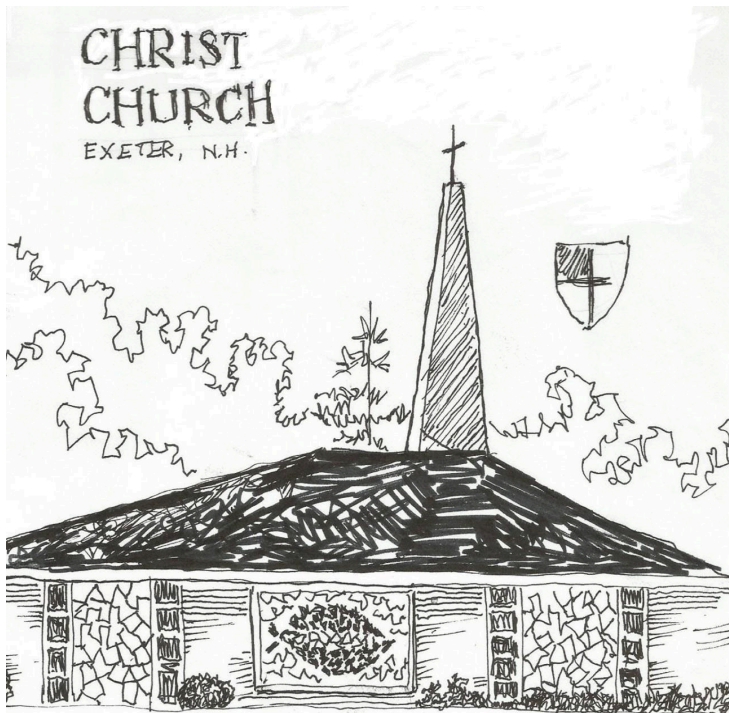


CHRIST CHURCH of Exeter



Live
joyfully in faith

Connect
with God and one another

Serve
the local and global community

Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 22, 2024
8:00 & 10:00 a.m.

Reflections on Today's Readings

The theme of the Fourth Sunday of Advent is the role of the Virgin Mary in the events that brought about our salvation. A related theme is the Lord's human nature.

The first reading deals with the Messiah's human origins. He will come from the village of Bethlehem within the clan of Ephratha, the smallest and least significant of all the clans of the Tribe of Judah. The importance of this prophecy from the book of Micah is that with the Messiah, as with all people, greatness comes from God rather than from human sources.

It was as an obedient human being that Jesus made the willing offering of himself for our salvation, says the author of the Letter to the Hebrews. The salvation of humanity was

accomplished within human life not apart from it.

Human nature has a real and definitive role to play, a role revealed in the story of Mary. Today's Gospel reading is the story of Mary's visit to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. Both Elizabeth and her unborn son rejoice in Mary's role. Mary then praises God in the words used by the church at Evening Prayer, "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." God's blessing of Mary, the lowly servant, will be extended in the ministry of Christ to all, especially the poor and the lowly. In her acceptance and cooperation with God's will, Mary becomes the model for our response to God and the human agent of God's gift of the redeeming Christ to the world..

From *The Rite Light: Reflections on the Sunday Readings and Seasons of the Church Year*. Copyright © 2009 by Michael W. Merriman. Church Publishing Incorporated, New York.

Welcome to Christ Church: If you are visiting for the first time, please fill out the welcome cards in the pews and hand it to a member of the clergy after the service. Books and resources for children are located on the table near the side left door. Although there are customary postures (such as standing and kneeling) in Episcopal worship, you are invited to be seated at any point, according to your needs and comfort. Sunday School is offered today at 9:45 a.m. for ages 5-8. Nursery care is available during the 10:00 a.m. service.

The Holy Eucharist

[10:00 a.m. service]

Prelude

Two Settings of the Magnificat
"My Soul doth Magnify the Lord and my Spirit
hath rejoiced in God my Savior."

Marcel Dupré

Welcome

✠ *All stand, as they are able, as the the clergy enter or the bell tolls.*

[10:00 a.m. service]

Processional Hymn 56, vv. 1-3

O come, O come, Emmanuel

Veni, veni, Emmanuel

Presider Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

People **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

Presider and People: **Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, 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.**

[10:00 service] **Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

Leader: Today we light the fourth candle of the Advent wreath. There is a tradition that each candle has a meaning: HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and today the fourth candle LOVE.

The four candles are lit.

From the First Letter of John we hear: "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them." "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear."

God IS love. Today may we pray that we can continue the work of spreading this love that binds together the Kingdom of God.

People **Thanks be to God.**

The Collect of the Day

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

✠ *The people sit.*

The First Reading

Micah 5:2-5a

Reader A Reading from the Book of Micah

You, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred

shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 80:1-7 (*read responsively by verse*)

- 1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
- 2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *
stir up your strength and come to help us.**
- 3 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
- 4 O Lord God of hosts, *
how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?**
- 5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; *
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
- 6 You have made us the derision of our neighbors, *
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**
- 7 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

The Second Reading

Hebrews 10:5-10

Reader A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

When Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God' (in the scroll of the book it is written of me)." When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in

People Thanks be to God. sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

[10:00 a.m. service]

Sequence Hymn 266, vv. 1-2

The angel Gabriel from heaven came

Gabriel's Message

The Gospel

Luke 1:39-45, 46-55

Gospeler The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

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

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit

and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped

for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with

his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Gospeler The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ**

✠ *The people sit.*

Sermon

The Rev. Nicole Benevenia

✠ *A brief period of silence follows the sermon.*

The Nicene Creed (*said together*)

**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.**

Prayers of the People: BCP pg. 383, Form I

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying "Lord, have mercy."

