love-Filled* Advent

This is a wonderful opportunity to **invite** others to join in the fellowship, conversation, and study during this season. +



There will be no Hike & Seek or Holy Trinity Goes to Breakfast gatherings in December. Check back for January dates and plan to join us! †



Sponsor A Pipe for Those on Your Christmas List!

What do you get the 'hard-to-shop-for' person on your Christmas list? What do you give the person 'who has everything'? <u>Consider sponsoring a pipe</u> (or an octave) in their name!

As you know, Arts @ Holy Trinity is celebrating it's 40th Anniversary this concert season. Our 4,551pipe organ has been the focal instrument for most of the concerts. Your gift will help ensure this magnificent instrument continues to inspire and uplift both audiences and organists for another 40+ years. **Stop by the Sponsor A Pipe table in the Welcome Center lobby any Sunday after worship to make your donation of \$40 per pipe or \$480 per octave.** Cash, check, and credit card accepted. We'll have special gift acknowledgement cards available to give as Christmas gifts.

You may also give securely online by visiting artsholytrinity.org. Checks made payable to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church can be mailed to the church. Please note 'Sponsor a Pipe' in the memo line. <u>Our goal is sponsor all 4,551 pipes</u>. **Thank you to those who have sponsored 169 pipes thus far!!**

All donations received will support the ongoing maintenance of the organ. Thank you for your generous support! +



Arts @ Holy Trinity celebrates its 40th Anniversary

For four decades, Arts @ Holy Trinity has presented a wide range of musical styles and talents, attracting nationally and internationally renowned, award-winning, and award-nominated performing artists. In the past seven seasons, Arts @ Holy Trinity has provided learning opportunities that inspire, captivate, and transform students of all ages.

To commemorate this milestone, we are hosting a few **Special Anniversary Events** throughout the concert season. Join us in celebrating 40 years of Arts @ Holy Trinity as we make a difference in your life and transport the lives around you to new heights. †

'40 Years of Music' Exhibition

On display now through June 2024 in the Chapel Lounge View photographs, programs, and other historic items showcasing amazing organ and instrumental music that has been enjoyed by audiences for 40 years. †



One of the items featured in the '40 Years of Music' exhibition is this program from the very first concert, titled Organ Dedication Recital, held Sunday, October 16, 1983. Be sure to stop by the Chapel Lounge to view this special exhibit!





Organist Peter Sykes Returns to Holy Trinity

Arts @ Holy Trinity welcomed multi-awardwinning organist Peter Sykes November 19 who performed as part of the 40th anniversary concert series. It had been 14 years since Mr. Sykes played the organ, his last performance being February 2009. For this concert, he played so beautifully and brought the organ to life! Truly an amazing concert!

More than 120 people attended and many joined Mr. Sykes for a festive reception following his performance. † **Pictured above and bottom left:** Organist Peter Sykes. **Pictured below:** Peter Sykes speaks with guests at the reception.



DLM by the Numbers

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, DLM Food & Resources has continued to operate and provide food boxes, personal care items along with cleaning supplies, and laundry items to those families involved with Project RISE and others who are in need. Clothing is given to those who inquire.

During the month of November, DLM served the following ...







698 Individuals



FOOD AND RESOURCES



Children Helping Children

Nothing warms the heart than seeing children helping other children. And that is exactly what the students at Case Community Learning Center did! They donated their PBIS points ... Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support. This is a school-wide systems approach aimed at establishing a positive student culture and individualized behavior supports, all of which are necessary to create a safe and effective learning environment. Students earn points for good behavior, doing well in class, helping and being to kind to others, among various other methods. They use their points to buy things in the school store, things like pencils, erasers, and snacks. To support DLM

Continued on next page ...



Pictured on previous page: Darlene Katz (far right) gets a group hug from Case CLC students. *Pictured this page:* Students from Case CLC donate PBIS points (about \$500) to DLM.



... continued from previous page

Food & Resources, the students gave up 1,530 points collectively. Case CLC matched .10 for every point. This equaled a nearly \$500 donation for DLM! DLM Director Darlene Katz and DLM Operations Manager Stefan Katz were presented with the funds and gave a personal thank you message to the students. So the students could see what their donation will provide to other children and families, Darlene and Stefan brought in a box filled with food, hygiene items and diapers. What a heart-warming and thankful experience! †





Food Boxes for Robinson CLC

Come and Serve! Help pack food boxes for Robinson CLC!

Sunday, December 17 after worship in Room 202

Holy Trinity will again pack 20 food boxes for identified students at Robinson Community Learning Center. The distribution will be coordinated by the Robinson Family Resource Center. Each food box contains non-perishable foods, easy-to-prepare meal items, and paper products along with a \$20 gift card to Dave's Supermarket. This will help to ensure students have food over the two-week winter break. +

Holy Trinity Goes to...

cleveland Botanical Garden

Thursday, December 14

Car Pool will leave the church parking lot no later than 10 a.m. Meet at the Botanical Garden entrance by 11 a.m.

Cost is \$10 per person plus the cost of lunch

Location for lunch to be determined.

Please sign-up by Wednesday, December 6 at the Welcome Center. And, invite a friend (or two) to come along!!

If you have any questions, contact Rachel Núñez, Director of Faith Formation, at (330) 634-6597 or by email at Rnunez@holytrinityakron.org. +



December's Love Offerings will support ...

