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# Tidings



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

## The Rector's Column

What a whirlwind it's been getting back in the saddle! I can't believe it's already October. With the Annual Picnic and the Annual Meeting celebrated, we've already started looking ahead. We're planning for All Saints' and Christmas, and before we know it, 2025 will come knocking. With all those on the horizon, there've been meetings about music, service offerings, and of course, the Annual Budget.

You'll be seeing pledge cards soon, and each Sunday in October, you'll hear someone from St. Thomas' speak about their relationship to stewardship. I might even try my hand at it this year!

The truth is, it's never fun to talk about money, but this time is especially difficult. With stagnant wages and the growing cost of just about everything, it's a tough time to ask folks to donate and even tougher to ask folks to donate more than they have before. We know this, but the hard truth is that the church is facing the same growing costs. We're also trying not to fall into the pattern of stagnant wages we see elsewhere, but that's gonna be tough.

At the request of the Vestry, the Budget & Finance Commission, the Wardens, and I have been hard at

work since August on the 2025 Budget. We're starting our Stewardship drive early, hopefully giving us more time to collect pledge cards and finalize the Budget before the new year begins. We are looking at some hard decisions, reevaluating our priorities, and trying to adapt so that we can be the best stewards of your gifts possible. The earlier you can return your pledge cards, the more time we'll have to navigate all this carefully, delicately, and prayerfully.

Folks, I know this is going to be hard. I know most of us are feeling the economic squeeze. And I know that how the church's finances work isn't always easy to decipher. So, I want to make y'all an offer: Ask. Your Treasurer, Chair of Budget & Finance, Budget & Finance Commission members, Wardens, and I would be happy to talk through your questions and listen to your concerns. We want to fund our ministries in ways that complement the parish's priorities, both for the coming year and the years ahead. And we can't do that well if we don't hear from y'all.

One last thing: I hope this would go without saying, but I don't want to miss a chance to reassure you. If

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you just cannot consider an increase in giving, it's okay. The last thing I want to do is play on your guilt. Churches have too long a history of that. Whether or not you can give or can give more, you are still very much a valued part of this congregation. There are so many ways to support a church, and only a handful involve a billfold. There are always opportunities to volunteer, invite people to attend a service or help with a ministry, share sermons with friends and family, weed the gardens, change the light bulbs, and on and on.

We may need some creativity to meet the demands of the year ahead, but I'm confident no matter what comes of this season, we'll meet 2025 with the prayers, dedication, and stubbornness of an immensely dedicated Body of Christ.

— Fr. Brooks

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## Youth Program Continues

St. Thomas' youth program continues and the classes remain open for new students to join at any time!

9:00 - 9:40 am - Teen Class - 6th through 12th graders meet with Fr. Brooks, learning how to navigate the intersection of church teaching and their day-to-day lives. Class ends in time for all to attend the 10:00 am worship service with the rest of the congregation.

9:45 am - Godly Play and Nursery - Younger kids, from babies to 5th graders, learn the basics of the Bible, community, and the Episcopal Church using a Montessori-style program called Godly Play. Class overlaps the first half of the Sunday worship service, and students rejoin the congregation in time for Communion.



## Join the Conversation: Bible Study

We're continuing through the book of Jeremiah, the delightfully nicknamed "Weeping Prophet."

**Where:** Jeremiah sits almost exactly in the middle of the Christian Bible, between Isaiah and Lamentations.

**What to Watch for:** There's a lot of prophecy and a lot of direction in a last-ditch effort to save the people from their soon-to-be conquerors. It doesn't look good.

**References:** Lots of references to Moses and the Exodus.

**Content:** Jeremiah takes place immediately before and at the outset of the Babylonian invasion and exile.

**Lectionary:** Only 11% of Jeremiah shows up in our Lectionary. We typically encounter Jeremiah in Year C and occasionally at both Christmas and Easter.

## Upcoming Events

**October 14:** The Office Closed

**October 27:** Fall Family Fest  
& Crop Walk

**November 3:** All Saints' Sunday

## Nave Gazing

Ever wonder why we bless animals this time of year? It's not just because the weather tends to be temperate and the changing leaves make for a lovely backdrop, though those do help. At St. Thomas', we do the Blessing of the Animals on the first Sunday of October. That tends to be the closest Sunday to October 4th, the day in the church calendar set aside to remember St. Francis.

Ok, great. But why does the Blessing of the Animals go with St. Francis?

As the story goes, Francis and some of his companions were walking through the Italian countryside when he spotted a flock of birds. He got a tad excited and ran over to share the Good News with them. Much to his companions' surprise, the birds stayed put while Francis spoke. "My brother and sister birds, you should praise your Creator and always love him: He gave you feathers for clothes, wings to fly, and all other things that you need. It is God who made you noble among all creatures, making your home in the air. Without sowing or reaping, you receive God's guidance and protection." The birds appeared to listen attentively, and when he finished, they spread their wings and sang their praise. Francis walked through the middle of the flock, touching their heads and blessing each bird as he went.

