

# Reflections

In A Monthly Newsletter of the  
Spotswood Reformed Church

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Serving the community since 1821

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*THE WISE STILL SEEK HIM*

**January 2016**

## From the Pastor's Desk

The following cover letter has been published in "Reflections" several times over the years. It has been suggested that it might be time to publish it again as new information for some and to refresh the memory for others.

Once again we look ahead and begin a new year of ministry and mission as the people of God who gather together in fellowship and service. You and I are called into ministry and service reaching out to one another and to the world. As members of the Spotswood Reformed Church we gather in a common bond and understanding of what it means to follow the Christ; of what it means to be in covenant relationship with God.

Membership in the Spotswood Reformed Church, or in any church of Jesus Christ for that matter, means being a part of the body of Christ. There is a personal dimension to the experience as well as a community aspect to it. According to the Book of Church Order as published by the Reformed Church in America, each year the Boards of Elders of every congregation in our denomination are required to review the membership rolls and make an assessment of the membership status of each person. This can be a tedious and arduous assignment, but it is one that must be done; not only for statistical information, but also as a way of keeping track of church family members and friends.



Our denomination has several membership categories: confessing members, baptized members, inactive members, and adherents. The following is an explanation of how these categories are defined as found in the Book of Church Order:

*"Confessing members" (or sometimes referred to as "active members") are "members who have received Christian baptism and who*

*have made a profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ before the board of elders, or who have made a reaffirmation of a previous profession of faith, or who have presented a satisfactory certificate of transfer from another Christian church."*

*"Baptized members" are those people who "have received the sacrament of Christian baptism; who may participate at the Lord's Table, but who have not been received by the board of elders as confessing members."*

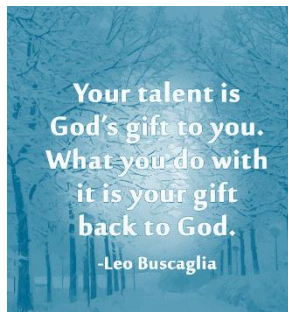
*"Non-confessing members" (or sometimes referred to as "inactive members") are members "whose relationship with the church has ceased for one year or who for one year have not made faithful use of the means of grace, especially the hearing of the Word and the use of the Lord's Supper" (which basically means, not attending worship services on Sunday mornings), "unless there are extenuating circumstances making such faithful use impossible."*

*"Adherents" are all those who "participate in the life, work, and worship of the church, but have not made a confession of faith before the board of elders and the congregation and who have not been received into the membership of the church."*

*The board of elders may remove from the church roll the names of the following members: one who has transferred to another church; one who has united with another church without securing a certificate of transfer; one who has had a prolonged inactive status.*

Membership in the church of Jesus Christ must first and foremost begin with a confession of faith and trust in our Lord. But it cannot stop there...words that are not backed up with actions are empty and meaningless. Participation in the life, work and worship of the church is essential for spiritual growth and it is vital to the life of

the church. You are the lifeblood of the congregation! Without active participation on the part of its members, the church ceases to exist. All the services and programs, the support and sacraments are only possible when people of faith make a commitment to God and to one another.



In other words, showing up on Sunday mornings to offer God your worship and your praise; your time, talent and treasure, is at the heart of who you are, if you consider yourself a Christian. And for those of you who are faithful in your attendance and have honored the commitment to Christ's church that you made when

you joined, I say, "Amen and Amen! Thanks be to God for such faithful servants!!"

For those of you reading this cover letter and wondering what the status is of your membership in the Spotswood Reformed Church or the membership status of a friend or family member, please feel free to contact one of the elders on consistory or Rev. Ribbans. If you're not sure who any of these people are, then maybe that in and of itself answers the question of your status. If the names and faces of elders and pastor don't look or sound familiar...well then maybe you've been away too long! And if you're not comfortable asking about the status of your membership, there's a simple way to answer the question. Walk through the red doors and into the sanctuary of the Spotswood Reformed Church on Sunday mornings at 9:50 a.m., greet your fellow church members and friends and join us as we worship God.

We have just celebrated the wonderful, mysterious and gracious birth of our Savior. What better way to give thanks to God for such an amazing gift, and mean it, than by making the commitment to be a part of his church. After everything He has given us, isn't that the least we can give him?

