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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

Easter is coming! But first, Lent!

Christmas always happens on the same date, figured by following the solar calendar and sticking to it. But Easter, Easter's a funny thing. To find the date of Easter, you have to look at the lunar calendar, which is why it moves around. Easter is always the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. Sounds kinda like an old druid should be chanting around Stonehenge, doesn't it?

I love that when faced with the choice between a solar or a lunar calendar, we chose both. The solar thing: It's lovely to pair Jesus' arrival into our world with light and sunrise and all things bright and beautiful.

That lunar thing, though, that's where I really thrive. I don't know why or what it is, but there's something about looking around in the dark that's good for my soul. There's a lot of beauty in the darkness that we tend to miss with our mostly diurnal lives.

Phases of the moon, bright stars, air so cold it almost sparkles. There's lightning bugs, owls, and bats searching for a yummy mosquito meal. I'd even go so far as embracing

some of the harder things that emerge when the light leaves our lives. Grief, anxiety, depression, and countless others are no fun, but there's unique beauty buried in the dark.

Lent and the lunar calendar weave all these gifts together. This year, the vernal equinox is March 19th. Palm Sunday is March 24th. The Paschal Moon is March 25th. Finally, Easter blooms on March 31st.

This is why I love Lent so much. It encourages us to go into the darkness and look around with a lifeline tethering us to safety. It's no surprise then, that the sky goes dark when Jesus dies, that he's buried in the dark of a tomb, that Resurrection comes before the sun rises. All those gifts of Easter, they may be visible in the light, but we get there traversing the dark.

—Brooks+



Lenten Moon by Cricket Hackman
fineartamerica.com

Sabbath Book

Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom

This one's been around for a while by now. If you've already read it, read it again! The story follows a young man's conversations with an infectiously lovable former teacher as the latter's life wanes. There are so many beautiful insights, with perhaps the greatest being the focus on love and kindness.

—Fr. Brooks

Join the Conversation Bible Study

In March, we're reading the second half of Proverbs, and if time allows, we'll shift our attention to 2 Thessalonians and Colossians later in the month.

Where: Proverbs is right after the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament. 2 Thessalonians and Colossians are New Testament epistles.

What to Watch for: What (or who) is Wisdom? For those epistles, oh wow, there's a lot to unpack.

References: Proverbs pulls on the Wisdom tradition, which puts heavy emphasis on the Spirit of God. A familiarity with Paul's letters will be helpful for the epistles, but it's not necessary to be in the class with us!

Content: Proverbs views the world as fairly black-and-white and assumes a life well-lived is a faithful one. Those epistles hope to instruct their readers in the "proper" way of doing church.

Lectionary: Proverbs appears in the Lectionary rarely. If you hang around, you'll hear it four times in the Summer of Year B and twice in the Summer of Year C. 2 Thessalonians shows up in the Lectionary three times at the end of Year C. Colossians appears about twice as often, also in Year C.

—Fr. Brooks

Fr. Brooks' Sabbatical Update

May 12th will be my last Sunday, and I'll be back in the office on August 12th. The Wardens are hard at work arranging for clergy to lead services on Sundays and already have more than half of those days covered.

My plans are starting to take shape, little by little. There's a dry stone wall workshop in Vermont I plan on attending that first week away, and I'm hoping to further hone my skills with the wall on my property. I'm also looking forward to my high school reunion all the way out in New Mexico!

Parish House Usage

The Parish House at St. Thomas' gets used for all sorts of things, from Bible Study to Bridge Club and everything in-between. From time to time, you may find someone on one of our sleeper sofas, which certainly can be a surprise if you're not expecting it! Out of respect for those folks, we won't announce if someone is staying with us, but please know that it might happen. Y'all know what to do! Be kind, love that neighbor, and welcome everyone that comes to find peace here.

—Fr. Brooks

A Prayer

God of all, remind us that we are one body working together for the good of each other amid your creation.

