

The Beacon

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2019



From the Rector's Desk

Sunday, February 24th, will be an exciting day at St. Thomas. On that day we are launching our first "Invitational Sunday." While you are always encouraged to invite people to church every Sunday, February 24th will be a day specifically designed to help you introduce your friends to the beautiful liturgy and warm and friendly community we have at St. Thomas. We are planning extra special coffee hours after both services with tours of the church campus. Childcare will be provided for the 10:00 a.m. service, and our children will be involved in that service as well. We invite you to ask friends of all ages and from any spiritual background.

As you have heard me say before (including at our recent Annual Meeting), the statistics show that most people who attend a church do so because they were invited by someone. (An article from churchgrowth.org says that 86% of people start attending church because a friend invites them, while only 2% do so because of advertising.) So in addition to sending out flyers in the surrounding neighborhood and using social media to invite people, we are asking every parishioner to invite someone to attend church on the 24th.

I know that Episcopalians are often shy about inviting people to church, but it really isn't as hard as it may seem. Here are some suggestions:

Invite people out of your love for our church.

If coming to church is meaningful for you, this is your opportunity to share it with others.

Before you extend an invitation, ask yourself, "Why is worship at St. Thomas important to me?" Take time to think about what draws you to St. Thomas. Here are some of the things many of you have said about why you worship here and what feeds you:

- To receive the joy and love of God, and not only to receive but give and spread the word.
- St. Thomas is where I feel close to God and can reflect on my week.
- The Holy Spirit is alive in the support we give each other and the bonds we have with each other.
- I feel peace as soon as I walk through the door.
- The Holy Spirit brings us together to worship, rejoice, and participate in warm fellowship.

This is not a hard ask or a hard sell. Consider inviting someone to experience a worship service at St. Thomas just as you would consider inviting a friend to a movie or a restaurant. An invitation to join you in church is a way for friends to experience a culture and tradition that you find meaningful.

Help your guests enjoy their time at St.

Thomas. Make your guests feel welcome by helping them navigate through the service and introducing them to others.

Do it in your own way. Whether it is made with lighthearted humor or your own personal testimony, the invitation is yours to make. Find a way to invite people that feels authentic to you.

St. Thomas is a welcoming church, but we also need to be an invitational church--inviting people to experience God's unconditional, life-giving, and liberating love through our faith community.

Peace and many blessings,

Ann +

Have You Included the St. Thomas Endowment Fund in Your Long-Term Estate Plan?



Planning for important things in life is essential...preparing for retirement, planning to protect our loved ones, and providing for long term financial security are significant priorities. Equally important are plans for final distribution of our personal assets, which should reflect the values and principles that guided us during our lives.

As you form your estate plans, please consider including the St. Thomas Endowment Fund. Your gift to our Fund will enable St. Thomas to advance, for years to come, Christian ideals we've lived by during our years on Earth.

- Duncan Murray, Endowment Fund Chair



February Birthdays

- 10 George Lamont
Bill Janes
- 25 Susan Hamlin
- 27 Sally Schwarz

February Anniversaries

- 2 Linda and Tom Whitehead

Arrival of the Magi

On January 6, Epiphany Sunday, the Sunday School children celebrated the visit of the Magi to the baby Jesus. Mary (Emily Hente) welcomed the Kings (Christopher Hente, Mason Duer and Lucy Duer) to the St. Thomas altar as the congregation celebrated the *good news* of Christ's birth. Many thanks to Judy Wilson for shepherding the children in this re-enactment.



Throughout the season of Epiphany the Sunday School children have been experiencing the early life of Christ with more re-enactments including his baptism and the wedding in Cana. They have made scrolls similar to the scroll from which Jesus read when he first appeared and instructed in the Temple.

This is a lively little group learning our Christian traditions and sharing their faith together.



Parish Annual Meeting

The annual meeting and potluck brunch was a time of thanksgiving and celebration as we heard news of the many and varied parish ministries; expressed gratitude to the dedicated service of parish members; received the reassurance of a balanced budget for 2019; and, prayerfully considered a positive outlook for the future of St. Thomas.



Senior Warden Paul Colvin and Rev. Ann Gaillard called the meeting to order with opening prayer.



A delicious brunch and good conversation was enjoyed by all.



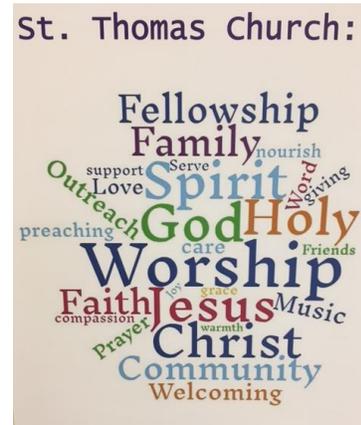
And with much appreciation to the kitchen crew – George Lamont and Linda Whitehead.



Tom Whitehead, parish treasurer, (left) reported on the proposed budget for 2019. Duncan Murray, chairman of the endowment committee, (right) provided a helpful tutorial on planned-giving and the status of the St. Thomas Endowment Fund.



New Vestry members were installed and outgoing Vestry members were gratefully acknowledged.