As you think about the year ahead, please think about the priorities of how you spend your time, how you share your talent and how you give of your treasure. Make the life, the work, the ministry and mission of the Spotswood Reformed Church the heart of your life, your work, your ministry and your mission and in so doing... "give glory to your Father in heaven."

So be it for all of us!

JER

## A Big "Thank You"

*I would like to express my most sincere thanks to all of you for another blessed year of shared ministries. Working together with you and worshipping with you has brought so much meaning and joy to my life that I can't imagine how different my life would have been had I not joined you 15 years ago. Coming back to NJ was an easy transition for me, having*

*attended New Brunswick Seminary and having grown up in Somerville. Albeit, it had been a few years since those days (and dealing with the traffic did take some getting used to) but after all is said and done, if I had the chance to do it over again, I would jump at the opportunity to be your pastor and teacher. And finally, I would like to express my thanks for the most generous Christmas gifts and well wishes I have received these past weeks.*

*Many thanks to you all,  
Pastor Jim Ribbans*

## A Thank You for Prayers and Encouragement

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*A long, over-due thank you for your heartfelt prayers, encouragement, cards, and support through this season of our lives. During my time in Philly, there were times of loneliness, fear, and uncertainty – dark places for sure. But God continued to lead me and my family through, constantly providing the nourishment we needed through our loving SRC family.*

*Thank you for providing Kevin with your prayerful and financial support as he continues to grow in his journey.*

*Thank you and may God continue to bless each of you.*

*Tracy Suchcicki*

## Congratulations to Rev. Ribbans!

On Sunday, January 21, 2001, Rev. James E. Ribbans was installed as our minister. Thank you, Rev. Ribbans, for your commitment and dedication to our congregation and for your spiritual guidance over the last 15 years. God bless you as you continue to serve Him!



## Worship Team

Happy 2016 from the Worship Team! We hope your Advent and Christmas time was full and rich. We are looking forward to a wonderful 2016, worshipping together as a covenant community!

The Worship Team has been in discussions with the Christian Education Team and since some teachers would like a longer time in the classroom with the children, we have made a decision to do our Children's Sermons on the second and fourth Sunday of each month. Therefore, on the second and fourth Sundays the children will come to church and then go to Sunday School right after the Children's sermon as we have been

doing. However, on the first, third and any fifth Sundays, the children will go directly to their Sunday School classrooms.

Also, the Liturgist lineup has been finalized through August. The schedules are posted on the bulletins boards by the kitchenette and in the Narthex. As always, if you need to change dates please write the changes on the lists AND let Sherry Ruckdeschel know.

Worship Team has the remaining meetings scheduled for the year – and anyone is welcome to attend any of our meetings:

**Monday, January 4th at 7:30 PM**

Topics: Lent, Easter, National Day of Prayer

**Tuesday, May 10th at 7:30 PM**

Topics: Year-end preparations

Going forward, please let us know if you desire to be part of planning worship and/or participating in the leading of worship. You can speak to any member of the team: Carole George, Kathy Romero, Margaret Tierney, or Sherry Ruckdeschel.

### ***Our Gathered Community Comes Together for January and February***

#### ***Sunday, January 3***

Second Sunday after Christmas Day  
Communion Service  
Please remember your CUP Offering

#### ***Sunday, January 10***

First Sunday after Epiphany  
Installation of Elders and Deacons  
Commissioning of Teams  
Coffee Hour following Worship

#### ***Sunday, January 17***

Second Sunday after Epiphany  
Praise Sunday  
Communion Service  
Please remember your CUP Offering

#### ***Sunday, January 24***

Third Sunday after Epiphany  
Psalter Sunday – Psalm 19

#### ***Sunday, January 31***

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

#### ***Sunday, February 7***

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany  
Communion Service  
Please remember your CUP Offering