—Sojourners

Nave Gazing

We all know Lent is the major penitential season in the Church, but Lent has so much more to offer. Going all the way back to Ash Wednesday, there's a great summation in the Invitation to the Observance of a Holy Lent (BCP 264-5) which invites us to live for the same things they did, notably emphasizing contrition, lamentation, and forgiveness. That Invitation also turns our focus to self-discipline with an eye towards penitence. Converts were prepared for Baptism, and the entire congregation was reminded of the power of reconciliation. By that description, Lent is about self-examination and repentance, prayer, fasting, self-denial, and reading and meditating on scripture.

That said, the Collects for each week shed a different light on the season. Each week, we'll pray for different aspects of our lives while looking for help, mercy, truth, healing, life, order, joy, grace, delight, and love. (BCP 218-9)

I don't know about you, but the penitential nature of the season has always felt like the primary focus to me. And maybe it still is, but the additional aspects from the Collects add some meat to those penitential bones. I guess the word "penitence" just sounds so heavy that it gives a lot of folks a sort of spiritual "ick," and we assume these 40 days must be heavy, guilt-laden, and miserable.

But look at those aspects in the Collects again. This season of Penitence is not about feeling like a horrible person. It's about the power of recognizing our own shortcomings while knowing there's a way forward. If you've ever forgiven an old hurt or been forgiven, you know just how beautiful the world can feel once the weight is lifted. That's what Lent is about.

Life in community can be hard, and people will make mistakes that hurt each other. The message of Lent, especially with Easter waiting on the other side of the season, is that the hurts we cause do not have the final say. Reconciliation puts our communities back together again, and that emphasis on repairing and maintaining loving community becomes a source of joy, love, and even delight.

Those are not words I typically associate with Lent, so that's my discipline this year. I invite all y'all to join me in working for all those unexpected aspects -- especially joy, love, and delight -- as Lent carries us on to the crown of the year!

—Fr. Brooks



All are welcome to join us in the Parish House for pizza and games! Drinks will also be available and maybe even some baked goods!

Some of the games include the following:

Clue (Haunted Mansion version), Life (Pirates of the Caribbean version), Jumanji, Liar's Dice, Kingdomino (now with Giants!), Manoeuvre, Splendor, Codenames, Apples to Apples, trivia games, and many more. You are also welcome to bring games of your own.

Lenten Donation

Please consider a special Lenten donation on the following Sundays:

- **March 3rd:** Community Action Partnership
- **March 10 and 17:** Hamilton Food Cupboard
- **March 24 /Palm Sunday:** Episcopal Relief and Development

The first special Lenten Collection is for **Community Action Partnership of Madison County**. Community Action Program for Madison County, Inc. (CAP) is a community based not-for-profit that has been serving low income and vulnerable families in Madison County for 34 years. Established in 1986, we partner with our clients and provide information, assistance, and support so they can gain the knowledge, skills and motivation necessary to reach their full potential. We work closely with a large number of community partners such as local churches, schools, community foundations, other non-profit agencies as well as local, state and federal agencies to provide comprehensive services to low-income families. Historically they have served one out of every 16 residents of Madison County.

<https://capmadco.org/about/>

New AA Meetings at St. Thomas'

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

Group Name: 12 ½ Group of AA

Place: St. Thomas' Parish House, Teen Room. (Building behind the church, first door on the left).

Time: Sunday's at 3:00 PM, beginning March 3, 2024.

Sleep & Relationships in Older Adulthood Study at Colgate

Colgate invites you to participate in the **Sleep & Relationships in Older Adulthood Study at Colgate University**. Colgate is looking for couples who live together and in which one couple member is over the age of 65 for this study.

This study involves four parts:

1. An initial meeting to complete surveys about yourself, your relationship, and general health and sleep
2. Wearing a sleep watch to assess sleep quality and duration and completing brief daily surveys in the morning and evening for 10 days.
3. Two months after the study, we will ask you to complete another brief survey like the initial one.
4. Then we will ask you to complete a second follow-up survey a year from now.