When he returned to his stunned companions, they stared at him in awe as he wondered aloud why he'd never tried to preach to animals before. From then on, any time he came across an animal, domestic or wild, he'd deliver a barn-burner of a sermon. That fateful flock of birds was his first critter conversion, but there are legends involving lots of other animals, too, including a rabbit, a wolf, lambs, a donkey, and even a school of fish!

Francis has an amazing legacy beyond his connection to the animal kingdom. He founded the monastic order of the Franciscans and inspired ministries to the sick and the poor through his own vows of poverty and his work among lepers. Francis attempted to broker peace

between Christians and Muslims during the Fifth Crusade, and though his attempts to end the fighting failed, he did secure better treatment for captured soldiers on both sides. He's reported to have borne the marks of the stigmata, the wounds of Christ, as a sign of his holiness.

These days, it's easy to forget just how much St. Francis did. Most think of him as the guy that preached to animals or maybe as the model for serene garden statues. As the patron saint of animals and ecology, it makes sense to celebrate the Blessing of the Animals on his saint's day. But that day can also be an invitation to us to live more faithfully and to include a greater swath of creation in that faithfulness than we might think possible.

There's an old quote attributed to St. Francis that makes the rounds pretty regularly: "Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words." I've always loved the way this emphasizes actions over words. The problem is, it doesn't reflect how St. Francis actually taught. Yes, he did amazing work, but he also preached to everyone and everything who would listen (and a few that wouldn't) *using his words*. It seems, as our Bishop says, that Francis knew "when necessary" might be more frequent than we like to think.

One last thing: Does a blessing mean my 12-year old dog Cotton will reverse his aging, his white snout will turn back to black, and his tired hips will support him with the spring and joy of a puppy again? Sadly, no. Blessings are not magic tricks. Blessings are acknowledgments that the person or thing receiving them is sacred. We already know our own pets are angels, of course, but these blessings are one way of saying, "Hey God, thanks."

So, as we remember Francis this Fall, remember who this saint was: a man who gave up his life to serve God among the poor, a man who preached often, and a man who saw the sacred in all of creation.

**Sermon for the Eighteenth  
Sunday after Pentecost:  
James 3:13-4:3 & The Antichrist  
The Rev. Brooks Cato  
September 22, 2024**

Oh, James. If you haven't before, go home and read the whole thing. It's like five chapters, so it won't take long. I say this because James is a mostly clear set of instructions for how Christians should live. It's the kind of letter we all need to review, but it's also the kind of thing the church really should've been trying to live out for millenia. Part of me just wants to read James right now and call that my sermon. I mean look at it. "Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind." In other words, I don't know how many different ways to say this, and I'm not sure how many more weeks I can stand to talk about it (or how many y'all can stand to listen to it). But come on. I've said it ad nauseam, and I'll say it again. I don't see how what passes for so much of Christianity today can actually be called Christian with a straight face. So, I'm gonna let y'all percolate on that on your own. But before I set you loose on James, I want to remind you to read it with as little bias as possible 'cause, depending on the biases of the news you listen to, you may be predisposed to hear wisdom in your candidate and wickedness in the other. Try to set your preconceptions aside, search for the truth (not the supposed "truth" you like but the real thing), and then read James.

Instead, today I want to share a different scriptural idea: the antichrist. Now, you should know that just like there were many who bore the title of Messiah before Jesus came along, there've been many who've borne the title Antichrist. "Messiah," by the way, is Hebrew. "Christ" is basically just the Greek word used instead. So an antichrist is an inverted messiah, one who subjugates and exploits the people in the name of himself instead of liberating them in the name God. Think of it this way: if you're a Colgate Hockey fan, every team you play against is an

anticolgate. But Cornell is THE Anticolgate. When Colgate plays Cornell, you don't abandon Colgate and decide to root for Cornell instead because there's a chance they might make the stock market jump. So, the Antichrist, the big bad from Revelation, probably referred to the Emperor of Rome who was the primary exploiter of God's people back then. But we've carried the idea forward and now many fear the return of the Inverted Messiah as much as they long for the return of the true Messiah. But wherever you land on what the future holds, whatever you believe about powers and principalities, it's helpful to know how the Antichrist is described. Either it gives us a roadmap of who to watch out for, or it gives us an archetype illustrating what evil does.

