



February, 2016

Address

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Pittstown, NJ 08867-0348

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Web: <http://stthomasepc.org/>

Rector

The Rev. Canon Carol Horton
rector@stthomasepc.org
(908) 735-9559

Parish Administrative Assistant

Anita Campbell

Monday & Thursday: 10:00am - 1:00pm

Wednesday: 10:00am - 2:00pm

secretary@stthomasepc.org

908-996-4091

Service Schedule

8:00am Eucharist

10:00am Eucharist with music

9:45am Nursery and Church School

Mid-week Services

Wednesdays at 12:15pm

(no service on February 24)

Ash Wednesday on February 10

Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes
at 12:15 pm and 7:15 pm

Office Hours

Please call the office to arrange for a
home visit or to make an appointment.

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

To worship, to nurture, to serve, together in Christ

From the Rector: *Epiphanytide/early Lent 2016*

I have before me a framed depiction of the Holy Spirit as a dove that I received for Christmas. I had first seen it at a workshop this fall, and loved it, but immediately forgot about it. My companion at the workshop did not forget, and located the source, obtained the print and had it framed for me for Christmas. A wonderful and inspiring gift.

When we think of the Holy Spirit as a dove, it is often the pristine, white doves that are sometimes released at weddings, or over St Peter's Square in Rome. This Holy Spirit dove is not like that at all. There are many wings, going in all directions, as though captured mid-flight by time lapse photography. Some of them have a hint of flame shapes at the ends – like the depictions of the Holy Spirit as flame at Pentecost. And this dove is a riot of colors, muted yet brilliant: purple, green, blue, pink, yellow, orange – stunning in its variety and its energy. Frenetic, bordering on chaotic, and incredibly beautiful, powerful, compelling, awesome. The Holy Spirit. Not sitting demurely on a perch, but in motion, in flight, inviting, encouraging and challenging. The Holy Spirit.

We need the comfort of the white dove, and we need the chaotic riot of color and energy – both of them represent the Holy Spirit in our lives. So often it is out of what seems like chaos that we find new direction and new life. It is both journey and pilgrimage. When I look at my dove/Holy Spirit, I smile. It also makes me a bit nervous: what is it that the Holy Spirit is inviting me, challenging me to see or do or become?

Part of any journey or pilgrimage involves telling our story. How is it that we came to faith? What has the journey been like? Who have been the important companions along the way? Where and how have we seen or experienced the Holy Spirit in our lives, and how do we share our story now, both as individuals and as the Church? During Lent we will be sharing in the offerings of the Diocese of New Jersey on Telling our Story. Check the weekly church bulletin and Good News emails for more information.

As we complete our journey through Epiphany and begin our pilgrimage in Lent, may it be a time of comfort and chaos, growth and new life. May we be surprised and energized by what the Holy Spirit has to offer, and always know ourselves to be surrounded by and filled with God's love and care.

Peace and blessing,
thanks and love,
Carol+

Wardens

Amanda Fuhro
908-735-5602

Lynn Logg
908-995-4794

Vestry

Fran Brunelle-Iuzzolino
908-217-8571 (cell)
908-387-1000 (office)

Gene Budsock
908-735-9976

Kevin Kapples
908-996-3019

Pat Neil
908-730-6696

Roger Prince
908-735-9709

Treasurer

Roman Chiminec
treasurer@stthomasepc.org
908-995-2675

Music Director

Richard McIntyre
macwnj@yahoo.com
908-213-6619

Assistant Organist

Jan Davis
908-689-1222

Altar Guild

Please contact the Rector

Acolytes

Mary Nemec
mnemec@ptd.net
908-996-7955

Church School

Michelle Wagner
wagners88@comcast.net
908-735-4015

Youth Group

Antonia Mattei
908-782-3777

Michelle Wagner

wagners88@comcast.net
908-735-4015

Childcare

For more information,
please call 908-996-4091

Newsletter

Maria Markovich
mmarkovi@ptd.net
908-229-3515

Super Bowl Sunday is February 7 !



