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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

Y'all, things are getting tough. Among countless other examples, there's the pinch of grocery prices, the roar of news coverage, and the growing hostility infiltrating public spaces. None of that's surprising to hear, I imagine, but what can be surprising is just how much all these things weigh on our hearts. These days, we're carrying more weight, more stress, more frustration, more grief, and sometimes more anger than normal.

Meanwhile, if we only look at this lovely village we call home, it can seem like everything's fine. Life goes on. The Farmer's Market still happens. Our jobs still call us into the office. Regular stuff keeps happening, and while it's certainly a blessing to have some degree of normalcy, that apparent normalcy can be misleading. What I mean is, it's easy to get so caught up in the normalcy that we don't realize just how ratcheted up everyone is.

I'm not saying we shouldn't be concerned about our current climate or that going about our daily lives is a bad thing, so long as we go about our daily lives recognizing that things are hard. Life today isn't what it was a year ago, and we have to remember that when we deal with the regular, normal, everyday frustrations of regular life.

That means when we "go in peace to love and serve the Lord," it's a little harder to be true to our faith and the claims it lays on us. I'm not talking about the big stuff here; I'm talking about the line at the grocery store, a yellow light at the five-way, or a slow-walking stranger hogging the sidewalk. All those little annoyances we usually just put up with are becoming so many straws on camels' backs. It's easier to get upset over "nothing" and let loose a string of words and actions we may regret.

My grandmother used to say, "everyone's carrying something you don't know about." That's truer now than I can ever remember. I suspect it'll get more amplified, still, and I pray we'll meet that growing tension with grace, love, and kindness. Easier said than done, I know. Still, we have to try.

Brooks+

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Sunflower Stitches for Ukraine

In partnership with the Common Man for Ukraine, we are seeking donations of **hand-knit hats** for the children in Ukraine who have been affected by the war. We will be accepting donations through 12/1/2025. Hats will be hand-delivered to the children of Ukraine just before the holidays.

You may use any pattern you like for a children's hat. Please contact Beth Reynolds at BethQReynolds@gmail.com with any questions or if you need a pattern suggestion!

To donate, please mail all hats to:

Beth Q. Reynolds

141 Prostpect Street Ext.

Lebanon, NH 03766

To learn more about the important work being done by the Common Man for Ukraine visit the following website: commonmanforukraine.org



Join the Conversation: Bible Study

We're continuing our pop culture exploration with a whole slew of different offerings. So far, we've watched the movies *Big Fish*, *Prince of Egypt*, *Doubt*, and *Pray Away*. Fr. Brooks did a presentation on Barbara Brown Taylor's book, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*.

Looking ahead, we'll watch more movies, discuss a little art history, read a short story or two, and begin working our way through the former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams's book *Tokens of Trust*.

If you'd like to participate and need help purchasing a copy of the book, please contact Fr. Brooks.

Worth Repeating

The first essential component of social justice is adequate food for all mankind. Food is the moral right of all who are born into this world.

—Norman Borlaug

Scrabble Club

Scrabble Club meets on the first Tuesday of the month. We'll be slinging tiles from 4:00-6:00 pm in the Unicorn Suite. If you'd like to join, feel free to drop in or reach out to Denise Dixon to be added to the text list for updates and other information at (315) 416-2323.

Christian Education

Our youth programs will continue through May with Bible story lessons and hands-on activities. We are looking forward to seeing more youth involvement during our classes, services, and events here at St. Thomas'. During Godly Play on October 5th, students will be decorating pet bandanas to be handed out at our Annual Blessing of the Animals service on October 12th!