The word Antichrist shows up in John's First and Second Letters. Second Thessalonians, Matthew, Daniel, and Revelation describe a similar figure though they use different names. Those are the main places we find the "man of sin," the "false prophet," the "beast of the sea," the "deceiver," and my personal favorite, "Little Horn." Whatever you call him, scripture says he'll be one who lies to gain power, he'll scoff at laws, he'll exalt himself above all other people and every one of the gods, and he'll declare himself to be the only one who can save the people. He'll be followed by those who refuse to love the truth. Jesus says this false messiah will lead many of the faithful astray. Some say the Antichrist is the Devil, but scripture points to him more as a tool or a sower of evil than the actual Devil himself. The Antichrist'll also be difficult for many to recognize. He'll rise to the heights of power and have an army of dedicated followers. They'll wear his mark on their foreheads, Revelation says, though what exactly that mark looks like is unhelpfully never described. Could be a tattoo, an implant, a hat, a pin, an armband, who knows? During the time it takes for people to recognize his true identity, he'll cause all sorts of disruptions, seek unprecedented levels of control, and strip freedoms from growing numbers of people the longer he's allowed to reign. Where the people once pledged their hearts to God, they'll turn to him instead. Where they once gathered to worship Jesus, they'll worship him instead. Where they once loved their neighbors, they'll send the most violent of their ranks to silence any opposition instead. The Antichrist will receive a head wound that heals, he'll utter "haughty and blasphemous words," he'll discount the teachings of the true Christ as weak and naive. He'll be nearly impossible to fight and bring down, and what few

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supporters he has that show skepticism'll either fall in line or lose their own power. They'll claim he is without sin, or if he has sinned, it was either insignificant or necessary. When he's in power, all will be chaos. He'll take the livelihood of the people, especially the poorest, and pile them around his throne. And maybe most telling, he will eventually lose, but it's a long, hard road to get there.

That's how the Bible describes the Antichrist. I've told you nothing beyond that. If you feel your face flush because church is getting too political, I'll remind you of three things. One, again, I'm just relaying what scripture says. Two, it is one of the Antichrist's goals to sway you away from scripture in favor of his teachings. And three, I have said no names. If you've identified somebody from this description, you've identified an antichrist. Also, if you're feeling a little smug, remember that The Antichrist doesn't preclude other antichrists running around, and we've all seen plenty of those pop up regardless of party affiliation.

Now, I'm not big on the End Times. The Rapture, those Left Behind books, and the various millenarian theologies don't do much for my spiritual life. I don't fear a coming Antichrist, the Mark of the Beast, or giant scorpions sent to pick off the faithful remnant. But I do hold to the teachings of Christ, which fundamentally means rejecting any antichrist. In other words, the Antichrist's job is primarily to discount the teachings of Jesus and to convince his followers that other things matter more. Should we seek Christ in all persons and respect the dignity of every human being, or should we claim that that's a nice sentiment but it doesn't pay the bills? Should we welcome little ones and bring God closer into our lives, or should we force women to suffer in search of desperate maternal and prenatal care? Should we hammer our swords into plowshares, or should we share AI generated pictures of a triumphant Jesus with rippling muscles, bandolier belts, and assault weapons?

Look at James again, then when you leave this place, look around you. What is pure, what is peaceable, what is gentle and willing to yield? Where do you see mercy? Can you spot hypocrisy? When the people of old needed to suss out who was a real prophet and who was false, they had a very simple test: you will know them by their fruits. Resist them, and they will flee. Love them,

and they will crumble. Defy them, and their rotten fruit will be laid bare. Say nothing or do nothing, and they will thrive.

I'll say one more thing and then sit down. History has shown us all sorts of arguments as to why the way of Christ supposedly isn't up to the challenge of governance: Love doesn't save the economy; Jesus doesn't care about our retirement accounts; serving foreigners is bad for business; sharing a common cup threatens the social hierarchy; war is the only way to solve conflict; and on and on. You've heard 'em all. Antichrist arguments undercutting the power of the Gospel always, always lead to oppression and often to the attempted eradication of those on the margins. Remember that. We are not just talking about theology or scripture or the long tradition of the church here. We're talking about human lives at risk because some are willing to overlook evil in exchange for dubious promises.

Much of my life, I've been told I'm not allowed to call out other Christians for their unchristian behavior because I don't know what's in their hearts. I have seen their fruits. Maybe there was a time when "you don't know what's in their hearts" was true, but I'm not convinced. I'm beginning to think that thread has always existed to give refuge to the wolves in sheep's clothing. Maybe it wasn't meant to, but it has, and it still does. Put another way, I'm tired of tiptoeing around other people's feelings when they'd rather see my friends killed than to actually follow Christ. So maybe it's time to call those wolves what they are: Antichrists teaching Antichristian quote-unquote values. People of St. Thomas', while powers and principalities swirl around us and our world continues to flirt with evil, we all need to go read James, and when we're done, ask ourselves, "who do I really serve?"

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## A Prayer

Give us eyes and hearts to pay attention to you, God, and to all your work in the world.

—Sojourners

## **St. Thomas' Episcopal Church**

### **Vestry Minutes**

#### **August 25, 2024**

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

*Absent:* Wynn Egginton

*Zoom:* Anne Perring

#### *Call to Order*

The meeting began at 11:42 a.m. in the parish hall. Martha Berry led the opening prayer.

