

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 501-554-1236
brooks.cato@gmail.com

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC:

Dianne Adams McDowell 315-684-7215

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR:

Nancy Schmitt 315-750-0251

WARDENS:

Ellie Weyer 315-824-2591
Luke Marshall 315-824-3007

VESTRY MEMBERS:

Kerry Linden '20 315-825-5543
David Sturges '20 315-750-9112
Deany Wood '20 315-323-0607
Sheila Catania '21 315-345-1837
Michelle Landstrom '21 781-392-6204
Lee Anne Miller '21 315-525-7250
Erin Loranty '22 716-440-3087
Hannah McClennen '22 315-691-2001
Dan Schult '22 315-750-8183

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
movakhamilton@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

By now, I suspect most of y'all know what to expect from these cover letters: an update on my life, something bordering on inspirational, a touch of humor from time to time. I often use this space to reflect back on the vibrant ways our church has lived into the Kingdom of God in the previous month, and just as often, I'm looking ahead to the work we still have left to do.

And this month is a chance to do that again. We've been through Advent and Christmas, the arrival of a new year, the arrival of a new intern, and plenty of opportunities to pause and love being a part of this sacred Body. Ahead of us, sooner than we might realize, Lent is coming. And that means Holy Week and Easter are just around the corner, too! Lord, have mercy!

But today, in the middle of looking forward and backward, I'm writing with a mind full of concerns and a heart more worried than I'd like to admit that bad news is on its way. A number of you St. Thomas' souls have been working with the family of a migrant worker facing deportation. There's kids in the mix, and family, and politics, and all sorts of tough conversations to be had.

My heart weighs heavy, but my soul is getting lighter by the day. Because what I keep seeing, what I keep hearing, what I keep learning,

is that the people of Hamilton are standing up for someone in great need. And though I fear the worst, I can't help but see evidence each day that God is bigger than this whole mess.

I share this with you so you know what we're up to around St. Thomas', but also because we all need that reminder. Whatever we're doing, whatever's weighing heavy on our hearts, whatever has you fired up or newly at ease, remember, God is bigger.

That was true as we waited for Christmas to come. It was true when Jesus arrived. And it's true now as we lurch toward Lent. God is bigger, which is the best news this heavy heart could ever hope to hear.

In Christ,

Brooks+

A Prayer

Connect us, God, as beams of support for one another in the ongoing pursuit of justice and righteousness.

--Sojourners

IN THIS ISSUE:	
The Rector's Column	1
Bible Blurb	2
Notes from the Life of an Intern	2
November 2019 Vestry Minutes	4
December 2019 Vestry Minutes	5
Sermon for the First Sunday after Christmas	6
A Book Review of Karen Armstrong's <i>The Lost Art of Scripture: Rescuing the Sacred Texts</i>	8
Details—Coincidence?	9
Jazz @ Noon in February	10
Hamilton Ecumenical Youth!	10
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	10
Ash Wednesday Services	10
Free Showing, <i>SPOTLIGHT</i>	11
February at St. Thomas'	12
Looking Ahead to March	12
Prayers of the People	12
Thanksgivings	12
February Calendar of Servers	13

Bible Blurp

In February, we'll continue our case of déjà vu as we read the Second Book of Chronicles.

Where: Fourteenth Book of the Old Testament

What to Watch For: Picking up where First Chronicles left off, Second Chronicles is almost a word-for-word rerun of the story told in Kings, except when it's not.

References: First and Second Kings are almost a prerequisite for reading First and Second Chronicles.

Content: A whole lot that we've read before with a few new things sprinkled in!

Lectionary: Second Chronicles does not appear in the Lectionary.

BONUS: First and Second Chronicles combine into the Book of Chronicles, which is the last book of the Hebrew Bible. We use the same texts, but put them in a different order!

Read on, good people, and God bless!■

--Fr. Brooks+

Worth Repeating

Without justice and love, peace will always be a great illusion.

--Dom Helder Camara (1909-1999) was a Brazilian Catholic Archbishop. An advocate of liberation theology, he is remembered for his social and political work for the poor and for Human Rights and democracy during the military regime.

Notes from the Life of an Intern

My internship at St. Thomas' is the first of three internships that make up the majority of my formation process for ordination to the priesthood. (My process is a bit unusual because I have a Ph.D. in Theology, so I am not "going to seminary" as would be typical.)

Much of this first internship is what you see me doing on Sundays: helping with the adult and teen classes, preaching monthly, learning more about liturgy and how to participate in services at St. Thomas', and getting to know all of you. Even in the short time I have been part of your parish, I have so appreciated the community and liturgy here and have found it a really rich place for me to be spiritually. Thank you!