For the peace from above, for the loving-kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the Holy Church of God, and for the unity of all peoples, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For our Bishop, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For our President, for the leaders of the nations, and for all in authority, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this town of Exeter and the Seacoast region, for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the good earth which God has given us, and for the wisdom and will to conserve it, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the sick and the suffering. We pray for those known to us:

Greg, Mary, Lela, Kass, Julie, Pat, Sharon, Sue, Beatrice, Jewelle, Justin.

Please add those names either silently or aloud for whom you are praying for.

Silence

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the poor and the oppressed, for the unemployed and the destitute, for prisoners and captives, and for all who remember and care for them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, and for all the departed.

Silence

For George Baker, beloved husband of Bunny, who died this past week.

We remember Jeanne d'Arc Vigeant in whose memory the flowers are given.

Silence

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy

For deliverance from all danger, violence, oppression, and degradation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

In the communion of saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life, to Christ our God.

To you, O Lord our God.

Silence.

Presider: O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Confession of Sin

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we have sinned against you

in thought, word, and deed,

by what we have done,

and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,

have mercy on us and forgive us;

**that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Absolution

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

Presider The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

✠ *The people greet one another in the name of the Lord. The Peace may be expressed by shaking hands, bowing, "fist or elbow bumps", namaste greeting, putting hand over heart, waving, making the peace sign, and by offering a smile.*

Announcements

The Holy Communion

[8:00 a.m. service at the Presentation of the Gifts]

Presider All things come of thee, O Lord.

People **And of thine own have we given thee. Amen.**

[10:00 a.m. service]

Offertory Anthem

Ave Maria
Christ Church Choir

Michael John Trotta

✠ *The people stand for the hymn as they are able.*

[10:00 a.m. service]

Offertory Hymn 437

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!

Birmingham

The Great Thanksgiving Eucharistic Prayer B Pg. 367

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin

and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your name:

[8:00 a.m.] *Presider and People*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

[10:00 a.m. service] **Sanctus S-124**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might, hea - ven and
earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Music: David Hurd, "New Plainsong." © 1984 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense.net A700244

The Presider continues

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Presider and People

**We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;**

The Presider continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. AMEN.

The Presider then continues

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People and Presider

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

✠ *A period of silence is kept.*

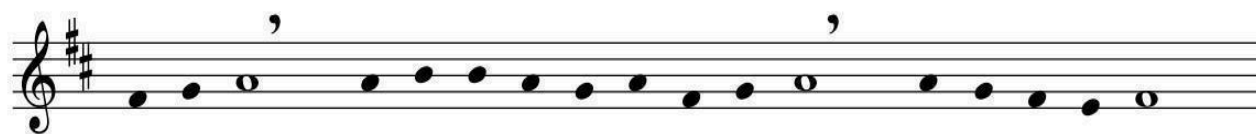
[8:00 a.m. service]

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

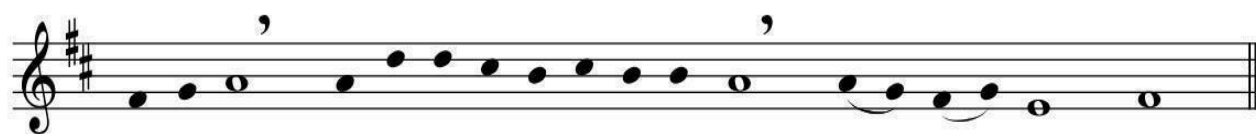
[10:00 a.m. service] **Fraction Anthem S-161**



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world: have mer - cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world: have mer - cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace.

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Invitation to Communion

The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Prayer for those Participating Online

In union, O Lord, with your faithful people at every altar of your Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, we desire to offer to you praise and thanksgiving. We remember your death, Lord Christ; we proclaim your resurrection; we await your coming in glory. Since we cannot receive you today in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, we beseech you to come spiritually into our heart. Cleanse and strengthen us with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let us never be separated from you. May we live in you, and you in us, in this life and in the life to come. Amen.

Instructions Concerning Communion and Healing

You are invited to receive Holy Communion. Following the usher's instructions, we begin with those seated in the side sections, starting with the front pews. Please go to the back of the church and proceed down the center aisle to the communion rail. Return to your seat using the outside aisles of those sections. Those seated in the center sections, please come forward beginning with the back pews using the center aisle and return using the diagonal aisles.

Communion may be received kneeling or standing at the altar rails. The bread is received in the open palm. (Gluten-free wafers are available). You may drink from the cup, or place your hand on the base as a sign of devotion. Intinction, dipping the wafer into the wine, is also acceptable. Those who do not wish to receive Communion are invited to come forward for a blessing, indicated by crossing your arms over your chest.