#### ***Wednesday, February 10***

Ash Wednesday  
Worship Service – 7:30 PM

#### ***Sunday, February 14***

First Sunday in Lent  
Coffee Hour following Worship

#### ***Sunday, February 21***

Second Sunday in Lent  
Communion Service  
Please remember your CUP Offering

#### ***Sunday, February 28***

Third Sunday in Lent

### ***LITURGISTS***

**1/10** Jan Ortt  
**1/24** Pat Hampson  
**2/7** Chuck Hager  
**2/28** Barbara Brain

### ***CHILDREN'S SERMONS***

**1/10** Rev. Ribbans  
**1/24** Mark Ruckdeschel  
**2/14** Pat Hampson  
**2/28** Carole George

### ***GREETERS***

**1/3** Peggy White and Judie Nicol  
**1/10** Patricia and Robert Hilman  
**1/17** Isabella and Nancy Goretskie  
**1/24** Gary Wallace  
**1/31** Peggy White and Judie Nicol  
**2/7** Junetta Bunce  
**2/14** **Volunteer Needed**  
**2/21** **Volunteer Needed**  
**2/28** Kevin Styles

*If you are unable to serve on any of the dates listed above, please find someone to cover for you. Please let Sherry Ruckdeschel know of any changes to this schedule. Thank you!*

**“Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy...the Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.”  
Psalm 126:2-3**

*Kathy Romero for  
The Worship Team*



### ***With Gratitude to the Chancel Choir***

I am grateful for the SRC Choir:

*For our sopranos:*

- \* **Carole George**, whose quiet prayerfulness and beautiful spirit always supports us.
- \* **Nancy McTaggart**, whose love of music shines through to us all.
- \* **Michelle Tennill**, who brings energy and big love to our group.

*For our altos:*

- \* [Carrie Lawrence](#), who is tireless in her practice and commitment.
- \* [Janice Ortt](#), the fearless section leader, who never says no to a challenge.

*For our tenors:*

- \* [Alice Ryan](#), whose heart is so big she always lifts our spirits.
- \* [George Sliker](#), whose quiet perseverance, work and effort always underpins our efforts.

*For our basses:*

- \* [Mark Ruckdeschel](#), who keeps us laughing, even when we don't want to.
- \* [Margaret Tierney](#), who keeps us laughing, even when we don't want to.

...I am definitely going to split you two up!

I am grateful for those who joined us for our Christmas music ministry:

- \* [Nancy Cano](#), who keeps us on track in all we do.
- \* [Megan Farmer](#) and [Paul Rosato](#), our power singing couple.
- \* [Jim Ribbans](#), who cements us together.
- \* [Lisa Romero](#), who always leads us through the Christmas season.
- \* [The other Romeros](#) – [Erik](#), [Kyle](#) and [Kate](#) who are always there when I need them.
- \* [John Stanzione](#), a newbie, who fits right in with all the craziness.

Thank you one and all for your weekly and yearly commitment to the music ministry at our church. You are true worship leaders whose hard work and joy bring us all closer to God's presence!

*Kathy Romero  
Minister of Music*

**With Gratitude to our Minister of Music**

We want to take this opportunity to thank our fearless leader, Kathy Romero, for all of her tireless efforts and commitment to the music ministry of our church. Through the gifts and talents God has blessed her with, she has helped to guide us into meaningful worship not only on Sundays, but at our practices as well. Kathy, may God continue to bless you as you bless others!

*The Chancel Choir*

**The Lectionary for January**

*Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. Psalm 119:105*

**January 3** – Second Sunday after Christmas Day  
**Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20;**  
**Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9), 10-18**

**January 10** – First Sunday after Epiphany  
**Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17;**  
**Luke 3:15-17, 21-22**

**January 17** – Second Sunday after Epiphany  
**Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10;**  
**1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11**

**January 24** – Third Sunday after Epiphany  
**Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19;**  
**1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21**

**January 31** – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany  
**Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6;**  
**1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30**

**Mission and Outreach Team****Many Thanks and a Look Ahead to 2016**

Many thanks to all of you who participated in our giving projects this year. The folks that we helped were truly overwhelmed with the generosity of our congregation. With your help, we blessed children and adults around the world with shoes, helped both male and female Veterans with clothes, toiletries, batteries and Christmas gifts. We provided a struggling family with a food basket for Thanksgiving and two military families with a joyous Christmas. And throughout the year, we have provided financial support to the Bunuparadah family – our missionaries in Thailand.

As we enter into 2016, the Team is looking for people and projects to support. If anyone has suggestions, please contact a team member or the church office.

We wish you all a happy, healthy 2016!

