



St. Thomas Episcopal Church

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

Address

98 Sky Manor Road
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Web: [http://
stthomasepc.org/](http://stthomasepc.org/)

Rector

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

Parish Administrative

Assistant

Anita Campbell
Mon & Thurs: 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 Childcare and Church
School

Office Hours

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

From the Rector...

May Christ, the Son of God, be manifest in you, that your lives may be a light to the world;

Blessing for Epiphany, Book of Occasional Services

These are the words which begin one of the seasonal blessings for Epiphany. In this season of Epiphany we think first about the wise men following of a star to Bethlehem in order to worship the newborn Jesus, the Light of the World, and mark their visit on January 6. The season of Epiphany continues until the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday. This season is all about light and discovery. The dictionary meaning is of a “moment of sudden” and great revelation. In simpler terms, an “aha!” moment, when something which had been previously unfathomable is suddenly understood when we suddenly “get it” or when the light begins to dawn and we understand.

In our part of the world, Epiphany marks the beginning of the return of daylight little by little, a minute or two each day, and every day stronger. Since Ash Wednesday does not fall until March 6 this year, we will spend the entire month of February in Epiphany!

February 1 is the feast day of St. Brigid of Kildare, a late 5th century woman, founder and abbess of the first convent in Ireland, and, along with St Patrick and St Columba, credited with the rise of Christianity in Ireland. Near the cathedral is St Brigid’s well and St Brigid’s fire pit, both rooted in the pagan traditions, and valued and revered long before Christianity arrived in the area. Water, essential to life was an important part of pre-Christian ritual. Fire, too, was valued and respected for its warmth and light, and as a symbol of power.

February 2 marks the Presentation of our Lord in the temple, and the encounter with Simeon and Anna, the reminder that this child Jesus was indeed very special and destined for a life that would be rich in spiritual gifts, but also of suffering and pain.

February 3 is our annual Youth Group Super Bowl Sunday Hoagie and chef salad sale. See elsewhere in this newsletter for more information about this event and how to place your order.

On February 13 the church remembers Absalom Jones, America’s first black priest, and founder of “The First African Church” in 1792 in Philadelphia. This would become part of the Protestant Episcopal Church, known as “African Episcopal Church of St Thomas”. Jones was an avid evangelist and abolitionist, ordained deacon in 1793 and priest in 1802. He died in 1818. Though he did not live to see it, his work sowed many of the seeds that led to emancipation of

From the Rector...

slaves. A bringer of the Light of Christ, if ever there was one.

On February 18 we have our annual Food Pantry Shopping trip — see elsewhere in this newsletter for more information and ways that you can help.

February continues with commemorations of Frederick Douglas (February 20), St Matthias, Apostle (February 25) and George Herbert (February 26).

Throughout the month, St Thomas members and friends are encouraged to join thousands of others as part of the Good Book Club in reading the Book of Romans, Paul's letters to the people in the Church in Rome. See elsewhere in this newsletter for more information about this and The Good Book Club, and how you can be involved.

“To worship, to nurture, to serve, together in Christ” — all ways that St Thomas is part of bringing the Light of Christ into the world, and more deeply into our own hearts and lives. In this season of Epiphany, and as we move toward Lent, may we pay attention to our own epiphanies, small though they may seem, and know ourselves to be filled with the Light of Christ. And may we have the wisdom and courage to show and share that light in the world.

In Christ's love,
Carol+



Wardens

Lynn Logg
908-995-4794
Lori Ann Wolfe
732-710-2053

Vestry

Tracey Bergstrand
973-979-1594
Gene Budsock
908-735-9976
Kevin Kapples
908-996-3019
Pat Neil
908-730-0114
Roger Prince
908-735-9709
Adam Rinehart
832-330-6808

Treasurer

Nicky Wallis
treasurer@stthomasepc.org
609-851-0870

Music Director

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

Assistant Organist

Jan Davis
908-689-1222

Altar Guild

Please contact the Rector

Acolytes

Donna Kapples
dkapples@gmail.com

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

From the Vestry...

February is the month to celebrate **love**. So, who do you love? What do you love? Besides my husband, my dogs and a long list of family members, friends and other blessings, **I love EfM**. Doug & I are participating in a program called Education for Ministry (EfM)— which is a four-year study of theology focusing on the Bible, the history of Christianity and contemporary issues. In this class you are not simply a passive receptacle for information passed on by someone else. You are expected to read the content and then encouraged to interpret, ask questions and share, come to your own conclusions.

