



St. Thomas EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Tidings

Getting back to a Happy New Year

The Rev. Canon Bob Goolsby, Rector

We made it! Happy New Year. Most of us will not look back fondly on 2020, but we hope and pray for a new year that will bring a new hope and new opportunities for us to serve the world in Christ's name, and grow closer to God in the coming months.

But there is always some value that we gain, even in adversity. Some of the things we have learned as a result of living through the pandemic year of 2020 have shaped how we will do and be church for years to come. It's as if 2020 in its entirety was Advent! Not that Advent is a time of inconvenience and weariness, but the season is marked by patience in waiting, waiting for the hope that is to come. And we do not wait alone. We begin this new year still hoping for our lives to return to some normalcy and for our fellow citizens, both in our communities and around the world, to be healthy and fear-free.



THE REV.
ROBERT GOOLSBY

The seasons of the church year are interesting, in that they are not meant to isolate our thinking to that particular season. Each season calls our attention to something.

Advent bids us to await the coming of Christ and prepare our hearts and lives for his coming. This anticipation includes the tenets of hope, love, joy, and peace. These are the values that infuse our world as Christ enters in.

Christmas is the celebration of God coming to us incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ. **Emmanuel**, God with us. **Epiphany** is God's revelation of himself in Christ to the world. **Lent** is a time historically that estranged members of the Church are offered a time of repentance and

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preparation to be welcomed back into the fellowship of faith. **Easter** is the six-week long celebration of Christ's Resurrection, the inspired stories of his appearances to those who believe and how Christ's death, resurrection and ascension has altered our relationship with God in such a way that we are heirs of eternal life.

Which of these seasons contain values that we do not commemorate continually? None!

Advent. We are continually called to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, because Christ is always coming and we as Christians are called to continually anticipate his presence.

Christmas. We continually rejoice in the Good News that God in Christ became human and that we are now adopted as God's children and heirs of God's kingdom.

Epiphany. Epiphany means "showing" or "manifestation." The season's readings include the events that manifest the divinity of Jesus. Christ is *always* present and makes himself known to the world through the ministry of the Church. That's you and me!

Lent is a season of penitence and fasting and is marked by "self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word" (BCP 265). When are we *not* to practice self-denial, repentance, and reading God's holy Word? We should always do these.

Easter. We are an Easter people. Many have said this about Christians, Episcopalians especially. We display the empty cross above the altar to signify that Christ is not dead, but alive; raised. We live and move and have our being in the eternal life of the Risen Christ.

Each season is a reminder of how we are called to navigate our lives as Christians. The Church seasons remind us that we do not travel alone on our pilgrimage. As we begin another year anew, may we set our hearts on the life and teachings of Jesus and remember that God is always with us and is born into our hearts continually.

Blessings for a happy, healthy, and faith-filled 2021!

Bob+



Family Christmas Service December 2020



SENIOR WARDEN'S MESSAGE

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11

Happy New Year!

We have had quite a few months of reflections, hopeful changes, and start-overs! Most of us do not want to reflect on last year and cannot wait to see what possibilities the new year has in store for us. Patience will be required. We will **still** need to social distance and wear our masks. Until guidance changes what we can do, this continues to be our norm here at St. Thomas.

I ask you to lean in as we move into 2021. Our mission, goals, priorities, vision, and future accomplishments will all need a restart, our review, our attention, and a recapture of what matters most to us, our church, and our community. **No one** can do that task alone. We will need to roll up our sleeves and work together to give time, financial, and awareness support to all we need in 2021.

How do your unique skills, gifts and passions fit with the work that God is calling us to do? We need your ideas, your precious time, your energy and prayers to stay connected here at St. Thomas. Guess what? It is our year. Today and everyone that follows. It is ours to choose how to serve and what to focus on. What a wonderful place to start. What new thing would you like to do this year? What have you done in the past and stepped away from? With whom and how would you like to reconnect?

Your vestry is committed to working on your behalf and along with Father Bob, the staff, all the volunteers, committees and ministries who make up the living fabric of our church family that we all care for so much. We look forward to working together with you in the common goal of continuing to make St. Thomas an even better and more meaningful spiritual home for all.

Thanks to each of you for your continued prayers and support of St. Thomas and for all you continue to give to our community and each other. As always, please contact me to share any questions and concerns that you may have.

Continued peace.

Cindy Mitchell
Senior Warden

"There are far better things ahead than any we leave behind."

C.S. Lewis

VESTRY UPDATE

During the past 8 months, there have been 3 resignations of Vestry members. The seats were not filled due to on-going current events and unprecedented times.

