

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Friday 9:00 am -1:00 pm

RECTOR:

The Rev. Brooks A. Cato 501-554-1236
brooks.cato@gmail.com

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC:

Dianne Adams McDowell 315-750-6027

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR & CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR:

Leah Schmitt 315-750-6040

WARDENS

Jane Welsh 315-824-3070
Martha Berry 315-263-6384

VESTRY MEMBERS:

Susan Beattie '24 315-824-0209
Valerie Morkevicius '24 312-218-1389
Anne Perring '24 415-280-8943
Wynn Egginton '25 315-825-5534
Connie Harsh '25 315-824-2183
Maureen Ghent '25 315-893-7383
John Orr '26 610-716-2501
Kerry Linden '26
Rose Novak '26 315-824-2082

CLERK OF THE VESTRY:

Susan Cerasano 315-824-1037

TREASURER:

John Bowen 315-824-4118

SEXTON:

Barbara J. Hicks 607-244-3397

TIDINGS EDITOR:

Rose Novak 315-824-2082
rnovakhamilton@gmail.com

Tidings



St. Thomas' Episcopal Church is an inclusive and worshipping Christian community that accepts the challenge of living the Gospel.

The Rector's Column

Happy Easter!

I cannot express just how grateful I am to have the privilege of a Sabbatical. I'll be at St. Thomas' for the Gospel Eucharist on May 12th, and then I'll return to the office on Monday, August 12th.

I'm sure this comes with a ton of questions, some of which I share! We'll do our best in this edition of *Tidings* to answer those questions. If you think of something that's got your brain itching, though, please reach out to me and the Wardens (Jane Welsh and Martha Berry) before I head out so we can fill in even more blanks!

In the meantime, I've pulled together a handy FAQ!

What are those dates again?

May 13 - August 11

What will Sundays look like?

Mostly the same, just with some different faces. The Rev. Canon Megan Castellan will lead many of the Sunday morning services. The Rev. Jim Corl and The Rev. Holly Eden will cover some, too. At the moment, there are three Sundays that will be Morning Prayer.

What about the rest of the week?

St. Thomas' will continue offering our regularly weekly slate of events,

especially Mondays' Friendship Inn, Tuesdays' Free Coffee and Scrabble Night, Wednesdays' Morning Prayer, and Thursdays' Bible Study. For the latter, Fr. Steve will pick up teaching on May 23rd. Also, Tuesday morning Free Coffee is an excellent time to chat with a warden!

Who's in charge?

The Wardens, with the help of the Vestry and a whole slew of volunteers, will keep St. Thomas' going strong through the summer months. Jane and Martha have been preparing for about a year, and we expect things to be able to run smoothly.

Who do I contact if something comes up?

The first point of contact should be Leah Schmitt, our Parish Administrator. She'll help you get pointed in the right direction and will keep the Wardens in the loop, too.

Fr. Steve White is available for pastoral emergencies. For other pastoral concerns, the Pastoral Care Commission under the guidance of Liz Brackett is ready to serve.

What do I do if I see Fr. Brooks in the wild?

Say hi!

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What's he going to get up to while he's out?

I'll be doing several different things, like a dry-stone wall workshop in Vermont, a high school reunion in New Mexico, a trip to celebrate my sister's graduation, and a whole lot of time to read, write, and re-energize.

What should we do while he's gone?

Come to church! You'll get a good spread of different preaching and liturgical styles, meet the amazing Canon Megan, and support this special place.

For about a year-and-a-half, we've been leaning into the idea of "sabbath" around St. Thomas'. There are a million ways you can continue to explore that concept, but maybe my sabbath can invite each of you into your own. Find those things that bring you renewal and rest, and lean in. That may mean picking up old hobbies, connecting with people that bring light into your life, rededicating yourself to prayer practices, or, really, anything that brings you deeper into your spirituality without weighing like a heavy burden.

One final note: This Sabbatical comes at a time when my period of disability is still fresh in all of our memories. That was a hard six months for St. Thomas', no two ways about it, and I've heard from a few folks who are worried this summer is going to feel the same. I'm confident this church is going to be just fine. We have planned for services ahead of time; the Wardens have been preparing for months; the Vestry is ready; pastoral coverage is arranged; and our administrative ducks are in a row. Also, we have a set end-date, so there's no ambiguity about when I'll be coming back. St. Thomas' is going to thrive, and we'll all have our feet solidly under us in time to start anew in a few months. It's going to be great as long as y'all do what y'all do best: Be kind and share God's grace!

With gratitude,
Brooks+

**Join the Conversation
Bible Study**

Before Fr. Brooks begins his Sabbatical, we'll finish two more books: Titus and Malachi.

Bible Study will take a week off and will not meet on May 16th.

Then, beginning May 23rd, the Rev. Steve White will lead an in-depth study on the fraught story of the Binding of Isaac. One of the most difficult and most discussed passages in scripture, this story carries an immense amount of historical and modern weight.

Where: Titus is a New Testament letter, and Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. The Binding of Isaac is from Genesis 22.

What to Watch for: In Titus, we'll examine the authenticity of authorship and changes to theology as early Christianity developed. In Malachi, we'll look at the hopes of a prophet. In the Binding of Isaac, all may not be as it seems.

References: Familiarity with Paul's letters will be helpful for Titus but not necessary. Malachi assumes you know something's wrong with the world. For the Binding of Isaac, Fr. Steve will draw considerably from James Goodman's book *But Where Is the Lamb?* A copy is available in the Church Library but is not required reading.

Content: The author of Titus poses as Paul but approaches things very differently. Malachi looks for a coming fix to all that is wrong. The Binding of Isaac *may* be about sacrifice or something else altogether.

Lectionary: Titus gets a special place on Christmas Day. Malachi graces the Sunday Lectionary twice. The Binding of Isaac also appears in our Lectionary twice, including the Easter Vigil.

—Fr. Brooks

Nave Gazing

We're returning to our pre-Covid way of doing church! So, here's some quick reminders of why we do what we do the way we do.