Remember to order your tasty Hoagies & Chef Salads from the Youth Group! *Order Forms* are in the gallery and parish hall (one form per hoagie or chef salad, please).

Happy Valentine's Day from the Flemington Area Food Pantry

The following testimonials are posted on <http://flemingtonfoodpantry.org/>

I used to be the one to give, but now I have to receive.

I come for food but I also receive love and support to help me go on.

You're giving us hope. We may come for food, but we leave with hope.

There's a unity we feel with the Pantry volunteers.

For those clients who may not thank you, I say, "Thank you."

I feel a part of something special.

You are feeding my body, but you are also feeding my spirit.

At first I was ashamed to have to come here, but now I'm extremely grateful.

Mid-winter needs include:

FOOD PRODUCTS *

- ♥ Fresh oranges
- ♥ Canned fruit
- ♥ Soups
- ♥ Flavored Oatmeal & cereals
- ♥ Canned Tuna and Salmon
- ♥ Coffee and Tea

* Please try for healthier, lower sugar & sodium items.

PERSONAL CARE

- ♥ Laundry detergent
- ♥ Deodorants
- ♥ Bar Soap
- ♥ Shampoo and Conditioner
- ♥ Disposable razors & shaving cream
- ♥ Feminine Care Products
- ♥ Toilet Paper and Tissue
- ♥ Adult Incontinent Products

There are baskets in St Thomas' gallery for non-perishable donations.

YOU make the difference!

Winter finally comes to St Thomas !

Annual Meeting Postponed until January 31



Winter had been unusually mild, but on Friday evening, January 22, a predicted nor'easter snowstorm began across much of the East Coast, continuing through early Sunday morning. Although no records were set for snowfall, nearby Hunterdon County areas reported receiving 29 inches of snow (Star-Ledger newspaper). Major area roads were cleared promptly, but smaller ones took longer. Many people found that their snow removal equipment or providers were slowed or delayed considerably by the sheer volume of snow. Monday school closings were announced well ahead of time. So it was no surprise that St Thomas' Sunday service was canceled and the 2016 Annual Meeting was re-scheduled for January 31.

Thanks to Joan Milne for the pictures – taken while St Thomas' snow removal was underway.



The picture immediately above shows the overall snow depth in the parking lot, while the one at left shows the gallery entrance almost completely snowed in!



ST THOMAS WEATHER INFO



For the latest information on scheduled services or events, please check the church voicemail (908-996-4091)

Our aim is to have the driveway, parking lots and walkways cleared in time for worship and other events. However, this is not always possible. Use discretion about travelling if conditions seem questionable -- your safety is the highest priority.

SNOW LIST -- Feeling lucky? Don't forget to sign up on the Snow Pool list in the church gallery.

When it doesn't snow, you win! *(No winners last week.)*



Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, this year on February 10. Check the calendar for the times of services on that day. We hear the words, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return” as the sign of the cross is marked on our foreheads with ashes. The ashes are made from the blessed palms of previous years Palm Sundays. They remind us of our connection with all that God has created, and our need to periodically examine our lives in order to live more fully into that creation and God’s love for us and the world.

Prayer, self-examination, fasting and giving are integral parts of Lent. The forty days are not designed to be a drudge, but a way to become more fully the people God is creating us to be. If you count the calendar days, you will see that between Ash Wednesday on February 10 and Easter Day on March 27 there are more than forty days. This is because every Sunday is a reminder of Easter Day, and so, every Sunday is a day to ‘break’ the fast of Lent. (This is good news for Valentine’s Day this year, as it falls on a Sunday!)

LENT MADNESS appeared a few years ago as a way to inject some fun and education into Lent. Chances are you have heard of March Madness, the yearly basketball tournament where teams across the country are paired, games are played, teams advance, and, eventually there is one winning team. The Church came up with its own tournament of sorts, called Lent Madness. Instead of teams, saints and holy men and women from the Church Calendar are paired off, and one pair is presented each day. The faithful get to vote on their favorite saint each day, and the daily winners advance to the next level. By Easter, there will be one saint left standing. It is really a lot of fun, and very educational, as each day includes biographies of each saint – many saints that most of us might never have heard about before. Last year, St Francis came out as the winner, with Brigid of Kildare (second only to Patrick in importance in Ireland) so close a second that a special award was given in her honor. So, if this sounds like fun, or if you find yourself even mildly curious, go to www.lentmadness.org and check it out for yourself.

