

12 1/2 Madison St.  
Hamilton, NY 13346  
315-824-1745 (for fax also)  
E-Mail: stchurch@cnyemail.com  
Website: StThomasHamilton.org

**OFFICE HOURS:**

Tuesday-Friday  
8:30 am -1:30 pm

**RECTOR:**

The Rev. Brooks A. Cato 315-554-1236  
brooks.cato@gmail.com

**DIRECTOR OF MUSIC:**

Dianne Adams McDowell 315-684-7215

**PARISH ADMINISTRATOR:**

Nancy Schmitt 315-750-0251

**WARDENS:**

Luke Marshall 315-824-3007  
Hannah McClennen 315-691-2001

**VESTRY MEMBERS:**

Sheila Catania '21 315-345-1837  
Michelle Landstrom '21 781-392-6204  
Jana Laxa '22 315-750-9111  
Erin Loranty '23 716-440-3087  
Lee Anne Miller '21 315-525-7250  
John Orr '23 610-716-2501  
Erin Loranty '22 716-440-3087  
Heidi Riley '23 452-200-9931  
Dan Schult '22 315-750-8183  
Deany Wood '23 315-527-0328

**CLERK OF THE VESTRY:**

Susan Cerasano 315-824-1037

**INTERIM CO-TREASURER:**

Rick Geier 315-824-9181

**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

I remember hearing a phrase once; supposedly it's some old Irish curse. The "curse" goes: "May you always live in interesting times."

Well, folks, if the past couple of years are "interesting times," I think I'm ready for some *uninteresting* times!

I am delighted to be sitting down to write again, to be helping Nan and Rose and all the rest of our contributors to shape our first edition of *Tidings* since this whole whirlwind began, and to be doing so from inside my office without a mask! And not a moment too soon. There was something oddly comforting about a mask in February -- an extra piece of fabric to keep me warm and cozy from winter's chill. But now? In June? Good Lord, am I glad to breathe free again.

We've been baby-stepping our way through returns to the things we're accustomed to here at St. T's, and this newsletter is yet another. We finally get to put out our monthly newsletter. We can finally think a month ahead to what life has in store for our church!

As we make this shift, there's a part of me that wants to take a moment to regroup and live in some *uninteresting* times for a while. We've got some wagons to circle and some old habits to pick back up.

But we also have opportunities now that we haven't had for over a year. When we left off, St. Thomas' had some extraordinary momentum in a lot of places. It's time for us to pick back up, or, it's nearly time.

We'll take our summer, we'll take our slow days in the heat, we'll take a moment to appreciate that we've made it through as a community -- hardly untouched by the pandemic. But once we've caught our breath, hold on tight, folks, 'cause we've got some work to do!

In the meantime, though, I'll leave you with this blessing: "May you live in uninteresting times."

Brooks+

## A Prayer

God, thank you for the beautiful, strange gift of existence. Help us to steward and honor your creation.

--Sojourners

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## Bible Blurb

In July, we'll continue on with the Gospel according to John. It's slow-going, this one, because it's just so dense! Fun stuff, though, I promise!

**Where:** Fourth Book of the New Testament

**What to Watch For:** So much! John is absolutely a product of its time, roughly 90-120 AD, and the book is chock-full of layers. The book is written "so that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah," (John 20:31) and that stakes quite the claim in contextualizing nearly every decision the author made.

**References:** John regularly makes reference to the Hebrew Scriptures, especially those stories related to Moses

**Content:** John gives us the soaring prose we love so much in the gospel accounts

**Lectionary:** About 70% of John appears in the Lectionary, sprinkled throughout years A, B, and C. The Gospel also gives us most of the narrative of Holy Week and Easter every year! or borrow one from the St. Thomas' Library!■

--Fr. Brooks+

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## Confirmation

Confirmation class continues on Sundays at 10:15 am on Zoom. The Service of Confirmation will be September 8th at St. Thomas'. More details to come!

## Nave Gazing

From a church nerd perspective, this year has been a fascinating study in applied liturgics. Starting right before Holy Week of 2020, churches all over the world were thrust into a new way of being. Amazing timing, and it's nothing short of miraculous that we got all of ourselves together to make things work. Y'all kept showing up in new ways, and we did it! Twice!

But the work behind the scenes, while overwhelming at times, was cool to see develop. We had priests and lay people taking all their training, all the theologies of the church, all the various priests' manuals and clergy handbooks and prayerbook cheat sheets -- all that came crashing together as we tried to figure out how to do the single most basic thing we do: gather.

Zoom and the occasional Facebook Live served as our new home for a good, long while. Thankfully, we've moved back into our building. But even now, we still see how the church has had to adapt to an odd time.

Now, this is nothing new for the church. We've been adapting for thousands of years. From the moment Jesus went to a wedding in Cana with his momma as a +1, we've had to keep shifting how we're used to doing things. But all this change can make a priest long for that good, ol' time religion.

These days, what I'm most interested in, though, is our collective theology about Eucharist. There's a whole bundle of ideas of what "happens" in the service: big words like "transubstantiation" or "consubstantiation" or "anamnetical presence." Some of you might find these ideas academically interesting, some of you may have quite a lot of personal faith contained in them.