The bread and wine we use for making Eucharist are brought forward from the rear of the church before being consecrated. Why do we do it this way? The bread and wine are symbols of the work you do in your day-to-day lives. There was a time when the wheat for the bread and the grapes for the wine were grown, harvested, and prepared by the same people that fill the pews each week. Literally, those mundane grocery items were the work of your hands and the fruit of your labors. When we bring the bread and wine forward, you, the congregation, are bringing your livelihood to Christ's altar.

The collection plate also makes its way through the nave and lands on the altar, where it stays for the duration of the Liturgy of the Table. While we certainly rely on donations to keep the church running, the liturgical reasoning for the collection plate is very similar to that of the bread and the wine. Most of us don't grow wheat or stomp grapes; our livelihood these days shows up differently. Our wages, pension dollars, retirement funds -- maybe even lottery winnings! -- are the fruit of modern labor, so we present those to God at the very same altar. And, we keep the plate and those gifts in that sacred place because we want to reclaim the sacredness of your daily work.

We're also bringing back the shared chalice. For some, this is excellent news, and for some it's a little scary. Believe me, I definitely understand both sides of that. If you want to drink from the chalice, go for it! And if you're just not there yet, that is totally fine, too. Feel free to intinct, if you prefer. Or, you can always abstain from receiving the wine. Our tradition has long held that "receiving in one kind is fully efficacious." In other words, receiving just the bread counts.

Finally, on those Sundays when we have Morning Prayer instead of Eucharist, we're tapping into some of the older forms of worship. It was the practice of the church for centuries that the

primary liturgy on Sunday mornings was Morning Prayer, and Communion was only offered three or four times a year. Rooted heavily in the monastic traditions, Morning Prayer is one of the services of the Daily Office, our daily cycle of prayers marking every moment as sacred. With that in mind, there's also a somewhat different purpose to the service of Morning Prayer compared to Eucharist. Where Eucharist draws the community together to witness Christ in our midst, to be fed by his body, and to be sent into the world to serve all of God's people, Morning Prayer is more focused on shoring up your individual spiritual bridge to God within the greater framework of the gathered People of God. Of course, when we return to the world, we still go out to serve, but how we gather together shifts ever so slightly.

On a personal note, I'm thrilled for St. Thomas' this summer. You get to experience a couple of different kinds of services led by multiple different officiants and celebrants. Take note of these worship leaders and how they approach services differently (and what they do the same!). Just about every movement and gesture has a purpose, but those often vary greatly from person to person. Take note, and if you have questions, ask 'em!

—Fr. Brooks+

Rite II Services

Normally we make a few changes to our worship schedule in the summer months, but this year we're going to stick with **Rite II at 10:00 am** every Sunday. Primarily, we're keeping our schedule simple to ease the way for our various supply clergy and volunteers.

Sabbath Book

Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again by Rachel Held Evans

For the next several months, y'all get a light reading assignment. Rachel Held Evans was raised in an evangelical environment and grew to love the classic Bible Stories. As she distanced herself from that branch of Christianity, though, she felt a great loss where her beloved stories once resided. In *Inspired*, she combines her love for these ancient stories with a new-found Episcopal approach to scripture.

BONUS: Once you've finished her book, consider spending some time this summer approaching those familiar Bible Stories again, renewing your own love for those beautiful tales.

—Fr. Brooks

Sabbatical Contacts

Wondering who to contact if something comes up? Leah Schmitt in the Church Office can help you find the right folks to help out. The Church Office phone number is (315) 824-1745 and the email is stchurch@cnyemail.com

During Fr. Brooks' Sabbatical, he will not be checking email and may not be the quickest to respond to texts. Please direct church questions or needs to the Office or to one of the Wardens.

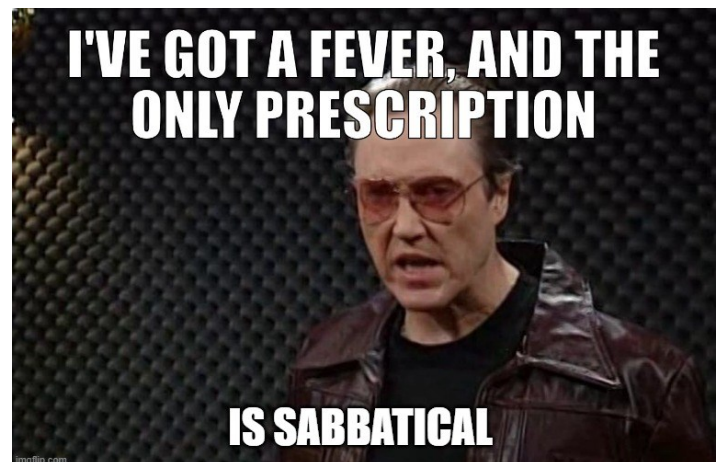
Summer Schedule

The Wardens have arranged for priests to be at St. Thomas' for most of the Sundays during Fr. Brooks' Sabbatical. Here's who you can expect to see this summer:

May 19: The Rev. Canon Megan Castellan
May 26: The Rev. Canon Megan Castellan
June 2: The Rev. Jim Corl
June 9: Morning Prayer*
June 16: The Rev. Holly Eden
June 23: Morning Prayer*
June 30: The Rev. Jim Corl
July 7: Morning Prayer*
July 14: The Rev. Holly Eden
July 21: Morning Prayer*
July 28: The Rev. Holly Eden
August 4: The Rev. Canon Megan Castellan
August 11: The Rev. Canon Megan Castellan

*We'll have Morning Prayer services on three Sundays led by our talented Lay Worship Leaders. The service of Morning Prayer remains a beautiful way for the church to gather and tap into our old-school roots when it was the primary Sunday service.

On the Lighter Side



Upcoming Events

May 10: Parents' Night Out

May 12: Gospel Eucharist & Fr. Brooks' last Sunday before sabbatical

May 16: No Bible Study

May 23: Bible Study with Fr. Steve

August 12: Fr. Brooks returns from sabbatical

Parents' Night Out

May 10th - 5:00-8:00 pm

Parents of St. Thomas! we're delighted to offer free childcare for kids up to 12 years old on Friday, May 10th. We'll have dinner, games, and entertainment to keep the kids busy while y'all take an evening to yourselves. Go on a date! Sit in a quiet house for once! Nap! It's up to you! We'll be available starting at 5:00 pm, and your kids can stay for as long or as little as you like, as long as everyone's picked up by 8:00 pm. For questions and more information, contact Leah in the Office.