The other half of the internship is tagging along with Brooks on Wednesdays as he goes about his various duties: visiting with parishioners, meeting with area clergy, learning about his administrative duties, and so on. I'm really thankful that I have the opportunity to have Brooks mentoring me; I've already learned a great deal from him about the ministry of a parish priest.

Another project that I'm working on and which is on my mind this month is a talk that I'm giving at the Spiritual Renewal Center in Syracuse on renewing Christianity's relationship to Judaism. This is a topic that comes out of my experience of life in an interfaith family and of coming to awareness of Christianity's difficult relationship to Judaism. To prepare, I've been reading about anti-Semitism and rereading the New Testament with an eye to this issue--both have been eye-opening. I'm hoping there will be an opportunity for me to share what I'm learning later on at St. Thomas'.

If you remember me in prayer, I would certainly appreciate your prayers in the coming months, particularly for safe travels to and from Hamilton, for balance and times of rest and fun for me and my family during this internship, and for God's confirmation on my calling.

Thank you, to all of you, for how quickly and warmly you've welcomed me into your community. It's a privilege to serve as your intern,

Continued from Page 2

and I very much look forward to the coming months. ■

With Love,

Erica (and Dan, Anna & Miriam)

Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
 You do not have to walk on your knees
 for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
 You only have to let the soft animal of your body
 love what it loves.
 Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
 Meanwhile the world goes on.
 Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
 are moving across the landscapes,
 over the prairies and the deep trees,
 the mountains and the rivers.
 Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
 are heading home again.
 Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
 the world offers itself to your imagination,
 calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—
 over and over announcing your place
 in the family of things.

--Mary Oliver

A Prayer

God, grant us clarity and focus. Help us to not be caught up in the distractions that keep us from seeing the fullness of your creation.

--Sojourners

Vestry Minutes November 20, 2019

Call to Order and Opening Devotions

The meeting began at 7:02 PM. Kerry Linden offered a prayer to support the good work of the meeting.

Clerk's Report

David Sturges asked the clerk to delete "Sheila Catania" from those who were listed as present at the October 16 meeting. There were no other alterations requested. The October 20 minutes were approved as written.

Treasurer's Report

Rick Geier presented the report through the end of October. He observed that expenses were at 101% of budget ytd and that the deficit was at **\$18,065.72**. While this is not a small sum, Rick assured the vestry members that the picture is explained by patterns that are typical of the end of the year when some congregants wait to make their pledge payments. He pointed out that pledge income was at 83% ytd (**\$158,330.30**, of the **\$190,000** that would be expected by the end of the year). Rick then presented the balance sheet. Parish investments showed the expected market fluctuations. Some donations, totaling **\$2630**, had been made to the Memorial Garden Fund (**\$2500**) and the Memorial Fund (**\$130**) during October. The Treasurer's Report was received as submitted.

Rector's Report

Brooks Cato began by stating that he wanted to brag a bit because during this autumn the parish has enjoyed many special opportunities to donate to special projects. He stated that he has been "floored by the generosity and the love and the support of this congregation. So, thank you!" He also reported that the Jazz Eucharist had been a wonderful occasion. Looking over the Treasurer's Report, Luke Marshall wondered whether the income and expense lines of the special collections should always match. Brooks explained that the amounts do, but that the amounts are sometimes reported in different months, depending upon when donations are given, so the numbers in the monthly reports don't always come out the same. That is one reason why there are monthly reports from the Outreach Commission at the vestry

Continued from Page 3

meetings, he explained, and, also, in *Tidings*. It is part of the job of the treasurer and of Outreach, together with the wardens, to follow up and make sure that the checks are being recorded properly as well.

Wardens' Report:

Ellie Weyter welcomed the guests from St. Stephens', New Hartford. Luke Marshall gave thanks for the opportunity to attend the recent diocesan convention. Hannah McClennen (who had been the second delegate to the convention) agreed that it had been a good experience for her, especially because she is a new member of the vestry. Attending the meeting had offered her a great deal of useful insight into the greater church, as a whole.

Commission Reports

Outreach: Kerry Linden presented a list of the organizations to which Outreach had given support as summarized at their final meeting of the year on November 17th. In total, **\$7500** was donated, in addition to which St. Thomas' raised **\$10,000** for the Crop Walk. A new chairperson and secretary need to be elected for the Outreach Commission for 2020.

Grounds: Brooks Cato informed the vestry that he is working with Lynn Staley (Garden Committee) to replace some plaques in the yard that have gone missing over the years.

Parish Life: Brooks Cato and the vestry commended Parish Life for their excellent brunch on All Saints' Day.

