

St. Michael's Episcopal Church

Faith, Community and Hope ~ 50 Years and Growing

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2013/JANUARY 2014

from the Interim Rector

Dear Friends in Christ,

As I sit down to write this message to you, we are half way through the Advent season and the light of Christmas is getting closer. I would like to share a personal story of one way that I am reminded of the hope that we are promised on Christmas. The Christmas hope is not only a hope that happened 2,000 years ago but it is a hope that we can embrace today. My story is of the Christmas cactus that has always been part of my life. It has survived quite a few moves and it still blesses me with beautiful blooms every Christmas. It belonged to my maternal grandmother and as the days shorten and the nights grow cold, I wait in anticipation for the buds to appear, and they have. My hope is that the plant will be in full bloom right around Christmas.

This plant means a lot to me because I grew up with it in my childhood home. When my maternal grandmother died, my mother inherited the plant and when my mother died I inherited the plant. Over the years, I have given cuttings to family and friends in the hope that the gift that I have been given can give joy to others. This plant holds a part of my past, my present and my future, and during this time of year as I await the gift of the flowers that are to come, I am more aware of this than at other times of the year.

As the dark and cold of winter sets in, the buds of the Christmas cactus are a concrete reminder to me that the hope that we find in Jesus Christ is real and is ours and holds a part of our past, present and future. The gift of salvation is the true meaning of the birth of Jesus and as Christians we are called to spread this Good News to all people. The Christmas cactus reminds me that God became flesh and lived and died as one of us. It reminds me that the Incarnation is about God reminding us that God is with us. It reminds me that God loves each of us; hears our pain and offers compassion. It reminds me that God will never abandon us; that God is the God of love and nothing can separate us from the love of God.

As we gather together to worship, pray, play, work and celebrate who we are in Jesus Christ, may we each be reminded that we are beloved children of a God who will go to great lengths to let us know that we are loved beyond anything that we can imagine.

I wish and pray that you and your loved ones will have a blessed Christmas

Blessings and hope,

Pat Stelz



Sunday, December 15

Eucharist at 8 & 10 AM
Candlelight Lessons & Carols at 5 PM
Deadline for Stockings of Hope

Wednesday, December 18

Blue Christmas Service at 7 PM

Sunday, December 22

Eucharist at 8
Advent Pageant at 10

Christmas Eve, December 24

5 PM Festival Eucharist with Blessing of the Crèche and children's story
10 PM Festival Eucharist with special music

Sunday, December 29

Eucharist and Hymn Sing at 10
(no Eucharist at 8)

Sunday January 5

Eucharist at 8
All Ages Eucharist at 10
Children's offering of Heifer boxes at 10

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URGENT NEED — STOCKINGS OF HOPE – DEADLINE SUNDAY DECEMBER 15

We have 10 stockings completed out of the 60 needed. Can you please help? Items needed include socks, gloves, nail polish, chapstick, hats and scarves. All items must be new please. Bins are located at St Michael's or at Soul Spirit Studios, 1562 Washington Street and at the Colburns 131 Cedar Street. **The deadline is Sunday December 15.** Hate to shop? We gladly accept money and will do the shopping for you! For more information, contact Paula at pcolburn1@verizon.net or Pamela at newpamela@comcast.net.

GREENING OF THE CHURCH

During Advent, members of the Altar Guild "progressively green" St. Michael's. More decorations are added each Sunday, as we progress towards Christmas. The Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 22, we welcome any parishioners who would like to help in the final transformation of the sanctuary. Please contact Pat Weston (508-429-6455) with any questions.

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Although Christmas is a time of celebration for most of us, for some it can be a sad reminder of what has been lost -- whether it is a loved one, a job, or good health. On Wednesday, December 18, at 7 PM, St. Michael's will be hosting a Blue Christmas Service for those who may not be feeling the joy of the season. This is a special reflective opportunity to acknowledge the blue in our Christmas. It will be a service of readings, music, candle lighting, and silence.