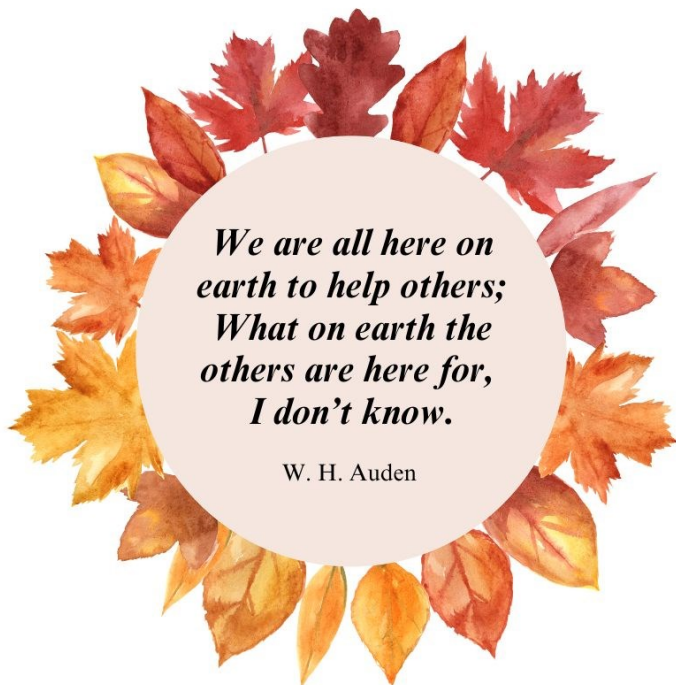
9:00-9:40 am - Teen Class -

Sixth through Twelfth 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 & Nursery -

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

<https://www.stthomashamilton.org/education>



Ministry Fair

October 5

Wonder what people get up to around St. T's? Looking for a way to volunteer? Stick around after the service, hear from the various commissions and guilds, and consider donating some of your time and talents to the life of this amazing church!



Blessing of the Animals

October 12

In honor of St. Francis we'll hold our annual Blessing of the Animals at 1:00 PM in the Memorial Garden. All critters great and small (and properly restrained) are invited. Their humans are welcome too!

Bring A Friend to Church Day

October 26

Looking for an excuse to help St. T's grow? Have we got the opportunity of a lifetime for you! Invite your friends, invite your foes, invite every household in the tri-state area to join us for Bring A Friend to Church Sunday on October 26th. All ages welcome! We'll have paint-your-own mini-pumpkins, a semi-raucous service, and yummy coffee hour treats. Help us show off who we are and what makes us thrive. And as one last incentive, anyone who brings a friend to church gets a free St. Thomas' t-shirt!

Nave Gazing

There's an old saying in the world of liturgy nerds: *lex orandi, lex credendi*. For our purposes, that basically means "how we pray shapes what we believe." Writing in the first half of the 5th Century, Prosper of Aquitaine stressed the importance not just of prayer for the sake of connecting to God but also prayer as a means to teach -- and even embody -- theology.

Certainly, prayers reflect what we believe. There's hardly anyone who would argue against that point in the world of liturgical scholarship. Prosper's point, though, was that it's not a one-way street. What and how we pray also informs what we believe.

For liturgical churches like ours, the Book of Common Prayer lays out exactly how to pray when we gather as a community. There are some prayers that guide how you pray on your own in there, and of course, we all have our own personal ways of praying, too. All of those come together not only reflecting what we already believe but also pushing us towards new or deeper ways of believing.

This is one of the brilliant aspects of our early founding. Between Thomas Cranmer and Queen Elizabeth I, the prayers we've said together continually shape us *as a body*. We hold our prayers *in common* not just 'cause we like the comfort of familiar prayers, but because the comfort of familiar prayers reflects the comforts we find in God.

This may sound a tad esoteric, so let's zoom in. As Anglicans, we say we rely on that good ol' Three Legged Stool of scripture, tradition, and reason. Look at the structure of our Sunday services. We start with scripture, we hear a sermon (hopefully one with reason), and we recite the Nicene Creed (tradition). That's belief shaping how we pray. But it goes the other direction, too. Week after week, we experience that scripture-tradition-reason model and it gets down in our bones, sometimes in ways we don't even recognize until much later. When faced with a conundrum in your faith life, you're

likely to come at that conundrum using the very same scripture, tradition, and reason model we enact in church. And where you land in working out that conundrum reflects that long practiced way of praying.