Old Business

Mutual Ministry Review: Brooks Cato told the vestry that a discussion of MMR would return to the agenda in January.

Signs: Brooks Cato stated that they are still waiting for the codes officer in the village to offer a decision and/or advice concerning whether a banner could be placed in the easement or where it can be placed.

Stewardship: The vestry thanked Michael Sitts for his fine leadership of the Stewardship Campaign this autumn. As of the vestry meeting,

51 pledges had already been received for a total of **\$172,374**.

Budget Process: Rick Geier noted that the budget process continues on, through a series of conversations. At last month's meeting he had distributed an old budget template so that vestry members could see what one looks like. Now he handed out a draft of a newer version so that members could see what the template looked like for 2019, with some updates figured in for 2020. He explained that the process of putting together a budget for 2020 would essentially be a matter of updating the budget from 2019, working out new expectations in light of past experiences. Vestry members had the opportunity to ask some questions; however, the actual version put forward by Budget and Finance for a vote won't be available until the vestry meets in December.

New Business

Colgate Archives: Brooks Cato explained that he and Adger Williams had been consulting with Sarah Keen, University Archivist, to see precisely what materials relating to St. Thomas' currently exist in Colgate's archives. This is in advance of deciding what materials might stay in Archives and what might be returned to St. Thomas'. This will also start a conversation within the parish addressing what materials might be sent to Archives in the future, what St. Thomas' should keep on site, and what we will need to start creating additional storage space for, within the parish hall, to house archival materials.

Mentor Relationship: Brooks Cato informed the vestry that Dr. Erica Olson-Bang is being sent by the Diocese of Central New York to visit St. Thomas' for the next six months (or more) as she considers her vocation to the priesthood. She will be visiting both Sunday services, at times, and will visit the office one day per week. Once per month she will offer the Sunday sermon. Brooks read a brief biography that Erica had sent along. Her first Sunday should be December 1st, but winter weather will, of course, be a factor in everything.

Upcoming events were reviewed.

The next vestry meeting will be December 18th. David Sturges will lead prayer at the opening of the meeting.

Continued from Page 4

The meeting ended at 7:57 PM.■

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Cerasano, Clerk

**Vestry Minutes
December 18, 2019**

Call to order and Opening Devotions

The meeting began at 7:02 PM. David Sturges offered an Advent prayer.

Clerk’s Report

The minutes of November 20 were approved as written.

Treasurer’s Report

Rick Geier noted that during the month of November the parish finances seemed to be in catch-up mode. The difference between income and expenses for the month allowed a positive difference of **\$10,856.15**. Pledge income was at 90% for the month, but Rick noted that “things are looking good for where we are.” In looking over the balance sheet, Rick pointed out that the NBT checking account was up roughly **\$13,000** from the previous month. The Treasurer’s Report was received as submitted. Then, Rick presented the proposed budget for the 2020 year. David Sturges praised the Budget & Finance Committee, noting that he had observed them working, as liaison to the vestry, and that they had done a fantastic job. After some conversation the budget was approved unanimously.

Rector’s Report

Brooks Cato stated that vestry members from St. Stephen’s, New Hartford had sent a note thanking us for their visit in October. He updated the vestry on Erica Olson-Bang’s schedule for parish visits.

Wardens’ Report

Ellie Weyer had nothing to add.

Commission Reports

There was nothing to add.

Old Business

Mutual Ministry Review: This was tabled for discussion in 2020.

Signs & Banner: We are still waiting for word from the village.

Stewardship: At the time of the meeting, there were 66 pledges for a total of **\$198,008**.

New Business

Colgate Archives: Brooks Cato stated that conversation has begun with the diocese to determine which records must be stored on site and which can be delegated to another body.

Intern Childcare: Brooks Cato discussed the issue of childcare costs, which has been raised by the rector at St. James, Skaneateles. St. James’ has proposed to share costs with St. Thomas’. Vestry members agreed that this would be an amenable arrangement and they allocated **\$1000** to match what St. James is contributing to our intern.

Announcements were made.

Deany Wood agreed to lead prayer at the January meeting.

The meeting ended at 7:36 PM.■

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Cerasano, Clerk

A Prayer

God, quiet our restless souls as we listen for your leading in the work we hope to do.

--Sojourners

Sermon for the First Sunday After Christmas: John 1:1-18

Merry Christmas, folks! We're still going! Today is the Fifth Day of Christmas. Now, on the First Day of Christmas, while I didn't get a partridge or a pear tree, I did receive an extraordinary gift from one of my sisters, the kind that makes you so glad the world exists that you can't help but cry.