*Carrie Lawrence for  
The Mission & Outreach Team*

**For Donations to our Veterans**

*Dear Friends,*

*On behalf of the residents and staff at the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Menlo Park, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your organization for your most generous donation of clothing and toiletries for our residents.*

*Your donation was given to our Recreation Department for our residents who are in need of these wonderful clothes and toiletries.*

*Our residents appreciate all the kind donations they receive. Donations like yours help to provide a better quality of life for our residents.*

*Sincerely,  
Joseph Brandspiegel, Chief Executive Officer  
Marsha Lasko, Supervisor of Recreation*

## South Carolina Relief Fund

Thank you to all who contributed to the South Carolina Relief Fund. We collected \$70. Tom DeVries, General Secretary of the Reformed Church in America, wrote "You have made a difference through your generosity – Thank You!"

## Thanksgiving Gift Basket

The Mission & Outreach Team delivered a Thanksgiving gift basket to a local family. The family was very grateful and one of the children sent the following note and picture:

Dear, Faces unknown,

Sometimes in our lives along with the good,  
There comes sorrow.  
There is a saying, we never know what a day is  
Going to bring.  
Whether, it be good, or be it bad.  
What matters, is having people  
Sometimes friends,  
Sometimes family,  
Sometimes faces unknown.  
Always knowing you're not alone.  
Because of our love for those we love  
We hide our tears,  
We protect others from our fears.

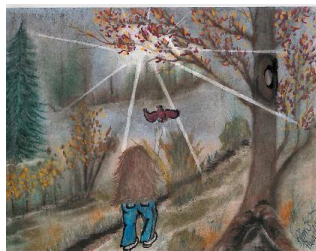
If we are lucky enough, a light comes  
Through those dark clouds.  
From faces we never met.  
The impact of a kind deed, the kind we  
Didn't even know we need, this changes our  
Perspective, that people in this life are still good,  
And not all news is bad.  
It's not the generous gifts we may receive.  
It's their thoughtfulness, a piece of their  
Heart selflessly giving to you.  
Opening our eyes, enabling us to see  
That ray of light and feeling of hope.  
Teaching us that not every day brings bad  
When we least expect it  
From faces unknown.

From the kindness they have shown,  
That little light brightens our day  
And a smile on our face is shown.  
It's the greatest gift of all,  
A smile is the best medicine.  
To know you're thought of,  
To know you're cared about.

You gave me hope, not all days are dark  
Not every envelope opened is bad news  
And all from faces unknown.

From my heart to yours.

Thank you,  
Kim



## Dinner-Go-Round #2

The second of three Dinner-Go-Rounds will be held on Saturday, January 9th. Here are the who, what, when, where and why of these dinners:

**WHO:** Everyone in our congregation - yes, that means YOU!!! Of course, you must like to eat good food, have good conversation, and generally enjoy yourself!

**WHAT:** A time for people to come together over dinner in groups no larger than eight people to enjoy food and get to know our congregational family outside of the walls of our church. This smaller group arrangement allows for rich relationship building and a time to really



get to know each other well - as any family would!

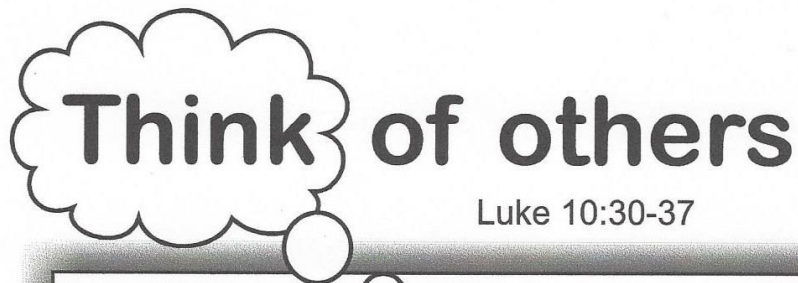
**WHEN:** Saturday, January 9, 2016, and Saturday, March 12, 2016. So MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW! Save these dates - join in the fun of getting to know your church family better!

**WHERE:** We will need a few people who are willing to open their home to "host" the dinner. The perk of being a host - YOU DON'T HAVE TO COOK! Every person, or every couple, will sign up to bring a main dish, a side dish or a dessert! Sign me up now!!!

