



Parish Profile



St. Thomas à Becket  
Episcopal Church

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# A Letter to Our Next Priest

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On behalf of our congregation, we greet you, and invite you to read this Parish Profile to discern whether St. Thomas à Becket Episcopal Church might be a church home for you.

St. Thomas à Becket is a welcoming and generous, pastoral-size parish in Morgantown, West Virginia. Feeding each other is central to our faith—whether we gather for the celebration of Holy Eucharist, work together through Empty Bowls to raise funds for our hungry neighbors, or congregate for food and fellowship. Members of our church enjoy spending time together, and often describe each other as family. We have a strong history of lay leadership and a firm commitment to community outreach. We cherish our Episcopal traditions and delight in our music.

We are seeking a faithful pastor and priest to be both a spiritual leader and a member of our church family—someone who will recognize our skills and strengths as well as our needs, and who will help and challenge us to grow more fully into our baptismal covenant. We pray that our next priest will provide pastoral care to those in need, communicate effectively and listen attentively, deliver engaging sermons, and establish meaningful connections with our members.

This profile offers a glimpse into our parish as well as information about our diocese and the wider community of Morgantown, West Virginia. Included are an overview of our finances, a summary of our recent parish survey, information about parish staff, and a description of the qualities we seek in our next priest. We hope this document gives you a sense of who we are, how we worship, and how we function as a church family, and that it facilitates your discernment.

As we search for our next priest, we pray:

*Almighty God, giver of every good gift, as we faithfully pray for those involved in our search for a new priest, we ask that you give us an open spirit, discerning hearts, and clear minds, that we may trust your will for us. Inspire our conversations, deepen our prayer, and guide us to be a community of love, inclusion, and action.*

*Raise up for us, we pray, a priest and pastor who will proclaim your truth with boldness, faithfully administer your sacraments, and serve all your people with love and compassion. All this we ask through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.*

Thank you for your interest in our parish. We look forward to learning about you and hearing what draws you to Morgantown and St. Thomas à Becket.

Yours in Christ,

The Family of the Parish of St. Thomas à Becket

# Our Mission Statement

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St. Thomas à Becket Episcopal Church celebrates the glory of God in Jesus Christ through worship, service, and fellowship. We believe God calls us to grow by expanding our spiritual life, focusing our outreach, and increasing our ministry to one another.



## About Us

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In 2019, the parish of St. Thomas à Becket Episcopal Church joyfully celebrated the 40th anniversary of our organization as a mission. The parish chose its name to mark the first formational meeting held on December 28, 1978, the eve of the feast day of St. Thomas à Becket.

We are situated atop a hill within a ten-minute drive of downtown Morgantown, on an 11.5-acre forested tract of land purchased in 1980. Worship services at this site were initially held in a simple cinder block building previously owned by the Girl Scouts. The current building, which expanded upon and incorporated the original building, was dedicated in 1994. In addition to the main sanctuary, our church home also contains a small chapel that houses our columbarium.

The people of St. Thomas à Becket are loving and accepting, and they contribute to the life of the parish through strong lay leadership. We are grounded in traditional worship from the Book of Common Prayer, lean toward progressive values, and have a heart for outreach and service to our community. Our worship is enriched by excellent music, and musicians love the acoustics of our sanctuary. We feel especially blessed that this parish has raised up five priests and one deacon from within the congregation.



Many of our founding members still worship regularly with us. Although our membership does include some young families, and we have recently welcomed several new babies, the majority of our congregation is over 50 years old.

Fellowship is a major part of who we are. In the words of a former Senior Warden, “We’re a family at St. Thomas. When we have something to celebrate, we come together to celebrate. When we need to comfort, we come together to comfort. That’s what family does: we take care of each other.” We also enjoy each other’s company and have a reputation of sharing our food-based fellowship as often as we can.