Participation is voluntary. Compensation is up to \$110 per participant (\$220 per couple). Each individual will receive \$20 for completing baseline measures, \$2 for each of the 10 morning diaries, \$3 for each of the 10 evening diaries you complete, and a \$20 bonus if you complete at least 80% of the daily surveys (at least 16 of the 20 daily surveys). You will receive \$10 for each of the two follow-up surveys you complete.

If you would like to participate, please complete our eligibility survey [here](https://redcap.utdallas.edu/surveys/?s=4TRA8P3XCFNJLY4T) <<https://redcap.utdallas.edu/surveys/?s=4TRA8P3XCFNJLY4T>>

Once you complete this survey, a researcher will be in touch to let you know if you are eligible and to schedule a time to get started with the study

Contact: Jennifer Tomlinson
tomlinsonlab@colgate.edu



I Tried to Capture You

You alluded me. I smelled fresh moonlight, felt your light bless me and I wonder...

Perhaps these moments are just to be between us, deep within, held close in the tapestry of my inner being, gazing at the moon.

I am offered a window to the unseen God.

My heart opens and gratitude flows, knowing the Divine is not absent, but a living light.

Shining in all beings.

—Patti Joy Posan – Sewanee, TN,
National Episcopal Church Women

Hamilton Ecumenical Youth Group (HEY)

HEY is a group of 6th through 12th graders from the various churches in and around our village. When HEY comes up in the calendar, clergy and students gather for food, games, and a spiritual element to the evening. If that last part's a little scary, here are some examples of things we've talked about: Jesus would love trick-or-treating, St. Nick's and Mother Mary's record in boxing matches, and the connection between Fortnite and King David. As we're pulling this great group back together, dates aren't set in stone just yet so keep your eyes open for upcoming HEY days!

A Prayer

Remind us this day that love is the answer to injustice and that perfect love, embodied by you and living in us, casts out all fear.

—Sojourners

A Prayer

Lord, help us to see the humanity in our fellow beings. May we see your creative works in those around us.

—Sojourners

On the Lighter Side



Sermon for the First Sunday in Lent

**The Rev. Brooks Cato
February 18, 2024**

A few years ago, I signed a petition acknowledging Christianity's poor record on racial justice. It seemed relatively straightforward at the time, that is until I got a phone call from a Christian man in Utica. He asked all sorts of questions, each with a rather heavy dollop of accusation barely veiled behind his aggressive words. Ultimately, he wanted to know how I, a priest, could suggest that his church had ever done anything that required repentance. Now, I made it clear that I'm an Episcopalian, and I asked why he didn't take this topic up with a minister in his own tradition, but that went about as well as you're imagining. While I didn't love the guy's tone, more than anything, what bothered me most was that he decided I was a part of something I wasn't and then judged me based on those standards. It wasn't fair, and it wasn't terribly kind. As conversations with strangers go, it was not what you might call "fun."

Obviously, there's a lot to unpack wrapped up in that not-brief-enough encounter. We could spend all morning talking about the Church's many errors throughout history. We'd need to break for lunch before spending the afternoon talking about the Church's ongoing errors today. There's a lot of hurt in this world caused by Christians, some in our own denomination, some in others. But the proposition that the Church has never treated another person badly or never taken steps in bad directions, that proposition is absurd. We're a human institution trying to make sense of a sacredness beyond comprehension. Of course we're gonna make mistakes. The question shouldn't be "Has the Church ever made a mistake?" It should be "How does the Church fix its mistakes?"

This is complicated stuff, I realize that. But I suspect most can see the distinction between God and us, God and our institutions. Actually, I think most need that distinction. We know enough about people to have experienced humanity at its best, and I want our institution to reflect that. But we also know enough about people to have experienced humanity at its worst, and I don't want to go anywhere near an institution that makes that a practice. St. Thomas', that's not us. We aren't perfect, but we strive to be humanity at its best with

the Love of God as the epitome of our communal life. But that can't be said for everyone. There are far too many Christians and far too many churches like that guy that took me to task on the phone. It isn't fair to judge non-Episcopalians by Episcopal measuring sticks. But we can and should measure ourselves by those metrics.