Church Cookbook

Thanks to a steady stream of recipes, we've decided to extend the deadline for submissions! If you have a favorite recipe you'd like to share, an old friend's go-to dish, or something you wish Central New Yorkers knew how to do just like your grandma did, send your submissions to the office at stchurch@cnyemail.com

We're looking to finalize and publish in the Fall.



Easter Metaphor

Creator of springtime,
how can it be that every year
I forget the miracles visiting
the land in the form of fresh leaves, laughing
flowers,
greening grass.

Winter holds a strong power over me.
I lose the memory of vibrant vigor,
the unseen energy raising
dead earthen things to awakening life.

Risen One, dwelling within me,
how can it be that I forget you,
your passionate grace tending my soul,
your constant stream of hope
rising up through the dead ground
of my brown, barren prayer.

I turn to you in this season of spring,
bowing gratefully
to every growing plant,
every flourishing flower,
for each one sings an Easter metaphor full of
memory,
proclaiming your wild embrace of my inner
life,
a life holding the promise of an eternal return
to spring.

—Sister Joyce Rupp, O.S.M.
a Roman Catholic author and speaker

Sermon for the Fourth Sunday of Easter: Luke 24:36b-48

The Rev. Brooks Cato

April 14, 2024

I suspect some of y'all have seen my post over on Nextdoor, but if you haven't, here's the situation. We've been flying that Pride flag out front for about a year. In that time, the Vestry's received only one complaint, an anonymous letter decrying the existence of trans people. Incidentally, we've also seen at least eight newcomers who decided to come to St. Thomas' because of that flag. Anyway, we've been flying it for around a year, and, admittedly, it's gotten a little frayed around the edges. Madison Street is a windy place, and the cheapest flag I could find on the internet wasn't made for that kind of airish abuse. So, it's not been in great shape. But it has been flying as proud as it can. Has been, that is, until night-before-last. Perhaps to let us know it was time to get a nice new replacement, someone attempted to make off with the flag. But have no fear! A new one, of higher quality, is on its way.

The Pride flag has a long tradition. The first iteration was designed by a group of activists headed by Gilbert Baker in 1978. Baker was an artist and an army vet. He hand-dyed and hand-sewn that first flag, which included eight colors. Since then, the flag has undergone quite a few changes. For much of its history, the Pride flag was only six colors, and I gotta admit, from a purely aesthetic standpoint, that one's my favorite. But for some, that symbol of inclusion didn't feel like it included them, so the flag changed again. Philadelphia was the first to add brown and black stripes, emphasizing the unique struggles of queer people of color. The Progress Pride flag then emerged to explicitly include trans folks with the rainbow and a black, brown, blue, pink, and white chevron. That brings us up to the flag we've been flying, the Progress flag with an additional triangle representing people who are intersex. For those that don't know, that just means people who are born with physical or genetic markers that don't fit the typical gender binary. This is not a new category, just a new name. Shoot the concept even shows up in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, when Harper Lee describes an ambiguous wintertime creation as a "morphodite snowman." Same thing, different name.

Great, but why a visible symbol in the first place? Or, as I've heard it put more often than I'd like, why do they have to shove all this gay stuff down everybody else's throats? Well, to start, it's a symbol of unity. While the flag and alphabet soup abbreviations connect a whole bunch of different groups under one big queer umbrella, there's a huge amount of variation from one group or one individual to the next. There's a lot that isn't shared in common, but there's one thing in particular that is: the insufficient nature of society's strictly manufactured categories around human sexuality and gender. And as y'all are well aware, those that don't fit within society's categories live under constant threat of violence, abuse, insult, theft, damage of property, and on and on. Often, when those crimes get reported, they're downplayed or swept under the rug. The societal pressures and the dangers of just trying to live are so great on people within the community that suicide is a disturbingly high cause of death. And those same pressures exist on folks outside of the queer community, too, so heavily that queer folks-- especially trans women-- are murdered at higher rates than the rest of the population.

The flag represents unity of all those groups, but the point isn't just to say we've got a family that we got to choose. The point is to make our presence visible and to make the audacious claim that we deserve to live as much as anyone else. It doesn't matter what categories we're talking about, it doesn't matter how complicated the flag design gets. What matters is that, until queer folks are able to exist without fear, that flag is necessary. It has very little, if anything, to do with what you get up to in the bedroom, and everything to do with whether or not you can walk down the street holding your partner's hand without worrying what the person walking behind you is gonna do.

In other words, St. Thomas' hasn't been flying that flag to celebrate what happens behind closed doors. We've been flying that flag to celebrate what happens in front of God and everybody and to remind ourselves what happens when everybody but God turns a blind eye. So, for whoever stopped by St. Thomas' the other night, trying to remove our flag and then tearing it wasn't just an insult, it was a statement, a statement for us and the rest of the community that our tolerance, our acceptance, shoot even our glorification of queer people is not acceptable. Now, I've got a quote up in my office that says, "The Glory of God

is the human person fully alive.” A human person cannot be fully alive while the weight of society tells them they shouldn’t be alive at all. And that’s why we fly the flag. We want the queer community to know they are safe here while declaring that hatred is not welcome in God’s house or in God’s world.