So, my sister's been going through a rough time. Over the past two years, in addition to walking both of our grandmothers to their deaths, she's also been going through the painful and messy process of getting a divorce and discovering what life on the other side of those enormous changes means. It's been no fun, I'll tell ya, but God bless her, she has shown immense strength, drawing on wells of faith and family and friends, and refusing to let her world be defined by him any longer. And what she's doing is finding purpose in her sorrows. But this year was her first Christmas Eve to celebrate without her kids. With them gone, she knew the day would be made all the more difficult if she stayed at the house, so she kept herself busy. She went in to work, went to the gym, ran from the shadow reminding her that she was alone. She could feel it behind her all day, but she knew if she just kept moving, just kept busy, it couldn't catch up. At least, she hoped.

As the sun set, she made her way to that last distraction with creeping shadow still behind. My sister's last item on the shadow-fleeing agenda was a visit to the local women's prison. She's gone with a group from her church off and on for a few years. They do Eucharist there, services very similar to what we're doing here. Only it's, well, it's different. Eucharist is big on community gathering, and they do that. But the prison is a no-touch facility, which means exactly what it sounds like. Inmates can't touch each other, and visitors can't touch inmates. Can you imagine that? For however long you're incarcerated, the only physical human contact you're allowed comes from guards and COs and the occasional medical professional. All other freedoms stripped from you, and now something as simple as touch, too.

There are some logistics in the service they've had to get creative around. When the church folks

welcome the women into the room, there's warmth, but there's no handshakes. When they share communion, there's an elaborate system to make sure the bread ends up passing from one person to another without contact. And maybe the most heartbreaking, when they pass the Peace, they turn to each other and sort of bow, no handshakes, no hugs, no pats on the shoulder. Just a quick bow. This is what my sister and those inmates have come to expect. It's not ideal, but it's the rules. What're you gonna do? Well, apparently in the lead-up to Christmas, my sister's priest decided it was time to change the rules, at least where she could. So, she met with the powers that be and convinced them that the Peace wasn't just a cute gesture or a way to skirt the no-touch policy. It was so much more.

See, when we pass the Peace, there's so much tied up in that one gesture. I had a congregation once that thought the Peace was the church-equivalent of the seventh-inning stretch. Stand up, shake the cobwebs from your legs, check the football scores, make a business deal, see how so-and-so's new baby is doing, you get the idea. Oh, and there was one curmudgeon in the back who refused to participate in the Peace because it was an addition to the service imposed on southerners by yankees, and it didn't mean a darn thing anyway. At least, that's what she claimed. The last thing on any of their minds was church.

But the passing of the Peace is a very, very old practice, and it's absolutely steeped in meaning. First off, where it happens matters. It's at the tail end of the first half of the service, what we call the Liturgy of the Word. We gather together as the people of God. We praise God, we hear God's message through scripture, we listen to a sermon and, hopefully, hear some nugget of truth that stirs something in our being. We pray for the needs of the world, we confess where we've sinned, we're reminded that Christ has taken those sins on so we don't have to carry them anymore, and *then* we pass the Peace. We stand, we see a spouse we've wronged, a neighbor we've not been kind to, a stranger in need of welcome in spite of all they've done, and we greet them all in the name of God.

There's an echo, too, of Matthew in there: "When you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something

Continued from Page 6

against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.” Maybe it’s not practical to go all the way to your brother’s house to reconcile with him there, but the person in the pew behind you can serve as a symbolic stand in. Greet that person in the name of God, and you’ll soon greet your brother likewise.

It gets deeper, still. There’s the theology of the Body of Christ that Paul talks about so much. When you greet another person, you greet them as though they were actually part of Jesus, with the same humility, gratitude, and awe. And you greet them as though you were actually part of Jesus, with the same grace, generosity, and forgiveness extended.

One last thing. The Peace, more than anything, is about the Incarnation. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And suddenly, our bodies begin to matter even more. Our bodies were already sacred because they were divinely created things, but now, they’re elevated. Having a body matters in a deeply spiritual way. That we move, that we stub our toes, that Christ lives, suffers, dies, and ascends, all that plays into us and all the things our bodies do. When we shake hands, when we hug, when we pass the Kiss of Peace, we touch the Incarnation of God.

Y’all, the Peace is a big deal. It’s about recognizing your own fault; it’s about forgiving the faults of someone else; it’s about being reassured that Christ’s sacrifice really does matter right here, and right now, and right there between two people. The Peace is the Body of Christ repairing itself and looking to repair the world. And all that happens before we turn our attention to the next part, when we join with the entire Body of Christ to partake in the Body of Christ as one body and one blood. That’s what the Peace is about. So, when my sister’s priest told the warden at the women’s prison what the Peace meant, especially that whole thing about recognizing fault and trying to repair wrongs done, the warden relented, just for that sliver of the service. But the priest kept the secret.