#### *Clerk's Report*

The minutes of the June 23<sup>rd</sup> vestry meeting were approved as submitted in final draft. Approval was moved by Susan Beattie; seconded by Jane Welsh.

#### *Treasurer's Report*

John Bowen submitted the following report to the vestry members:

“Pledge income, happily, remains stable, with a small surplus. There may be a bit of inflation due to early bulk pledges, but in most years, we see a lull in summer giving with a deficit rather than surplus in pledge income. We seem to be doing better this year. The major portion of non-designated income is from the Schaupp bequest of late last year. We should remember that we diverted some of that bequest to defray the deficit in operating budget this year. As a reminder, we earmarked some funds from the Ramshaw Fund to defray expenses related to Christian Education. We have not needed to draw on those funds to date.

Expenses are generally in line with the budget. We have had no unusual expenses.

The balance sheet shows continued growth in our endowment funds.

We continue to make progress in our ability to manage Church Windows, our accounting software. We have finally learned to balance the Funds against the Assets on the Balance Sheet. We are working on more accurate assignment of Expenses in the Treasurer's Report and expect to clear those up soon, now that we have identified the sources of errors.

The external audit of year 2023 was completed in August. There were no findings or recommendations.

The Budget and Finance Commission has prepared a very preliminary budget for 2025 based on prior years expenses and estimates of future expenses for discussion with the vestry.”

Susan Beattie asked a question regarding the manner in which the growth of the Good Neighbor Fund is recorded on the balance sheet. John Bowen explained recording procedures for the fund.

Valerie Morkevicius moved that the Treasurer's Report be received; Maureen Ghent seconded the motion. The Report was received as submitted.

#### *Rector's Report*

Brooks Cato remarked on how nice it was to be back with everyone again, and, also, on how smoothly everything had run while he was away on his sabbatical. Brooks commented on what positive remarks he had received from visitors to the parish while he was away. He didn't have a great deal more to say at this point in the meeting, except that he was looking forward to showing off his lapidary skills on the section of wall that he has finished. The “reveal” will be on Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### *Wardens' Report*

Jane Welsh noted that she is grateful that Brooks has returned and, also, that she is grateful to everyone who had helped out during his absence. Jane said that she now has a better sense of all that must be done to keep the parish community going and appreciates, more than ever, what a “healthy, giving, caring community” we have. Martha Berry seconded Jane's comments. Additionally, Maureen Ghent commented that she is buoyed up by the fact that everything had gone so well.

#### *Commission Reports*

There were no reports submitted to the vestry for discussion.

#### *Old Business*

- *Safe Church Training:* Brooks Cato wondered where all of the vestry members were in terms of completing the steps to safe church certification. Anne Perring reminded everyone that the program had changed in the midst of things and that some direction was still wanting. Martha

Berry said that she thought that she would look into the matter to see whether she could clarify the situation. At one point it appeared that as long as the first segment was completed at an in-person program that the subsequent segments could be completed on line; however, there is currently some confusion over access to the components of the diocesan program. Martha and Brooks will sort it out somehow.

- *New Vestry Slate:* Susan Beattie announced that the nominees to fill the positions for the vestry will be Deborah Knuth-Klenck, Ellie Weyter, and Debbie Barker. Martha Berry announced that she and Jane Welsh had worked so well together over the past year that Jane has agreed to return as the Junior Warden. Susan Beattie moved to put forth this slate of nominees at the Annual Meeting; Rose Novak seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- *Buildings Commission:* Since receiving the 187-page "Buildings Condition Report" prepared by Crawford and Stearns in March, the Buildings Commission has met several times to discuss priorities and next steps. The consensus opinion is to initially prioritize work on the Rectory. Based on the report, a list of projects/issues to be addressed was developed. Jane Welsh and John Orr met with Ted Bartlett (senior associate with Crawford and Stearns) on June 28 to see if he would act as general contractor for the project. He told them that their firm no longer does that type of work, but they could act as a consultant on the job site, particularly with issues regarding historic preservation. He will work up a proposal for consultation services. He also offered to compile a list of potential contactors with the necessary experience. He will vet all candidates before passing on the names to the Buildings Commission. A follow-up meeting with Bartlett on August 20 was postponed and re-scheduled for September 4.

John Orr expressed the sense that it will probably take another 12-18 months to select a contractor, firm up a list of the tasks to be done, and to create timetables and budgets before actual work can begin.