# Worship



*The Crucifer extinguishes candles at the end of a service.*



*Acolytes and choir members prepare to process.*



*Youth are confirmed by Bishop Klusmeyer.*

Our worship services are at the heart of St. Thomas à Becket. All that we are and all we do as a parish begins with worship; it sets the tone for our other ministries. As our deacon tells us at the dismissal, “Our worship has ended, but our work has not. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.”

At St. Thomas à Becket, we cherish a traditional approach to the liturgy, the church year, and our music. The Eucharist is central to our corporate worship, and our liturgical practice is rooted in the Book of Common Prayer.

Traditionally, our Sunday worship schedule has consisted of Holy Eucharist Rite I (spoken) at 8:00 am and Holy Eucharist Rite II (with music) at 10:30 am. Concurrent with the 10:30 am service we have also held Children’s Chapel, with the children joining the congregation for Communion. The early service is quiet and contemplative; the later service is a traditional choral Eucharist, with organ and choir. Even though the pandemic has disrupted this schedule, we are in the process of returning to it.

We are committed to continue offering the livestreamed services we began in response to the pandemic. Livestreaming allows access for all, even as we joyfully resume in-person services in our physical church home.

The ministry of the laity at St. Thomas à Becket is strong. Those serving on the altar guild, in the choir, and as Eucharistic ministers, acolytes, readers, intercessors, and ushers all play important roles in our worship services.

Music has long been a special part of our worship experience. We are fortunate to have many talented musicians within our parish family who willingly share their gifts. We do make a joyful noise unto the Lord!



# Our Ministries

At St. Thomas à Becket we conceptualize ministry as providing service to others both in our parish and in our community. Our parish family consists of capable and caring individuals who step forward, take responsibility, and successfully execute a variety of tasks. We are a congregation that actively engages in the priesthood of all believers.

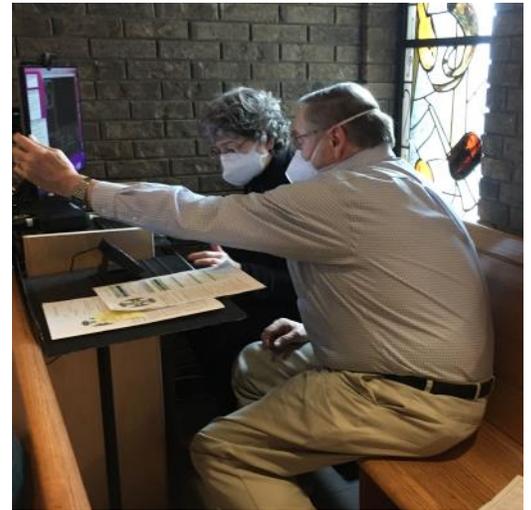
Our active ministries include:

**Audiovisual Producers**—Following a successful 2020 campaign to fund the purchase and installation of microphones and cameras in the sanctuary, one or two parishioners serve as producers for livestreamed worship services, which are broadcast on our public YouTube channel. Recruitment is ongoing for our newest ministry.

**Children’s Chapel**—Our Children’s Chapel with Sunday School, which serves those aged 4–10, was placed on hold when in-person services ceased in March 2020. We look forward to reinstating this program when it is safe to do so for our young parishioners.

**Youth Group**—Parishioners in grades 6–12 appreciate both classroom study and activities outside the church walls. For example, the Youth Group took on the special project of upgrading a neglected outdoor worship/gathering space on the church property to make it more useable for the entire congregation. During lockdown, the group met monthly on Zoom, but the format and curriculum for the Youth Group as pandemic restrictions ease is under evaluation.

**Ministry to Each Other**—Part of life is facing challenges, and at times some members of our church family experience health challenges, loss, or other hardships. This ministry determines and fills needs for meals, transportation, and other help, and then enlists and schedules the assistance of parish volunteers. A recent note from a parishioner illustrates the impact of this ministry: “I want to thank everyone in our church community, those that sent in cards, those that delivered meals—my family has felt so supported during this challenging time. The gifts and food have helped us in more ways than I could express and more than you all could ever know.”