Communion can also be brought to you in the pews. Please communicate this request to an usher or the clergy. The Healing team is available to offer healing prayers at the side of the church. Please tell your healing minister if you have a specific prayer need and if you would like a laying on of hands, just prayers or both.

[10:00 a.m. service]

Communion Hymn 60
Hymn 81

Creator of the stars at night
Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming

Conditor Alme Siderum
Es ist ein ros

Post-Communion Prayer

✠ *The people kneel or stand as they are able.*

Presider and People

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing

Be people of love.

Let love live in your heart and share the love of Christ with all you meet.

Share love by loving those you do not know.

Share love by praying for our world.

As you go out into the wonder of God's creations, share love, joy, peace, and hope with those you meet. Amen.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

[10:00 a.m. service]

Recessional Hymn 278

Sing we of the blessed Mother

Rustington

The Dismissal

Priest Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

[10:00 a.m. service]

Postlude

O Blessed Creator of the Light

Flor Peeters

*The worship is over * The service begins*

Participating in Today's Liturgy:

Presider: The Rev. Mark Pendleton

Preacher: The Rev. Nicole Benevenia

Lector at 8:00 a.m.: Becky Moore

Lector at 10:00 a.m.: Susan Dixon

Intercessor at 10:00 a.m.: Cindy Eaton

Eucharistic Minister at 8:00 a.m.: Sue Ingram

Eucharistic Minister at 10:00 a.m.: Jeannette McDonald

Welcome Team/Usher: Scott Anders, Lissa Simard

Live Streaming Tech: Will Sera

Altar Guild: Patti Buck, Cindy Eaton

Flower Delivery: Carol Allard

Hospitality: Linzee Coleman-Bagge, Cynnie Irwin

Altar Flowers: Given in memory of Jeanne d'Arc Vigeant by her children

Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m. – Pageant & Holy Communion

7:30 p.m. - Music begins

8:00 p.m. – Traditional Christmas Eve Service*

Christmas Day

10:00 am – Christmas Day Holy Communion & Carols

Sunday, December 29

No 8:00 a.m.

Join us for

One service at 10:00 a.m. – Lessons and Carols – Holy Eucharist*

*service will be livestreamed

The church office will be closed December 25-Jan 1.

Together for Joy Pledge Cards have been mailed to our households. As of this past week, we have received **122 pledges** for **\$337,394**. In 2024 we received **139 pledges** for **\$365,020**. More cards are available in the narthex lobby. If you have not received one, please call the church office at 603 772-3332 or you can make a secure pledge online.

Greening of the church **Today at 12:30 p.m.** We are looking for helping hands to put up aisle candles and wreaths.

A free **CPR class** will be offered at Christ Church for anyone interested in learning Basic Life Support. Learn what to do if someone becomes unresponsive because of a heart condition, breathing failure or opioid overdose. The date will probably be on a Saturday morning, depending on everyone’s availability. As of now, January 11, 18 and 26 are available. If you are interested, send an email with your preference for dates to Darla in the church office at office@christchurchexeter.org or Wendy Gladstone at WAGladstone@comcast.net.

To make a donation, you are welcome to use this QR code from your smartphone.



**This week at Christ Church
December 22-28**

Sunday	Pageant Rehearsal 11:30 a.m. PSP Rehearsal 1:00 p.m.
Tuesday	Christmas Eve Pageant and Holy Communion 4:00 p.m. Traditional Christmas Service 8:00 p.m. (music begins @ 7:30 p.m.)
Wednesday	Holy Communion & Carols 10:00 a.m.

CHRIST CHURCH

43 Pine St., Exeter, NH 03833

Phone: (603) 772-3332 E-mail: office@christchurchexeter.org

Office Hours: Mon, Tue, Thur 9 a.m. - 12 Noon, Weds 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. OFFICE CLOSED FRIDAYS

RECTOR

The Rev. Mark Pendleton

Ext. 12 [cell phone 860 490-8544]

mpendleton@christchurchexeter.org

CURATE

The Rev. Nicole Benevenia

nbenevenia@christchurchexeter.org

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Suzanne Jalbert Jones

musicdirector@christchurchexeter.org

ORGANIST

Bruce Adami

bruce@christchurchexeter.org

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT & SAFE CHURCH MINISTER

Darla Watt

office@christchurchexeter.org

BOOKKEEPER

Richard Ingram

bookkeeper@christchurchexeter.org

SENIOR SEXTON

George Malgeri

ssexton@christchurchexeter.org

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF PINE STREET PLAYERS

Lexi Meunier

thepinestreetplayers@gmail.com

EVENTS COORDINATOR

Christina DeMaio

events@christchurchexeter.org

VESTRY FOR 2024

Senior Warden

Patricia Gianotti

Junior Warden

Judy Blaisdell

Treasurer

Richard Ingram

Clerk

John Cofer

Scott Anders

John Hodsdon

Susan Dixon

Blake Carrico

Jennifer Murray

John Woodard

Juliette Gavin

Morgan McCay

Alice Bentley