In that Gospel reading, John describes the familiar story about Jesus the Good Shepherd. This is Sunday School 101. But there’s a line buried in that story that always surprises me. Jesus is talking about how he’s the way into the safety of the sheepfold, and then almost as an aside, he says, “I’ve got other sheep in other sheepfolds. I’ll take care of them.” He might as well say, “take care of yourself and don’t worry about anyone else. I’ve got this.” My Lord, do I wish more of us Christians thought that way. But I do love the ambiguity of that other sheepfold. I have no idea who it’s for. I don’t know who those sheep are, I don’t even know if they’re Christian. Admittedly, I’m a bit of a universalist, but I like to think of our sheepfold as followers of Christ, and that other sheepfold as sheep we’d never recognize on this side of the grave. Who knows, but I love that there’s a place for my ambiguity to live, to be protected, to be held close by that Good Shepherd. I wish the whole world worked so generously. I wish we could just tell those we disagree with that there are plenty of sheepfolds for plenty different folks, and we all love whatever sacredness we find, so we don’t need to worry about what you get up to ‘cause there’s room for everyone. I wish it was that easy. But it’s not, and the world instead is full of sheepfolds burning down other sheepfolds. I wish it was as easy as putting a flag out front and saying, you’ll be safe in this sheepfold. But it’s not that easy. We’ve had a wolf on the loose, attempting to snatch and scatter the faithful. Or at least to tell us our sheepfold’s caught their attention for all the wrong or very right reasons.

Now, I have heard a critique of our flag that came from a very different place. A queer friend extended their thanks to St. Thomas’ for having the courage to fly those many colors, but they wondered if it was true. They wondered if the flag was actually bait with the doors of the church as the steel teeth of a trap waiting to spring. That friend has been stung by so many Christians that when they see the flag out front, their heart swirls with a terrible mixture of hope and fear. Hope that Christianity can change and fear that it never will. I’ve only heard that from one person, but boy do I get it. We can only tell folks what we believe so

much. At some point, we gotta start showing them. That can look like a lot of things, but today, it starts with continuing to fly that battered, nearly stolen flag in defiance. It might look a little beat up, but it’s still there by God. And if the messy sight disturbs you, lean in. Because that flag represents people, a people who themselves have been torn, beaten up, and battered, but still live the only way they can: defiant.

I know it’s hard to be a group this big and not have some disagreements. I know not everyone thinks it’s okay to be gay. In all honesty, I’d love to sit down with you and have a conversation about that, but for the moment, I hope we can agree on this: that no matter who you are, no one should have to live in constant fear under a shadow of menace. That is the “Valley of the Shadow of Death.” But St. Thomas’? We are a home for light and life and the gate of our sheepfold remains open. We are a home for God. And flag-tearing wolves be damned, we are a home for you.

If You Want to Learn More About Being Transgender

On the shelves of the library in the Parish Hall are several books which inform the reader about the issues of a person who is transgender. Two of the books are written from the perspective of the parent of a transgender child, two are written by a person who is transgender, and one is a novel with a character who is transgender. Following is a list of books and their authors.

Becoming Nicole by Amy Ellis Nutt
She’s Not There: A Life in Two Genders
 by Jennifer Finney Boylan
Good Boy: My Life in Seven Dogs
 by Jennifer Finney Boylan
Mad Honey by Jodie Picoult
 and Jennifer Finney Boylan
Raising Kids Beyond the Binary
 by Jamie Bruesehoff

—Ellie Weyter

T-Shirts for Sale



St. Thomas' T-shirts are available in the office. Pay what you can or we're now asking \$10. Feeling generous? Offset someone else's cost at another \$10! **Available sizes:** Adult S-XXL

Let's Scrabble!

When: Tuesdays from 5-8 pm

Where: St. Thomas' Parish Hall

What to bring: \$5 to cover club expenses, Scrabble board, tiles, and racks if you got 'em.

Hope to see you there!

Looking for Contributors

Interested in adding something to our monthly newsletter? We're looking for contributors to spice up *Tidings* and add some variety! Pictures, poems, articles, book reviews, insights -- anything that's brought you closer to God. Please make submissions to the Church Office by the 20th of each month, and we'll consider them for publication.

Ramshaw Scholarships

Congratulations to Joe Berry, Emilija Morkevicius, and Daria Shokri as the recipients of this year's Ramshaw Scholarships! The Ramshaw Scholarship is a one-time gift from St. Thomas' for graduating high school seniors with plans to further their education.

Please enjoy the following reflections from Joe, Emilija, and Daria on their time at St. Thomas' and their plans for the future.

Joseph Berry

What has St. Thomas' meant to you?

St. Thomas has provided me with a church home. I started attending St. Thomas in 2016 until Covid-19 hit. I returned this year, as the pandemic has lifted and I was missing all of the study and fellowship of my church home. St. Thomas means so much to me, including attending church, teen class before church, attending events like the famous pancake dinner and coffee hour after church, and even volunteering at the Friendship Inn soup kitchen that was hosted at St. Thomas. St. Thomas gives me the feeling of being a part of something bigger than just myself. The congregation provides a sense of welcoming with open arms, a safe space to worship and that is what I like most about it. I feel like I can participate in a whole new community when I walk through the doors of St. Thomas, giving me the strength to look for another community when I leave for college.

What are your plans for the future?

During my high school career, I developed a metered and regimented focus academically and athletically. I plan to use these strategies as I strive to achieve my goal of completing the pre-dental program at the University of Rochester while representing my college through my athletic endeavors. In college, I plan to pursue and participate in programs that challenge me and increase my understanding of the world. Thanks to St. Thomas church community, I know the value of being a part of a church and have benefited from the fellowship, accountability and strength that it provides. The future is exciting!

Emilija Morkevivius

What has St. Thomas' meant to you?

St. Thomas' has been not only a place of worship for me, but also a home, a family, and an opportunity to express myself.

In full honesty, St. Thomas' hasn't always been a place of worship for me. Until about a year ago, I was not a true believer. I can vividly remember the sour, unpleasant taste in my mouth every time I muttered psalms and prayers. I felt dishonest to recite the Lord's Prayer, the Confession, the Nicene Creed and so on when I didn't full believe in God. Even then, I still felt at home at St. Thomas', although my sense of belonging was limited to coffee hours and volunteer days at the Friendship Inn.

Then, somewhat spontaneously, I decided to join the choir. Here, I found the place I belonged. I became a family member instead of just a guest passing through. I was also able to express myself through music and perform in a way I hadn't before. For starters, I got the opportunity to sing with people who had decades more experience than me, which allowed me to learn and grow as well as begin to see singing as a life-long hobby. More importantly, the energy of everyone around me was intoxicating and it was through this energy that I felt the familiar connection to God waiting for me that I had not felt since I was a little kid. Finally the words I sang rang true and I was able to connect to the lyrics and actually meant what I said. Through music, unexpected friends, mentors, and community, St. Thomas helped me reconnect to God and I will be grateful for that for the rest of my life.