Another example comes from the Baptismal Covenant. We pray that together, and one of its most often quoted lines has had an enormous effect since the publication of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer: we will "strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being." Respecting the dignity of every human being is rooted in a life lived like Christ, and as the church has used this prayer, the reach of that respect has grown to include aspects of humanity that were long ignored or even lambasted.

In the Antebellum South, while the church emphasized using a single chalice to represent the one body and one blood of Christ that we all both share and represent, enacting that prayer caused a much-needed problem for all those folks praying that way. You see, as part of the enacted prayer, when one chalice went around, the belief that was put into action was one of equality before God. If you were a slaveholder, say, that was all well and good so long as the ones you were equal to were also slaveholders. But if the person receiving the wine beside you or, heaven forbid, before you was a slave, the enacted prayer made the very visible claim that the slaveholder and the slave were equal. They came up with several different ways to act out their prayers that "solved" the problem by making the slaves receive communion last, by using one chalice for slaves and a different chalice for everyone else, by having a second station to receive communion at for slaves (typically in the back of the church), and even by creating churches specifically for slaves!

See, we have a choice when it comes to how our beliefs shape what we pray and how our prayers shape what we believe. We can let the deep work of the Spirit chip away at our prejudices or we can make our prayers reflect those prejudices. This is tough stuff for many reasons, but it's particularly challenging that most of the time (Antebellum slaveholders notwithstanding) this all happens without us even being aware of it.

But that's also the beauty of prayer and belief. It's a positive feedback loop happening somewhere under the surface where what we believe shapes how we pray, and how we pray shapes what we believe, and what we believe shapes how we pray again, and so on, in an ever deepening, ever challenging evolution of how we connect to God, God's People, and God's Creation.

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! Open to all.



Scripture Lesson

Help us find the strength to embody your voice, God, in honor of those who have been rendered voiceless. Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.

—Proverbs 3:27

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

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 to, whichever you prefer. Then you can simply bring some goodies! If you have any questions, you can reach out to Linda Jenks at jewels4grams@gmail.com.

Sermon for the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost:

**The Rev. Brooks Cato
September 7, 2025**

Where I grew up, there was family, which was a loose idea, and then there was kin. Kin was tighter, sometimes included folks we weren't entirely sure were related, but it didn't matter. They were kin. With their foibles, their tempers, their insecurities they were kin, and kin meant something. Kin was who you set aside everything for, who cleaned out their trailer to help you move, who showed up when you died, who showed up when you married, who showed up when they needed help but weirdly, didn't always show up when you did. But still, they were family. Family with a big "F." The concept of big-F Family sometimes meant more than the reality of big-F Family. Betrayals and rejections've filled some of those connections with grief, some with relief, some with much needed reality. Now, reality's a hard thing to accept when held up to its conceptual ideal. In other words, what family is can be very different from what family should be.

Truth is, family's not the only place we see an ideal challenged by reality. For those for whom small government, fiscal conservatism, and the preservation of personal freedoms define the ideal approach to government, reality shines a very different light. What personal freedom's coming to mean is the freedom to prevent other people from doing or saying what I don't like. You catch the irony there? What's painted as fiscal conservatism has proven to be immensely beneficial to those who've already got money and immensely damaging to those who don't, and all the while, the middle keeps on shrinking. The government is getting smaller as vital jobs are cut, but the reach of that so-called small government stretches all the

way to your doctor, your bedroom, and your bathroom, and they're just getting started.