#### *New Business*

- *Wedding:* Brooks Cato stated that he would like to send a note of congratulations from the vestry to Mason and Genesis, and the entire MacDowell family really, just to congratulate them again on the recent nuptials. Brooks said that rarely (and perhaps never) has he seen such a joyful and loving family come together on such an occasion, and that it was an unequivocal delight to have participated in the occasion. The vestry unanimously moved to send such a note; the vestry then unanimously seconded such a note. To nobody's surprise, the motion passed unanimously.
- *Christian Education:* Brooks Cato was pleased to announce that everything is in order to begin another year of Christian Education, from Godly Play right through to teen classes! Hooray!
- *Office Credit Card:* Brooks Cato explained how difficult it is to pay for occasional, but necessary purchases around the village and, sometimes, on line. It is currently a matter of parish members using their own cards and then asking for reimbursement by check, often for miniscule amounts. In consulting Fr. Steve and others, Brooks leaned that every church now seems to have a credit card, set with a small limit, that can address this problem. Following some discussion, vestry members agreed that this would be more efficient. Maureen Ghent moved that Brooks Cato should move ahead in procuring a credit card for the parish; Valerie Morkevicius seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously!
- *Homeless Policies:* Brooks Cato reported that he had been in conversation with the insurance company that covers the parish and had learned that there are many issues that must be addressed if we are to continue to allow homeless persons to sleep on the premises. For instance, two

persons who are safe church certified must be present and sleeping on the site concurrent with a homeless person. There must be cameras on the site. Moreover, there are regulations regarding bedrooms, locks on doors, shower facilities, bathroom facilities, and so forth. (The insurance company is sending a much fuller list.) Consequently, St. Thomas' will not be able to allow persons to sleep on the premises overnight in the future and Brooks will be speaking with the two persons who occasionally rely upon St. Thomas' parish hall as an overnight bedroom to find an alternate solution. This is not to say that homeless persons will be banished from the premises. They can still stop in at the parish hall during the daytime, stay inside the parish hall to get out of the cold during the day, as well as receive basic food, drink, and snacks while sheltering within the parish hall (again, during the daytime hours). Brooks envisioned that the guidelines being sent by the insurance company will offer more detailed instructions. Yet he was concerned about the potential issue of having to lock the church and the parish hall (for the first time) if the insurance company were to raise concerns about leaving the premises unlocked all the time.

In anticipation of further conversation, Brooks informed vestry members that he planned to create a small task force to look into other aspects of this issue and what St. Thomas' might be able to offer in the future. Jane Welsh suggested that one thing might be the creation of a group of drivers who, when needed, would offer to transport homeless persons to shelters where they could be given overnight accommodation, or access to more permanent housing and extended services. In the discussion that followed it was agreed as well that this task force needs to be in conversation with other area churches. In the end Susan Beattie, Jane Welsh, Martha Berry, and Valerie Morkevicius all agreed to be on the task force. Brooks

- stated that he would try to invite in one or two members of the congregation as well.
- *Budget & Finance Budgeting Process:* Brooks Cato and John Bowen opened the conversation by informing the vestry that the budgeting process has begun earlier this year so that it can be introduced at the Annual Meeting. John Bowen observed that for the 2024 year pledges came in at **\$206,000**. He then presented a form which broke down the proposed budget into categories of expense: clergy/staff/ payroll expenses (**\$214,110** total), insurances (worker's comp/property & liability, **\$9,511** total), utilities/office supplies, maintenance (**\$36,300**, total), diocesan assessment (**\$23,483**), misc. (youth, music, Christian Education, Outreach, altar expenses, flowers, nursery, vestry expenses, non-recurring expenses, **\$21,350** total).

The total expenses come in at **\$304,754** with income predicted at **\$249,000** if pledging comes in at **\$206,000**. (Pledge income for the end of July 2024 is at **\$134,000** year-to-date of a budgeted **\$205,000** for the year-end total.) This means that the *surplus/deficit* built into the current draft budget are reported by the Treasurer at **-\$55,754**.

Brooks Cato stated that the stewardship conversation would begin this year at the Annual Meeting. Connie Harsh asked whether there are external grants that would help to defray the costs for some parts of the budget. Brooks stated that St. Thomas' would be applying for a grant to help with one area, but that the grant would not assist with the personnel area, which is always the largest part of any budget. Last year the vestry had voted to expand the parish Christian Education program and had funded the first year's expenses from the Ramshaw Fund. It was acknowledged, at the time, that this would require taking on an additional expense. Now the vestry will have to consider how to fund this moving forward. John Orr stated that the vestry should be mindful of the timing in the light of future capital campaigns. Valerie Morkevicius said that



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it was good to move forward ahead as soon as possible with grants because an influx of external funds might also encourage parishioners while they consider their own giving positions. John Orr observed that the vestry was now two months behind in getting numbers for the building renovations that, unhappily, would slow other consideration. Brooks was hopeful that there would be a more polished sense of numbers by the September meeting. Nevertheless, drawing together all of our competing needs will be a delicate balance.

*Core Priorities: Open Discussion: Stewardship*

Because stewardship had been considered within the previous discussions, the vestry decided to close the meeting.