TWO CHRISTMAS COFFEE HOURS

Providing treats for Coffee Hour for December 22 and 29 in a sort of "pot luck" sharing makes sense for all of us during this busy time. As you are baking and buying, think of providing one treat for one of the coffee hours. While there are several lines for names on the Coffee Hour sign-up sheet, we will be happy to receive any last minute goodies. For more information, please contact Nan

ONE YEAR LATER

A candlelight vigil for the victims of the Newtown shooting will be held on Saturday, December 14 from 4 to 5 PM in the Holliston Town Common. Please come and bring your family for a thoughtful remembrance. Candles will be provided.

CHURCH SCHOOL SCHEDULE

On Sunday December 22, all children are invited to take part in the annual Advent Pageant. There will be no atrium lessons on that day, nor on Sunday, December 29, when children are invited to sit with their families in church. Church School atrium lessons will resume on Sunday, January 5.

NURSERY SCHEDULE

The nursery will be staffed on Sunday, December 22 when our Church School children present an Advent pageant. The nursery will not be staffed on Christmas Eve, December 24 because past experience has shown that there is no demand for nursery care on those days.

ADVENT PAGEANT ON SUNDAY DECEMBER 22

This year's pageant has roles for every child who would like to take part – and opportunities for teens and adults also. Please speak to Mike Teuber (508-429-6335 or Michael.teuber5@gmail.com) if you or your child can take part. There will be a rehearsal this Sunday, December 15 after the 10 AM service.



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AND MUSIC DONATIONS

If you would like to make a contribution to the cost of Christmas flowers and special Christmas Eve music in "memory of" or "in thanksgiving for" a loved one or loved ones, please fill out

the form on the back page and mail it to the church or place it with your donation in the offering plate on Sunday. Poinsettias may be collected after the Ten O'Clock Service on Sunday December 29.

HYMN SING DECEMBER 29 AT 10 AM

Do you have a favorite hymn that is seldom sung at St. Michael's? Or is there a hymn with special meaning for you that you'd like to tell us about? On Sunday, December 29, at our one service only at 10 AM that morning, we will have a hymn sing in place of the sermon. Everyone is invited to come and say a word or two about a favorite hymn – we'll sing a verse or two of each hymn.

HAVE YOU PICKED UP YOUR HEIFER BOX?

Advent calendars and collection boxes are available in the narthex. Children are invited to bring their boxes back to St. Michael's on the Feast of the Epiphany, Sunday January 5, and vote on the animal to be donated this year. If you have any questions, please get in touch with Michelle Tate at michellefrancistate@yahoo.com or 508-893-0945.

*Wishing you a blessed Christmas
and New Year.*

The Interim Rector, The Wardens and Vestry of St. Michael's



Christmas at St. Michael's Church

Third Sunday of Advent, December 15

8 & 10 AM Eucharist

5 PM Candlelight Lessons and Carols

Wednesday, December 18

7 PM Blue Christmas Service

Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 22

8 AM Eucharist

10 AM Pageant with Eucharist

Christmas Eve, December 24

5 PM Festival Christmas Eucharist

with Blessing of the Crèche and children's story

10 PM Festival Christmas Eucharist with choir

The First Sunday after Christmas, December 29

10 AM Eucharist and Hymn Sing (one service only)

The Epiphany, January 5

8 AM Eucharist

10 AM All Ages Eucharist

Children's offering of Heifer boxes

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PLEDGE!

Dana Frye, Stewardship Committee Chairperson

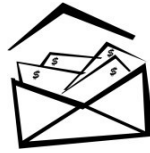
We give thanks to all of you who have made generous pledges to St. Michael's for 2014. With your enthusiastic and generous response to our *Stepping Into The Future* pledge campaign, we are well on the way to the base of financial support that our parish needs for a vibrant year ahead. As of December 8, 57 parish households have made pledge commitments for 2014 totaling \$102,098. This is encouraging progress towards our campaign goal of a pledge from every household that calls St. Michael's home. If you haven't yet pledged, please send your pledge form as soon as possible to St. Michael's or place it in the offering plate.

In the seasons of Advent and Christmas, we are reminded of much that St. Michael's means to us – rich worship and music, the joy of our children's participation in the pageant, fellowship at the All Parish Breakfast with a Visit from St. Nicholas, learning and sharing at Companions, the rewards of helping others through Stockings of Hope and the Heifer Advent Calendar. Please help us continue to answer God's call to grow in faith, hope and community.

SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Rector Search Committee is currently reviewing and discussing parish input to date that is intended to help guide us in crafting a Parish Profile in our search for a new Rector. In the next several weeks we will be reflecting our understanding of those issues back to you, to insure we have heard the proper tone and content. At that point, we will begin drafting the language that will frame our Parish Profile. We are also beginning the task of establishing the necessary timelines and procedures for gathering names and information of potential candidates for Rector, including how to go about screening candidates, as well as developing questions for interviews. Guidelines for much of this process are provided to us by the Diocese Office of Transition Ministry, and the consultant we have engaged through the OTM.

Of course, please feel free if you wish to speak with any member of the Search Committee - Margaret Cardello, Joan Clark, Helen Daly, Cathy Harper, Tom Koshy, Bob Malone, Craig Miller, Ken Rice, Ralph Stover, and Stacey Thorner.

**UPDATE AND THANK YOU – TOGETHER NOW CAMPAIGN**

Barbara Gardner, Junior Warden

As the calendar year draws to a close, it is an appropriate time to bring you up-to-date on the Together Now campaign. We are deeply grateful to each and every parishioner who pledged to our Together Now campaign and we rejoice, in this season of joy, with the wonderful things we have been able to accomplish as a result. These funds have empowered our congregation in new and imaginative ways and, as time goes by, will enhance our mission and ministry together.

Because of your extraordinary generosity, we have received \$49,120.05 through the 4th quarter of 2012 and \$18,272.56 through the 3rd quarter of 2013. This has allowed us to pay off our Stokes Loan mortgage of \$26,162.00 in September, 2012 and make a payment of \$8,650 for our beautiful and now treasured stained glass windows. The remaining cost of the windows were paid through a diocese grant of \$18,000. Our final allotment thus far has been to St. Michael's Endowment Fund for \$28,701.61. Building up our endowment is critical to the long term sustainability and financial health of the church.

We will continue to be very conservative in the use of these funds. One of our goals is to resurface the rest of the parking lot and we have begun to spruce up the inside of the church building by repainting Eva's Room and getting quotes to remodel the downstairs ladies' room. Pat Stelz, Joan Clark and I went to a luncheon attended by members of our deanery who had participated in Together Now campaigns on October 30 at St. Elizabeth's Church in Sudbury. We learned first-hand what other churches were doing with their fund campaigns and how they were keeping their parishioners informed. There was a real excitement in the room as people described their various projects and missions. The diocese representative reported that they had reached their \$20 million goal which was allowing the diocese to establish mission hubs and do much more outreach here and around the world.

Once again, a heartfelt THANK YOU to all of you who helped and continue to help by your commitment to St. Michael's and to all the things we can accomplish together through the Together Now campaign. It has allowed our church community to become a rich witness to God's abundant love and is a true testament to your faith.

LADIES ROOM TO GET FACELIFT

Materials are currently being procured to renovate the first floor ladies bathroom. Renovations will include a new floor, new stall partitions, new lighting fixtures and fresh paint. The work will take place when the Montessori school is closed for their vacation, which is between December 21 and January 4. Work will be done by contractor Anthony Babin. This is part on an ongoing effort to spruce up the premises prior to rector candidates coming to visit us next year.

SEEKING NEW VESTRY MEMBERS

There are several vacancies to be filled by election at the Annual Meeting on January 26 and we're looking for parishioners who are interested in serving St. Michael's by becoming a Vestry member. Vestry members are spiritual leaders of the parish and share with the Rector responsibility for the growth and health of St. Michael's. The ministry of the vestry is particularly important this year as we prepare for our new rector and begin to think about and put in place a structure that will help us to respond to the comments of the parish. Each vestry member has oversight of a particular ministry such as stewardship, Christian formation for adults and children, outreach, fellowship, worship, communication, newcomers, and pastoral care.

Vestry meetings are held once a month (currently the fourth Wednesday evening of the month). Vestry members are also asked to attend a vestry retreat (on a Saturday) once a year and to assist in counting St. Michael's Sunday offering for about six Sundays a year. Candidates for the vestry should be parish members who are regular in worship, make a stewardship pledge and give of their time and ability to the church. If you are interested in serving on the vestry, please speak to Senior Warden Carl Twomey (508-881-7790).