I bring all this up because of a marketing campaign that's been swirling around for a while now. If you're a football fan, you probably saw the "He Gets Us Footwashing" ads. The basic idea behind them is to market Jesus to folks that don't know about him or might've gotten the wrong idea somewhere along the line. For a long time, I've been in a live-and-let-live place with those ads. To me, they feel a little cheesy, but I've been fine with just letting them exist without giving 'em an extra thought. Then I found out the money behind the ads comes from folks with religious agendas very different from my own. The money comes from folks with the explicit rejection of things like the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ people. They'll tell you they welcome everyone, but that comes with the tacit understanding that everyone's welcome to join ... so long as they agree to change. But even that, even that I was mostly willing to set aside. I mean, that's not great, and I'm tired of being targeted, but mostly I thought I could ignore what my measuring stick had to say about how they do their own thing. And maybe, just maybe, someone would see an ad and think about learning more about Jesus and somehow find their way into our sanctuary. It hasn't happened to my knowledge yet, but I held out hope. But I should've listened to my gut.

After the Super Bowl, the "He Gets Us" ad campaign has come under pretty intense scrutiny. Some of that is a general resistance to Christianity, the exact thing the campaign aims to undo. Some is the rejection of organized religion, some is the acceptance of Christianity with a rejection of the supposedly "woke" depictions of Jesus. And some of it is a rejection of that particular kind of Christianity. All that's fine, individual choices. But the scrutiny the campaign has received has unveiled some deeper problems. Many have raised the concern of how much a Super Bowl commercial costs to air. I've lost count of how many times I've heard "Couldn't that money have been spent on the poor?" For the record, while that is a Biblical question, it was Judas that asked that question of Jesus, but we shouldn't discount the question because of him. In fact, even back then it

was such a good question that the Gospel writers had to explain that Judas didn't actually care about the poor but was trying to skim off the top himself. Anyway, spending the money on the poor absolutely is a good and faithful concern, and questions about the campaign's finances matter.

But even THAT I could almost stomach. It's oodles of money, but assuming you're doing the good work elsewhere, maybe it's not the worst thing in the world to do some advertising. And then news broke-- on Ash Wednesday no less-- that I cannot support. If you are interested in the "He Gets Us" campaign, you can go to their website and poke around with no problem. But it's all very vague. In order to get to the real meat of what they're about, you have to create an account and login. And here's where the trouble begins. Once you create an account, the campaign mines your data and sends it off to the political organizations they'd really prefer you be a part of. Now, I don't care which organizations they do this with, any data mining to sway you politically under the auspices of learning more about Jesus is an extreme misuse of what we hold sacred. I grew up being told that using the Lord's name in vain meant saying a specific pair of words when I hit my thumb with a hammer. Maybe I shouldn't cuss as much as I do, but I've come to have a different understanding of what it means to use the Lord's name in vain. I don't think it's about the occasional swear word. Using Jesus to sow hatred, that's using the Lord's name in vain. And if that's so, Christianity has a major problem right now. Thing is, I'm guessing most Christians can look at the world and the state of our shared religion and see cracks. But we disagree on where the cracks are. Some say we're evil for supporting gay people; some say the other side's evil for advocating for conversion therapy. Some say the poor will always be with us so we don't need to worry about them; some say the Church is meant to serve the poor. Some say God is only visible in a select few; and some say God is in every soul waiting to be seen.

So, how do we make sense of all this confusion in a world trying to confuse us? This isn't a new problem. The Old and New Testaments both are peppered with false prophets and bad leaders. But over in the Gospel according to Matthew, we get the secret. Jesus says, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits." Religion is a powerful tool, and people looking for power know that. It can be used for great beauty and kindness, but it can just as easily be turned to hatred and oppression. And it can be

incredibly hard to tell the difference in the moment. Now, I realize that I'm talking myself into a tight spot here. I want to continue to measure "He Gets Us" by our standards for our purposes, but it's a fine line to step beyond that and start judging them by our standards for everyone's purposes. Does that make sense? I don't want other Christians telling us how to do Episcopal things, but it's real tempting to do the same thing back.