*Announcements:*

- *Announcements:* Announcements of importance to the parish were made.
- *Next meeting:* The next meeting is set for September 29<sup>th</sup>, which is also the Annual Meeting.
- *Prayer Leader:* Nobody from the vestry will be leading prayer at the opening of the next vestry meeting.

Valerie Morkevicius moved that the meeting be ended; Maureen Ghent seconded the motion. The meeting ended at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Cerasano, Clerk

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## A Prayer

Loving God, as members of your family, help us to love and serve one another selflessly. May we embrace the tasks that others might avoid, seeking to support our neighbors and fulfill your call to community. Guide us to give without expecting anything in return, reflecting your love in all we do.

—Sojourners

## Hamilton Crop Walk

Dear St Thomas'

You have been wonderfully generous in supporting the Hamilton Crop Walk over the past several years and I especially appreciate your support of Team Highroad Walkers (cue the music from that old Scottish folk song).

Since 1972 the First Baptist Church has hosted the Hamilton Crop, but that honor has now come to St. Thomas'. **The Crop Hunger Walk will be on Sunday October 27th this year** with registration in the church at 1 pm and the walk starting a little after 1:30. Dunkin Donuts will sponsor us with coffee and munchkins.

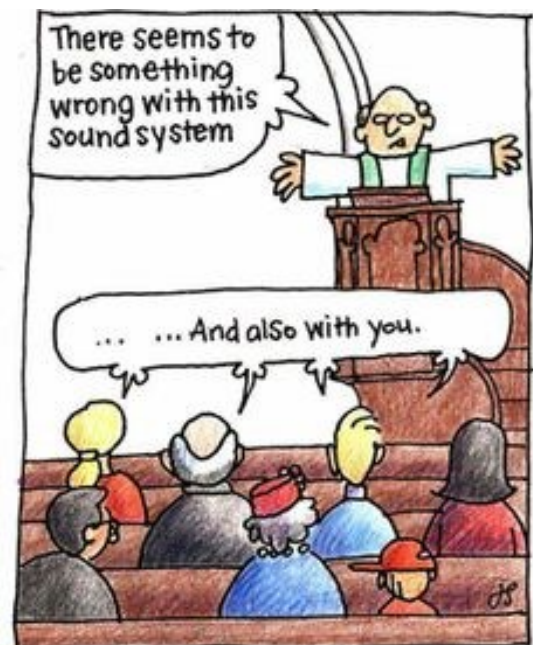
**Online donations to Crop Walk** can be made on the Highroad Walkers website. See the Church's website as well as on the St Thomas' Facebook page. <https://www.stthomashamilton.org/>  
**Checks** should be made out to "CWS/Crop" and delivered to our Church.

Thank you again for helping us fight hunger at home and abroad.

—Emily Hutton-Hughes

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## On the Lighter Side



## 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!



## 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 can just bring some goodies! If you have any questions, you can reach out to Leah in the office.



## FALL DANCE OPPORTUNITIES

### ADULT LINE DANCE NIGHTS

\$10 5:30-7:00 PM

OCT 18\* at Top Shelf Tavern, Sherburne

NOV 1

NOV 22

### REGISTRATION IS STILL OPEN

### FOR ALL DANCE CLASSES

Classes for all ages! Students are welcome to try out the first class for free

### CONTACT US TO REGISTER:

SchmittDance@gmail.com

Facebook.com/SchmittDance

12 E Main St., Earlville, NY



## Words for Hannah McClennen

Almost 20 years ago, I thought I would give Hannah back, if I could, something handmade at the death of her beloved Charlie. Food, say, or words.

I would, if I could, describe Charlie.

And now, of course, it is Hannah herself who has died.

I want to talk with you about my friend and companion, Hannah McClennen, with whom I was often in a COVID-like pod—the two last stops on the ride home from Hamilton to Hubbardsville.

We ate many a meal together at my house (sharing what we'd cooked, bought or baked). We went to movies, and town events, and a regular reading/eating gathering with dear friends. We took part in many community groups—including the Wednesday morning women's discussion group that Hannah welcomed me into.

We live with a lot of talk in the 2024 political climate of Cat Women who choose work over motherhood, condemning themselves, as some see it, to unhappy singlehood. Perhaps less attention is paid to another form of being single. Hannah, who had a long and happy marriage to an extraordinary human being, and two wonderful, present children, nevertheless spent seventeen years a widow. And she worked to make that a rich, fulfilling and fulfilled time. With cats.

Hannah drove to sing in the Hamilton College chorus; she swam *lapses*; she gardened; she celebrated her Swedishness and her connection to Colgate--where she worked in Communications; she was close with her Wellesey classmates. And she traveled with her children and grandchildren to places like St. Petersburg, with friends to Iceland and Mexico, and with the love of the novels, to Jane Austen's neck of the English woods.