The good news is we have been blessed to have three parishioners accept to fill the vacancies. Jodie Bevel, Rick Cabrera and Ben O'Kelley. The appointees will start their terms effective January.

Additionally, the current Vestry will be "frozen". Members slated to end their term in 2020 will be extended through 2021. Those scheduled to end their term in 2021 will be extended through 2022 and so on. The Vestry is looking forward to the new year ahead!!

It has been a frustrating year meeting via Zoom, attempting to accomplish and conduct church business via email and phone. If you have any questions, safety issues, building concerns, etc., please reach out to a Vestry member.

Operation Christmas Child—Shoeboxes

St. Thomas Family, I want to offer my deep felt thanks for participating in Operation Christmas Child this year. Even in a pandemic we were able to provide 22 shoe boxes filled with blessings to children around the world. They received toys and useful school supplies and personal care items. Samaritan's Purse provided Gospel Books in each child's own language. What you have done to bless these children will ring out through eternity. Our church is overflowing with love!



Julie Carter
Director of Student and Family Ministries



Thank you for your generosity in supporting Chow Now and Christmas Come True this holiday season for our community. Your donations along with the donations from Outreach resulted in the following:

“Christmas Come True - \$1,500 and over 11 gift cards for various stores
“Chow Now” - \$ 755

Your gifts ensured many children enjoyed a happy Christmas and much needed food support outside of school.

Carole MacDonald Outreach Committee

WORSHIP & COMMUNICATION SCHEDULE

Sun.... 10 a.m. Worship at Church and live on Facebook
Service is also emailed later on Sunday

Tues.... 10 a.m. Morning Prayer
1 - 3 p.m. Jewish/Christian Zoom Bible Study
(contact office to join)

Wed.... 12:00 p.m. Noonday Prayer with Healing

Thurs.... Email from Fr. Bob

Fri..... . 9 p.m. An Order for Compline

All worship services can be viewed on St. Thomas' Facebook.
Communication is done via email.
Please make sure we have your correct email address.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Altar flowers are given to the glory of God.
Donation is \$35.00 per arrangement.
Please contact the office at 446-2300.



During times of illness, hospitalization, or life crisis, please call :
Church Office - 386-446-2300

For Intercessory Prayer:
Yvonne Kendrick 386-445-9969

To be added to the prayer list:
Dolly Bordinger - 445-6875 or
Barbara Lawson - 517-1695

Offering Envelopes

Offering Envelopes were distributed and delivered in December.
If you did not receive envelopes and wish to have them for 2021, please contact Deborah in the office, at 446-2300.



The new year is here, and we will be slowly but surely coming back more and more in the coming months. Everybody repeat after me:

THERE IS AN END TO THIS HEALTH CRISIS AND IT'S HERE NOW, PRAISE GOD.

Now that we are properly filled with confident hope, let's talk about the year in Student Ministry. Our kids are coming back into our lives once they can be in places other than the sanctuary. Be honest everyone, our services, even contemporary, aren't really kid friendly. We must meet them where they are. To really make an impact in the lives of our students, we need to be everywhere. We need a Student Ministry Advisory Council. There are multiple roles that I have defined. I need you if you are interested in the development of faith in children of all ages and their families. Please pray about these descriptions and ask God to show you where your gifts will be best invested:

Social Activities Committee –

Advising and planning for social events and activities like Rock the Universe, Family Movie Night, Parents night out, lock-ins, camp outs, hikes, beach days, Camp Weed Summer Camp, etc.

Faith Formation Committee –

Advising and planning curriculum for Sunday School, VBS, EYC, Confirmation, Baptism, and Small Group Bible Study for parents

Mission and Service Committee –

Advising and planning mission trips and other service opportunities here in our church, in our community, and internationally

Prayer and Worship Committee –

Advising, planning, and advocating for student roles in liturgy and worship in our church as well as at home. Assisting with the development of retreats or other worship centered activities like Happening, Breakout, and New Beginnings at Camp Weed

Communications and Promotion Committee –

Advising and assisting with communication tools like Facebook, Bulletin Inserts, Posters, and other programs to help us promote and provide clear communication with parents and other ministries at our church. Also advocates for parish involvement in our student programming.

Administrative Committee –

Advising and coordination of budget expense decisions and fund-raising efforts, organization of student information and releases, registration of new students, and organization of administrative processes related to student ministry.