The light of reality can be unforgiving and harsh, but at least it doesn't hoodwink us into causing great harm. The way nearly everything in the world is changing, it's likely that the realities of our political, religious, and communal identities've changed, too, while each of us goes on clinging to our ideals. Those ideals may've been true before, or maybe reality's finally coming to light in ways we've long needed it to. What a Christian is, for example, has changed drastically since the earliest days of the Church. In some ways, that's been a good thing. The full inclusion of women, the embrace of gay folks, the permission to find joy and not just fear, these've developed over time in an institution that's changed nearly constantly to bring people, us, closer to God. These days, more folks opt into Christianity than inherit it, and that's a good thing. It means we're getting people who want to be a part of what we offer. It also means we've got access to different views of reality than we would on our own. And what those folks see as reality is something we desperately need to pay attention to. Institutions of all kinds're facing serious backlash, often well deserved. Churches are no exception, but we need to remember that those critiques're often rooted in a love so deep that it hurts to see our institutions and churches go astray.

And y'all, that's where I'm landing with Christianity these days. It hurts. The way I grew up, if someone said they were a Christian, that was enough. Leave it at that, maybe the choir folk would gossip a little if Uncle Tommy acted up again, but mostly, if someone said they were Christian, they were. It was a major red line you did not cross to say that a church going, God-fearin' feller was no Christian. That was insulting and it reeked of the old days of heretics and burning stakes. Who am I to judge, after all, when I too am a sinner? I get that. But that overly polite, ideal-in-place-of-reality has allowed Christianity to slip into a perverse extension

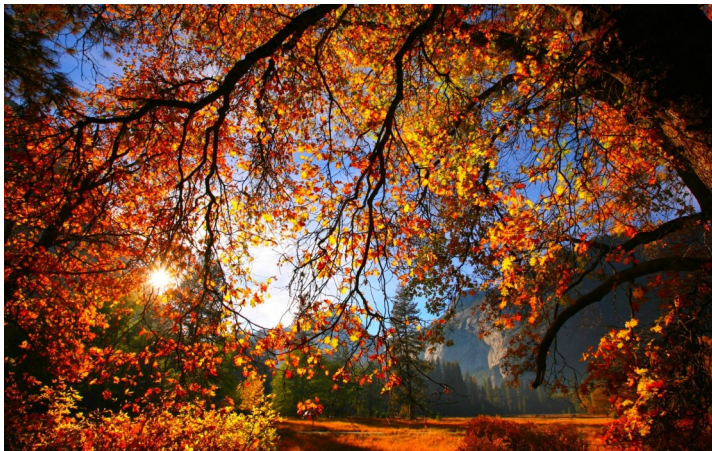
of our nation's culture embracing not the ever-expanding Body of Christ, but instead searching for whose body to put on the cross next. War is not Christ's way. Injustice is not Christ's way. Serving the 99 while 1 wanders lost is not Christ's way. To put a finer point on it, in spite of the immense push we're seeing in headlines, interviews, and press releases, Christianity does not justify slavery, Christianity does not justify the expulsion of foreigners you don't like, doesn't justify the arrest of innocent people, the erasure of dissent, the neglect of the poor, the enriching of the wealthy, the subjugation of women, the subjugation of brown people, the subjugation of sexual minorities, or the subjugation of you. If you don't feel that subjugation of you is a real threat, two things: First, count your blessings. Second, give it time. When it comes for you, remember, Christianity is not for that, but if you've waited that long, good luck getting anyone to hear.

If we want to stop this now, we have got to get clear about what Christianity is and what it is not. I know this makes us itchy 'cause again we're hesitant to judge lest we be judged ourselves. But my buddy Fr. Steve talks about Paul and his writings as kinda like a marketer trying to figure out how to pitch this new product of a life lived like Christ. Nobody'd done that yet, and as a result, we got the beginnings of our definitions. And for millennia since, we've been defining what we're about, which inherently draws lines judging who's in and who's out. I don't want to pretend we've always gotten it right or that we've never used Christianity for ill. God knows reality shines plenty of light there. But I do want to be clear that we stand for something. And because we stand for something, inherently we stand against something else, even if, maybe especially when that something else is in our own family. Look at it this way. Some of y'all've heard this analogy before, but stick with me. If you go to McDonald's, you know there's gonna be certain things on the menu and certain things that aren't. No sane person

would pull up to McDonald's and order a taco. It's not that McDonald's hates tacos, it's just that McDonald's serves what McDonald's serves and tacos ain't it. Christianity serves what we serve. You want a religious structure that supports the deification of party, person, or piles of cash? That's fine, but don't call it Christianity.