*A/V producers work to record and broadcast a service.*



*Sunday School children show off their sock puppets to remind the congregation to donate socks.*



*Members of the youth group clear brush on Pahl Hill behind the church for an outdoor worship space.*

# Our Ministries, cont'd



Parishioners help pack food into totes for our annual Thanksgiving Basket project.



Outreach Committee members sort and pack donations for Salvation Army Angel Tree.



Fellowship Committee members prepare boxed lunches.

**Outreach**—Outreach is a major focus at St. Thomas à Becket. Christ tells us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and care for the sick—each of these actions is an expression of loving our neighbors as ourselves. We work to respond to Christ’s command by using our gifts to serve and care for those beyond our church walls. Our annual budget includes a line item for outreach. During 2020 these funds supported programs in the greater Morgantown community that focus on health, food insecurity, housing issues, and foster care for children. Outreach funds were also allocated to support a diocesan education effort in the southern part of the state and the Episcopal Relief and Development Overseas Fund.

**Stewardship**—The Stewardship Committee regularly offers communications and meditations through “Stewardship Reflections” in our weekly Parish Post and monthly parish newsletter. This committee aims to assist the parish to grow while helping us appreciate that stewardship is ultimately a reflection of loving and caring for others.

Additional ministries at St. Thomas à Becket include:

- Acolytes
- Altar Guild / Flower Guild
- Coffee Hour / Fellowship
- Counters
- Greeters
- Lay Liturgical Ministry (Readers, Intercessors, and Chalice Bearers)
- Music / Choir
- Nursery Care
- Special Events
- Ushers



# Our Finances

Our Vestry and the Finance Committee work together to be faithful stewards of our financial and physical resources. Over the life of our parish, we have thoughtfully expanded and renovated our physical spaces as needs dictated and resources allowed.

The majority of our operating expenses are funded through pledges, offerings, and restricted donations. We established an investment account in 2014 but have never drawn from it. The cost of salaries and benefits for our three staff members—the Rector, Parish Administrator, and Director of Music—makes up the largest portion of our budget.

	2016 <sup>1</sup>	2017 <sup>2</sup>	2018 <sup>2</sup>	2019 <sup>2,3</sup>	2020	2021 <sup>6</sup>
ASA	109	100	90	83	88 <sup>4</sup>	54
Pledging Units	64	58	60	52	51	42
<b>Pledge Total</b>	<b>\$222,574</b>	<b>\$190,000</b>	<b>\$214,805</b>	<b>\$200,909</b>	<b>\$186,734</b>	<b>\$160,859</b>
<b>Operating Income</b>						
Offerings	\$248,306	\$237,408	\$208,846	\$207,977	\$198,855	\$190,911
Other	\$477	\$750	\$1,975	\$5,000	\$29,667 <sup>5</sup>	\$700
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$248,783</b>	<b>\$238,158</b>	<b>\$210,820</b>	<b>\$212,977</b>	<b>\$228,522</b>	<b>\$191,690</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>						
Salaries & Benefits	\$126,163	\$59,923	\$80,477	\$134,678	\$167,166	\$115,533
Apportionment	\$37,214	\$38,234	\$39,155	\$38,751	\$36,701	\$34,639
Facilities	\$22,752	\$33,112	\$29,813	\$23,282	\$18,258	\$23,917
Worship	\$1,586	\$1,428	\$1,890	\$1,390	\$2,342	\$1,014
Nursery, Children, Youth	\$16,000	\$11,033	\$14,775	\$13,125	\$7,675	\$2,850
Outreach	\$7,503	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$6,708	\$7,388	\$7,503
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$225,082</b>	<b>\$162,848</b>	<b>\$186,227</b>	<b>\$237,871</b>	<b>\$250,687</b>	<b>\$197,786</b>