Second-year students read the New Testament, and I'm now preparing to read the letters of Paul. Paul, previously known as Saul, believed that gentiles were outside the covenant God made with Israel and in order to be right with God, one had to comply with Jewish law (circumcision, dietary, etc.). Because Jewish Christians and Christians didn't comply, in his mind they were not worthy to worship God, and persecution, torture, death was the only other option. He also believed Jesus Christ to be a false Messiah. *Until his revelation on the road to Damascus.*

Saul was a member of the people of Israel, and he never renounced Judaism (which is what the word "conversion" implies) but could best be considered a Jewish Christian. Seen as an unmerited act of grace by God on his behalf — his life was changed, he became enlightened and had new purpose. (*Spoiler alert — I now love Paul in a, "I'm fascinated by this man and in awe of all he accomplished" kind of way.*)

Paul was brilliant, a pharisee, a tent-maker, an incredible leader, regarded as one of the greatest moral teachers in history AND the most influential Christian that ever lived. Whoa, right?! But there's more. I also learned that Paul had *a strategy* for growing the church, in approximately 46 AD. He intentionally targeted urban commercial centers as prime locations for founding churches; hubs of people, activity, trade. He had a missionary team that included emissaries and troubleshooters, like Timothy & Titus who could act on his behalf. He supported himself financially as a tent maker as to not place any financial burden on fledgling churches. His goal was to proclaim the gospel where others had failed.

There were no planes to fly to what is now Turkey and Greece from Rome, but donkeys. No computers to type letters or printers to print on paper. Just papyrus and ink made from soot and tree gum. No internet to gather intel, just direction from Jesus Christ. No internet or USPS to deliver letters or teachings. Just emissaries and troubleshooters on donkeys.

This is why I love Paul. It is hard to wrap my head around all that he accomplished between 46 AD and 62 AD, less than 20 years. And given that, it seems possible then that

our dream of growing St. Thomas as we approach our 300th anniversary is attainable.

But what if Paul said, "No", "No, thanks, Jesus.", "Not a priority.", "Not my gig." What would have happened to Christianity?

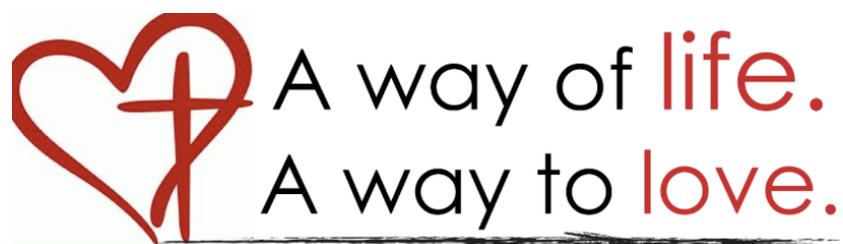
I don't know. I don't think I want to know.

And what if we were to say, "No" to our dream for St. Thomas? "No" to outreach. "No" to community engagement. "No" to new ideas and programs to attract new parishioners. (*shiver*)

I know we share A LOT of **love for St. Thomas**. It's evident every Sunday and any day in between when we attend meetings or choir rehearsal, send an email, organize and attend events, plan fundraisers, set up the altar, manage acolytes, weed or rake leaves, or prepare for Sunday school.

I love St. Paul. I'm so grateful he said, "YES!" For me, he's an incredible mentor, one I'll be learning more about and staying connected to for a long while. May he inspire you, too.

— Lynn Logg



Church News...

Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras at St Thomas! Sunday, March 3! Pancakes with all kinds of fixins, desserts, fruit and entertainment! Your chance to sing a song, play an instrument, read a poem, tell a joke - multigenerational- everyone gets to take part as willing. See the sign up in the parish hall - brush off your talent and come celebrate Mardi Gras as only St Thomas can do.

The Good Book Club

During Epiphany we will be joining tens of thousands of Episcopalians learning about life in the early church and the central principles of our Christian faith. "Forward Movement" has divided Romans into 50 daily readings, which began on Monday, January 7, and concludes on Shrove Tuesday, March 5. Learn more (or sign up online) at www.goodbookclub.org When you sign up online you will also receive a weekly guide to the readings, and some other information about the passages, along with questions and things to ponder

Every day, except Sundays, we will read a short passage. On Sunday at Adult Forum (at 9:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall) we will discuss what we read. The readings are from Paul's letter to the Romans.

This format will continue through Epiphany on the following Adult Forum days: Sundays February 3, 10, 17, 24. March 3. Come for one session, or come for all, or drop in when it works best for you.

Saint Thomas' Annual Hoagie Sale

Saint Thomas' Annual Hoagie Sale is scheduled for Saturday, February 2nd (see youth group). An order form is provided in this newsletter for you to order your personalized hoagie and / or chef salad. Perfect for Super Bowl Sunday! Your hoagie (and / or salad) will be available for you to pick up on Sunday, February 3rd at the 8AM or 10AM service.