BAPTISMS

The sacrament of baptism will be celebrated at the Ten O'Clock Eucharist on Sunday, January 12, the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. If you are interested in baptism for yourself or your child, please speak to Pat Stelz.

**ANNUAL MEETING—
SAVE THE DATE**

Save the date for Sunday, January 26, when the Annual Meeting offers a chance for the entire parish to get together. We will follow last year's successful pattern of holding the majority of the meeting during the 10 AM service. Following the Eucharist, there will be a potluck brunch.

It's an informal affair and we hope that you will be there. There will be activities for children during the brunch. (An abbreviated version of the meeting, without voting, will be available during the 8 AM Eucharist.)

THANK YOU TO:

Karen Ballenger for sharing her gift for painting Eva's Room and Hallway.

Jeff PinterParsons for website design.

Pat Duffey who organized and provided food for the Bishop's Reception and Breakfast with St. Nick.

Dana Frye and Deb Ervin for our Stewardship Campaign.

Deb Ervin and Nan Malone for bringing the Deanery Instructed Eucharist to St. Michael's.

Church School teachers, Choir, Altar Guild, Readers, Eucharist Ministers for their commitment and dedication.

*Thank
You*

St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 1162 Highland Street, Holliston, MA 01746

508-429-4248 E-mail StMichHoll@aol.com Website: www.stmichaelhollistonma.org

Interim Rector: Pat Stelz (patstelz1217@gmail.com or 484-356-8119)