<sup>1</sup> Rector departed 10/2016

<sup>2</sup> Supply Clergy

<sup>3</sup> Priest-in-Charge arrived 6/2019

<sup>4</sup> Prior to the pandemic lockdown

<sup>5</sup> Includes PPP grant of \$22,167

<sup>6</sup> Priest-in-Charge departed in 6/2021

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Capital Projects Account</b>						
Income	\$67,614	\$33,525	\$22,263	\$18,567	\$26,228	\$14,709
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>\$65,887</b>	<b>\$83,542</b>	<b>\$75,799</b>	<b>\$37,767</b>	<b>\$25,577</b>	<b>\$9,306</b>
<b>Investment Account</b>	<b>\$170,987</b>	<b>\$208,987</b>	<b>\$212,419</b>	<b>\$248,845</b>	<b>\$266,810</b>	<b>\$311,003</b>

# Our Finances, cont'd

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In the past, we have successfully retired two mortgages through capital campaigns and a variety of special events. Currently, we are paying off debt incurred due to necessary building and grounds maintenance (a new roof and repaving the driveway and parking lot). During our annual pledge drive, parishioners pledge their intentions to support the church in three ways: contributions to the General Fund to cover operating expenses, contributions to the Capital Improvements Fund to cover capital expenses, and contributions of time and talent to support the various ministries of the parish.

St. Thomas à Becket has successfully completed three major projects over the past year: renovation to the altar area of the sanctuary (funded through a special donation), the addition of audiovisual capacity to livestream our worship services (funded through a special capital campaign in the summer of 2020), and the addition of assistive devices for our hearing-impaired parishioners (funded through a diocesan grant).

Like most churches, we experienced financial uncertainty in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Vestry successfully applied for a Small Business Association Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan in May 2020; the loan was forgiven in March 2021. We feel especially blessed that our parishioners continued to support the parish financially, even when we were not able to worship together in person.

Pledging units fell in 2021; we suspect this decrease reflects both pandemic fatigue and the uncertainty introduced by the departure in June 2021 of our Priest-in-Charge. Following the resumption of in-person worship services in May 2021, we are heartened to observe that both attendance and offerings are beginning to stabilize.



# Current Clergy and Staff

## **The Rev. Al Prichard, Deacon**

Deacon Al was ordained as a vocational deacon in 2011 and assigned to St. Thomas à Becket by Bishop Mike Klusmeyer. Deacon Al has been a member of the parish since the early 1980s and was an active lay person prior to ordination.

Graduating from Davis and Elkins College with a degree in History and Political Science, initially Al taught high school in rural Tucker County in West Virginia. Later he completed a degree in accounting from West Virginia University. He has also completed graduate coursework from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and from West Virginia University. Al is retired from a 30-year career in public broadcasting, having served in various capacities, culminating with a position as Station Manager with the West Virginia Public Television station in Morgantown.

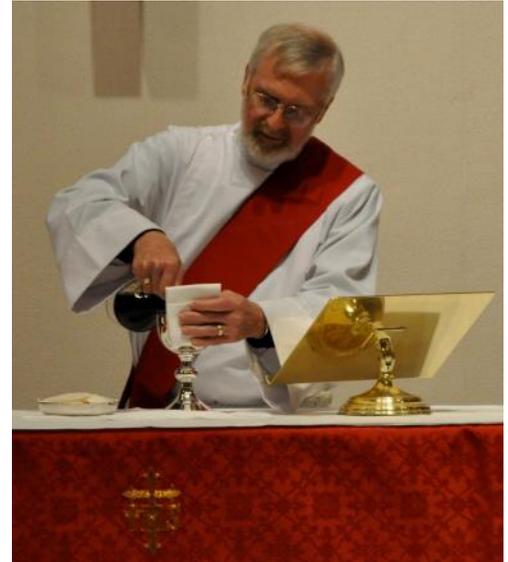
Deacon Al's ministry has focused on addressing the problems of the homeless and those with food insecurity. He has served on the boards of Bartlett Housing Solutions, Morgantown Community Kitchen, and Empty Bowls Monongalia. He has a gift for preaching and assists liturgically with worship at St. Thomas à Becket. He participates on the diocesan level as a member of the Commission on Ministry and with the West Virginia Iona School, the diocesan formation program. Recently, he chaired the Bishop Coadjutor Search and Nominating Committee. Deacon Al and his wife, Cheryl, have two children and enjoy their grandchildren greatly.