Youth Group & Church School



Epiphany Pageant

We had a wonderful Epiphany pageant this year! Thank you to everyone who was able to come and enjoy this wonderful play put on by the Youth of St. Thomas. All the children were able to make our Epiphany story come to life in their own way. We even had a unicorn come stay at the stable with our sheep and other animals this year. It was wonderful to watch each one of them bring their own special piece to this story. A special thank you to all the hidden hands that help make sure that this year's play was a wonderful success! Thank you especially to Sarah, Sandra, and Leigh Anne for making this pageant possible. A special thank you to Jan for the organ accompaniment and Amelia for her trumpet intro to the pageant!

Hoagie Lock- In

Our annual hoagie sale lock-in will be on Saturday, February 2nd through to Sunday, February 3rd. The youth group helps with prep, plays a little gaga, attends a service at the church, makes hoagies, sells hoagies, 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 need two adults to chaperone this event at the church. Please speak with Antonia Mattei or Cheryl Ann Spies if interested.

Laser Tag at Branchburg Sports Complex

On Sunday, January 27th we are planning to go to Branchburg Sports Complex to play laser tag. Please eat before meeting up at the church. We will be meeting at 5:30pm at St. Thomas and leaving there by 5:45pm. We will then drive the half hour to Branchburg Sports Complex, 47 Readington Road, Branchburg. They have drop in 15 minute games for \$8.00 per person per game. We will plan on all playing one game. So, everyone needs to bring \$8.00 plus extra if they want a drink. If any of the kids want to play a 2nd game, then they need to bring \$16.00.

Everyone who plans to play, must have a signed waiver. Link is attached to this article: <https://www.smartwaiver.com/w/5302cf48efbfd/web/>
We should be back to St. Thomas at about 8pm. Parents will be called when we leave the sports complex. This event will need a 2nd chaperone and probably 2 drivers depending on the interest. So, please look at the date and RSVP to wagners88@comcast.net as soon as you can. Younger kids (K to 4th grade) can participate if their parent plans to be at the complex. If I get a large enough group interested, I will see if we can get a better rate.

Blue Mountain Tubing

SAVE THE DATE! Our snow tubing event is planned for Sunday, March 3rd. More info will be provided in our youth group emails and the Thursday blasts! All students and their families are invited to this event!

Gnome In Your Home — we need hosts!

Have you been thinking about meeting some of our wonderful youth and just haven't been able to make the time? A group of 5 youth will be happy to visit along with their travelling gnome if you volunteer to host! Please send Michelle Wagner an email if you can be a host on Sunday, March 31st at Wagners88@comcast.net

Confirmation Class

An email has been sent to current 8th graders of St. Thomas. Please confirm to Doug Logg if you are interested in participating in our Confirmation program. We would like to put together the planned meeting dates on a calendar.

Flemington Shopping Trip

Collection envelopes are out on the pews! Please donate to our wonderful annual outreach for the Flemington Food Pantry. The church school children will be going shopping on President’s Day, Monday, February 18th. Last year we raised so much in funds that we were able to donate food to the Open Cupboard Food Pantry in Clinton as well as the Flemington Food pantry.

Let’s hope we can do that again! This year we will meet at the Flemington Shop-Rite at roam. An item or two as well as a budgeted dollar amount will be given to the kids and they will proceed to shop and get us the best deals! We then check out and pack up our cars and drive them to the Flemington food pantry.

This wonderful outreach only takes about 1-1/2 hours all total and is something the younger kids can really appreciate.

A sign up sheet is out in the gallery.

Birthday’s & Anniversaries

Feb 2nd — Mark DiRienz

Feb 17th — Diane Delany

Brian Kruzel

Feb 18th — Josalyn Walker

Feb 6th — Owen DiRienz

Feb 21st — Lynn Faust

Feb 7th — Kim Testa

Ryan McKenna

Feb 8th — Louis Mikolajzyk

Feb 22nd — Elizabeth Dougherty

Feb 9th — Sandra Mikuta

Feb 25th — Michael Harney

Frederick Lowe

Feb 27th — Shannon Kenny

Feb 14th — Kurt Wagner

Feb 28th — Gregory Shutske

Feb 15th — Trish Walsh

Christopher Faust

Feb 16th — William Davis

Suzanne Snyder

Feb 18th — David Eichorn & Catherine Eubank

Feb 19th — Phil & Lucy Fleming

Feb 24th — Mary & William Nemec

Feb 26th — Warren Searles & Stephanie Valeiko



From Roger Prince...

The Madaba mosaic — the oldest known map of Biblical Geography

Madaba is a small city in western Jordan some 20 miles southwest of the capital Amman. It has been inhabited since the Middle Bronze Age (perhaps as early as 2000 BCE), and the Old Testament tells us that it was destroyed by Moses in his scorched earth passage to the Promised Land (Numbers 21), and then given by Joshua to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh (Joshua 13). Madaba thrived during the Roman Empire, and had a prosperous Christian community with a Cathedral and Bishop at the time of the Council of Chalcedon (October 451). Sometime in the next century or two a skilled team of mosaicists installed a fabulous Biblical map as the floor of the Cathedral, but an earthquake in 746 flattened the city, and the area was abandoned. Iconoclastic Islamic invaders likely added to the destruction by defacing parts of the map, and it was lost to the world for a millennium.