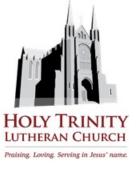
ELCA GOD GIFTS

Help a family break the cycle of hunger and poverty — for good. A cow, a couple of goats, a dozen chicks, two pigs, farming tools, seeds and agricultural training can create a world of opportunity for a family living in poverty. With eggs, milk and meat to eat and sell, and tools and training to increase the harvest, this gift can make all the difference.

Family

Farm

\$715







November 3 was Read to Me Day at Robinson Community Learning Center, and Holy Trinity members were there and excited to read to the students. This is the third year we have participated in this event. We were asked to read to the Kindergarten through 2nd grade classrooms this time around. The younger students love being read to, so much so that Gregg Loesch received a group hug!

Pictured above (sitting from l): Sylvia Leddon, Ruth Stefanik and Pam Marko. **Pictured above (standing from l):** Gregg Loesch, Frederica Cohen, John Stefanik and Marsha Asente. **Pictured right:** Ruth Stefanik reading to students.







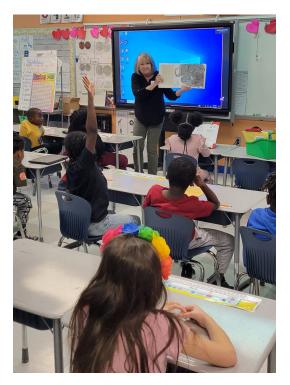




Read to Me Day is hosted by United Way of Summit & Medina Counties through the Family Resource Centers. United Way provides the books, which are donated to the classrooms.

A total of 10 classrooms participated in Read to Me Day. Pam Marko, John Stefanik and Gregg Loesch each read to two classrooms.

Pictured above counter clockwise: Gregg Loesch, Pam Marko, John Stefanik, Frederica Cohen and Marsha Asente.





Pictured left: Sylvia Leddon reads to students on Read to Me Day.







Holy Trinity Goes to Breakfast

It was our monthly gathering of Holy Trinity Goes to Breakfast at Akron Family Restaurant! Great food and fellowship time was had by all!

NOTE: There will be no gathering in December due to the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Our next gathering will be Sunday, January 28.

Pictured above left (from l): Rick & LK Kimble, Joan Derrig, Diann Jenkins, Sophia Morton, Tom Baumgardner, Darcel Zuller, Joanne Aller, Gregg Loesch, Becky Adkins, Tom Bouton, Deborah Marks, Dottie & Rob Wise, Pastor Becki and Ann Lawson.

Pictured left (from l): Tom Bouton, Gloria Woodford, Deborah Marks, Dottie & Rob Wise, Rick & LK Kimble, Diann Jenkins, Sophia Morton, Tom Baumgardner, Darcel Zuller, Judy Coffman, and Joanne Aller. Rachel Núñez took the photos.

Pictured above (from l): Gregg Loesch, Hannah Miller and Becky Adkins.



Hikers & Seekers spent time enjoying God's creation on November 10. We gather at a different park each month ... plan to join us! *Pictured clockwise from back): Don Parsisson, Diane Chambers, Amy Indorf, Rachel Núñez, LJ Kimble, Rich Williams and Joanne Aller.*

Worship Stewards

Date	Readers	Assisting Ministers
Sunday, December 3 9:30 a.m.	Tom Bouton	Linda Vowles
Sunday, December 10 9:30 a.m.	Valerie Clark	Frederica Cohen
Sunday, December 17 9:30 a.m.	Gregg Loesch	Mike Ameling
Sunday, December 24 9:30 a.m.	Heidi Miller	Rachel Núñez
<u>Christmas Eve</u> Sunday, December 24 7 p.m.	Ben Mormino	Rachel Núñez
Sunday, December 31 9:30 a.m.	Diann Jenkins	Rachel Núñez



'Happy Birthday' to the following members who are celebrating birthdays this month!!

December 1 – Kurt Seiberling December 4 – Joan Amon December 5 – Tom Bouton December 8 – Julie Sanders December 9 - Logan Seiberling December 12 – Gregory Mitchhart December 16 – Ella Izenour December 16 – Samantha Lupo December 18 – Deborah Ickes December 19 - Paul Anacki December 19 – Bob Nagle December 21 - Alex DeLuca December 22 - Natalie Spencer December 24 – Lor Breyley December 25 – LJ Kimble December 27 – Jacob Padget December 28 – Logan Vowles December 29 – Samuel Forbes December 29 – Debbie Schramm December 30 – Dan Detwiler December 30 – Sandra Plummer

If you want to include your birthday in a future issue of the Highlights, please contact Annmarie Demko at (330) 376-5154. NOTE: This list only includes known birthdays.

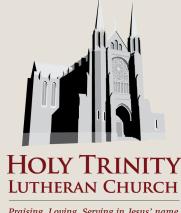
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Groups & Activities

Altar Guild - Deborah Ickes Archives - Ricki Ethington Assisting Ministers-Rachel Núñez Book Club - Diane Chambers & Amy Indorf Communion Assistants - Deborah Ickes & Marcy Nagy Family Promise & OPEN M - Gregg Loesch Memorial Garden - Sonya Nagle Men's Bible Study - Tom Baumgardner & Jack Harig Parish Nurse Ministry - Sally Richenbacher Prayer Chain - Sally Richenbacher Renaissance Team - Bob Keener Readers - Nan Riemenschneider Robinson CLC/FRC - Sandy DeLuca Live Stream Team - Sandy DeLuca Ushers - Gregg Loesch Warriors Journey Home - Jack Harig Women's Bible Study - Velma Pomrenke

2023 Cabinet

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