In 2020 and well into 2021, though, there's one thing most all of us have shared: a deep longing to receive Communion again. We went on a fast together, one we did not choose, and during that time, I think it's safe to say that nearly all of us gained a deeper appreciation for what the Eucharist does for our own faith lives. I got choked up the first time I said those words of consecration again a few weeks ago. I've seen

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many tears and heard a few gasps as I've shared the bread with you again. I've even heard a few of you ask if it will ever feel like normal again.

It might, it might not. Whether we ever get used to again, though, I pray it will never feel normal again. I pray that we will continue to feel the deep and great gift at the heart of our service. I pray that our involuntary fast continues to shed light on our renewed feast.

--Fr. Brooks+

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## **A Long and Almost Certainly Incomplete List of What St. Thomas' Has Been Up To**

Since we put *Tidings* on hold back in March of 2020, quite a few things have happened in our congregation in spite of everything slowing down. I'd like to share some of those things here, briefly:

- St. Thomas' performed one baptism and one wedding. Those were beautiful bright spots, but we all know it was a hard time. Eleven people connected to St. Thomas - nine of them members - died, and the church performed five burials.
- St. Thomas' has received the membership information of five new folks with more on the way. We have a Confirmation service with the Bishop scheduled in September to welcome even more to the fold.
- We added two midweek prayer services on Zoom: the Vigil for a Pandemic on Wednesday evenings and a joint service of Morning Prayer with Fr. Steve and his churches, initially on Fridays and now on Wednesdays.
- The Hamilton Village Area Clergy set up several prayer services for the hospital staff at Community Memorial.
- St. Thomas' newly established Migrant Worker Discretionary Fund paid for legal fees and other items for a local family. The father was eventually deported and the rest of the family moved to another town. However, though the news was

ultimately disappointing, the family expressed their deep gratitude to our church for the support they got.

- St. Thomas' also received a donation of a family car which was, in turn, donated to a farmworker in need.
- We celebrated two Easters online and still have the hymnboards set for the last Sunday we were all able to sing together: The Third Sunday of Lent, 2020.
- The Outreach Commission supported a number of local efforts to combat COVID, shifting their model for 2020 to a hyper-local approach.
- The Hamilton Ecumenical Youth Group continued to meet over Zoom for all of 2020, and the St. Thomas' Teen Class continues to tackle tough theological issues many Sundays after church.
- We welcomed several guest preachers from around the church, including a handful from Fr. Brooks's seminary days and a couple of former St. Thomas' regulars. The Bishop also offered a couple of diocesan-wide worship services.
- The Bishop established weekly Diocesan clergy calls, that included guests from the CDC and WHO, major hospital administrators, and epidemiologists, as well as spiritual retreat leaders. The Diocese also offered periodical calls with lay leaders and church wardens.
- Friday Night Lights shifted to Zoom after a few months away, and while it's a small crew these days, the open mic always gives attendees an evening of smiles and warmth.
- Bible Study also moved to Zoom, and since the pandemic began, we've covered 8 books of scripture, read two complimentary books, and watched a movie! Of particular resonance this year, Lamentations was a much needed reminder of the breadth of faithful responses.
- Dr. Erica Olson-Bang finished her internship with St. Thomas'. Erica recently finished her second church internship and, with great relief,

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passed her General Ordination Exams. She is now in conversation with the Commission on Ministry to establish a chaplaincy, and then ordination should be right around the corner!

- Many members of St. Thomas' joined with the rest of Hamilton in the aftermath of the police violence in the Spring and Summer of 2020 against unarmed black men and women.

- The ongoing conversation about banners at St. Thomas' has continued to evolve. The original banner design, which says "Our hearts and doors are open to all," will be hand-painted and soon will hang on the back wall of the church as a reminder to us as we leave our space and go into the world. The Vestry also approved a second banner with a quote from the First Chapter of Isaiah: "Learn to do right. Seek justice. Defend the oppressed." The two banners will be swapped out from time to time, and we may even make others to join in the rotation!

- We missed our Annual Parish Picnic and the typically amazing Annual Meeting luncheon! While we were able to conduct business online for the Annual Meeting, I think it's safe to say that we all missed the amazing food. Even so, Millie surprised us with blueberry muffins we could pick up from the parish hall to "bring" with us to the call.

- Somehow, St. Thomas' Stewardship Season was among the most successful in our long history. Credit goes to our Vestry for taking the reins as a group and inspiring the immensely generous wells of support within our congregation!

- We installed a stunning stone altar in the Memorial Garden and have big plans to put it to use over the summer!

- Dianne continued to inspire us with musical additions to our worship, in spite of the extreme limitations of Zoom.

- St. Thomas' outdid itself by filling Turkey Bags for Thanksgiving in 2020.

- You also had a stunning accomplishment with Crop Walk! St. Thomas' was the 52nd largest

fundraiser in the entire country!!!

- We celebrated a beautiful and unusual Christmas on Zoom, but somehow it still brought a tear to my eye. Maybe for what we could still do and maybe for what we couldn't.

- St. Thomas' joined forces with the churches in Norwich, New Berlin, and South New Berlin to do a Lenten class on End of Life Issues, covering everything from wills to funeral hymns and a whole lot more. The class was the largest and most heavily attended course either Fr. Brooks or Fr. Steve has taught since moving to the tundra.

- Fr. Brooks was named the community liaison for the Hamilton Police Department. He's done a ride-along with the HPD and continues to be in contact with them and the Hamilton Area Anti-Racism Coalition.