Organist and Choir Director: Matthew Jaroszewicz

Parish Secretary: Amy Plante

Senior Warden: Carl Twomey

Junior Warden: Barbara Gardner

Treasurer: Joan Clark

Clerk: Lisa Ahronian

Adult Education: Deb Ervin, Nan Malone

Building and Grounds: Carl Twomey

Children/Youth Ministries: Craig Miller, Jane McIntyre

Communications: Lisa Ahronian

Fellowship: Pat Duffey, Seth Flannery

Fundraising: Barbara Gardner, Seth Flannery

Newcomer Ministry: Ralph Stover, Carl Twomey,

Craig Miller

Outreach: Pat Duffey, Joan Clark

Pastoral Care: Jane McIntyre, Seth Flannery

Stewardship: Dana Frye, Deb Ervin

Worship: Nan Malone, Ralph Stover

Altar Guild: Pat Weston

Pledge Treasurer: Pete Johnson

Catechesis Level I: Karin Protas

Catechesis Level II: Mike Teuber

Catechesis Level III: Kristen Walters

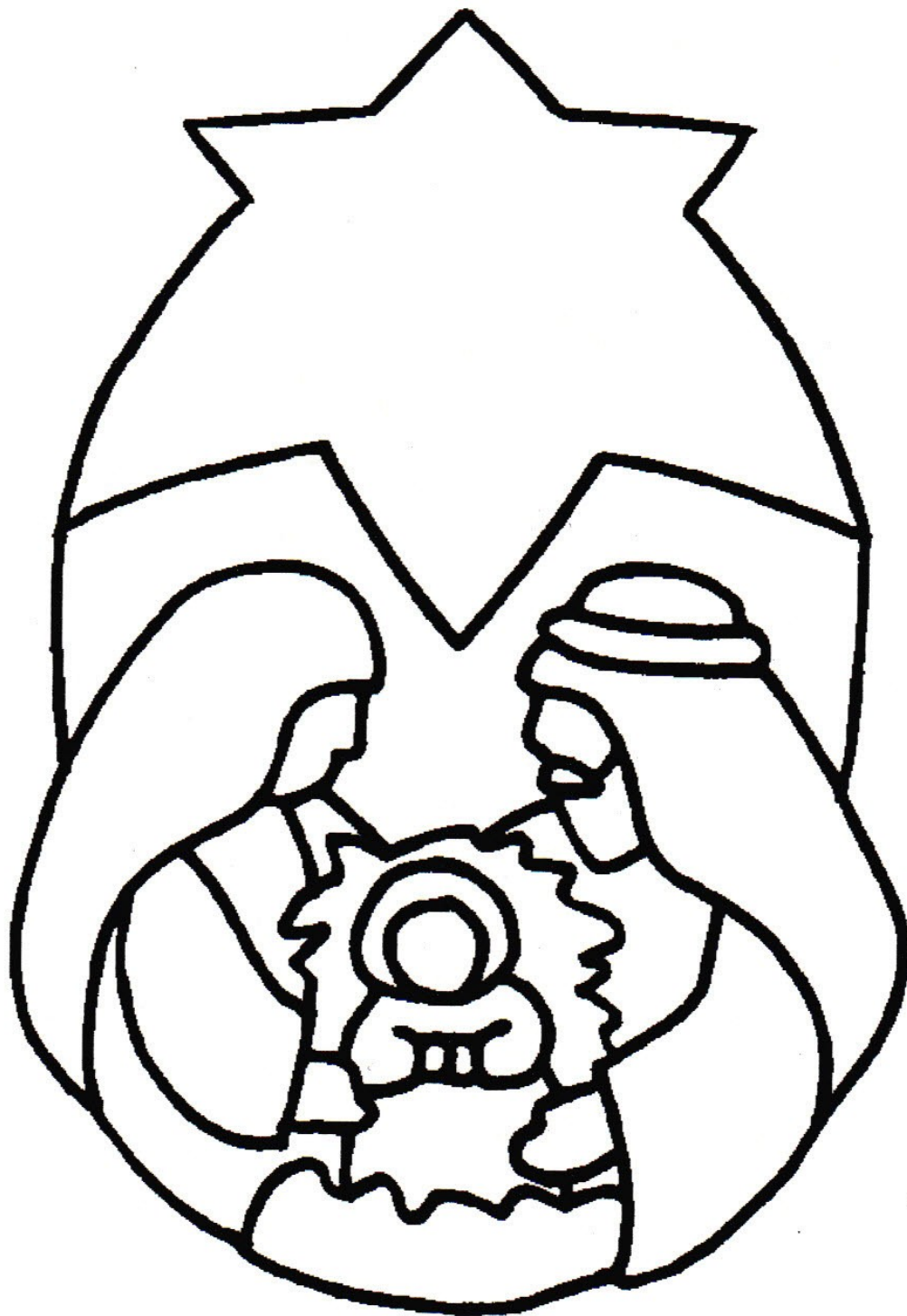
Rite 13 and J2A: Cathy Harper

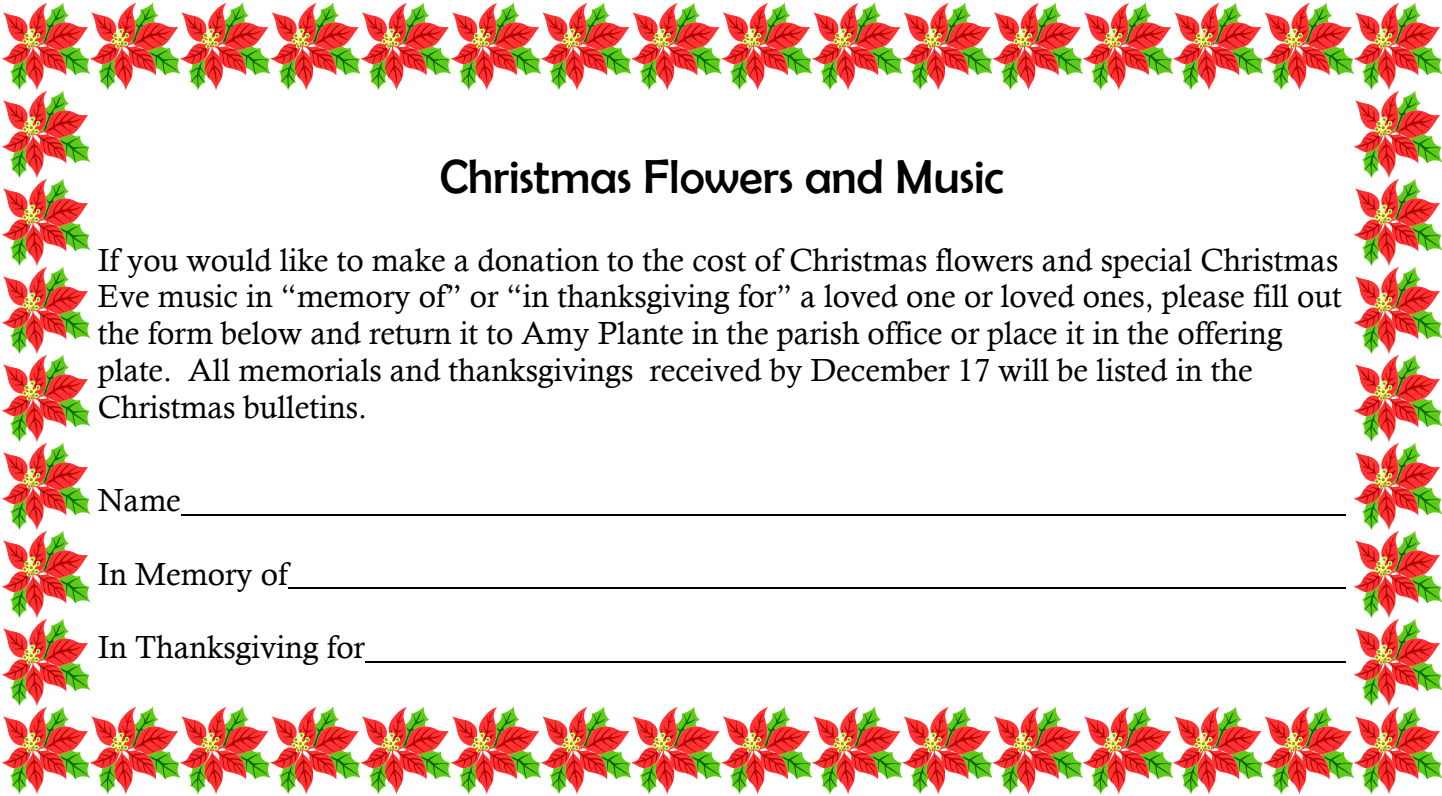
Nursery Caregivers: Tess May, Abigail PinterParsons

JANUARY AT ST. MICHAEL'S

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 New Year's Day	2 Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	3	4
5 Eucharist at 8 All Ages Eucharist at 10 AM No Church School Classes	6 Search Committee at 7PM	7 BNI Group 6:30 to 8:30 AM	8	9 Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	10	11