Dig through our Catechism, read our scriptures, study our theologians, ask another minister if you're not sure about me, look at our moral and spiritual exemplars we've built our societies on the sacrifices of, and you'll find a whole lot about "all people" without caveat, about a great body stretching across time and space to support our sacrifices now, a never-ending succession of prophets ringing these same bells of economic and societal equality, preacher after preacher decrying how money fouls souls, and innumerable verses promoting goodness and kindness and love. What you won't find is that which prioritizes power instead of people, cruelty in place of justice, the rejection of compassion in favor of some hard masculinity. You won't find excuses to hate, to manipulate, to trick, to beat, to cast out, or to close our doors in the face of souls broken by this world.

We're getting more divided by the headline and as this year creeps forward, it's also getting more important to state what we are about and what we're for. What we're about and what we're for means we have some serious soul searching to do, some real reality-based examination of what we believe, what we want to be true, and what is actually true. There are lots of easy to grab fantasies out there, but if you want truth, you gotta do some work. Our work starts with Christ. That may lead us to immigrants, trans folks, the sick, the dying, the poor, the repentant, the ones who can't help us at all, and the ones we can't survive without but don't even know yet, with them we may end up in a heretofore unknown richness of humanity, but we always start with Christ. They may lead us to all sorts of new kin, but always, the reality of Christ is where we stand.



When Fall Comes to New England

When Fall comes to New England
The sun slants in so fine
And the air's so clear
You can almost hear the grapes grow on the vine.
The nights are sharp with starlight
And the days are cool and clean
And in the blue sky overhead
The northern geese fly south instead
And leaves are Irish Setter red
When Fall comes to New England.
When Fall comes to New England
And the wind blows off the sea
Swallows fly in a perfect sky
And the world was meant to be.
When the acorns line the walkways
Then winter can't be far
From yellow leaves a blue jay calls
Grandmothers walk out in their shawls
And chipmunks run the old stone walls
When Fall comes to New England.
The frost is on the pumpkin
The squash is off the vine
And winter warnings race across the sky
The squirrels are on to something
And they're working overtime
The foxes blink and stare and so do I.
'Cause when Fall comes to New England
Oh I can't turn away
From fading light on flying wings
And late good-byes a robin sings
And then another thousand things
When Fall comes to New England
When Fall comes to New England.

—Words and Music by Cheryl Wheeler

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church Vestry Minutes August 2025

The August Vestry Minutes will be approved
at the October Vestry Meeting.

Looking for Contributors

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

A Prayer

Open our eyes to where our privilege
meets another's pain, and give us the
courage to respond

—Sojourners

Prayers of the People as of October 1st

For those in need:

Danielle Bikowsky, Holly Crouch, Aster Dinku, Joan Fales, Lisa Gee & her children, Laura Ginter, Kaia Harding, Amanda Harlan, Michelle Heavner, David Hughes, Kathy Hynes, Barb Kershaw, Pat Osowski, Diny Rupp, Joe Rupp, Patricia Tayntor, Paula Tayntor, Tom Tomsik, Ed Vantine, Becky Vinopal, Christine Watkins, Wanda Warren Berry, Deb Willis, Dana Wratten, the Blum Family, Sarah & her family, Joyce & Eddie, Jerry & Roseann Fitzgerald, Anthony & Vincent Pacillo, Candy & her son Troy, Adam, Aurora, David, Jan, Janice, Kate, Kristi, Lynn, Margaret, Michael, Nick, Paula, and Scot

On the Lighter Side



October Thanksgivings

Birthdays:

Harold Cole (10/01), DeWitt Godfrey (10/01), Jane Gieryic (10/08), Edward Page (10/09), Susan Geier (10/17), Wynn Egginton (10/18), Joan Ford (10/18), Nancy Heck (10/19), Andrew Hengst (10/20), Courtney Trueworthy (10/25), Daniel Wheeler II (10/26), Daniel Jerome (10/27), Holly Stevens (10/31).