My sister sat near the bread and the wine, and an inmate filled the chair next to her, close, but not so close that the folds of their shirts could touch.

They gathered. The women came in, warmly greeted but no handshakes shared. They praised God. They heard the word of God. They listened to a sermon, they prayed for the world from inside their white-cement block walls, they confessed their sins, and they crossed their chests with the dear reminder that they, too, are forgiven. And then the priest said, “The Peace of the Lord be always with you. You may now pass the Peace with a hug.”

Everyone froze. My sister shot her priest a look. Was this some sort of civil disobedience? Was the priest taking them all down with her? What was happening? The women, also, froze. One had her hands already in proper bowing position, turned slightly to the woman next to her, and just stared back at the priest. Another woman, finally, squeaked out, “For real?” And, like a scene from a movie, they all turned their heads to the guard at the door who just gave a simple, quiet nod, and said, “Go ahead.” The room immediately changed. Timid handshakes erupted into tight, strong hugs. My sister wept on the shoulder of an inmate who said, “I remember you! You were at my baptism!” And the Body of Christ knit itself a little closer on Christmas Eve.

I cannot imagine what that moment was like. I’ve been in hopeless places and hopeless times, but nothing like the solitary nature of serving out a prison term surrounded by people that can’t even share a high five. I’ve shared hope found. I’ve greeted someone who’s forgiven me. I’ve lived a lot of things that we say the Peace is about, but never like that. On Christmas Eve, my sister and those women embraced Emmanuel - God Among Us - in a way I will always treasure in my heart. I wasn’t there, but I’m better for knowing the story, for hearing her tell the story through years of tears stored up, and for getting to share with you today that same gesture, that Peace from God who lived among us: Jesus. Emmanuel. The Word Made Flesh. The Prince of Peace. ■

--Fr. Brooks+

Reminder: Sunday sermons are posted on the St. Thomas’ website: StThomasHamilton.org

**A Book Review of
Karen Armstrong's,
*The Lost Art of Scripture:
Rescuing the Sacred Texts*
(2019)**

Karen Armstrong is special, a treasure. The author of penetrating commentary on the Bible by a Christian of inner faith, her books have led me to review them for *Tidings* in the past and were an incentive for my reviewing Christian history books on a regular basis. The title of this book is a teaser: Is Scripture a lost art? What does that mean? Her punch is in the subtitle: She intends to explain the original functions of the ancient Hebrew Tanakh, Christian Bible, and other sacred texts.

Civilization in the Middle East began about 5,000 years ago with agriculture, fixed settlements, and writing. The purpose of writing was not to transcend time with everlasting truth but to reflect oral truth for people who had already memorized it. In charismatic cases religious leaders were expected to modify their religion to keep it relevant. What kept it vital was not group reading of Scripture but communal chanting and recitation. Over time written texts grew archaic.

Ancient Hebrews were part of this process. They wrote down what they had memorized and went on to other revelations and newer texts. This helps explain why the Jewish Tanakh—their anciently modified Bible—periodically contradicts itself, as in changing wholesome humans in Genesis into Adam and Eve, the snake, and their punishment. But the great achievement of the Hebrews as peasants was to acquire the land of Canaan as arranged by their God, Yahweh, making Him unique for them among many adjacent gods.

Over two or three thousand years there have been many ways of using sacred Hebrew and Christian texts, Old and New Covenants, with or without writing, with or without interpretation, with various means of selection and modes of reaction, from ecstasy to skepticism, order or confusion, sometimes belief and distress together.

Only after the 4th century AD, under Greek

influence for the superiority of ideas as permanent over time and place in the Roman Empire, and the selective spread of literacy, did the written word of God take on fixed supremacy over community worship. Even then the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches insisted on the primacy of their institutional interpretations for social acceptance and eternal salvation.

The Protestant Reformation later promoted individual responsibility, which led to personal contact with the published Bible – “sola Scriptura,” meaning “Scripture alone” -- which Karen Armstrong has repeatedly examined in American Christianity.

Americans have shaped their own inventions from Scripture alone. One of them was Premillennialism, the certainty of an Englishman, John Nelson Darby, who toured the U. S. in the mid-19th century, teaching that humanity was so depraved that God would soon destroy the world, saving faithful Christians like himself and his converts. (p. 395)

For a closer example of “sola Scriptura,” Evangelicals used the statement of Isaiah that “the wealth of the nations shall come to you” to believe that God intended converts to be rich, and made it part of their religion. ■

--Richard Frost

Worth Repeating

When the song of the angels is stilled / when the star in the sky is gone / when the kings and princes are home / when the shepherds are back with their flocks / the work of Christmas begins: / to find the lost / to heal the broken / to feed the hungry / to release the prisoner / to rebuild the nations / to bring peace among the people / to make music in the heart.