In the 1880's, the Christians in the nearby village of al-Karak petitioned the Ottoman Empire to refurbish the site. They were granted permission to rebuild the town, but to build churches only on sites that had held churches in antiquity. The ruins of the ancient Cathedral were recognizable, and the new builders rediscovered the amazing mosaics — the earliest known map of the Holy Land. It is particularly renowned for its map of Jerusalem, which is shown as the navel of the world - by far its largest city - and experts believe they can identify many of the buildings shown — all in place before 570 CE. The rest of the map illustrates both Old and New Testament sites, although in a somewhat more speculative manner, and major rivers are redirected to fit the Genesis description of the four rivers of Eden. Like many maps of the past, decorative insertions of fish and beasts add to its charm.

Alas, after almost a millennium and a half of living together, Madaba's Muslim and Christian communities are drawing apart, despite their long and shared history. We can only pray that they can find a peaceful way forward, and that they continue to treasure this remarkable gem.

Thanks be to God.

Roger Prince



The map on the floor of
St. George's Madaba



Jerusalem in the Madaba mosaic



The site of Christ's baptism, and some
splendid fish

Schedules for February

	Reader	Eucharistic Minister	Acolyte	Cleaning	Counters	Snow Pool	Flowers	Altar Guild
February 3rd	Denise Buczek	Jan Davis	Trinity Mikuta	Joan Milne, Jose Salazar	Amanda DiRienz	Greg Shutske	Kate Allworthy	L. Grieme, P. Neil
February 10th	Jan Davis	Denise Buczek	Garrett DiRienz			Joan Milne	Lynn Logg	K. Cichonski, J. Pragdat
February 17th	Maria Markovich	Larry Mikuta	Marjorie Mikuta	Jack & Ann Holt		Walker		D. Buczek, H. Budsock
February 24th	Diane Kemmerer	Donna Kapples	Brooke Testa		Kim Testa	Brian Kemmerer	McIntyre / Lowe	M. Markovich, (D. Buczek)

- 1 St Brigid of Kildare
- 2 The Presentation of Christ in the Temple
Youth Group Hoagie overnight
- 3 The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany
Youth Group Hoagie Sale
Good Book Club, 9:00am Parish Hall
- 6 Choir Rehearsal — 7:15 pm
- 10 The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany
Good Book Club, 9:00am Parish Hall
- 13 Absalom Jones
Choir Rehearsal — 7:15 pm
- 16 March Newsletter submission due — please send to Trinity Mikuta at trinitymikuta@gmail.com
- 17 The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany
Good Book Club, 9:00am Parish Hall
- 18 President's Day — Food Pantry Shopping trip — 10:00 am Flemington ShopRite
- 20 Frederick Douglas
Choir Rehearsal — 7:15 pm
- 21 Vestry - 7:00 pm — Parish Hall
- 24 The Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany
Good Book Club, 9:00am Parish Hall
- 25 St Mathias the Apostle
- 27 George Herbert
Choir Rehearsal — 7:15

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.

THANK YOU

To all who participated in the Epiphany Pageant this year — children, youth and adults — and to Sarah Rinehart, Sandra Mikuta, Leigh-Anne Walker and all who helped for their expert direction -- well done!

To those who saw to the preparation of the costumes for the pageant;

To all who have pledged their support of time, talent and treasure to St Thomas for 2019;

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

To all 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 Lynn Logg and Tracey Bergstand for their service as vestry members and wardens;

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

Hoagie Order Form

ORDER FORM -- ONE form per hoagie or chef salad, please!

Please choose which size hoagie you would like, which meat (limited to one meat per hoagie) and which fixings you would like. Thank you!

Name: _____ Home Phone/Cell _____

		Whole	Half		For Youth Group Use Only:
Prices:	Roast Beef	\$11.00	\$5.50		Order #____ of ____
	Turkey	\$ 9.00	\$4.50		Total this Order: \$_____
	Ham	\$ 9.00	\$4.50		TOTAL AMOUNT DUE: \$_____
	Chef Salad	\$ 6.00			

Order your choices below

Choose your Size: WHOLE HALF

Choose your Meat (one): ROAST BEEF TURKEY HAM

Choose your Cheese: PROVOLONE AMERICAN

Choose your Fixings: LETTUCE TOMATO ONION

Order HERE for Chef Salad: CHEF SALAD

Chef Salad Only: Choose if you would like MEAT CHEESE

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CHANGE ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

If you would like to be removed from the mailing list, please contact the Church Office:
by phone 908-996-4091 or by Email to secretary@stthomasepc.org