- The Vestry has established a Strategic Planning Committee, made up of seven members representing different segments of the St. Thomas' population. This committee will begin their work soon with help from The Rev. Canon Carrie Schofield-Broadbent.

- The newly minted Tech Commission has been off to a very busy start. We have new computers in both offices, updated software to run the accounting and parish management side of church administration, and a spectacular streaming set-up. On the to-do list still is a new wireless mic for Fr. Brooks, a hearing loop to make the service a little more accessible for people with hearing issues, and a set of lights to be installed at the back of the church to illuminate the new banner and the choir's hymnals.

- The Vestry approved a new waterline to run to the Memorial Garden. After years of carrying buckets of water, the Grounds Commission is waiting admirably for the work to be completed. Soon, you wonderful people, soon!

- The Vestry also approved an additional sign to go on the front of the church that will highlight the address for emergency personnel. This will be done to meet the new Village code.

- St. Thomas' began hosting the Madison County

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Department of Health for pop-up vaccine clinics. The first round was a test run with the Friendship Inn.

- Special thanks to the Altar Guild, the Flower Guild, Christian Education, St. Thomas' Drivers, the Buildings Commission, the Grounds Commission, Parish Life, Friendship Inn, Budget & Finance, the Vestry, the Wardens, and the many, many, many, many, many others who have continued to keep St. Thomas' running in spite of massive changes. Never have I more firmly believed that the church is its people than over the past nearly 500 days. You have kept this place alive and active, thanks be to God and all y'all!

- Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude I'll never be able to repay to Nan, Dianne, Barb, and Kathleen. If there's a church that says they've got a better staff out there, they're full of lies. Thank you, all of you, for your work and your dedication!

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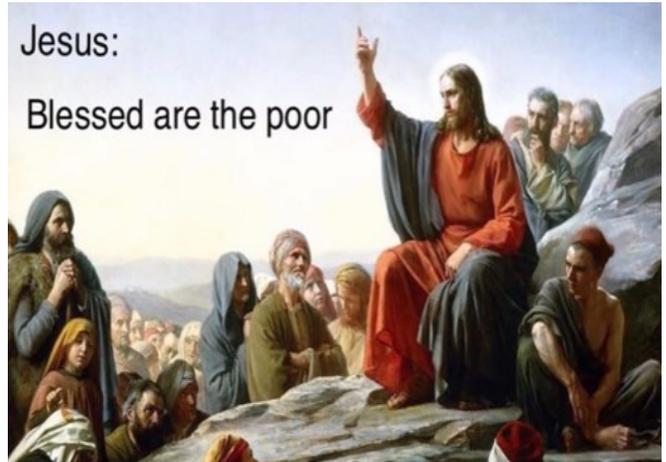
**Ponder This**

God is like an eagle, sharp eyed and swift, with wings so wide you can play under their shadows.

--Rachel Held

Evans and Matthew Paul Turner,  
*What Is God Like?* (2021)

**On the Lighter Side**



"No Jesus! Blessed are ALL people!"

Jesus:



## Vestry Minutes May 19, 2021

**Call to Order and Opening Devotions:** The meeting began at 7:02 p.m. Jana Laxa offered a prayer to open the meeting.

**Clerk's Report:** The minutes of the April 21st meeting were approved as submitted.

**Treasurer's Report:** Brooks Cato gave the treasurer's report in Rick Geier's absence. He explained that the update of Church Windows software continues and that, as a result, a balance sheet alone is being presented. Since the last report the NBT checking account increased by around \$6,000. A \$100 deposit was made to the rector's discretionary fund. One charge (\$740) was made against the Migrant Discretionary Fund, posted 4/14/2021. Otherwise, April was a quiet month. Brooks commented that St. Thomas' can probably expect to see some effects of not having in-person worship on Easter Sunday because there was no plate passed. When Budget and Finance met they noted that there was still no action related to the ongoing issue involving the NYS.

**Department of Labor.** Rick Geier, Adger Williams, and a few others from the commission have started looking into the annual audit. The Treasurer's Report was received as submitted. Rector's Report: Brooks Cato reported that the last month had been a very restorative period for him because he had been away for a time. He was grateful for the trip that he and Becca had shared to Florida and back and he now has a wonderful new-to-him truck. He thanked Deb Barker and Linda Jenks for taking over the Wednesday night prayer for the pandemic and Susan Cerasano for stepping in for Morning Prayer on Sunday, the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Wardens' Report:** Luke Marshall welcomed Brooks back to Hamilton after his break in sunny Florida and Tennessee. He thanked Susan Cerasano for serving in Brooks' place at Morning Prayer on May 9<sup>th</sup>. He thanked Nan Schmitt for keeping everything together in the office during Brooks' absence when the computer kept on crashing. Luke then announced that he has ordered two new computers for the parish office. Luke was pleased to inform the vestry that George

Weaver and Robert Maziarz have donated eighteen folding chairs to the parish. Luke and Ed Page are still waiting for the electrician to come and install the cameras and lights in the church. Lastly, the JotForm issues seem to have been solved by the change of a hyperlink.

**Commission Reports:** Nothing received.

### Old Business:

**Flower Guild:** Brooks Cato was pleased to note that Diane Rich had recently joined the Flower Guild (Welcome, Diane!) and that she is a professional floral arranger. We are all looking forward to enjoying her work in the weeks and months ahead.