So these days, I'm having a real struggle. You see, what I love about the "He Gets Us" campaign is that it does have the potential to introduce, as they put it, "hurting people to Jesus." That's great and it's a very Christian thing to do. What I'm concerned with is which Jesus they're introducing, or better yet, if it even is Jesus. My problem is that these ads don't have much in the way of nuance. There isn't the important detail that there are many different denominations and many different ways to be Christian. And that means someone who knows very little about Christianity hears the loudest (and often most damaging) voices without caveat. And pretty quickly, all Christians get lumped together. This is not hypothetical. I've been spat on for representing things I do not believe. A mother once pulled her child away from me at a buffet because of what The Church has done to children. I've been mocked in the street for my collar and my life has been threatened for standing between oppressors and oppressed. I know some of you are worried your friends will stop talking to you because of what other Christians do. I know some of you have children that don't want anything to do with the Christianity you're not even a part of.

I know this is hard, but y'all, we have a choice. We can let the world assume we're a part of something we're not, or we can differentiate ourselves. Some of that's conversation and education, hard things to do, no question. But some of that's being who we are. How can the world tell love wrapped in love from hate wrapped in sheep's clothing? The same way it always has: they will know us by our fruits. For God's sake, my dear people, love everyone, no matter how hard they are to love. Love the ones who hate us, love the ones who misjudge us, even love the ones that we're pushing so hard against. But loving the people doesn't have to mean we love what they do. If "He Gets Us" starts a conversation or gets someone through our doors, wonderful. But we can't trust that campaign to do our hard work for us. For one thing, they aren't

selling what we're about. And for another, too much of the world doesn't even know what we're about.

I don't know, maybe I'm being too harsh on some fellow Christians. Maybe there's room to be lenient, and maybe they aren't using the Lord's name in vain by their own standards. But I remain skeptical. I've seen at least some of their harvest, and much of it is poison. I wish I could ignore them and focus on planting our own seeds, but their reach has become far too broad, and it threatens to subsume what we're about to a larger agenda. People of St. Thomas', remember what you are: the very fruits of a faithful community. You are sheep in sheep's clothing, the real deal. You are servants of God and servants of the poor. You love your neighbor without exception. You scoot to one side in the pew so anyone can sit beside you. You hold fast to what is true and what is good, and you put your faith not in a human demagogue but in God. Use that name faithfully, and your harvest will be great.

T-Shirts for Sale



Make a Donation Online

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

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

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

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.

Scripture Lesson

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

—Hebrews 11:1

Scripture Lesson

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

—Lamentations 3:22-23



COLOR OUR CHURCH!

*Images from St. Thomas' Episcopal Church
Hamilton, New York*

Colored by Cana Stark

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church

Vestry Minutes

January 28, 2024

Present: Susan Beattie, Martha Berry, John Bowen, Brooks Cato (presiding), Wynn Egginton, Maureen Ghent, Connie Harsh, Kerry Linden, Valerie Morkevicius, John Orr, Anne Perring, Jane Welsh

Absent: Rose Novak

Call to Order

The meeting began at 11:40 a.m. in the parish hall. Jane Welsh led the opening prayer.

Clerk's Report

The minutes of the December 17th vestry meeting were approved as submitted. (Moved by Susan Beattie; seconded by Connie Harsh.)

Treasurer's Report

John Bowen submitted the following report to the vestry members:

“Pledges finished the 2023 year around 90% of expected. A few end-of-year, on-line pledges have not yet been accounted for in Church Windows. The number will look a little better when they are added. The gift line, as previously reported, reflects the generous support for the Fall deficit appeal. The result is a shortfall of budgeted income of about **\$15,000**.

Expenses exceeded budget by about **\$7,000**. Most the excess was in utilities, maintenance, and staff compensation.

The balance Sheet shows healthy gains in the investment accounts. Next month will reflect the restoration of **\$40,000** to the St. Thomas's Endowment. The checking account at present holds the **\$200,000** Schaupp bequest and money liquidated from the Steffenhagen Account.