What are your plans for the future:

For the next four years, I will be attending college at Yale University (I haven't officially committed yet, but will let you know after may 1 about my final decision!). My major is currently undecided, but I am planning to treat my experience as an all-you-can-eat buffet and try a bit of everything (film, theater, geology, biology, phycology, archeology, Eastern European Studies...)

Daria Shokri

St. Thomas' Church holds a special place in my heart, a sanctuary where I find solace and peace amidst life's uncertainties. Stepping into its hallowed halls, I am enveloped in a sense of tranquility, a respite from the chaos of the outside world. Despite its variance from the churches of my homeland, Ukraine, St. Thomas' church has become a corner stone of my spiritual journey during our brief two-year sojourn in this new land.

For me, St. Thomas' Church transcends its physical structure; it embodies a sanctuary where I can unburden my mind and seek clarity amidst the fog of uncertainty. When the weight of indecision and worry bears down upon me, I find solace in the rituals and serenity of this sacred space. Here, amidst the flickering candles and solemn hymns, I find a refuge for my restless soul

While the architecture and customs may differ from those of my native land, the essence of St. Thomas' Church resonates deeply within me. It is not merely a place of worship but a beacon of hope and renewal, a sanctuary where I can reconnect with my faith and find guidance in times of turmoil.

Moreover, St. Thomas' Church serves as a bridge between my past and present, a symbol of continuity amidst change. In its sacred confines, I am reminded of the timeless truths and values that transcend cultural boundaries. Here, amidst the diverse congregation of believers, I find a sense of belonging that transcends geographical borders.

Indeed, St. Thomas' Church has become more than a place of worship; it is a spiritual anchor in the tumultuous sea of life. As I reflect on its significance in my journey, I am filled with gratitude for the moments of serenity and clarity it has bestowed upon me. Though our time in this new land may be fleeting, the memories and lessons gleaned within the walls of St. Thomas' Church will endure as a testament to the power of faith and community.

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church

Vestry Minutes

April 7, 2024

Present: Susan Beattie, Martha Berry, John Bowen, Brooks Cato (presiding), Maureen Ghent, Connie Harsh, Kerry Linden, Rose Novak, John Orr, Jane Welsh

Absent: Wynn Egginton, Valerie Morkevicius, Anne Perring

Call to Order

The meeting began at 11:33 a.m. in the parish hall. Kerry Linden led the opening prayer.

Clerk's Report

The minutes of the February 25th vestry meeting had been approved by email vote on April 2nd-3rd, in advance of the publication of *Tidings*.

Treasurer's Report

John Bowen submitted the following report to the vestry members:

"Finances remain stable with no unusual expenses. The Balance Sheet shows a large checking account balance due to the Schaupp Bequest. The funds have now been transferred to the Historic Preservation Fund, leaving **\$85,000** in the checking account as of early April.

Pledge income to date is high but may be a bit distorted by some prepaid and bulk pledge payments. We continue to struggle a bit with our software, Church Windows, resulting in some report errors, but all funds are safe and bill are being paid on time."

John Orr moved that the Treasurer's Report be received as submitted; Jane Welsh seconded the motion. The Report was received unanimously.

Rector's Report

Brooks Cato reported that he had received a note from Barb Hicks thanking the vestry for the Easter bonus she had received. Brooks then offered thanks to the many persons, in countless places around the parish, who had worked together to help make Holy Week "happen." He particularly thanked Dianne

McDowell, the choir, the Altar Guild, the Flower Guild, Parish Life, the Worship Commission, our sexton Barb Hicks, Leah Schmitt (many service bulletins), Susan Cerasano, and Ed Page.

Wardens' Report

Jane Welsh had nothing to present at this point in the meeting. Martha Berry noted that she would be putting together a final schedule of supply clergy for the period covering Brooks' sabbatical and that, when she has completed it, she will make it public.

Commission Reports

- *Buildings:* Brooks Cato noted that a grant from Emmanuel (Norwich) for **\$5,000** has been received, which will be put toward building works. He already sent a thank you card. A discussion regarding the purchase of an AED is in the works. Nothing has yet been decided and no funding has been allocated at this time. Soon Brooks will meet with Brian who laid the front walkway and he will ask him to write up a bid to create some stairs for the door leaving the church on the south side to the lawn. Brooks stated that this bid, if acceptable to the vestry and wardens, can be approved at the May vestry meeting.
- Reporting on behalf of Buildings Commission, John Orr added that they have been reading the full report submitted by Crawford & Stearns. They have decided to prioritize work on the rectory, in large part because the advisors who wrote the report suggest this as the best path forward. At the moment, John stated that the members of the commission are all codifying their thoughts in writing so that a master list can be assembled amongst them as a first step. The rectory—once it is in good repair—will provide a good source of rental, John noted, as he reminded the vestry that Brooks and Becca still, at this time, plan, sometime in the future, to build a house of their own on the land they purchased near Lake Moraine. Brooks Cato then reminded vestry members that once he moves out of the rectory he will be owed money to offset the value of living in the rectory. This is currently **\$14,400 + 4,000** for utilities. (Technically speaking, it is not a housing allowance, but falls into a different category.) Jane Welsh followed up by suggesting that the rental of a renovated rectory could offset this expense. John Orr seconded this.

Old Business

- *Safe Church:* Anne Perring continues to monitor the status of those who are working their way through the program. Brooks Cato urged those who are still in process to contact her. He asked Martha Berry to remind vestry members of the importance of Safe Church Training for those in the parish, and she did.
- *1835 Bible Display Case:* There is no new information to report at this time.
- *Sabbatical 2024:* Brooks Cato opened the floor in case there were further questions, but there was nothing more to add at this point in the meeting.
- *Rectory Bathroom:* Brooks Cato continued, informing vestry members that Aaron Payne will pick up the first half of his check during the coming week so that he can begin to purchase supplies and begin the rectory bathroom renovations.