2016 Diocesan Acolyte Festival

February 13 @ 9:30 am - 3:30 pm at Trinity Cathedral in Trenton, NJ

This year’s theme is **Experiencing Holy Week and Easter**

From his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem through his Triumphant Resurrection on Easter morning, retrace the steps of Jesus and his disciples during the most holy week in the Christian calendar. Participants will be able to attend a morning and an afternoon workshop. A Celebration of the Holy Eucharist in the cathedral will close the day. Be sure to bring your vestments, processional crosses, torches, banners (and stands!), thuribles, kites, or whatever else you use in a service. Parents and other guests are invited to join us for the closing service, which will begin at 2:00 pm.

An Opportunity to Serve as acolytes in the liturgy will be offered to 12 young people attending the festival. Several other young people will be given the chance to serve as ushers or readers. The training/preparation session for the service will take place during the afternoon workshop session.

Registration is \$25 per person in advance (\$30 at the door). Lunch, morning refreshments, and an event t-shirt are included. Complete the registration form <http://www.dioceseofnj.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Acolyte-Festival-2016.pdf> and return it to the address shown on the form. Please be sure to include the age and the top three workshop choices for each participant.

Workshop sessions are detailed in the registration brochure and include:

You’re an acolyte – now what? Making a joyful noise Games and Practical Tips for Teambuilding Artistic Flairs

Bishop’s Roundtable (for acolyte masters, clergy, etc.) include:

Scavenger Hunt Holy Smoke Meditations for Lent and Holy Week

YOUTH NEWS

HOAGIE and SALAD SALE lock-in



Our annual hoagie sale lock-in will be on Saturday, February 6th at 4 pm through to Sunday, February 7th after the 10 am service.

The youth group helps with prep, plays a little gaga, attends a service at the church, makes hoagies and salads, sells hoagies and salads, and hopefully gets a little sleep in there. Members are asked to bring sleeping bags and pillows, as we sleep on the floor in the church hall. This event is a lot of fun and helps the group raise funds for their outreach projects. We are thankful for our two adult volunteers, Dr. Mattei and Mrs. Spies, for sleeping over with the group. We are in need of someone to provide the dinner on the 6th (breakfast on the 7th is already covered) -- please speak with either Dr. Mattei or Mrs. Spies if you can help. There is a permission form which needs to be signed for any youth attending – including any invited friends.

KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR CALENDAR

March 13	Go Karts
April 10	Cooking Competition
May 1	Gnome in Your Home
May 29	5 th Sunday
June 5	Dress for A Mess

Our sledding event was cancelled – although Mother Nature did come through with quite a lot of snow!

We are looking forward to our upcoming youth events.



Shrove (Fat) Tuesday Pancake Supper is planned for Tuesday, February 9 at 6:00 pm (one seating) -- *but We Need Some Volunteers*

event just a couple of days before, and with some school sports events occurring on February 9, we are asking if any adults can step up to lead with set up and cooking, with available youth continuing to help out with serving and clean up. Menu and prices will stay the same -- pancakes, sausage, bacon, dessert for \$5 per person or \$20 per family.

If you can help, please contact Antonia Mattei or Cheryl Spies.

In recent years, the youth group has provided a great service to St Thomas by helping at this event. However, with the Hoagie

St Valentine's Day Special

Don't miss the **Junior Youth Group multimedia presentation on Sunday, February 14th** during the 10 am service. Find out what they think "Love is..." through pictures, video, and music.



CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

OPEN CUPBOARD FOOD PANTRY SHOPPING TRIP

Our Church School annual shopping trip is on Monday, February 15 at the Clinton Shop-Rite. This is President's weekend. We will meet at the service desk at 10 am - we shop, check-out, drive the goods to Open Cupboard in Clinton, and unload. (Sometimes they let us pack their shelves.) This outreach usually takes a little over one hour - and is a GREAT event for our younger children to really see the impact they can make on their community. Sign up in the gallery!