**Mutual Ministry Review:** On hold.

**Strategic Plan:** John Orr reported that he and Brooks are in the process of approaching persons to join the planning committee. Thus far, two persons had said yes; 1-2 had said maybe; and several required a follow up. At the time of the meeting, John felt that they were "making progress."

**Archives:** On hold.

**Signs:** Brooks reported that he had received a mock-up, but it was not what we had been looking for so the church is back to the drawing board on this.

**Banners:** Brooks Cato informed vestry members that he, Melissa Davies, Jana Laxa, and Lara Scott will meet soon to get a sense of the spaces where the banners will hang and how designs will work in the spaces.

**Video-recording Update:** Luke reported that the IT crew is moving toward a trouble-free presentation on Sundays. St. Thomas' needs to purchase a new wireless microphone in order for the sound to be crisper. The person running the system in the church will now be the designated "host" so there shouldn't be any break-through noise from individual households during the services. Jana Laxa thought that the visuals were working great. Luke added that soon there will be an additional camera showing the choir area. Everyone thanked Luke profusely for sharing his

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expertise and his persistence in sorting through the problems that have emerged during the installation of the streaming system.

### **New Business**

**Street Numbers:** Brooks Cato stated that numbers have now been posted on the parish hall building. Numbers for the church are in-process with M & M Press.

**Hearing Loop:** Brooks Cato summarized the current situation and presented the estimate for the installation (\$2985) of the system. The Budget and Finance Commission, having reviewed the situation, suggested that if the vestry approved the project the money could be raised out of Wish List Funds. Luke noted that it would be useful to survey the congregation, in some manner, to find out how many hearing aids will connect with the system or how many persons will actually need the loop piece. This information will give us a better feel for our needs. Brooks agreed to revisit the matter at the June meeting and to investigate some details further, including what purchasing an additional loop will cost.

**Water Line for the Memorial Garden:** Brooks Cato stated that we have received confirmation that we can install the line. They need to get back in touch with Buzz Slentz. The funds to pay for the project will most likely come from the Memorial Garden Fund; however, if the work needs to begin before the next meeting the decision will perhaps need to be approved by an email vote. There is some urgency to complete the work because gardening season is in full swing.

**Landscaping:** Brooks reported that neighbors at #10 Madison St. have cleared out woods in their back yard, with the result that an area of the parking lot at the Colgate Inn is now visible from St. Thomas' churchyard. In the future, St. Thomas' will need to install some landscaping to block this view. This issue will be discussed at a later date.

**Upcoming dates:** Brooks Cato reviewed important upcoming dates.

Prayer leader for the June 16th meeting: Heidi Riley will lead prayer.  
The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Cerasano, Clerk

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## **Exciting News!**

St. Thomas' is in the very early stages of putting together a 3-5 year Strategic Plan!

I know, I know, this is the sort of thing that really gets some people going while others kinda doze off. But have no fear! We are working to make this process as engaging and as fulfilling as we can.

John Orr will be heading up a committee of 7 people representing different segments of the parish that will help us produce a document that can help guide the life and ministries of St. Thomas' well into the 2020s.

Most of us have felt energy brewing in our parish for a while, and the pandemic gave us time to step back and reflect on what we really value. In the coming year, we'll all have the opportunity to share what it is we value about this place and where we'd like to see the church grow in its representation of Christ to the world. We'll hold onto the greatest of the commandments as we move through this process: "Love God and love one another!"

But this isn't just about what happens within our walls. Of course not! How best do we serve our community? How well does our community actually know us? Ultimately we are looking to create something that furthers the parish and strengthens each of us in our relationship with God. The Strategic Plan will help us live faithfully with our buildings, our funds, our faith, our energy, and our time. We do this, ultimately, to feed and to be fed!

Fr. Brooks+

**Sermon for the Fourth Sunday  
After Pentecost:  
*Job 38:1-11 & Mark 4:35-41*  
The Rev. Brooks Cato**

Before getting priested, there was only one year that I didn't spend Christmas in Arkansas. I remember it vividly. For my Arkansas people, it was Christmas Day 2004, but for me it was the morning of the next day. I was living in Northern Thailand, studying local, sustainable community development and teaching English on the side. I spent a lot of time with Buddhist monks, even lived in the monastery for a few months before a family took me in. I was still new to that family's house, so all the creaks and groans a house makes hadn't faded into background noise just yet. I called my Arkansas family and they were, of course, delighted to hear from me on the other side of the world. The night before, Christmas Night, I'd thrown a big party for all my Thai buddies, monks included, gave out little gifts to everyone, and tried my best (and failed miserably) to draw a reindeer to help them understand our carols. When I got Mom on her phone, she and everyone else was gathered at Grandma's. Grandma was dressed as an elf that year, and Uncle James laughed hysterically at the unintentionally Charlie Brown-style tree in the corner. Mom passed the phone around, and I got to check in with everyone. I wasn't there, but it felt almost right. Now, while I was on the phone, I felt the house shake a little, a noticeable shake and a little worrying, but only a little more movement than a delivery truck going by on the busy road out front would typically cause. Only there was no delivery truck. After I got off the phone, my Thai family and I hopped in the pickup off to run some errands and go about another normal day. We stopped by a temple, and after a few minutes of puttering around while they did temple stuff, a man walked up to me and said, "did you hear the news?" I had not. And the man's face sank as he realized it would fall to him to tell me. "There's been a tsunami."