New Business

- *Diocesan Convention (Oct 18-19, 2024):* Brooks Cato announced the dates for the upcoming convention and asked for vestry members to volunteer to serve as the two delegates. John Orr stated that he would be pleased attend. Nobody else was ready to commit to the second position at this time so it was suggested that after the new vestry slate was decided, perhaps an oncoming member would like to attend.
- *Ramshaw Scholarships:* Brooks Cato stated that he had been in touch with two (and perhaps a third) student who would be eligible for a scholarship. The vestry can approve them at the next meeting.
- *Discretionary Funds Signatories:* Budget & Finance has suggested that two changes be made to remove two persons and replace them with two persons. This has to do with the availability of signatories for NBT accounts in the event of an emergency. Discussion ensued, during which the vestry considered whether the changes seemed necessary. Finally, they agreed that the request from Budget & Finance was reasonable. The change was moved by Brooks Cato and seconded by Susan Beattie. The motion carried unanimously. The text of

the motion read:

- “In order to assure St. Thomas’ is able to respond to the needs of community in the absence of the Rector, be it so resolved that the follow changes be made to the list of signatories for the parish’s two discretionary funds:
 For the Rector’s Discretionary Fund
 (account number ending XXX)
 Remove Rick Geier, keep Brooks Cato and Nancy Schult, and add John Bowen
 For the Migrant Discretionary Fund
 (account number ending in XXX)
 Keep Brooks Cato and Adger Williams, and add John Bowen”
- *New Vestry Slate:* Brooks Cato stated that during his sabbatical the wardens and outgoing vestry members will have to be preparing a new vestry slate to be approved first at the August 25th vestry meeting, and then presented to the General Meeting in September.
- *Budget & Finance Budgeting Process (Starting Early):* Brooks Cato brought to everyone’s attention the decision taken in 2023 to begin the budgeting process earlier than the parish had been used to. It was even thought that some discussion might take place at the Annual Meeting in September. Brooks reported that the Treasurer, wardens, and Budget & Finance will meet with him before he leaves for sabbatical to talk about what shape this might take.

Core Priorities: Social Service Needs

[Below is Part 2 of a discussion that began during the February 25th vestry meeting and is recorded in the vestry minutes for that meeting. Those minutes are reprinted in the April, 2024 issue of “Tidings.” They are also available online at the parish website.]

Brooks Cato opened the discussion with a report on what he had learned from CAP about the burning issues at the moment. These are: substance abuse, housing, income irregularity, and food insecurity. He opened the floor for ideas and discussion, wondering what others had been considering following the February meeting. Susan

Beattie stated that many persons had food cupboard needs but are too proud to admit it. Food insecurity is apparently a very serious problem, she noted, and it is unclear as to how to tackle the issue. Brooks Cato asked whether this is a “St. Thomas’ problem, or a Food Cupboard problem”? Susan Beattie responded that it is a Food Cupboard problem and that the severity persists because it is so difficult to figure out how to reach such persons. They are simply too proud to admit that they need help. Additionally, she continued, while in our former discussion we acknowledged that we are hearing about housing needs, there is no clear idea as to what to do with, or for this population once they arrive on our doorstep. Brooks Cato agreed that this raises substantial issues. He acknowledged that in order to develop a program more extensively St. Thomas’ would have to consider many concerns, including liabilities. Martha Berry extended the discussion by raising the issue of Safe Church. “It’s a Safe Church Issue, in many aspects,” she noted. Jane Welsh agreed and suggested that St. Thomas’ should look further into it. Brooks Cato explained that homeless persons who end up at our parish hall would be considered part of the vulnerable population.

John Orr commented that we need to do what makes sense for us, as a parish. Perhaps housing would help, but we can’t really address that at the moment. We should stay with what we excel at. Brooks Cato added “we do food already; perhaps we can expand on that.” John Orr responded that we could also consider child care, or even pre-school care. But we need to proceed carefully before we attempt to do anything. Brooks Cato wondered if it would make sense to send this conversation to the Outreach Commission and ask them to think about how to establish a “Third Space.” John Bowen commented that we might think about using a grant from the Good Neighbor Fund to support a larger project. Perhaps, he wondered aloud—if we began the nucleus of a larger project other, more-substantial donors will join in? Maureen Ghent said that she remembered a similar sentiment being aired at the end of the February meeting. Connie Harsh urged that, whatever the vestry and wardens eventually decided to do, it would have to be planned carefully and in great detail before any new initiative could be launched. This would take time and meticulous thought. Jane Welsh liked the earlier idea of joining forces to help out an initiative that CAP is operating. Supporting CAP might well be the best course of action, she urged. Brooks agreed that it will be important to be helpful, without the burden falling wholly on the shoulders of St. Thomas’ members. We

will have to continue this dialogue in the months ahead.

Announcements: Announcements of importance to the parish were made.

- *Next meeting:* Given the way holy days were scheduled within the calendar, the next vestry meeting will be on April 28th, 2024.
- *Fr. Brooks’ Last Sunday:* This will be May 12th.
- *Prayer Leader:* Rose Novak offered to lead prayer at the opening of the next vestry meeting.

At this point Susan Beattie moved to conclude the meeting; Jane Welsh seconded. The meeting ended at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Cerasano, Clerk

Scripture Lesson

So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.

—Galatians 6:9

Ponder This

Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.

—Chief Seattle

Free Coffee

St. Thomas' has free coffee in the Parish Hall every Tuesday, 9:00-11:00 am. Stay and enjoy a cup or take one to go. This will continue throughout the Summer



Coffee Hour Host

If you would like to host a Sunday Coffee Hour, there is a sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall. Parish Life can make the coffee or teach you how, and you just bring some goodies! If you have any questions, you can reach out to Leah in the office.

Make a Donation Online

Make a donation to our parish online with the link below. You will receive an email confirmation of your gift, and the Diocese will forward your gift and contact information to our parish for acknowledgment.