COMMUNION CLASS

We have a wonderful program for our 2nd & 3rd graders, as well as anyone who would like a greater understanding of Holy Communion and the role it plays in our church. We start this program in February as part of our church school curriculum. **We are in need of some volunteer adults.**

Please contact Michelle Wagner at wagners88@comcast.net if you have an interest in helping. We celebrate with the students who complete the program on Sunday, April 3rd.



Diocesan Fair Share -- *let's get back on track in 2016 !*

Happy New Year! Though 2016 is already a few weeks old, how many of us are still writing 2015 as a habit we formed last year? We find comfort in that routine of doing the same things repeatedly, and it takes an effort to break that habit. To have change and growth in our lives it often takes doing something different, something new to bring us to that new plateau. For instance a favorite New Year's resolution, eating healthy (especially after those indulgent holidays). We commit to that for many reasons -- we can look better, or we can get more energy and feel better.

At our last vestry meeting, Roger Prince reminded us of a habit that we are having trouble breaking. That habit is not paying our fair share of our Diocesan pledge. The change in the pledge happened more years ago than my tenure on the Vestry. I am sure it was a desperate measure at the time, but now it is becoming a habit -- one we would like to break.

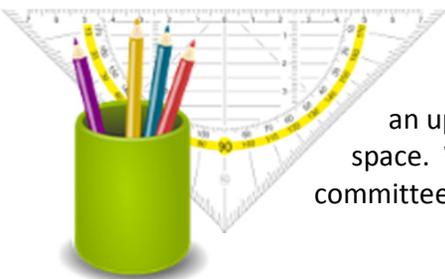
The Diocese gets its support from us, the member churches. It has many programs and ministries that it supports today. It offers opportunities for all of us to grow in faith through spiritual programs, and helps the community and individual parishes. The various programs and ministries supported by the New Jersey Diocese are highlighted on the diocesan web site, www.dioceseofnj.org. It was the support of the Diocese of New Jersey that helped St Thomas Church grow from a mission church into the parish that we all love today.

One of the messages on the diocesan website is about how the Diocese supports our youth through the programs that it has for them. In fact, there is a five-minute video of our own Julia Nemec, at www.dioceseofnj.org/media/. The opportunities that she had for spiritual growth is just one of the many ways that the New Jersey Diocese and the Episcopal Church support us. This is an example of how this stewardship thing goes both ways: "Give and you shall receive."

The Vestry is committed to finding a way to fully fund our fair share pledge to the Diocese of New Jersey. In order to do that, we need your help. We first want to begin sharing more information about the diocesan programs -- how they are providing opportunities and helping us as well as others. Second, we want to make sure everyone knows about the events and opportunities for programs that members of our parish can attend.

Now for the hard part: We need your monetary support to get us to our fair share. We already contribute a portion of all our fundraisers to this obligation. I know that everyone gives and pledges based on their individual situations. If there is some way that you can increase your support by 5 to 10% more, it will go a long way toward helping others and us. We are very frugal in our expense budget, with many parishioners providing their time and talent to help save on our expenses. Volunteer-provided services like snow removal, cutting the grass, cleaning the church and other activities all help to keep our expenses down.

We are the stewards or caretakers, and as the caretakers, we need to support not only our parish but also the Diocese and the Episcopal Church of which we are a part. Please think about helping us in our Fair Share resolution in 2016 and in the years to come. I am wishing you all a blessed and happy 2016.



The BUILDING COMMITTEE will meet on Sunday, February 7 after the 10:00 am Service

The building committee is working on a modified concept that will incorporate an upgraded kitchen and one new bathroom, as well as new classroom/gathering space. Watch this newsletter in the future for a new floor plan. We welcome new committee members, Tom Wolfe and Michelle Wagner.

Please consider stopping by to see what we're up to.

- Greg Shutske

PARISH REGISTER



To all who participated in the Epiphany Pageant this year – children, youth and adults – and to Trish Walsh and Alisa Swider for their expert direction -- Well done!