Now, Northern Thailand's nowhere near the coast. We're talking a twelve-hour bus ride from the rural mountains I called home to the bustling tourist beaches of the Indian Ocean. I was not in danger, but even I felt the shake of the earthquake that caused the tsunami in that mysteriously absent

delivery truck that shook the house earlier in the day. After a few days of fretting from afar, I finally tried to make my way south to Bangkok and then the beaches, thinking maybe my knowledge of languages could help with translation for all those foreigners trying to get help from all those Thais. Turned out, they had what they needed, and I probably would've just gotten in the way, so I wasn't given permission to get all the way to the coast. But I did see Khao San Road and other tourist hotspots as I'd never imagined them. Mostly empty, which was odd enough, with a deflated air in place of the usual revelry. And at either end of the stretch of bars and hostels and tchotchke shops, bookending the epicenter of tourism in Bangkok were these two police stations, only now the walls around the stations were plastered with missing posters printed out by desperate tourists in internet cafes, holding onto the stubborn hope that their loved ones weren't among the numberless masses of people dragged away by the sea. There were thousands of them, tens of thousands even, each a stubborn claim that in the face of chaos, in the face of fear, in the face of desperation, hope was not lost.

I'm no stranger to the power of water. I knew the dangers of flood waters from an early age. I've seen the Mississippi stake claim to land farmers only thought they owned. I've heard countless family stories that start with "it was a dark and stormy night" and end with tragedy or near misses. I've heard the adage, whether at the lake or the river or the beach, it's the same everywhere: "never turn your back on the water." I know water gives life, but it can just as easily take it. I know this. I knew this. But I had never seen what water could really do. And it is a fearsome thing. It's no wonder that, back in the days of the prophets, water was a symbol for chaos, THE symbol for chaos. Just like chaos, water is a thing that is, neither good nor bad, neither sentient nor still, life-giving but no respecter of life. And our scriptures are chock-full of water occupying this role, but more importantly for the establishment of our God over all the challengers of the day, our scriptures are chock-full of God showing mastery over water, mastery over chaos.

Right at the very beginning, in Genesis, before any creating happens at all, God's Spirit blows over the waters of chaos, and it's out of that chaos

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that all Creation comes. God's mastery over chaos made evident on Day 1. But it doesn't stop there, of course. The Second Creation narrative has God carving and directing the great rivers of the ancient world. God resets the brokenness of the world with Noah and a great flood. Moses, with God's help, overcomes the Nile and divides the Red Sea and then taps a desert stone for water to drink. Joshua stakes claim to the Promised Land dividing the River Jordan. Jacob digs wells. Jonah can't escape a raging sea's storm. Jesus comes along and is the Living Water, and on and on and on. There's almost no end to the examples of water as life-bringer and life-taker in Scripture. The Gospel is no different, right? Jesus falls asleep in a boat on the oft-stormy Sea of Galilee, and when the waters rage enough to swamp the boat, the disciples - desperate and afraid but still hopeful that God can help them - the disciples call for Jesus to wake up and do something! And boy, does he. With just three words, he makes them safe. "Peace. Be still." Way to go, Jesus! Right in line with the God of all that is, the God of all the waters, the God of Job that lays the foundations of the earth and shuts in the seas!

But y'all, this raises a massive question for me. If God has this power, if God can control the waters, if Jesus can make the storm stop raging, if Moses can push the tides back and walk on dry land, if Yahweh can chase Jonah with storms and waves and even great fish until he gives in to save a city, then what do we do with the times God doesn't? In other words, where was God when I was talking with my family that Christmas in Thailand? Where was God while the waters rose and a quarter of a million people died? If God can control water, then God can control chaos. But we all know more examples than we'd like of when God doesn't. So what do we do with that? There are some who would shrug their shoulders and dismiss this kind of question with a simple out like "God has a plan" or "The Lord works in mysterious ways." And sure, I do believe both of those things to be true, but I can't believe them to be true if they serve only as theological cop outs for difficult questions. No, for me, we have every right to ask these questions, maybe even to yell them at God. Before you start to worry that that isn't the faithful thing to do or that somehow getting angry with God is un-Christian, maybe take a closer look at the scriptures. The entire book