Baptism Anniversaries:

Greg Owens (10/07), Michelle Owens (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:

Kate & Henry R. Foss II (10/06), Emily Hutton-Hughes & David Hughes (10/15).

Consider This

The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it.

—Flannery O'Connor

A Prayer

God of justice, turn our eyes to the inequities of society. Teach us how to use the things we have for what is just, instead of what is convenient.

—Sojourners

SCHMITT
DANCE
STUDIO



DANCE WITH US!

OCT 14-16 FREE TRIAL WEEK!

TUESDAY

5:30 CREATIVE MOVEMENT (AGES 3-4)

6:00 LITTLE TUMBLERS (AGES 5-7)

THURSDAY

5:00 BALLET (AGES 5-7)

5:30 JAZZ/HIP HOP (AGES 5-7)

WEDNESDAY

5:00 LYRICAL (AGES 7+)

5:30 ACRO (AGES 8+)

6:15 HIP HOP (AGES 8+)

FRIDAY OCT 17

**6:00 ADULT LINE DANCE
(\$10)**

CONTACT US FOR MORE DETAILS

12 E MAIN ST. EARLVILLE

SCHMITTDANCE@GMAIL.COM

FACEBOOK.COM/SCHMITTDANCESTUDIO

315-750-6040

Consider This

True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it understands that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth.

—Martin Luther King Jr.

A Prayer

God, amid the weights we carry as we brave this world, may we find rest in you unlike any other refuge.

—Sojourners

Make an Online Donation

You can 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.

AA Meetings in Hamilton

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

HAMILTON FARMERS MARKET 2ND FALL FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 25, 2025
8 AM – 1 PM

HAMILTON VILLAGE GREEN

Join us for a spooktacular morning full of fun:



Trick-or-Treating
at Vendor Booths



Face Painting



& More Festive
Surprises!



Music &
Storytime



LAST MARKET OF THE SEASON

Shop Vendors & Produce



Hosted by:
Hamilton
Public Library
&
Sweet Dreams
are Baked of This



SCHMITT
DANCE
STUDIO



LINE DANCE NIGHT!

FRIDAY, OCT 3 & 17
6-7:30 PM

\$10 No experience required.
Step-by-Step instructions.

Come as you are & kick up the fun!



12 E Main St. Earlville



St. Thomas' Episcopal Church
Scheduled to Serve
October 2025

DATE	LECTOR	LEM	USHER	ALTAR GUILD	FLOWER GUILD	NEWCOMERS	COFFEE HOUR HOSTS
October 5	1 st : Rose Novak 2 nd : John Orr	Barbara Bowen	Ed Page	Susan Beattie	Sally Orr	Linda Jenks	Vestry <i>Ministry Fair</i>
October 12	1 st : Lynn Staley 2 nd : Jane Welsh	Susan Cerasano	Ed Page	Susan Beattie	Sally Orr	Linda Jenks	Kate Lucey
October 19	1 st : Kristen Strohmeier 2 nd : Ellie Weyter	Amy Jerome	Ed Page	Ellie Weyter	Sally Orr	Linda Jenks	Kate Hooks & Sheila Hathaway
October 26	1 st : Adger Williams 2 nd : Joan Ford	Debbie Barker	Ed Page	Emily Hutton-Hughes	Sally Orr	Linda Jenks	Irene, George, & Robert



Things October 2025

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