An audit of the Balance sheet revealed errors in the reporting of the monthly investment balances traced to a problem in the carryover of 2022 balances into 2023 balances in Church Windows. The reports have been corrected. We now have a process in place to avoid a similar problem in the future.

The Budget and Finance Commission is preparing a series of church finance articles for *Tidings*.

Work has begun on the Parochial Report.

The Diocese has instituted a new process for annual church audits. Several members of the Budget and Finance Commission have received training. St. Thomas' Church is due for an outside audit this year. Outside audits will be required every three years going forward.

Giving statements will be going out shortly.”

Wynn Egginton asked whether there is some follow-up on pledges that don't come in. Brooks Cato said that this is looked at on a case-by-case basis; but for the most part, it is flagged on the quarterly giving statements where parishioners can see a discrepancy between what they had pledged and what had paid.

Wynn Egginton moved that the Treasurer's Report be received as submitted; Valerie Morkevicius seconded the motion. The Report was received unanimously.

Rector's Report

Brooks Cato stated that currently he “feels great” about what is going on at St. Thomas'. All aspects of the church community seem to be up and running, including Christian Education. There were 45 persons at Friday Night Lights on January 26th and the event raised **\$150** for the local food cupboard.

Wardens' Report

Jane Welsh commended Brooks Cato for his outstanding sermon given at the 10:00 service, earlier in the morning. Martha Berry agreed, adding that she would be reporting more, later in the meeting, during the discussion on Brooks' sabbatical.

Commission Reports

- *Stewardship Progress:* Brooks Cato reported that, at the time of the meeting, there were now 64 recorded pledges for a total of **\$205,720**. He expected perhaps one more pledge to come in. Maureen Ghent asked how many pledges there were in 2023. Brooks Cato responded that there were 60 pledges for a total of **\$187,500**.

Old Business

- *Report on St. Thomas' Buildings:* Brooks Cato informed the vestry that the preservation architect who has been preparing a report on our buildings had suffered a series of family emergencies which has created a setback. However, he hopes to send

the report to Brooks during the upcoming week. When it is received Brooks will share it with the vestry.

- *Safe Church*: Brooks Cato reported that he has reminded a few persons about the need for them to complete this course. Anne Perring stated that she is also monitoring the status of those who are supposed to complete it.
- *1835 Bible Display Case*: There is nothing new to report regarding this.
- *Sabbatical 2024*: Brooks Cato informed the vestry that the dates have been set for his leave. May 12th will be his last Sunday and he will return to work on August 12th (a Monday). Martha Berry explained to the vestry that the canon who was helping with supply priests has been placed on leave. Consequently, she and Jane Welsh are working to find a substitute for Brooks during the period when he will be on leave.
- *A Financial Edition of Tidings*: John Bowen reported that the February issue of *Tidings* will contain several essays concerning the fiscal workings of St. Thomas'. The essays emerged from meetings of the Budget & Finance Commission. Jane Welsh noted that she had learned an enormous amount from these discussions and felt encouraged to share this understanding more generally. Among other things, Jane stated that our parishioners, might not, for instance, appreciate how a parish creates and operates an annual budget, or how its financial infrastructure functions overall. Martha Berry agreed. Other vestry members echoed the need to take advantage of opportunities to provide parishioners with greater insight into the financial workings of St. Thomas' in the future. (This conversation continued in the Stewardship discussion. See below.)

New Business

- *Rectory Shower Leak*: Brooks Cato explained that the upstairs shower in the rectory had developed a leak. Aaron Payne had been called in and he submitted an estimate of **\$1,000** (which he approximated on the high side in case he discovered additional problem as he replaced the valves and piping that are specified in the estimates.). In the course of discussion, vestry members wondered whether the entire shower should be replaced at this

time, rather than simply replacing the tub. They asked Brooks to request that Aaron provide us with an estimate that would cover a shower replacement, instead of simply replacing a tub replacement. All agreed that further conversation could take place amongst vestry members by email without waiting until the next meeting.