of Lamentations is just that: a beautiful, heart-wrenching collection of poems from people broken by chaos and yelling at God. They even end with the accusatory phrase best translated as "if you're even out there at all, God." And that's a faithful enough response to make it into the Bible. Ecclesiastes is probably best known for the lovely "To everything a season (turn turn turn)." But the rest of the book is such a gift to the askers of hard questions. There are so many sections that begin with the phrase, "You know what I've noticed that doesn't make sense?" And then they point out the injustices of the world, some brought on by people, and some just the lived reality of chaos interrupting life. And doing that, naming the injustices as people of faith and asking, "why is it like this, God?" -- that's a faithful enough response to make it into the Bible, too. And then there's Job. Good Lord, do I love this book. Basically, for over 30 chapters, Job is saying "I don't understand why all this bad stuff keeps happening to me, I haven't done anything wrong!" And his less-than-helpful friends argue, saying, "Well, you must've done something wrong because look at all these bad things that are happening to you!" And then God shows up and, out of the whirlwind, says, "You've all got it wrong." And like Forrest Gump's infamous bumper sticker, says, "Stuff happens" (only he doesn't say stuff). Chaos is a thing that just is, like water. Now, that may seem like a stretch, but let's go a little deeper. A little later in Job, God is going to make reference to the Leviathan, and for my hard-question asking brain, this is where it all starts to come together. The Leviathan, like water itself, was also a symbol in the ancient world. The Leviathan was a great sea monster, and this sea monster was chaos personified. If the sea was chaos, then the Leviathan was the bringer of the sea and all the chaos it rendered. In one Creation story of the time, the Leviathan was defeated by the real God of 2Heaven, and it was out of the blood and waters of the Leviathan that Creation came. Not only was chaos a part of Creation, it was baked into every aspect of Creation from the word go. So, when the God of Job speaks of chaos and the Leviathan, there's a truth that gets made clear: God creates out of chaos - just like Genesis - but chaos continues to exist. It's not that God can't or won't intervene, it's that sometimes, chaos simply is; and sometimes, echoes of the Leviathan still wriggle enough to upset the whole world. I

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know there are some that will find this solution deeply unsatisfying. Wouldn't it be nicer to follow a structure where only good things happen to good people and only bad things happen to bad people? Yeah, of course it would, but experience doesn't bear that out. That is not the world we live in, because chaos is baked in from the beginning. It's almost like the ancients knew of entropy and made space for it in our story. I gotta say, I actually take great comfort in knowing that this stuff is in our scriptures. Because I grew up around so many people that did buy the shallow answers, and when faced with hard questions, they'd either brush it off or lose their faith. No in-between. But this idea of the waters of chaos continuing gives me a framework I can make sense of. And it doesn't leave me wondering why God doesn't intervene or worse, why God causes all this suffering. Sometimes, chaos just is. And while chaos rages, I can start looking for God elsewhere. I don't believe for a second that God caused that tsunami (and I've met people who do). I don't believe that. But I do believe that I saw God all over the streets of Bangkok in its aftermath. I saw strangers seeking to calm the distraught. I saw saffron-robed monks praying for the thousands they'd never met. I saw fundraising and free meals and shattered souls weeping into foreign shoulders. And I saw more than a few miraculous reunions. I also saw something else miraculous, and I hope this comes off the way I intend for it to. I saw mourning across all the things that make us different. I saw the grumpiest anti-tourism Thais shed tears for the thing they hated. I saw political divisions dissolve while respectful silence held space for the pain and the loss. And I saw people from all over Creation setting aside division to just make time to listen. That was the most beautiful part of the entire experience. It wasn't just the generosity to make things right. It was the generosity to hold each other in what felt so wrong. It wasn't a solution. It wasn't prevention. It wasn't searching for answers or looking for blame, or even if it was, it was still faithful. More than anything, it was stilling not the storm, but the heart. More than anywhere, more than any time, in the midst of unimaginable chaos, God reminds us, "Peace. Be still."



**WOMEN WRITERS  
ACCOUNTABILITY GROUP  
(WWAG)**

**July 6-September 7, 2021  
7:00-8:00 PM**

Women Writers Accountability Group (WWAG) is a program to encourage women writers at all levels and in all genres. Four 10-week sessions take place Tuesday evenings at 7 PM (via Zoom currently) where women writers and aspiring writers gather for informal conversation about writing projects and to set goals for the duration of the session.

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**BASIC ACTING SKILLS**

**One-Week Summer Youth Theater  
Class for Ages 10-12  
Monday through Friday, 3-5:00 PM  
August 9-13, 2021**

This week-long series of classes will focus on basic acting skills for students aged 10-12. Students will learn the basics of voice production, movement, and scene work through two hours of game-play and instruction each day.

Gwyneth Davies will lead the classes.

Cost: \$100 for the 5-day session. Scholarships are available. Please email [director@artsatthepalace.org](mailto:director@artsatthepalace.org) to inquire.

Class size is limited, and all current COVID-19 guidelines will be followed to ensure the safety of participants and staff. A comprehensive registration form will be sent to you to complete prior to the first class.



## LEARN TO PLAY GUITAR (ADULT)

### 6-Week Beginner Group Class for Adults

**Wednesdays 7:00-7:50 PM**

**July 7-August 11, 2021**

If you've ever wanted to learn how to play the guitar, now's your chance. No guitar? No problem! We can lend you one!

Join local legend Ed Vollmer for group guitar lessons for beginners in-person at Arts at the Palace this summer.

Ed will cover tuning the guitar, some simple chords and melodies, how to read guitar music, how to switch chords, how to practice, and most of all, how to have fun!

Cost: \$120 for the 6-week session. Scholarships are available. Please email [director@artsatthepalace.org](mailto:director@artsatthepalace.org).

Class size is limited, and all current COVID-19 guidelines will be followed to ensure the safety of participants and staff. A registration form will be sent to you to complete prior to the first class.