She kept long, intimate friendships with many people now sitting in this space--people like Ellen Kraly who informed so many here of Hannah's illness, and drove with me to Hannah's elegant apartment in Lexington ("I'm so grateful it's not cute," Hannah had earlier said). Hannah, who had a degree in architecture from Syracuse University, worked as an architect in Hamilton. She was pretty well everywhere her friends and neighbors gathered. She even acted in theatre at the Palace. And, if I have one regret for her, it is like Martin Amis's, who, while dying, wrote to his friend Ian McEwan saying he would miss not learning the results of the 2024 US national story.

Hannah's spirit was alive and life-affirming throughout, and true to Woolf's vision, written out so long ago.

The words Hannah transcribed stay fresh in the ear, the words from *To the Lighthouse*.

*What is the meaning of life? That was all—a simple question; one that tended to close in on one with years. The great revelation had never come. The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark; here was one. . . . Life stand still here; . . . In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing . . . was struck into stability.*

*Life stand still here, she said.*

—Jane Pinchin

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## A Prayer

God, as we enter a new season, may we grieve what is lost, but also look forward to what lies ahead. May the falling of the leaves remind us that there is a time for everything and you are in control.

—Sojourners

### 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

### Make an Online Donation

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.

### 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 October 2<sup>nd</sup>

**For those in need:** Edmund Bradley, Michael Clough, Cindy Decker, Aster Dinku, Andrea Duncan-Tanner, Joan Fales, Lisa Gee and her children, Kaia Harding, Amanda Harlan, John Hart, Angela Jones, Pat Osowski, Cynthia Rell, John Rhode, Joe Rupp, David Sturges, Patricia Tayntor, Paula Tayntor, Ed Vantine, Becky Vinopal, Chris Warren, Christine Watkins, Ellie Weyer, Deb Willis, Pavla Zakova-Laney, Deb, Bill, & their family, Jerry & Roseann Fitzgerald, Anthony & Vincent Pacillo, Charles & Susan, Jan, Janice, Jim, Kate, Mary, Maureen, Meral, Nick, Paula, Scot; Brian, Dan, Katie, Richard, Rob, and Travis.

**For the Departed:** John Hull, Hannah McClennen, Elizabeth Morgan, Brice.



### 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

## October Thanksgivings

**Birthdays:** Harold Cole (10/01), Daniel Bouk (10/02), Jane Gieryic (10/08), Edward Page (10/09), Susan Geier (10/17), Wynn Egginton (10/18), Joan Ford (10/18), Nancy Heck (10/19), Kathleen Catania (10/20), Andrew Hengst (10/20), Courtney Trueworthy (10/25), Ryan Dye (10/25), Daniel Wheeler II (10/25), Daniel Jerome (10/27), Holly Stevens (10/31).

**Baptism Anniversaries:** Patricia Tayntor (10/04), Max Michelson (10/05), Stephanie McClintick (10/07), Greg Owens (10/07), Michelle Dye (10/08), Kenji Yoshino (10/10), Luke Marshall (10/11), Virginia Sakal (10/12), Daniel Wheeler II (10/12), Regina Conti (10/15), Kerry Linden (10/20), Tristan Martin (10/20), Amy Jerome (10/22), Anthony Sitts (10/27), Wynn Egginton (10/30).

**Marriage Anniversaries:** Melanie & Michael Clough (10/01), Kate & Henry R. Foss II (10/06).

### Scripture Lesson

Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

—Romans 12:2

### A Prayer

Lord, we are awed by your unfailing love and new mercies each morning, which renew our spirits and inspire us to act with justice and compassion. Help us to embrace a grateful heart, that your faithfulness may shine through us as we work for peace and justice in your world.

—Sojourners



## Autumn

Although I like each season,  
There's none I hold more dear  
Than on these bright blue-amber days  
When autumntime is here.


The hills are flaunting red and gold  
To mark October's day;  
A view that is so dazzling  
It takes our breath away.

The tawny fields so peaceful,  
The harvest gathered in,  
Our barns and bins now overflow  
With God's good gifts again.

The sugar maple trees aflame  
Neath sky of sapphire blue;  
A picture only God could paint  
And send each year anew.

I count all seasons beautiful,  
Each one our Lord has blessed  
But none uplifts my heart so much  
As Autumn's warm caress.

Kay Hoffman

 SALESIAN MISSIONS

### A Prayer

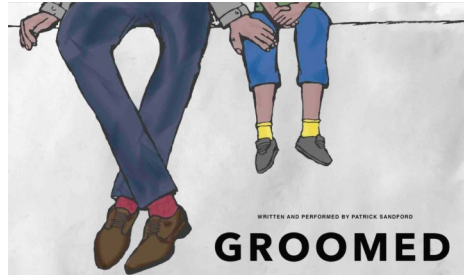
God of wisdom, grant us the insight to discern the truth in all that we do.