<https://cnyepiscopal.org/give/give-to-my-parish/>

When you go to the link above, you will fill out the donation form. In the Parish section, select "Hamilton: St. Thomas' Episcopal Church" and in the "Gift note/designation" line be sure to type pledge, deficit appeal, or wherever you'd like your donation to apply.

SCHMITT
DANCE
STUDIO

ANNUAL RECITAL

JUNE 23
AT 2:00 PM

DANCING
THROUGH THE
DECADES

\$5 ADMISSION AT THE DOOR

EARLVILLE OPERA HOUSE THEATER

18 E MAIN STREET, EARLVILLE NY

JUNE 23, 2:00 PM

Community Bikes Application 2024

Name of applicant _____
Address (street, number, city/town) _____
Phone (home) _____ Cell _____
Email _____
Age _____ M/F _____ Height _____ Weight _____
Contact person (if other than applicant) _____
Phone (home) _____ Cell _____
Email _____

Eligibility

Please indicate if you are currently eligible for one or more of the following (verification may be required): _____ Medicaid _____ SNAP _____ SSI _____ SSD

If you are not currently eligible for any of the above, you may still be eligible to receive a bike if you have special circumstances or other demonstrated need. Please briefly describe:

Bike Day Preference:

_____ Hamilton (Sat., May 4) _____ Oneida (Sun., May 19)
_____ Other by appointment (contact us)

Please return to: Community Bikes, P.O. Box 513, Hamilton, NY 13346
or email to: bikes@communitybikes.org

*Applications must be returned at least one week in advance of receiving a bike.

www.communitybikes.org, Phone 315-825-1361

The annual Community Bikes distribution is Saturday May 4 in Hamilton and on Sunday, May 19 in Oneida. Help is needed between now and then to: clean bikes, air bike tires and rolling bikes to a truck and from a truck on Friday, May 3 time TBD and Saturday, May 18. Contact Maureen Fox at 315-886-6797 with your abilities and availabilities. Many hands make for light work! Thank you!

www.communitybikes.org



COMMUNITY BIKES
HAMILTON, NY



COMMUNITY BIKES ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION

Eligibility:

Bikes are available to children and adults of all ages and sizes who don't already have a bike, and who are...

- Residents of Madison County
- Eligible for Medicaid, SNAP, SSI, SSD or other cash assistance, or have other demonstrated need or special circumstances.

See the attached application in this email to fill out, print, and mail to:

- **P.O. Box 513
Hamilton, NY
13346**



Flowers for the Altar

Just a reminder that if you would like to honor or remember a loved one with flowers on the altar, you can do that by making a donation to the Flower Guild (\$35 is recommended). Write a check to St. Thomas' Church and in the memo write Altar Flowers. Envelopes for flower donations are provided at the back of the church. You may either place the envelope in the collection plate during the Sunday morning service or mail or drop off your check in the Parish Office no later than the Wednesday prior to the Sunday you want your loved one honored or remembered so that the name(s) can be included in the bulletin. You can also fill in a date on the flower calendar in the Parish Hall.

Thank you.

—Rose Novak & Jana Laxa for the Flower Guild

AA Meetings at St. Thomas'

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church is pleased to host an **open** meeting of Alcoholic Anonymous.

Group Name: 12 ½ Group of AA

Place: St. Thomas' Parish House, Godly Play Room. (Building behind the church, first room on the right).

Time: Sunday's at 3:00 PM

Happening in the Area: AA Meetings in Hamilton, NY

TIME	NAME	LOCATION / GROUP	ADDRESS / PLATFORM	REGION
Monday, 7:00 PM	<u>Hamilton on the Green</u>	<u>Hamilton on the Green</u> First Baptist Church	First Baptist Church 27 Broad Street	Hamilton
Wednesday, 7:00 PM	<u>Colgate University</u>	<u>Shaw Wellness Institute</u>	113 Broad Street	Hamilton
Friday, 7:00 PM	<u>Hamilton on the Green</u>	<u>Hamilton on the Green</u> First Baptist Church	27 Broad Street	Hamilton
Sunday, 3:00 PM	<u>12 ½ Group of AA</u>	<u>St. Thomas' Parish House,</u> First door on the right	12 ½ Madison Street	Hamilton

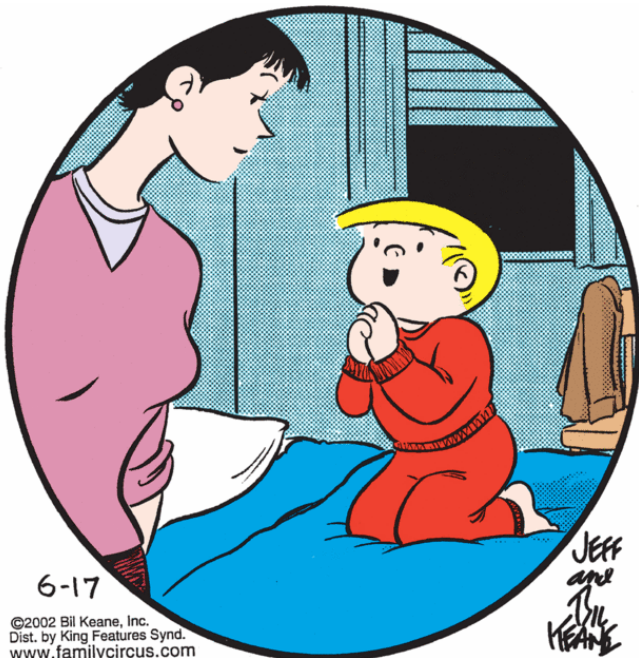
Prayers of the People

As of April 29th

For those in need: Edith Allen, Leslie Andersen, Aster Dinku, Andrea Duncan-Tanner, Joan Fales, Justin Fitzgerald, Barbara Frost, Lisa Gee and her children, Kaia Harding, Amanda Harlan, John Hart, Nancy Heck, John Hull, Angela Jones, Sandra Jones, Deb Moudarres, Pat Osowski, Wilma Peters, Joe Rupp, Candace Schult, Mark Spearing, David Sturges, Patricia Tayntor, Ed Vantine, Chris Warren, Deb Willis, Joan Winkler, Pavla Zakova-Laney, Christine Watkins, Deb, Bill, & their family, Jerry & Roseann Fitzgerald, Anthony & Vincent Pacillo, William & Elena Muenckler, Pat & Damon Simonds, Charles & Susan, Cynthia & her family, the Schmitt Family, Angela, Brian, Diane, Gordon, James, Jane, Jan, Janice, Jim, Mary, Maureen, Meral, Nick, Paula, Paul, Scot, Brice, Cassie, Charles, Dan, Grace, Kate, Nicole, Ryan, Travis, Jordan, Andrea, Russ, Evelyn, Ashley, and Taylor

For the Departed: Christopher Johnson.