**HUGE**  
"WORN AGAIN"  
CLOTHING SALE

\*  
Friday, July 9<sup>th</sup> – 9 am to 4:00 pm  
Saturday, July 10<sup>th</sup> – 9 am to 1:00 pm

Hamilton Bible Fellowship  
7433 Hamilton Road  
(Note: Hamilton Street turns into Hamilton Road)  
Hamilton, NY



## The Sam and Adele Golden Foundation for the Arts

### Residency Application Open Now!

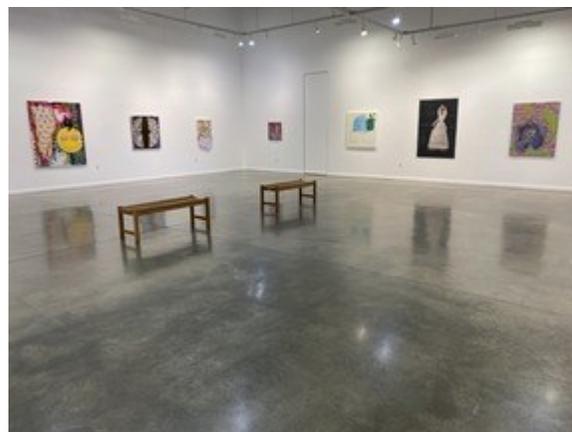
*For artists who are curious about their materials and love working with paint.*

[CLICK HERE](#) to apply!

Deadline: September 13, 2021 at 5pm EST



Check out the [Made In Paint Video Series](#), highlighting the work of the 18 artists in residence from 2019!



[theSAGG.org](http://theSAGG.org)

#### Contact Details:

Sam & Adele Golden Foundation for the Arts, Inc.  
237 Bell Road, New Berlin, NY 13411  
Phone: (607) 431-8765  
Email: [contact@goldenfoundation.org](mailto:contact@goldenfoundation.org)

## Summer at St. Thomas'

### Weekly Events

**Worship:** Sundays, 9 AM (June 6-August 29), followed by "Lemonade on the Lawn."

**Friendship Inn Community Meal:** Mondays, 5 PM, Parish Hall, Take-outs only. (St. Thomas' cooks on July 5.)

### Special Events

**Friday Night Lights,** July 23, 7 PM-9 PM, Zoom.

**Friday Night Lights,** August 27, 7 PM-9 PM, Zoom.

## Summer Worship Schedule 9 AM

<b>July 4</b>	HE Rite II
<b>July 11</b>	Morning Prayer
<b>July 18</b>	HE Rite II
<b>July 25</b>	HE Rite II
<b>August 1</b>	HE Rite II
<b>August 8</b>	HE Rite II
<b>August 15</b>	Morning Prayer
<b>August 22</b>	HE Rite II
<b>August 29</b>	HE Rite II

## Looking Ahead to August

### Mark Your Calendars

**Sunday, August 29, Parish Picnic,** Church side yard, 11:30 AM.

**Friday Night Lights (Open Mic series),** Friday, August 27, 7 PM-9 PM, Zoom.

## Prayers of the People

**For those in need:** Amanda Bastia, Phil Bisselle, John Brown, David Brown & Family, Emma Chapman, The Chapman Family, Barbara Crysedale, Esther Davis, Teddy Engle, Joan Fales, Jerry & Roseann Fitzgerald, Mary Frances, Miles Goodrich, Marlene Houck, Joe Hubbard, Joseph Henry Hubbard, Tammy Hutchinson, Danielle Jones, Janna Keser, Paul Keser, Beth Komaromi & Family, Harvey Jones, Patti Lamandia, Anne Leimkuhler, Jeannie McCabe, Liam Meyer, Anthony & Vincent Pacillo, Bill Pratt, Debbie Radford Moudarres, John Richmond, Shari Rodgers, June Schaupp, Sheryl Scott, Mark Spearing, Keith Stage, Peter Welsh, Deb Willis, Chris Warren, Ryan Wilson, Carol Strozyk, Joan & Tom Winkler, Brett, Brianna, Camila, Cesar & Paula, Corrine, Jeff, Lisa, Nick & Vanessa, Mary Lou, Melissa, Sandra, School Teachers, Staff, and Students, Colgate Professors, Staff, and Students.

**For the departed:** Barbara Bartlett, John T. Faulks, Douglas Marcellus, Suzanne McDonald.

## In Honor of Barbara Bartlett

Barbara Bartlett was a beloved member of St Thomas' Church for many years. She graced us with her talent at the eight o'clock service alongside Cathy and Chris Shenkel. They were the St. Thomas' Trio: Barbara on oboe, Cathy on viola, and Chris on cello. Barbara also participated at the 10 o'clock service as a guest oboist with Dianne McDowell and our Choir. Her rendition of John Rutter's *The Lord is My Shepherd* was amazing.

Barbara was also the Clerk of the Vestry for many years. Barbara will be remembered for her good nature and her humor, in addition to her down-to-earth manner. She was one of the cornerstones of the eight o'clock service for many years.

She will truly be missed.