--Howard Thurman (1899-1981) was an African-American author, philosopher, theologian, educator, and civil rights leader. As a prominent religious figure, he played a leading role in many social justice movements and organizations of the twentieth century.

Details—Coincidence?

This article is from a collection of articles written by a beloved member of St. Thomas', Marcia Sitts.

About a week or so ago, I emailed Nan and Brooks about three prayer shawls I had found tucked away and asked for them to see about potential recipients for them. That was on a Tuesday night. On Wednesday morning Nan emailed me back: "Marcia, you won't believe this...or maybe you will!" She had just gotten a call that morning from the Occupational Therapist at Community Memorial Hospital asking if there were any prayer shawls around. By Thursday, Brooks had taken those three down and met with Yvette Piper, who was delighted, and said they could use all they could get. She said the building is cool and folks need the little extra warmth that shawls and small lap blankets can provide.

Coincidences, synchronicities like this--call them what you want--they really, really get my attention. I KNOW that coincidence is not causation. I KNOW that sometimes stuff truly *does* just happen, and sometimes it just happens together at the same time. Still; events in my entire life have taught that, at the very least, one should go on high alert when a coincidence suddenly seems to come into focus. Pay attention. Be aware. It can sail in from left field; you can trip and stumble over it; it can make your head spin around; or, someone might say, "You won't believe this, but..." Let it stop you. Pick it up and see if it has your name on it. Mind that little tug in your head or your heart. Find out if it's yours. See what it seems to want you to be doing.

Then, do it.

In the interest of full disclosure, I have to tell you that there's no guarantee that it will be easy, or clear, or tidy. Sorry—usually the opposite. In the past, I have resented the disruption of MY life, MY plans, and MY ideas. Then suddenly, the focus shifts, and something utterly unforeseen, totally unexpected comes into view. That's the *WOW* moment, and you will realize that THAT'S what it all was about. It's not about you, nor about anything you considered or thought about, but something that God wanted doing, wanted done, and thought, was willing, to involve you. Don't try to anticipate, or guess, or suppose. Just go with the flow.

Now, about those shawls; I smell a coincidence here. The prayer shawl ministry group, started by Dorothy and Janet O'Flynn is gone—moved away, or died—except for me. Now we need more shawls (and lap robes this time) to warm folks' bodies and hearts. Can you knit? Can you crochet? Would you like to learn? Can you teach someone? Are you feeling a little tug? Might this have your name on it? ■

--Marcia Sitts
Tidings, October 2017

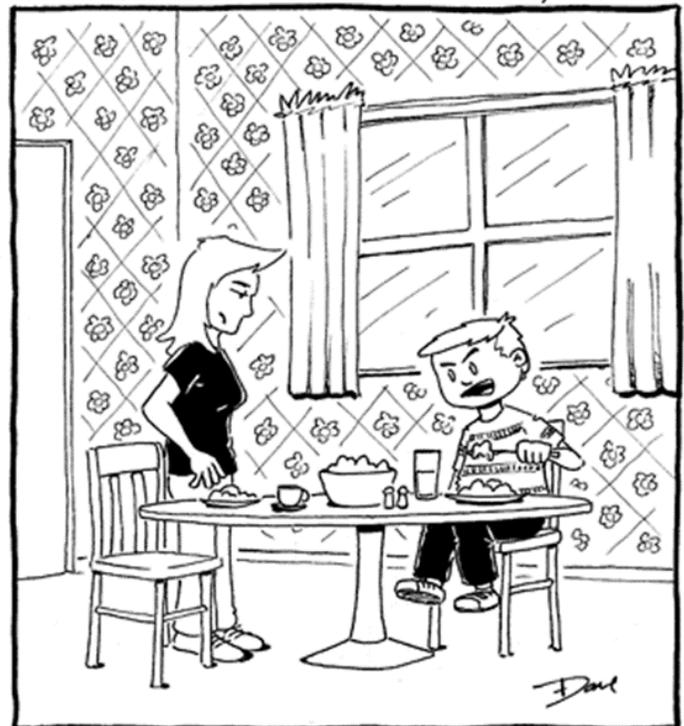
Marcia Sitts was a beloved member of St. Thomas' who inspired many of us with her words of wisdom mixed in with utter frankness and a dash of humor. (Your Thursday morning Bible Study group misses you very much.) I think Marcia would have been pleased to meet Linda Jenks, one of our newer members who has also taken up many responsibilities in the church including Altar Guild, Parish Life, and yes—Prayer Shawls! Who knew? And they are not just for the sick, but also a way of showing how much we (St. Thomas') care about someone. It seems the Prayer Shawl Ministry is still alive and well.

