

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Buffalo, New York

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH Buffalo, New York

Sunday, December 24, 2023 Fourth Sunday of Advent Celebrating our 145th Anniversary

Holy Communion – 9:30 a.m.

Welcome to Holy Trinity!

Holy Trinity recognizes that each of us is a unique creation made in the image of God. We celebrate and give thanks for the many diverse gifts that God has bestowed on us. We proclaim ourselves to be an Open and Affirming congregation to all of God's creatures welcoming into our ministry persons of every race, culture, age, gender identification, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, and economic status. We commit ourselves to the work of anti-racism and creating an anti-racist space through the protection against oppression internally, in institutions, interpersonally and structurally.

We believe that through our openness we all grow in our faith through Christ's teaching to love one another as God loves us.

Visitors interested in membership may talk with a Council representative at the Council desk, contact the Church office or indicate on the yellow Welcome sheet.

We invite you to share your story and your worship experience!
Check-in and share on any of our social media platforms using #poweroftrinity.
You can find us on Facebook @holytrinitybuffalo,
on Instagram @holytrinitybuffalo or on twitter @holytrinitybuff

Large print bulletins are available at the entrance ways

INTRODUCTION

God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

PRELUDE

Improvisations

Paul Manz (1919-2009)

- 1. Comfort, Comfort Now My People (Freu Dich Sehr)
- 2. The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came Down (Gabriel's Message)
- 3. Hark the Glad Sound (Chesterfield)

RINGING OF THE TOWER BELLS

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

For CARDIAC EMERGENCIES:

Our Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) is located in the Sacristy on the wall near the window.

Look for the First Aid and AED sign near the top of the door to the Sacristy.

Exit the Sanctuary next to the Angel Lectern.

The Sacristy will be the first room on the left.

Coming from other areas of our building,
go up the stairs toward the Main Church and turn left.

Please stand as you are able.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness "Kingsfold"

ELW 251



Text: With One Voice, 1995, based on the Magnificat

Music: KINGSFOLD, English folk tune; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872–1958

Text © 1995 Augsburg Fortress.

Outside USA: Arr. from The English Hymnal, © Oxford University Press 1906. All rights reserved.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation. **Amen.**

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Everlasting God,

you love justice and you hate wrongdoing.
We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression.
We are complicit in systems of exploitation.
We choose comfort over courage.
We are careless with creation's bounty.
Look upon us with mercy.
Turn our hearts again to you.
Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world.
Amen.

Hear these words of assurance:
God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness.
In the tender compassion of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.
God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all.
Amen.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Prayer before Lighting the Advent Wreath

While we light the Advent Wreath we sing together:

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel "Veni Emmanuel" ELW 257, vs. 1, 2, 3 & 4

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high, embracing all things far and nigh: in strength and beauty come and stay; teach us your will and guide our way. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on Sinai's height in ancient times you gave the law in cloud, and majesty, and awe. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny; from depths of hell your people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Please be seated.

FIRST READING: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

The first reading for the Fourth Sunday of Advent is recorded in 2nd Samuel, the 7th Chapter.

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? 6I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" 8Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, 11 from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE SOLO

Mariä Wiegenlied

Max Reger (1873-1916)

Nicole Brendel, soprano

Mary sits in the rosegrove and rocks her child Jesus, softly through the leaves blows a warm summer wind.

At her feet sings a colorful little bird: Sleep, child, my sweet, just go to sleep!

Lovely is your smile, lovely is your joy in slumber, lay your tired little head against your mother's breast! Sleep, child, my sweet, just go to sleep!

SECOND READING: Romans 16:25-27

The second reading for today is recorded in Romans, the 16th Chapter.

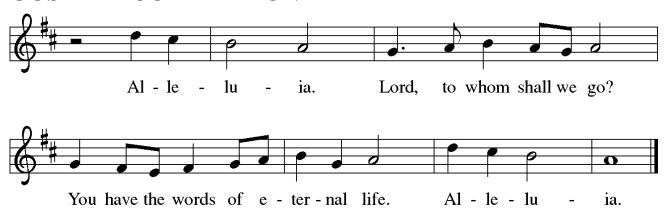
²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

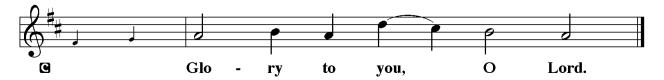
Please stand for the Gospel, as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38

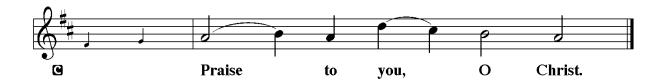
The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke



²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The gospel of the Lord.