## Thanksgivings

**Birthdays:** Vivian Phoenix (7/01), Marieke Kuiper (7/01), Ellie Wilson (7/05), Caitylyn Frost (7/06), Amy Jerome (7/06), Rocco Catania (7/11), Deborah Klenck (7/12), Matt Keller (7/19), Luke Marshall (7/21), Helen Kebabian (7/23), Liz Brackett (7/24), Terry Monty (7/24), Jim McDowell (7/26), Anthony Sitts (7/26), Irene Brown (7/27), Dan Schult (7/27), Jake Knapp (7/28), George Weaver (7/28), Barbara Frost (7/29), Ed Vantine (7/29), Pat Tayntor (7/30), Cathy Shenkel (7/31), John Bowen (8/01), Nancy Rivington (8/01), Sierra Barker (8/01), Sheila Catania (8/03), Connie Harsh (8/05), Ed Sitts (8/07), Evelyn Hart (8/07), Jamie Rivington (8/08), Barbara Baltusnik (8/09), Adriana Catania (8/10), Jeff Knapp (8/14), Erik Geier (8/16), John Novak (8/17), Joan Fales, (8/18), Melissa Davies (8/19), Tom Brackett (8/20), Stanley Dakosty (8/27), Rose Novak (8/28), Kerry Linden (8/30).

**Wedding Anniversaries:** Linda & Doug Jenks, (7/01), Becky & Joe Hubbard (7/07), Jessie & Stan Dakosty (7/09), Betsy & Ed Vantine (7/12), Evelyn Hart & Adger Williams (7/13), Maureen & Daniel Ghent (7/22), Brooks & Becca Cato (7/24), Joan & Jim Ford (7/26), Barbara & Richard Frost (7/27), Kat & Lucien Catania (8/11), Nancy & Dan Schult (8/13), Barbara & William Baltusnik (8/23), Liz & Tom Brackett (8/31).

**Baptism Anniversaries:** Anna-Marie Kuiper, Maureen Fox (7/02), Geordi Geier (7/18), Erik Geier (7/19), Cathy Shenkel (8/09), Chloe LaFrance (8/12), Charles Wickert (8/19), Nancy Rivington (8/28).

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## A Prayer

Fill us with your strength, O God, so that we don't grow weary as we push this world toward your perfect justice.

--Sojourners

## Lemonade on the Lawn Volunteers Needed

Anyone interested in preparing lemonade, coffee, water, and maybe a little snack for our Lemonade on the Lawn would be greatly appreciated. Just let Nan know ahead of time, and we'll be happy to show you where the lemonade is and how to work the coffee maker!

Thank you!

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## Prayer

Dear God, You give much, but You ask more.  
You bring our world into being, but You ask that we be its caretakers.  
You make us in Your image and likeness, but you ask that we show the world we are your children.  
You pour love into our hearts, but You ask that we love others.  
You are our hope, but You ask that we awaken hope in others.  
Sometimes we think it's too much.  
"I know," God says, "Sometimes I think it's too much, too."  
We both must live in hope.  
I hope that one day this world will match my dream,  
That you human beings will grow up into the humanity of Jesus Christ,  
That faith, hope, and love—these three—will reign in every heart.  
That's why I sent my Son."  
Dear God, let us be fellow sufferers and harbingers of hope in our world.  
May we not be so overwhelmed by the dark we cannot see the light.  
May others know hope through us.  
May we with our hearts love you,  
with our minds seek you,  
with our whole selves serve you.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

--E. Glenn Hinson, "Suffering and Hope," *Weavings*, July/  
August 2003

**St. Thomas' Episcopal Church**  
**Scheduled to Serve**  
**July 2021**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lectors</b>	<b>Chalice Bearer</b>	<b>Usher</b>	<b>Altar Guild</b>	<b>Flower Guild</b>	<b>Lemonade on the Lawn</b>
<b>July 4</b>	9 AM Debbie Barker	9 AM Debbie Barker	9 AM Edward Page	Susan Beattie	Diane Rich	TBA
<b>July 11</b>	9 AM Maureen Ghent	9 AM Wynn Egginton	9 AM Edward Page	Susan Beattie	Rose Novak	TBA
<b>July 18</b>	9 AM Amy Jerome	9 AM Amy Jerome	9 AM Edward Page	Emily Hutton-Hughes	Liz Brackett	TBA
<b>July 25</b>	9 AM Adger Williams	9 AM Wynn Egginton	9 AM Edward Page	Emily Hutton-Hughes	Michelle Landstrom	TBA
<b>August 1</b>	9 AM Kristin Strohmeier	9 AM Deb Barker	9 AM Edward Page	Wynn Egginton	Rose Novak	TBA

**St. Thomas' Episcopal Church**  
**Scheduled to Serve**  
**August 2021**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lectors</b>	<b>Chalice Bearer</b>	<b>Usher</b>	<b>Altar Guild</b>	<b>Flower Guild</b>	<b>Lemonade on the Lawn</b>
<b>August 1</b>	9 AM Kristin Strohmeyer	9 AM Deb Barker	9 AM Edward Page	Ellie Weyfer	Rose Novak	TBA
<b>August 8</b>	9 AM Susan Cerasano	9 AM Susan Cerasano	9 AM Edward Page	Ellie Weyfer	Rose Novak	TBA
<b>August 15</b>	9 AM Amy Jerome	9 AM Amy Jerome	9 AM Edward Page	Wynn Egginton	Rose Novak	TBA
<b>August 22</b>	9 AM Adger Williams	9 AM Wynn Egginton	9 AM Edward Page	Wynn Egginton	Rose Novak	TBA
<b>August 29</b>	9 AM Kristin Strohmeyer	9 AM Deb Barker	9 AM Edward Page	TBA	Rose Novak	TBA



**Qidings**  
March 2020

Address Service Requested

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

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