—Sojourners

### A Prayer

Creator, you are the maker of all. Guide us to cherish and protect your creation, that through our care, the earth may flourish for future generations.

—Sojourners



## How can a Truth be told? How can a Secret be spoken?

A betrayed schoolboy, a Japanese soldier, and the inventor of the saxophone.

Three narratives show how a story can save your life.

It's bold, provocative, theatrical—and not for a moment depressing.

The award winning play *Groomed* will be performed at **7PM on Saturday, November, 2, 2024** at the Palace Theatre, 19 Utica St., Hamilton, NY 13346, with a talk-back after the show. The performance is FREE and open to the public (PG-13). Doors open at 6:15PM.

Performed by UK playwright and male survivor, Patrick Sandford, the 1-hour, 1-act play is set in an elementary school. The performance evokes strong emotions but is not graphic. *Groomed* was performed at the Vatican in November 2023 and is meant to educate, inform, and be a catalyst for discussions about the reality of sexual abuse of minors.

For information contact: Michael Koplinka-Loehr, 607-592-8437, [mak11@cornell.edu](mailto:mak11@cornell.edu)

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### Co-sponsors:

Madison County Children's Advocacy Center

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, Hamilton, NY

The Hope for Children Foundation

HAVEN counseling Center, Colgate University; sexual assault response team

Adoptive and Foster Family Coalition of NY (AFFCNY)

Community Memorial Hospital

Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Team (SARP): Hamilton/Morrisville Catholic Community

### Reviews:

*Astounding and transformational - VATICAN OFFICIAL*

*Astonishing text and delivery make this a chilling but unmissable study GUARDIAN\*\*\*\* (film)*

*Sheds much needed light on some dark places GUARDIAN \*\*\*\* (play)*

*A remarkable and brave piece of theatre FINANCIAL TIMES\*\*\*\**

*The urging of the need for empathy rather than dismissal, and for simple acknowledgment, hits home hard DAILY TELEGRAPH \*\*\*\**



**Fall Family Fest**

**October 27**

St. Thomas' invites you and your family to come enjoy some Fall FUN hosted by our Youth Program! There will be crafts, pumpkin decorating, carnival-like games, photo stations with fun props provided, and face painting! This event is FREE and OPEN to the public. The activities will take place outside on the south lawn. Inside the Parish Hall will be our regular Sunday Coffee Hour with drinks and treats.





## Cultivating Compassionate Leadership

Thursday, November 7  
7 PM | *Hybrid*

Presented by  
**Rodney Agnant**  
*Director for Campus Culture & Inclusion at Colgate University*

Leadership often comes with the stresses of seeing how to best work together alongside a team, while also being of service to others. Leading in this way can be a great blessing, but also challenging when interpersonal styles clash. **This session is focused on how to integrate compassion into how we lead**, in order to strengthen our social bonds and to help us be effective in our communication.

Rodney works at Colgate University as the Director for Campus Culture and Inclusion. In 2023, he completed his Master's thesis that focused on transformational leadership, and the ways that it shapes meaning-making, resilience, and belonging for the individuals it reaches. His work on campus focuses on leadership development, organizational climate, and designing dialogic experiences for groups on campus. In this role, he primarily works with University employees and their professional development.

Outside of his work at Colgate, Rodney serves as a personal development and leadership development coach, certified through the Co-Active Training Institute, and the Academy for Coaching Excellence.

Register online at [www.spiritualrenewalcenter.com](http://www.spiritualrenewalcenter.com)  
or by calling 315-472-6546



**November 7 at 7:00 pm:** Compassion is a central part of many of our spiritual practices, and yet at times it can also feel challenging. This workshop provides a tangible way to think about how we can continue to cultivate compassion for others throughout our lives.

The suggested fee for this workshop is \$25 or whatever amount that you can afford.

**St. Thomas' Episcopal Church**  
**Scheduled to Serve**  
**October 2024**

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

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

<b>DATE</b>	<b>LECTOR</b>	<b>LEM</b>	<b>USHER</b>	<b>ALTAR GUILD</b>	<b>FLOWER GUILD</b>	<b>NEWCOMERS</b>
October 6	OT Lynn Staley NT Maureen Fox	Maureen Ghent	Ed Page	Jane Welsh	Sue Geier	Linda Jenks
October 13 <i>*Rite One</i>	OT Debbie Barker NT Adger Williams	Susan Cerasano	Ed Page	Jane Welsh	Sue Geier	Linda Jenks
October 20	OT Emily Hutton- Hughes NT Linda Jenks	Barbara Bowen	Ed Page	Emily Hutton- Hughes	Sue Geier	Linda Jenks
October 27	OT Vivi Linden NT Kerry Linden	Amy Jerome	Ed Page	Susan Beattie	Sue Geier	Linda Jenks



**Qidings**  
October 2024

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