Please be seated.

THE SERMON

The Rev. Richard Neal

Please stand as you are able.

SERMON HYMN

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light "Houston"

ELW 815





Text: Kathleen Thomerson, b. 1934 Music: HOUSTON, Kathleen Thomerson Text and music © 1970, 1975 Celebration.

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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, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. 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, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who 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.

PRAYERS OF PASTOR AND PEOPLE

In a culture that rushes to fill with noise the deep blessing of silence in which you whisper to us, dear God, grant us for one moment, at least, the stillness of heart and mind in which all things may rebalance. And in that moment, for once at least, bless the ears of our hearts with the music of the spheres, that we may reverberate throughout our lives with the good news of Incarnation. We thank you that you choose to dwell within our limited time, energy, space, and emotional and mental capacities. Receive now the prayers we offer with hope and expectation for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

You promise mercy to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants forever. Bring your church into thoughtful, caring, and collaborative relationship with those of other faiths. Strengthen our shared values, that we work together in caring for our world. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

As fields and crops lie dormant, bless them with holy rest. Prepare them to thrive, that they provide abundant food in due season. Protect animals that hibernate and provide for all who scavenge for food in the lean season. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You raise up the lowly and cast down the arrogant. Teach humility to all in positions of authority. Break down systems of oppression, especially systems that perpetuate inequity and exclusion. Do not allow wealth, power, or pride to become idols that obscure your call to justice. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Look with favor upon all who cry out to you. Accompany with tenderness all who are afraid or ill and those we name aloud or in the silence of our hearts... Rescue all who experience abuse or who live under threat of violence, especially refugees, immigrants, and asylumseekers in search of a safe and stable home. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You are pleased to make your home among us. Make our homecomings joyful as we gather to celebrate with friends, families, and chosen families, Gracelyn, Maddison, and all your children. Grant safety to all who travel. Sustain the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and other ministries that assist in setting up new homes. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Blessed are you for Mary and all your servants in every generation who lived according to your promise of mercy. Strengthen us by their example until the revelation of your glory is made known. Merciful God.

receive our prayer.

Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us share with each other a sign of Christ's peace.

Please be seated.

THE OFFERING

SOLO AT THE OFFERING

What Songs Were Sung

John Jacob Niles (1892-1980)

Nicole Brendel, soprano

We cannot tell, we do not know what stars shone down so long ago, When Mary birthed her own sweet Son and peace and love became one.

The Son of God, as scriptures said, was virgin born in a tiny shed, Where simple shepherds stood hard by while heav'nly sound filled up the sky.

Now let us stand, uncovered all, before this crèche in lowly stall, Where kings and angels dignify God's gift, His Son, in humility.

We do not know, we cannot tell what songs were sung, what starlight fell, Or why the holy mystery stands for so many years in so many lands.

We cannot tell, we do not know what stars shone down so long ago, When Mary birthed her own sweet Son and peace and love became one.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together.

God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth.

Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty.

Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

OFFERTORY

Amen.

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

ELW 885

"Old Hundredth"

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

praise God, all creatures here below;

praise God above, ye heav'nly host;

praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

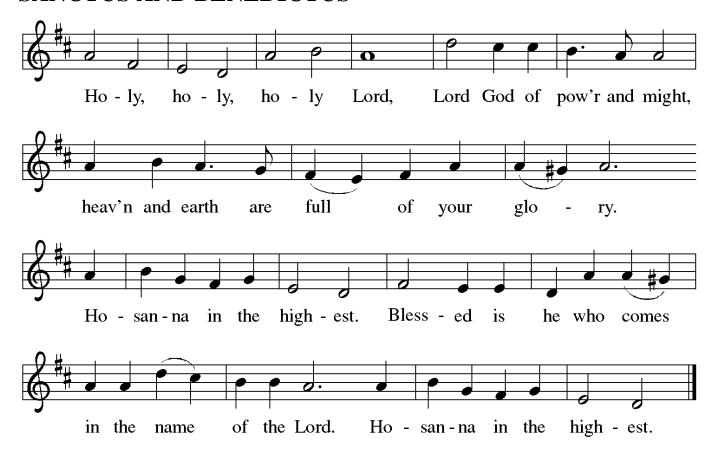
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right ... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS AND BENEDICTUS



THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ, whom you sent in the fullness of time to be a light to the nations. You scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts, put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalt those of low degree. You fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty. Your own Son came among us as a servant to be Emmanuel, your presence with us. He humbled himself in obedience to your will and freely accepted death on a cross. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us . . . When the supper was over he took the cup . . .

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by Christ's blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

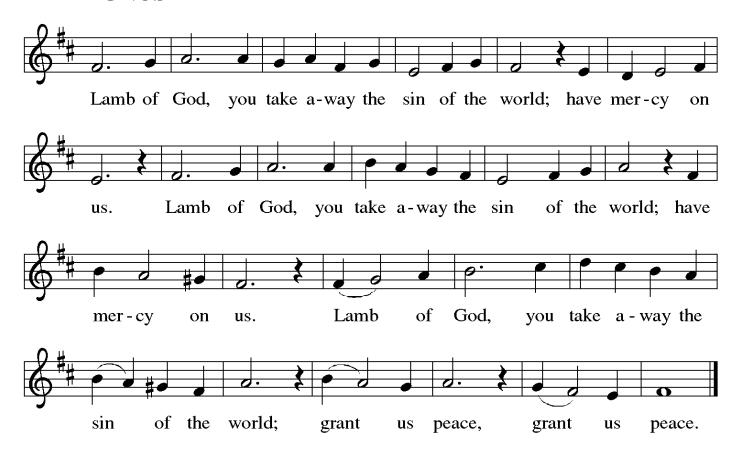
Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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, forever and ever. Amen.

THE AGNUS DEI



Please be seated.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to Communion

All are welcome to share in the sacrament of Holy Communion at Holy Trinity. Beginning with those seated closest to the altar, you are invited to come forward down the center aisle to the presiding minister. Receiving the wafer in your hand, you are invited to dip or "intinct" the wafer into the chalice. There is wine in the silver chalice and grape juice in the ceramic chalice. For those who prefer, gluten-free wafers are available by simply asking the Pastor as you are served. Portable communion cups are also available for those who are not comfortable sharing the sacrament of Holy Communion in-person. Adults or children choosing not to receive communion may come forward to receive a blessing. The Pastors will bring the sacrament to persons in the pews that are unable to come forward. Please advise an usher if you wish the pastor to do so.

Come eat and drink; there is a place for you at the table of our Lord.

Please stand as you are able.

The body and blood of our Sovereign and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace.

Amen.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray together.

Generous God,
in bread and cup you have revealed your glory
for all people to see together.

Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim
your good news of liberation and release,
brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

SENDING OF COMMUNION

Gracious God, you took the form of a servant, offering yourself as food, comfort, and strength to a broken and hurting world. Anoint with a servant heart those who take your word and sacrament to our sisters and brothers in their homes, in prisons, or in hospitals. Grant grace, mercy, healing, and hope to those who feast on your body and blood and receive your words of new life. May we all recognize that we are one in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

We invite congregation members to share this holy meal with those who are homebound, hospitalized, or otherwise unable to join us in person. Communion elements and a simple printed liturgy are available on the altar for your use. If you take a bulletin from this morning's worship service, you will be able to easily share today's scripture and prayers with the meal.

THE BENEDICTION

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit + remain upon you now and forever.

Amen.

RECESSIONAL HYMN

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus "Jefferson"

ELW 254



- born to peo-ple free; 1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, set thy
- child, and 2 Born thy peo-ple to de-liv-er, vet a king; born a



from our fears and sins re - lease us; find our rest let us born to reign in us for - ev - er, gra-cious king-dom bring. now thy



Is -rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all earth thou art, the By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all hearts a - lone; our



Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788 Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, Southern Harmony, 1835

THE DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Voluntary on 'Wachet Auf'

Paul Manz (1919-2009)

You are encouraged to take the bulletin home with you for future reference.
Otherwise, please place them in the recycle bins at the entrance ways.