To Mackenzie Kapples, Brooke Testa, Olivia DiRienz and Lauren Wagner for volunteering their time and talent to our January 5th Sunday service;

To Joan and Dennis Milne, Jose Salazar and Greg Shutske for their heroic snow removal efforts (see page 3, and then check out the difference next Sunday);

To all who have pledged their support of time, talent and treasure to St Thomas for 2016;

To all who continue to provide outreach to those in need through the discretionary fund and the quarter tube;

To Roman Chiminec, Amanda DiRienz, Kevin Kapples, Gene Budsock, Linda Ubry and Greg Shutske, members of the Finance Committee, for their work throughout the year and in preparing the budget;

To St Thomas Vestry for all they do;

To all who work each week to keep St Thomas clean, neat and welcoming;

To all who join in “spreading the word” about St Thomas Church;

And to all who quietly do so much.

Happy Birthday

Happy Anniversary

Feb 2 Mark DiRienz,
Brian Kruzel
Feb 6 Owen DiRienz
Feb 7 Kim Testa
Feb 8 Lou Mikolajczyk
Feb 9 Fred Lowe,
Sandra Mikuta
Feb 14 Kurt Wagner
Feb 15 Trish Walsh
Feb 16 Bill Davis,
Suzanne Snyder

Feb 17 Diane Delany
Feb 18 Josalyn Walker
Feb 19 Nancy Bush
Feb 21 Lynn Faust,
Ryan McKenna
Feb 22 Liz Dougherty
Feb 25 Michael Harney
Feb 27 Shannon Kenny
Feb 28 Christopher Faust,
Greg Shutske

Feb 18 David Eichorn & Catherine Eubank
Feb 24 Bill & Mary Nemec
Feb 26 Warren Searles & Stephanie Valeiko



St Thomas Prayer List



Please help us keep our prayer list up to date. Please contact Anita in the parish office to have someone included on the prayer list. Please also contact her when it is no longer necessary for that person to be included on that list.



Upcoming Dates

- Feb 6-7** Youth group overnight lock-in for hoagie & salad sale
- Feb 7** Super Bowl Sunday - Don't forget to pick up your hoagies and chef salads!
- Feb 9** Shrove Tuesday Mardi Gras Pancake Supper, one seating at 6:00 pm
- Feb 10** **ASH WEDNESDAY: Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes**
at 12:15 pm and 7:00 pm
- Feb 13** Acolyte Festival, 9:30 am - 3:30 pm, at Trinity Cathedral in Trenton
- Feb 14** *Valentine's Day* Junior Youth Group Multi-Media Event at the 10am service
- Feb 15** Presidents' Day - Open Cupboard Food Pantry Shopping; meet at Clinton Shop-Rite at 10am
- Feb 18** Vestry meeting, 7:00 pm at St Thomas
- Feb 22** March newsletter submissions are requested
- Feb 22-24** Clergy retreat; rector is away
- Feb 29** Leap Day!
- March 4 - 5** 232nd Convention of the Diocese of NJ, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cherry Hill, NJ

These Last Days...

Our current Book of Common Prayer (1979) is the fourth since our Episcopal Church distanced itself, for obvious reasons, from the Church of England (earlier ones were promulgated in 1789, 1892 & 1928). One of the myriad innovations was to offer a variety of 'forms and rites' for what Thomas Cranmer had called *The Supper of The Lorde and the Holy Communion, commonly called The Masse* in the first edition of 1549.

And in providing the different rites and forms, it included (Rite IIB) a phrase from the Letter to the Hebrews (1:2) *'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.'*

In these last days? The late 1970's were the height of the Cold War with the Soviet Union. France had withdrawn from NATO in 1966, the 'Prague Spring' had been crushed in 1968, and communist advances were perceived throughout the Third World. Nixon had visited China, and signed the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks Agreement with the USSR in 1972, but the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1978, and things were looking gloomy as the 1979 Book of Common Prayer was being assembled. Perhaps that explains what might be seen as a rather pessimistic phrase in the Liturgy – nuclear Armageddon did not seem that unlikely.