--Nan Schmitt

On the Lighter Side

FINDING ELIM

By Dave Nelson



I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS,
BUT I'M PRETTY SURE I
GAVE IT UP FOR LENT.



**Saturday, February 1
12-2 PM**

Listen, lounge, and lunch with Arts at the Palace on Saturday, February 1st from 12 PM – 2 PM!

This month’s performers will be Paul Merrill (trumpet), Joe Carello (saxophone), Dino Losito (piano), Steve Brown (guitar), Joey Arcuri (bass), and Jimmy Johns (drums).

Chartwells will be serving green chicken chili or vegetarian green chili with a side of corn bread, and Mexican bread pudding for dessert.

Join us in the cozy, relaxed atmosphere of the Palace Underground at 19 Utica Street, Hamilton, New York on Saturday, February 1st.

Suggested donation at door. Sponsored by Chartwells.■

artsatthepalace.org

Arts at the Palace
19 Utica St.
Hamilton, New York

A Prayer

God, take our seeds of hope and see them through to a full bloom.

--Sojourners

Hamilton Ecumenical Youth!

All 6-12 Graders Welcome
Sundays, 4:30-6 PM

February 9, First Baptist Church
March 8, St. Thomas’ Episcopal Church
April 19, Park United Methodist Church
May 17, Hamilton Bible Fellowship
June 14, St. Mary’s Catholic Church

ecumenical:

a : ... representing the whole of a body of churches
b : promoting...worldwide Christian unity or cooperation (Webster)

A community collaboration among the Hamilton area churches

**Shrove Tuesday
Pancake Supper**
Tuesday, February 25, 2020
5 PM-7 PM
St. Thomas’ Parish Hall

Ash Wednesday Services
February 26, 2020

7 AM	Holy Eucharist/Ashes
12 Noon	Holy Eucharist/Ashes
7 PM	Holy Eucharist/Ashes

FREE SHOWING

Tuesday, 2/11 at 6pm
Hamilton Movie Theater
Panel Discussion to Follow



This showing of the Academy Award winning film *Spotlight* is open to the public. Our goal is to spark a community-wide conversation about how we might best respond to the crisis of sexual assault and abuse in the church and the world.

Sponsored by the Sexual Assault Response and Prevention (SARP) Team of St. Mary's, St. Joan's, and the Colgate Newman Community. The goal of SARP is to provide a robust parish and community response to sexual abuse by (1) acknowledging past abuses in the church and in society at large, (2) ministering to victims of sexual assault and abuse, and (3) creating a healthy and safe community for future generations.

February at St. Thomas'

Regular Weekly Events

Holy Eucharist: Sundays, 8 AM & 10 AM.

Church School: Sundays, Teen Class, 9 AM; Godly Play (5-11 years), 9:45 AM.

Nursery Care: Sundays, 9:45 AM.

Adult Education Class: Sundays, 11:30 AM.

Friendship Inn Community Meal: Mondays, 5 PM, Parish Hall (St. Thomas' cooks February 24).

Prayer Group: Thursdays, 9:30 AM. All are welcome.

Bible Study: Thursdays, 10 AM. All are welcome.

Choir Rehearsal: Sundays, 9:15 AM.

Special Events

HAARC Monthly Potluck, Sunday, February 2, 6 PM, St. Thomas' Parish Hall.

H.E.Y!, Sunday, February 9, 8 PM, 4:30 PM– 6 PM, First Baptist Church.

Shrove Tuesday/Mardi Gras Party/Pancake Supper, February 25, 5 PM-7 PM, St. Thomas' Parish Hall.

Ash Wednesday, February 26, Holy Eucharist with Ashes, 7 AM, 12 Noon, 7 PM.

Friday Night Lights, (Open Mic series), Friday, February 28, 7 PM–9 PM, St. Thomas' Parish Hall.

Looking Ahead to March

Mark Your Calendars

HAARC Monthly Potluck, Sunday, March 2, 6 PM, St. Thomas' Parish Hall.

Adult Ed, Sundays in Lent (March 1-March 29), 11:30 AM.

Chanted Evening Prayer, Wednesdays in Lent (March 4-April 1), 7 PM.

Friday Night Lights (Open Mic series), Friday, March 26, 7 PM–9 PM, St. Thomas' Parish Hall.