Ann closed the meeting with a reminder to take pride in who we are as the parish of St. Thomas, so positively stated in our *word cloud*. She encouraged us to be open to the spirit while reflecting the values about which we care so deeply.

With gratitude to these outgoing Vestry members:

Mary Adams
Laurinda Andrist
Paul Colvin
Bill Janes
Dave Phillippi

Returning and New* Vestry members:

Janet Calvert *
Sue Colvin *
Dave Fredmonsky
Erika Hente, Senior Warden
Diane Landon
Debbi Pezzoni
John Spruance *
Anne VanDerveer *
Judy Wilson

***GrassRoots
Garden***



As members of St. Thomas we take great pride in our companion ministry, the Grassroots Garden, with its array of neatly groomed crop rows, planter boxes, trellises and orchards. But it wasn't always a productive community garden. Thirty plus years ago a parishioner and professional forester, Gary Jensen, was asked to mentor an Eagle Scout project. Nearly 1,000 trees were planted on the fallow two acres behind the church, which had originally been intended for church expansion. That not being feasible, a small Christmas tree farm was considered. The seedlings took hold, but so did the weeds and grasses.

About two years later the church employed the services of a man to provide grounds maintenance, an arrangement that included his living in a truck camper on the back of the property. In his enthusiasm to groom the back two acres, he mowed down the young trees returning the back acres to a fallow field. But that mishap led to a more practical and bountiful idea and the alliance with Food for Lane County resulted. To date tens of thousands of pounds of produce has been provided from this garden to serve the homeless and low-income

residents of the county while affording community volunteers and youth with countless hours of service opportunities and educational experiences. The bonus for St. Thomas parishioners is the beauty of the garden in every season.

For more information about the garden and volunteer opportunities contact Merry Bradley, GrassRoots Garden Coordinator, merrybradley@yahoo.com.

St. Thomas' Crafters



Mary Adams cheerfully initiated a new interest group at St. Thomas and a dozen crafty ladies joined her for the first gathering on January 19. Mary instructed several in basic knitting with the goal of producing a dish pad. Others shared their efforts with quilting, advanced knitting, crocheting and needle arts. All agreed to adopt a regular schedule meeting on the third Saturday of the month in the church library from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. This cheerful camaraderie, lighthearted conversation and encouraging instruction is not exclusive to women. Come join us for our next session on February 16.



A Special Request

Several of our parishioners are severely allergic to perfume. Please avoid wearing perfume in church so that everyone can worship without having to worry about potential breathing difficulties. Thank you for being considerate of others! Rev. Ann

Celebrating Valentine's Day



A little googling research revealed a mix of legend, superstition and scant fact as to the origin of Valentine's Day. Suffice it to say that the tradition of celebrating romance or sharing expressions of appreciation for friends, family or significant others has its earliest association with the pagan festival of Lupercalia, celebrated by the Romans between February 13 and 15. In the third century the Roman Empire was ruled by Claudius II Gothicus, a cruel leader who forbid his soldiers to marry to prevent them from shirking service and battle to remain with their wives and families. Valentine was a Christian priest who secretly married soldiers before they left for war. For his disobedience Claudius had Valentine arrested and thrown into prison. While awaiting execution he met the blind daughter of the jailer. Valentine had no writing instruments, but according to legend he managed to squeeze ink from violets to write her a sonnet and his words made the blind woman see again. Though brutally executed, the story of Valentine and his self-sacrifice and commitment to love was legendary in Rome. Centuries later he was granted sainthood and February 14 was designated as his feast day because of the ancient belief that birds, particularly love birds and doves, begin their mating song on that day. Geoffrey Chaucer's "Parliament of Fowls" makes reference to this belief – "For this was on St. Valentine's Day / When every bird cometh there to choose his mate." (translation)

The oldest known Valentine greeting dates to 1477 when Margery Brews of Norfolk, England, sent her fiancé John Patton a message inscribed with "my right well-beloved Valentine." The Industrial Revolution brought about the opportunity for mass production of affordable cards with images and

phrases reflecting the romantic sentiments. Then followed over the centuries the myriad of consumer goods generating a twenty billion dollar a year industry.

With the benefit of marketing, Valentine's Day seems to define the entire month of February. However, as Christians we are called to show love everyday – the love of compassion, caring, sharing and serving. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry so eloquently states, "Our commitment to be an inclusive church is not based on social theory or the ways of the culture, but on our belief that the outstretched arms of Jesus on the cross are a sign of the very love of God reaching out to us all." It is this love that gives us the capacity to love others as He loves us.



Upcoming Events

February 1 – Bingo, 2:00 pm

February 2 – CCC Community Dialogue
3 – 5 pm

February 3 – Souper Bowl Sunday

This is an annual St. Thomas Outreach ministry tradition. Parish members will be at the door at the close of each service with soup cans ready for collections - \$2.00 donations if not watching the game and \$3.00 if you plan to watch.

February 16 – Diocesan Vestry/Treasurer Workshop – 9 am – 3 pm

February 24 – Invitational Sunday

Church members are encouraged to personally invite someone to join you in church to experience the love of God and share in the spirit of our St. Thomas faith community.

Committee reports and articles for the Beacon are welcome. Please submit to Cindy Jensen at LAJotKDK@aol.com by the 25th of the month.