THIS WEEK AT HOLY TRINITY

SUNDAY, December 24, 2023 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:30 a.m. Service of Holy Communion (CH)

SUNDAY, December 24, 2023 – Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m. Family Service (MC)

9:45 p.m. Pre-Service Music (MC)

10:30 p.m. Candlelight Festival Service (MC)

MONDAY, December 25, 2023 Merry Christmas

10:30 a.m. Service of Holy Communion (CH)

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

TUESDAY, December 26, 2023

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

Happy Birthday Carol Littlefield

THURSDAY, December 28, 2023

7:00 p.m. AA/AL-ANON (RH)

SUNDAY, December 31, 2023 – First Sunday after Christmas

9:30 a.m. Service of Holy Communion (CH)



Today's announcer and reader is Todd Kroening. Ushers and altar guilds are Gail Camilleri and Heidemarie Kunz. Acolyte is Morgan Leiser.

The flowers on the altar are given:

In Loving Memory of Dr. Robert Schopp by the Schopp Family; and

In Loving Memory of Jack and Marion Grabenstatter from their grandchildren: Eric, Jonathan and Sarah;

and

In Celebration of our granddaughter Natalie's 13th birthday on Christmas Day from Donna and Ron Leiser.

As part of the Cherish All Children ministries, today's prayers of intercession include Gracelyn and Maddison Becker.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE CHURCH OFFICE will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, December 25 and 26 for the Christmas holiday.

ALTAR FLOWERS: Each Sunday, the beautiful vases of flowers gracing the chancel are often dedicated by members of our congregation in memory of or in honor of loved ones. Looking ahead, the following dates are available- December 31st, January 14th and 28th. Please contact Linda Schmidt with your request for this or any date during the vear. She can specific be reached other at msmarylschmidt@gmail.com or on her cell 716-472-4194. Vases are currently \$50.00 each.

BURRITO PROJECT: Thank you to everyone who donated items and/or participated in the Burrito Project event We left church with over 100 burritos, plus the cookies, juice, water, coffee and cocoa. We also had 6 bins full of clothing items like socks, scarves, mittens and shirts donated by various members of the congregation. Items were distributed to people near the downtown bus terminal. They were so appreciative of your generosity. Our next event at Holy Trinity will be Tuesday, February 6. New volunteers are always welcome for this very rewarding ministry!

CRISIS SERVICES: For anyone feeling down, lonely or depressed, Crisis Services is working around the clock to respond to our community. Their hotline number is 834-3131 and are available 24-hours a day. If you are looking for counseling services, we share a partnership with Mr. Pat Greene, LMHC, and he may be reached at 716-361-4615.



CHRISTMAS EVE
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24
4:00 p.m. Family Service
9:45 p.m. Preservice music
10:30 p.m. Festival candlelight service with Holy Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY
MONDAY, DECEMBER 25
10:30 a.m. Christmas service (Chapel)

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31 9:30 a.m. Worship Service (Chapel)

HOLY TRINITY LEADERSHIP

Congregational Council

Jennifer Yap, *President*Kathy Crissey, *Vice-President*Fred Howard, *Treasurer*Linda Horton, *Secretary*

Paul Bauchle, Matthew Brown, Gail Camilleri, Christopher Huber, Karen Kolb, Pat Lonergan, Raúl Saona and Elizabeth Vihnanek

Staff Contacts for Programs and Services

Kristen Pomietlarz, Organist ~ Justin Pomietlarz, Choirmaster

kjpomietlarz@holytrinitybuffalo.org

Linda Lipczynski, Office Manager

Carol Littlefield, Parish Accountant

John Busch, Director of Buildings and Grounds

Andrew Kraus, Incoming Director of Buildings and Grounds

Charles Ryniec, Steward of Buildings and Grounds

Erin Alexander, Youth Choir Director

youthchoir@holytrinitybuffalo.org

The Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Wilson, *Lead Pastor*pastorwilson@holytrinitybuffalo.org
The Rev. Richard Neal, *Pastor*richneal@together.net

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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