## **Dr. William Haller, Director of Music**

Dr. Haller is professor emeritus of organ and organ literature at West Virginia University. He received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from North Texas State University and both his master's and bachelor's degrees from the Eastman School of Music.

Before coming to St. Thomas à Becket, Bill served as director of music ministry at Edgewood Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wheeling, W.Va. Until 2002, he was the organist at the Worthington United Methodist Church in Worthington, Ohio. He also was the organist for the Columbus Symphony.

Dr. Haller's honors include winning the National Organ Playing Competition in Fort Wayne, Ind., in 1965, and tying for second place at the International Organ Playing Competition in Chartres, France, in 1974. Since 1982, Dr. Haller has been a fellow of the American Guild of Organists.



# Current Clergy and Staff, cont'd

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## **Natalie Homer, Parish Administrator**

Natalie has been at St. Thomas à Becket since 2018. Originally from Idaho, she moved to the area to pursue an MFA in Creative Writing from West Virginia University. Her first poetry collection, *Under the Broom Tree*, is now available from Autumn House Press (2021). Natalie, a confirmed cat lady, lives in Waynesburg, Pa., with her husband, who is a youth pastor in the Church of the Nazarene.



# Our City: Morgantown, West Virginia

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Located at the intersection of two interstate highways, I-79 and I-68, Morgantown is easily accessible by car or plane. The Morgantown Municipal Airport, only minutes from downtown Morgantown, offers daily flights to Washington Dulles International Airport and Pittsburgh International Airport.



Music, art, and theater lovers find a variety of things to do, from visiting artisan markets and attending theater performances, to viewing social art projects and city-beautification murals and sculptures around the town. Farmer's markets and local farms provide abundant opportunities for farm-to-table dining. Take a tour through area wineries and craft beer pubs. Grab a paddle and float down the Monongahela River as it cuts through town, or stick to the shore as you bike, walk, or run along more than 50 miles of local rail trail.

With a population of just over 30,000 our city is home to West Virginia University. As a research university, WVU offers bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and professional degrees, as well as programs in law and medicine. Football Saturdays turn Morgantown into a virtual sea of Blue and Gold. The football stadium seats 64,000 spectators—on home game days we become one of the state's most populous areas.

Morgantown has been recognized as one of the best small cities in America, and it ranks among [Livability's](#) Top 100 Places to Live, 10 Best Places to Raise a Family, and Best Affordable Places to Live. [Niche](#) gives Morgantown an overall grade of "A" as a place to live. Our two Morgantown public high schools consistently rank among the top high schools in W.Va.; U.S. News and World Report ranks them third and fourth in the state.

*Click on the image below for a quick video tour of our city.*



# Diocese of West Virginia

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The Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia encompasses the entire state and consists of 65 active parishes. Our oldest parish was established in 1740 and our newest in 2007. The Rev. Matthew Cowden, elected during our 144th diocesan convention, will be consecrated Bishop Coadjutor in March 2022. He will become the eighth diocesan bishop upon the retirement of the Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer on October 13, 2022.

Click on the image below for a video produced by the Bishop Coadjutor Search Committee, to see why we love the Diocese of West Virginia.



## Diocesan Ministries and Programs

**The Highland Educational Project (HEP)** has been an outreach ministry of the Diocese of West Virginia for over 70 years. HEP operates as an outreach program supporting addiction recovery, home repairs, and family and youth education programs in McDowell County.

**Summer Reading Camps** offer intensive instruction, including games, posture, books, and music to make learning fun for children in grades 2–4 who are identified by their schools as being behind grade level in reading.

**The Dayspring** is the official newspaper publication of the Diocese of West Virginia. It is published three times per year and is mailed to all Episcopal households in the state.