**Coffee Hour and Flower Chart
Schedules for 2020 are posted in
the Parish Hall!**

Prayers of the People

For those in need: Pat Andrews, Kathleen Baier, Ralph Barker, Jim Becker, Phil Bisselle, Irene Brown, Martha Brown, Mary Brown, Barbara Crysedale, Joan Fales, Victor Gloor, Joan Gorton, Marlene Houck, Steve Jones, Patti Lamandia, Alyssa MacKinnon, Ruth Martineau, Tom McCobb, Dianne McDowell, Liam Meyer, Bill Pratt, June Schaupp, Sheryl Scott, Marshall Sepello, Pat Simonds, Ed Sitts, Mark Spearing, Keith Stage, Marilyn Wakefield, Deb Willis, Ryan Wilson, Amanda, Bert, Kathleen, Elaine, Joyce, Philip, Katie & Jonathan (infant), Chick & Dawn, Andrea & Russ, Pat & Harold Ingraham, Dave & Bev McKay, George Weaver & Robert Maziarz.

For the departed: Judy Brown, Miriam Crowe, Mary Grahl, Edgar Hotaling, Debbie Huerta, Juanita McIntyre, Jurgen Meyer-Wendt, Ryan Pacillo, David Pearsall, Paul Schupf, Pat Stickle.

Thanksgivings

Birthdays: Becca Cato (2/08), Sicily Catania (2/14), Mea Martineau (2/15), Joshua Knapp (2/17), Alyssa MacKinnon (2/18), Anna-Marie Kuiper (2/19), Lee Lamb (2/20), Charlie Jerome (2/22), Jim Jerome (2/23), Adrien Catania (2/26), Vivianna Linden (2/27).

Wedding Anniversaries: Lauren & Luke Marshall (2/23).

Baptism Anniversaries: Sue Geier (2/02), Gwyneth Davies (2/13), Emily Hutton-Hughes (2/13), Jana Laxa (2/23).

Scripture Lesson

We love because God first loved us.

--1 John 4:19

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church

Scheduled to Serve February 2020

Date	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers	Acolytes	Ushers/Greeters	Godly Play/ Nursery Helpers	Altar Guild	Flower Guild	Coffee Hour
Feb 2 Presentation (4 Epiphany)	10 AM Erica Olson-Bang Lee Anne Miller	8 AM Evelyn Hart 10 AM Barbara Bowen	10 AM Adriana Catania Madalyn Jones Alessandra Catania Cora Loranty	Ushers: 8 AM Edward Page 10 AM Jana Laxa & David Sturges Greeter: 10 AM TBA	9:45 AM Debbie Barker Sheila Catania TBA	Ellie Weyter	Lauren Marshall	Susan Beattie Nancy Heck Maureen Fox
Feb 9 5 Epiphany	10 AM Lynn Staley Kristin Strohmeier	8 AM Amy Jerome 10 AM Erica Olson-Bang	10 AM Nick Catania Bergen Linden Isadora Catania Sicily Catania	Ushers: 8 AM Edward Page 10 AM Erin & Michael Loranty Greeter: 10 AM TBA	9:45 AM Sheila Catania Adrien Catania TBA	Wynn Egginton	Jana Laxa	Anne Perring
Feb 16 6 Epiphany	10 AM Jane Welsh Ellie Weyter	8 AM Susan Cerasano 10 AM Debbie Barker	10 AM Madalyn Jones June Loranty Alessandra Catania Cora Loranty	Ushers: 8 AM Edward Page 10 AM Michael Sitts Lynn Staley Greeter: 10 AM TBA	9:45 AM Kat Catania Erin Loranty TBA	Wynn Egginton	Lauren Marshall	Ted Engle Lee Anne Miller
Feb 23 Last Epiphany	10 AM Adger Williams Tom Brackett	8 AM Evelyn Hart 10 AM Michael Sitts	10 AM Viviana Linden Bergen Linden Isadora Catania Sicily Catania	Ushers: 8 AM Edward Page 10 AM Susan & David Beattie Greeter: 10 AM TBA	9:45 AM Karen Marriam Debbie Barker TBA	Jane Welsh	Jana Laxa	TBA
Mar 1 1 Lent	10 AM Maureen Fox Emily H-Hughes	8 AM Amy Jerome 10 AM Maureen Ghent	10 AM Adriana Catania Madalyn Jones Alessandra Catania Cora Loranty	Ushers: 8 AM Edward Page 10 AM Jana Laxa & David Sturges Greeter: 10 AM TBA	9:45 AM Sheila Catania Adrien Catania TBA	Ellie Weyter	Jana Laxa	TBA



Qidings
February 2020

Address Service Requested

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

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Hamilton, NY 13346
Permit No. 80