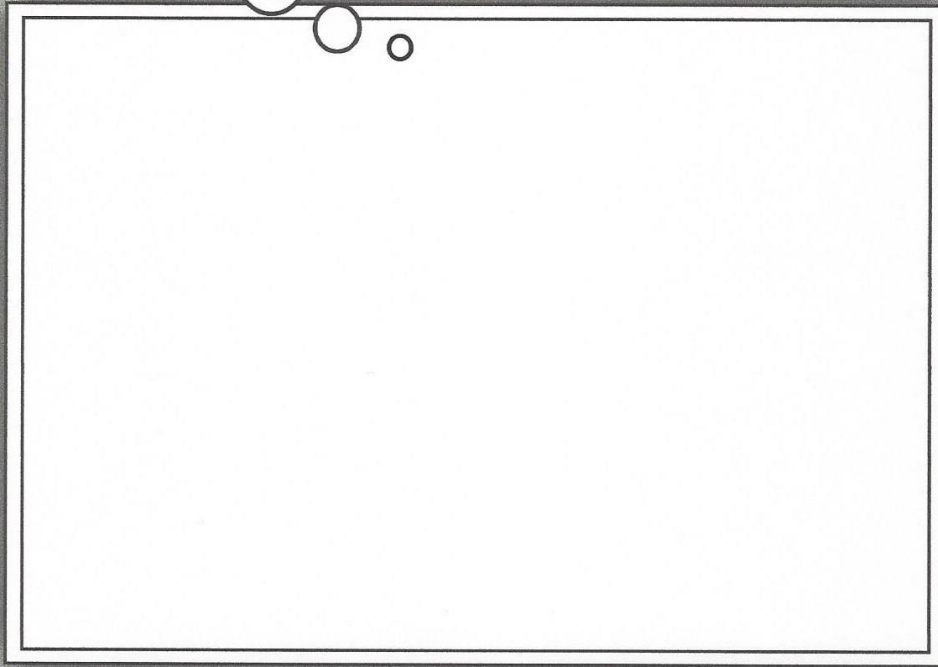
**WHY:** Well, simply put, God made us to be in relationship - in relationship with Him and with each other. There is simply no better way to get to know another person than breaking bread and spending time together in conversation!

There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. Please join us!

# Just for Kids...



Luke 10:30-37



Draw a picture of yourself doing something kind

Find the words in the square and draw a line around them.

It helps if you shade in the boxes that have an X, Y or Z.

SERVE  
CARE  
AID  
LOVE  
GIVE  
SHARE  
HELP

X	Z	X	S	H	A	R	E
C	A	R	E	X	I	X	Z
Z	X	Y	R	Z	D	Z	X
X	Z	X	V	X	Z	X	Y
Z	X	H	E	L	P	X	Z
X	Y	Z	X	O	X	Y	X
Z	X	G	I	V	E	X	Y
X	Y	X	Z	E	X	Z	X



**Prayer Requests**

**Dennis Adamic** (Mae Vaughn’s grandson) – at home in Spotswood; **Sandra Adamic** (Mae Vaughn’s daughter) – at home in Monroe Twp.; **Janet Applegate** – at home in Old Bridge; **Ann Bailey** – at home in Spotswood; **Deanna Bobash** (Kelly Ortt’s mother) – at home in Sayreville; **Chris Broscius** (Sharon Farmer’s son) – at home in Kentucky; **Florence Cano** – in Twining Village, Holland, PA; **Jacquie Chica and her unborn daughter, Esmee** (Pat Hampson’s granddaughter and soon-to-be great-granddaughter) – at home in Colonia; **Kyle Davidson** (Barbara Brain’s great nephew) – at home in Oregon; **Pat DeFazio** – at home in Monroe Twp.; **Teresa Dunlop** (Margaret Tierney’s sister) – at home in East Stroudsburg, PA; **Megan Farmer** – at home in Monroe Twp.; **Sharon Farmer** – at home in Monroe Twp.; **Eunice Harrigfeld** – at home in Spotswood; **Francis Ortt** (Kelly Ortt’s father) – at home in Rockford, IL; **Linda Rodriguez** (Shirley Leary’s and Barbara Jagemann’s niece) – at a rehabilitation facility in Sebastian, FL; **Tracy Suchcicki** – at home in Monroe Twp.; **Joan Worthington** – at home in Toms River; **Beverly Jawidzik, Scottie McTaggart, and Marie Riddle** – at the Reformed Church Home.