Actually the early church expected the world to end rather soon – indeed Matthew (24:34) had Jesus predicting *'This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled'*, and Paul anticipated Jesus' return in his lifetime (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) *'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.'*

After almost 2000 years we must take a broader view – but these really could be 'the last days' when viewed from a planetary perspective. The earth is probably about 4.5 billion years old (in a 14 billion year old universe), and humans are very latecomers. If the age of the earth was compressed to a single year, humans appear at about 11 pm on December 31st, and Jesus arrives at 11:58 and 43 seconds... From that viewpoint these really might be the last days, especially for our life-style. On the other hand, cosmologists predict our earth will orbit the sun for another 3.3 billion years before the latter expands to engulf it. With prayer and care the human race might yet make the phrase seem a quaint anachronism, but it will take prayer and care...

~ Roger Prince



SUPER BOWL 50

February 2016 at-a-glance

and the Youth Group
HOAGIE-CHEF SALAD Sale
are **Sunday, February 7**

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <i>St Brigid of Kildare</i>	2 <i>The Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple</i>	3 Mid-week Service 12:15 pm Choir practice 7:15 pm	4	5	6 <i>The Martyrs of Japan</i> Youth Group Hoagie Sale Overnight Lock-In
7 Epiphany Last HE 8 & 10am Church School & Nursery 9:45am Pick up hoagies & chef salads after either service	8	9 Shrove Tuesday MARDI GRAS Pancake Supper at 6:00 pm (ONE seating only)	10 Ash Wednesday Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes 12:15 pm & 7:15 pm	11	12
14 Lent 1 HE 8 & 10am Church School & Nursery 9:45am Valentine's Day Junior Youth Group Multi-media Event	15 PRESIDENTS' DAY Open Cupboard Food Pantry shopping trip; meet at Clinton Shop-Rite @ 10am	16	17 Mid-week Service 12:15 pm Choir practice 7:15 pm	18 Vestry meeting 7:00 pm	19
21 Lent 2 HE 8 & 10am Church School & Nursery 9:45am	22 March newsletter submissions due	23	24 <i>St Matthias the Apostle (no mid-week service)</i> Choir practice 7:15 pm	25	26
Feb 22-24: Clergy Retreat; Rector is away					
28 Lent 3 HE 8 & 10am Church School & Nursery 9:45am	Feb 29 LEAP DAY!	March 1	March 2	March 3	MARCH 4 - 5: Convention of the Diocese of NJ Crown Plaza Hotel, Cherry Hill, NJ

IF YOU CANNOT SERVE ON YOUR SCHEDULED DATES, PLEASE FIND A REPLACEMENT AND NOTIFY THE OFFICE

Date	Eucharistic Minister	Reader	Acolyte	Usher	Coffee Hour
Feb 7	8- 10- D. Buczek	8- 10- L. Grieme	10- T. Mikuta	8- 10-	8- 10- Markovich/Shutske
Feb 10 Ash Wed	12- 7 ¹⁵ -	12- 7 ¹⁵ - M. Markovich	12- 7 ¹⁵ - B. Testa	12- 7 ¹⁵ - ---	--- ---
Feb 14	8- 10- L. Mikuta	8- 10- D. Kemmerer	10- G. DiRienz	8- 10-	8- 10- Mikuta/Wolfe
Feb 21	8- 10- L. Logg	8- 10- R. Prince	10- O. Buczek	8- 10-	8- 10-
Feb 28	8- 10- A. Fuhro	8- 10-	10- M. Kapples	8- 10-	10-

FLOWERS

Feb 7 Testa
Feb 14 Lent
Feb 21 Lent
Feb 28 Lent

ALTAR

P. Neil, L. Grieme
L. Grieme, J. Pragdat
D. Buczek, H. Budsock
M. Markovich, D. Buczek

COUNTERS

K. Kapples, L. Santos
A. DiRienz, (+1)
D. Logg, (+1)
K. Kapples (+1)

CLEANING

Markovich/Shutske

SNOW

B. Kemmerer
Testa
Walker