12 Eucharist at 8 & 10 Church School at 9:45 AM Quilters at 5 PM J2A at 6:30 PM	13 Search Committee at 7PM Girl Scouts 3:30 to 5 PM	14 BNI Group 6:30 to 8:30 AM Girl Scouts 4:30 to 6 PM	15	16 Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	17	18
19 Eucharist at 8 Instructed Eucharist at 10 AM No Rite-13 or J2A	20 Search Committee at 7PM	21 BNI Group 6:30 to 8:30 AM	22 Vestry Meeting 6:30 PM	23 Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	24	25
26 Annual Meeting & Eucharist at 8 & 10 AM Church School at 9:45 AM Pot Luck Brunch at 11:15 AM Quilters at 5 PM J2A at 6:30 PM	27 Search Committee at 7PM	28 BNI Group 6:30 to 8:30 AM	29	30 Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	31	

St. Michael's Kids Page





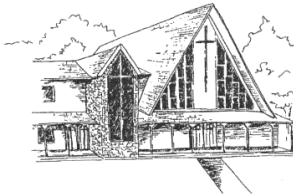
Christmas Flowers and Music

If you would like to make a donation to the cost of Christmas flowers and special Christmas Eve music in “memory of” or “in thanksgiving for” a loved one or loved ones, please fill out the form below and return it to Amy Plante in the parish office or place it in the offering plate. All memorials and thanksgivings received by December 17 will be listed in the Christmas bulletins.

Name _____

In Memory of _____

In Thanksgiving for _____



**St. Michael's Episcopal Church
1162 Highland St.
Holliston, MA 01746**