On the Lighter Side



6-17

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“Sayin’ ‘Amen’ is like pressing the ‘SEND’ button for your prayers.”

May Thanksgivings

Birthdays: Adger Williams (05/01), Alessandra Catania (05/01), Anna Owens (05/03), Dianne Rich Krause (05/06), Kristin Strohmeier (05/06), Travis Stith (05/07), Lukas Morkevicius (05/08), Bruce Moseley (05/08), Andrea Gunther (05/11), Kenji Yoshino (05/12), William Strohmeier (05/15), Hal Stevens (05/18), Dan Keller (05/18), Nora Addor Hughes (05/18), Dawn LaFrance (05/19), Leah Schmitt (05/21), Emily Hutton-Hughes (05/22), Powers van der Mandele (05/27), Elsie Brockway (05/27), Deborah Radford (05/31).

Baptism Anniversaries: Kerri McCue (05/05), Adriana Catania (05/05), Alessandra Catania (05/05), Sicily Catania (05/05), Georgina Godfrey (05/06), Brian Rivington (05/10), Jessica Dakosty (05/12), David Dudrick (05/14), Simon Williams (05/15), Barbara Frost (05/16), Lucy Michaelson (05/19), Jane Scheinman (05/19), Nolan Dye (05/19), Everett Egginton (05/21), Alec Strohmeier (05/22), Gemma Godfrey (05/24), Barbara Hicks (05/27), Kevin Schult (05/28).

Marriage Anniversaries: Barbara & Ed Page (05/01), Dianne & Jim McDowell (05/11), Susannah Davies & Michael Glaviano (05/13), Melissa & Morgan Davies (05/14), Sharon & Hal Stevens (05/17).

Consider This

May we be good stewards of the time we have and understand that life extends beyond our days.

—Sojourners



TAPESTRY

The All-Centuries Singers

G. Roberts Kolb, music director



THE GOLDEN AGE OF MADRIGALS AND CHANSONS

Lassus **Sweelinck** **Gesualdo** **Marenzio**
Morley **Wilbye**

Friday
May 3, 2024
7:30 P.M.

Stone Presbyterian Church
South Park Row
Clinton, New York

General admission \$15; Seniors \$10; Students \$5

“Together we are God's church.”
A Message from Bishop DeDe

Dear People of Central New York,

I am writing to share news about my ongoing discernment and invite you to pray with me. [As you may have read](#), I am on the slate as a nominee to be the next presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church. Since last year I have prayed deeply, sought wise counsel, and participated in each stage of the search process, including the final discernment retreat which was held in mid-March. When my name was not included in the initial announcement on April 2, colleagues petitioned and I have been added to the slate as a nominee.

As you well know, discernment is not linear, and my sincere hope is that we will all work together to support and encourage one another on this journey. Please be assured that this diocese's ministry is vibrant and *not* slowing down! I am proud of our shared ministry. We are resilient, faithful, and joyful people who understand the blessing and responsibility of communal life. We are committed to growing in our faith, and our dedication to ministry is inspiring. Together we have built a diocesan system that is healthy and robust, capable of facing challenges and remaining unified in our commitment to God and one another.

The staff, leaders of our diocese and I are focused and fully committed to our diocesan ministries. [We are actively discerning transitions for our parishes](#) and planning and implementing programming that will allow us to continue to realize [our vision of "A World Healed by Love" and our mission of "Learning to love God, One another, and all God's creation."](#)

My deepest desire is to serve God, to share in ministry with all God's people, and to proclaim Jesus. My sense of call to this process has been nurtured by my love for Central New York and our shared ministry. Building sustainable systems that empower ministry is central to my call; I believe that God is calling our church to not only proclaim the redeeming love of Jesus but to incarnationally live this proclamation in how we minister together. In our diocese, we do not agree on every issue, but we are committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ and are united in a shared purpose. Together we are God's Church, a tapestry of beloved people called to this good work of transformation in love.

I ask your prayers for our diocesan staff and leaders and for one another as we journey together. I also ask your prayers for me and my family as well as for +Scott, +Daniel, +Sean, and +Rob. Let us pray for our diocese's elected deputies who will represent us at The General Convention in June, as well as the whole of The Episcopal Church as together we seek to make important decisions about our local and global ministry.

The prophet Micah's question continues to compel us:

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?*

Faithfully,



Bishop DeDe Duncan-Probe

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church
Scheduled to Serve
May 2024

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church
 12 1/2 Madison St.
 Hamilton, NY 13346

315-824-1745
 stchurch@cnymail.com
 stchurchonline.org

DATE	LECTOR	LEM	USHER	ALTAR GUILD	FLOWER GUILD	NEWCOMERS
May 5	OT Martha Berry NT Wynn Egginton	Amy Jerome	Ed Page	Wynn Egginton	Diane Rich Krause	Colleen McNerney
May 12	OT Adger Williams NT Maureen Fox	Susan Cerasano	Ed Page	Wynn Egginton	Diane Rich Krause	Colleen McNerney
May 19	OT Kerry Linden NT Vivi Linden	Debbie Barker	Ed Page	Ellie Weyer	Diane Rich Krause	Colleen McNerney
May 28	OT Linda Jenks NT Rose Novak	Wynn Egginton	Ed Page	Colleen McNerney	Diane Rich Krause	Colleen McNerney



Qidings
May 2024

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church
12 1/2 Madison St.
Hamilton, NY 13346
Address Service Requested