**Commission on Racism & Diversity** works to eradicate racism through education, group interaction, anti-racism dialogues, and prayer to bring about mutual understanding, respect, appreciation, and fair treatment of people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds.

**Commission on Ministry** oversees work on the discernment and formation process for the diaconate and for those who feel called to the priesthood and expect to attend seminary.

**Women's Ministries** consists of six ministries: the Book of Remembrance program, Love-In-Action, the Church Periodical Club, Daughters of the King, United Thank Offering (UTO), and Gifts from the Heart. Women's Ministries also sponsors the annual Diocesan Women's Conference.

**Youth Ministries** develops programs and hosts events for students in grades 6–12.

# Diocese of West Virginia, cont'd

**Children's Ministries** develops a variety of programs and provides resources to parishes for use with younger children (preschool–grade 5).

**West Virginia Iona School**, in cooperation with the Iona Collaborative (a program of Seminary of the Southwest), is designed to address the need for local formation for those seeking ordination as priests or deacons and to provide formation opportunities for the laity.

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The Diocese of West Virginia is blessed to be home to both the Peterkin Camp and Conference Center and the Sandscrest Conference and Retreat Center:

**Peterkin** is located on 1,400 acres of forested land in eastern West Virginia. Generations of diocesan youth have attended camp at Peterkin, making new friends and lifelong memories while growing spiritually in this special place.

**Sandscrest** is located in northern West Virginia. The 285-acre property consists of an historic mansion (built in 1852) that contains a dining room and accommodations, a guest house, and a conference building. Sandscrest is available to house retreats, workshops, and celebrations. It is open to all religious denominations and non-profit organizations.



*The chapel at Peterkin in Romney, West Virginia.*



*Sandscrest Conference and Retreat Center in Wheeling, West Virginia.*



# What We Seek in Our Next Priest

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We are excited about welcoming a new priest to St. Thomas à Becket!

We seek a priest who will inspire us to value and strive for a strong relationship with God, a priest who will lead us to emulate Christ in our daily lives. We pray for a priest who preaches the Gospel with love and conviction, and who will lead us into a deeper appreciation of it. We pray for a leader with empathy and spiritual depth, a person of mindfulness and commitment to being a pastoral presence for our parish family. We hope for a priest who has a deep appreciation for Episcopal tradition, liturgy, ritual, and the important role that music plays in our worship.

We hope for a priest who will seek to develop and work with strong leaders from within the congregation. In addition, we pray for a leader who will be a good listener and embrace open communication and transparency, but who also can make difficult decisions when necessary. We pray for a priest who will work to build relationships with members of the congregation, on all age levels, a priest who will laugh with us and cry with us, who will energize and inspire us. We hope for one who will genuinely enjoy the social aspects of our parish life.

We pray for a priest who possesses the traits identified in our recent parish survey as most important to us. Specifically, we seek a priest who:

- Is skilled in providing pastoral care, and is able to respond to a variety of needs for spiritual support
- Will deliver thoughtful and engaging sermons that speak to our everyday lives
- Is an attentive listener and an effective communicator
- Will strive to know our congregation, our gifts, and our needs
- Will establish meaningful connections with the children and youth in our parish
- Has excellent interpersonal skills, and demonstrates effective administrative and organizational abilities

Finally, we seek a priest who will work with us to:

- Grow the parish, both spiritually and in numbers
- Reestablish and revitalize an effective Christian education program for children and teens
- Provide a varied program of Christian education and spiritual growth opportunities for adults
- Be intentional in honoring diversity, inclusion, and our commitment to social justice



# How to Apply

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If you are discerning a call to be our priest, please submit your resume, a copy of your OTM profile, and your letter of interest to:

The Rev. Canon Chad Slater  
Office of Transitions  
Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia  
PO Box 5400  
Charleston, WV 25361  
Email: [cslater@wvdiocese.org](mailto:cslater@wvdiocese.org)