A New Year's Prayer

May God make your year a happy one!  
 Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain,  
 But by strengthening you to bear it, as it comes;  
 Not by making your path easy,  
 But by making you sturdy to travel any path;  
 Not by taking hardships from you,  
 But by taking fear from your heart;  
 Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,  
 But by keeping your face bright,  
 even in the shadows;  
 Not by making your life always pleasant,  
 But by showing you  
 when people and their causes need you most,  
 and by making you anxious to be there to help.  
 God's love, peace, hope and joy to you  
 for the year ahead.

~Anonymous



**January Birthdays**

- |            |                    |
|------------|--------------------|
| January 2  | Nikki Ortt         |
| January 2  | Kyle Van Wageninge |
| January 5  | Marilyn Franz      |
| January 10 | Kelly Genthe       |
| January 16 | Kathy Romero       |
| January 18 | Pedro Gonzalez     |
| January 18 | Janice Ortt        |
| January 21 | Ella Styles        |
| January 22 | Margaret Tierney   |
| January 26 | Diane Lucas        |
| January 30 | Tom Gahrman        |
| January 31 | Judie Nicol        |

**Reformed Church Home Friends Birthdays**

- |            |                  |
|------------|------------------|
| January 3  | Helen Titus      |
| January 4  | Carmela Carrato  |
| January 16 | Evelyn Wieser    |
| January 17 | Luise Hennessey  |
| January 19 | Laura Salamone   |
| January 23 | Red Sujkowski    |
| January 23 | Barbara Zotstein |
| January 27 | Charles Brown    |



**January Anniversaries**

- |            |                        |
|------------|------------------------|
| January 16 | Charlie & Kathy Romero |
| January 22 | Frank & Kristyn Corace |
| January 29 | Luke & Fay Knox        |

*If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office.*

***For further information, and how to become involved in our church life, please call on one or more of the following people:***

James E. Ribbans, Pastor  
 Joseph W. Woods, Pastor Emeritus  
 Kathryn Romero, Minister of Music, Elder  
 Linda Soley, Church Treasurer  
 Charles Uhl, Financial Secretary  
 Sherry Ruckdeschel, Administrative Assistant, Clerk of Consistory, Newsletter Editor  
 Junetta Bunce – Elder Elect, Interfaith Network of Care  
 Sharon Farmer – Deacon  
 Carole George – New Circle Chair  
 Rita Hussey – Sunday School Superintendent  
 Carrie Lawrence – Deacon, COHM Board Member  
 James Lockwood – Interfaith Network of Care  
 Jennifer Mullen-Sommer – Elder Delegate to Classis  
 Janice Ortt – Elder Elect  
 Mark Ruckdeschel – Vice President of Consistory, Elder  
 Alice Ryan – Elizabeth Circle Chair, Alice's CUP Food Pantry Coordinator for SRC  
 Kevin Styles – Deacon  
 Michelle Tennill – Deacon Elect  
 Ken VanWageninge – Cemetery Chair  
 Peggy White – Elder

**TEAM AND TASK FORCE MEMBERS**

**Building & Grounds Team**

Nancy Cano  
 Kelly Ortt  
 David Sliker  
 Kevin Styles

**Christian Education Team**

Mark Ruckdeschel – Team Chair  
 Elizabeth Goretzkie  
 Marcia Halbert  
 Rita Hussey  
 Janice Ortt  
 Nikki Ortt  
 Tracy Suchcicki  
 Michelle Tennill

**Finance Team**

Kevin Styles – Team Chair  
 George Berry  
 Chuck Hager  
 Linda Soley  
 Charlie Uhl  
 Ken VanWageninge

**HOPE Team**

Junetta Bunce  
 Carole George  
 Rita Hussey  
 Judie Nicol  
 Kathy Romero  
 Mark Ruckdeschel  
 Sherry Ruckdeschel  
 George Sliker  
 Tracy Suchcicki  
 Peggy White

**Mission & Outreach Team**

Pat DeFazio  
 Sharon Farmer  
 Eunice Harrigfeld  
 Pat Hilman  
 Carrie Lawrence  
 Alice Ryan  
 Barbara Sliker  
 Laura Swiderski  
 Mae Vaughn  
 Peggy White

**Pixie Task Force**

David Sliker - Chair  
 Kelly Ortt  
 Barbara Sliker

**Worship Team**

Kathy Romero – Team Co-Chair  
 Carole George – Team Co-Chair  
 Sherry Ruckdeschel  
 Margaret Tierney