Come join our team while we have time to get it together. Here they come. Let's give them a reason to come back more often. I cannot wait for the emails to start pouring in. Send them to julie@stechurch.org

Julie Carter
Director of Student and Family Ministries



JANUARY 2021 BIRTHDAYS

1 - Errol Marshall
 2 - Sally Morris
 2 - Daniel Schmidt
 3 - Jenny Parchment
 6 - Andrew Jones
 6 - Carol Wing
 7 - Luciana Blackman
 7 - Ronald Leal
 7 - Andrew Jones
 7 - John Hardos
 7 - Diane Roosa
 10 - Joey Ortiz
 11- Virginia Esposito
 11 - Aloyd Hurley
 12 - Wendy Brooke
 13 - Richard Ellis



13 - Duane Moore
 14 - Gil Best
 15 - Jean Wright
 15 - Pat Schwartz
 16 - Joan Thompson
 17 - Pam Williams
 17 - Carl Potter
 20 - Edna Bevel
 21 - Gail Naworal
 22 - Jerry Esposito

23 - Violet Higgins
 24 - Dee Cunningham
 26 - Henry Johnson
 26 - Ken Wright
 26 - Sandra May
 27 - Craig Compton
 29 - Alice Lytch
 30 - Brittany Baratta
 30 - Joseph Harris
 31 - Nia Ortiz
 31 - Madelyn Ball

JANUARY 2021 ANNIVERSARIES



4 - James & Deborah Knowlton
 10 - James & Norma Daniels
 19 - Jack & Alma Dixon
 30 - Errol & Sheila Grant

The Financial Challenge Ahead



This year's stewardship theme, "Walking in Faith and Gratitude" speaks to us as individuals and as a community of faith. We are called to share through our work, our friendships, our service, and our giving. It is a powerful calling.

As a faith community, St. Thomas walks in faith through our worship, welcoming, pastoral care, fellowship, and ministry to the wider community. The giving of our time, talents, and treasures reflect faith and gratitude.

During this year's pledge drive, each of us were asked to continue at our current level of giving to St. Thomas, increase our current giving or give at another level. Responses of parishioners who have pledged is 29% less than last year and the amount pledged is 22% less than 2020.

We are not able to fund any of the ministries of St. Thomas for 2021. Additionally, building maintenance and grounds budgets were forced to take significant reductions. In 2020, all commitments were severely trimmed to a minimum.

Your assistance is needed in 2021. There will be a need for additional support for required projects, events (when it is safe to do so), and funding of our mission and ministry.

In the past, St. Thomas has answered the call many times. Rest assured that is our hope for the year ahead. Your giving support is appreciated.

St. Thomas Budget Committee

Thank You for Keeping up your Giving to St. Thomas!

Despite the parish office being closed to visitors, we must still regulate the climate in our buildings, keep up our grounds, pay the parish's various vendors, maintain our pledge to the Diocese of Florida, and keep up our payroll for staff (who continue to work regular hours, either at the office or from home, following government guidelines for personal and community safety). There are four easy ways you can make payments towards your 2021 pledge, special giving or forward any other offerings.

1. **US Mail:** The mail is being collected daily, and bank deposits will continue to be made weekly, as always.
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
5400 Belle Terre Parkway
Palm Coast, FL. 32137
2. **On-line banking** via your own financial institution. A check will be sent directly to St. Thomas.
3. **Drop off** your offering Monday through Thursday 9 AM - 1 PM. Please call first (386-446-2300). The office staff will keep a look out for you!
4. **PayPal.** Links are posted on our website (www.stechurch.org) and on Facebook.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the office.

Our Church Mission

Living and Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Community,
Holy Communion, and Servanthood Ministry

The Episcopal Church Welcomes You!



We are here for you!

Please be sure to contact the office (386-446-2300) to report hospital stays, surgery, inclusion on the prayer list, health issues or any concerns. Clergy or the appropriate ministry will be informed as soon as possible.

The parish clergy, licensed Lay Eucharistic Visitors, and other pastoral visitors are still facing limitations on in-person visiting, especially in hospitals, retirement communities, and hospice care facilities. We remain greatly concerned for your health and safety. While it feels not nearly as warm and personal as we would all prefer, emails and phone calls are our visitation tools we can continue to use for visits and prayer in the days ahead.

TIDINGS EDITOR NEEDED!!



Have a couple of extra hours a month? Like to use Word or Publisher?
Have ideas on how the Tidings could improve? We need you as the **editor**.
The position is currently available. PLEASE call the office.

Deadline for article submissions is on the **15th** of each month.
Please submit information via e-mail: info@stechurch.org

Be sure to include “Tidings” in the subject line.
All submissions should be in Word or Publisher format.

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

5400 Belle Terre Parkway
Palm Coast, Fl. 32137



Phone: 386-446-2300
Email: info@stechurch.org
www.stechurch.org

Office Hours Monday - Thursday
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.