- *St. Matthew's, Liverpool FYI*: Brooks informed the vestry that, owing to the diocesan office being short-staffed at the moment, he had been asked to help out with the rector search that is ongoing at St. Matthew's, Liverpool. He noted that so far this involved very little interaction and that he expected his responsibilities to be minimal. They are aware that his leave begins on May 12th.

Core Priorities: Stewardship (follow-up)

Brooks Cato stated that he thought that it would be useful to continue the vestry's previous conversation on stewardship. He (and others present) thought that the introductory discussion in September, at the Annual Meeting, had been useful and it seemed a good thing to continue this practice. In some parishes, Brooks said, stewardship is an all-year practice, rather than a once-a-year event. However, for some persons, the constant conversation about giving can become an irritant and they simply close their ears. Susan Beattie offered the idea that perhaps there should be a short column in *Tidings*, every month, to indicate how much money the parish has, so that parishioners can consult it and see where we are. Wynn Egginton added that it is also a good idea to announce all of the special expenses that we encounter so that parishioners are constantly aware of how much we might have to spend above and beyond what we have budgeted for. Maybe we should have a regular financial update column in every issue of *Tidings*? Connie Harsh asked Brooks how much the parish will have to raise during 2024. Brooks Cato responded that we will need a substantial amount of funding to cover our projects. Connie followed up by suggesting that perhaps we need a short essay in *Tidings* to inform parishioners that we're beginning to think about a capital campaign and to inform them that this is where we are now,

and that they can expect additional reports later. Wynn Egginton added that reminding parishioners of what we were able to accomplish in terms of beautifying and renovating our property in 2023 might also encourage people to give more in 2024. Jane Welsh responded that the vestry needs to make clear to everyone that the parish is not affluent. They need to understand the clear difference between *restricted* funds and the *unrestricted* funds that we can actually use for projects. All this needs to be explained carefully. Brooks Cato wondered whether John Bowen could write a short statement, taking up this particular matter, for *Tidings*. Brooks stated that the vestry needs to continue to discuss these key issues with the parish. Additionally, he would like to kick off the discussion with the parish, at large, at the Annual Meeting this September and to make it a regular part of the Annual Meeting. Vestry members agreed.

- *Announcements:* Announcements of importance to the parish were made.
- *Next meeting:* The next vestry meeting will be on February 25th, 2024.
- *Prayer Leader:* Maureen Ghent offered to lead prayer at the opening of the next vestry meeting.

At this point Valerie Morkevicius moved to conclude the meeting; Wynn Egginton seconded. The meeting ended at 12:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Cerasano, Clerk

Pastoral Care

The Lay Pastoral Care Team helps Father Brooks keep folks connected to and cared for by St. Thomas'. If you're interested in visiting folks, making meals, or even sending cards, let us know in the Office!



A Prayer

May we rise up against hatred, against poverty, against racism, O God. You are with us in our revolution.

—Sojourners

On the Lighter Side





UPCOMING EVENTS

Hello March

TEEN NIGHT FRIDAY, MARCH 15
5-8 PM | \$5 ADMIN

OPEN TO AGES 12+

YOUTH NIGHT FRIDAY, MARCH 29
5-7:30 PM | \$5 ADMIN

5-6 PM OPEN TO AGES 2-6

6-7:30 PM OPEN TO AGES 7-12

FREE DANCE TIME, FUN LIGHTS, & GLOW STICKS

Hello April

ADULT LINE DANCE NIGHT TBA
\$10 ADMIN COME LEARN SOME LINE DANCES W/ US

ADULT BUTT-ERFLY PAINT&SIP APRIL 27
4-6 PM | \$65 OR \$60 IF YOU SIGN UP W/ A FRIEND

INCLUDES ALL MATERIALS, TUMBLER CUP, INSTRUCTIONS, A SPICY DANCE LESSON, & GOODIES TO SHARE. BYOBOTTLE

12 EAST MAIN ST. EARLVILLE

SCHMITTDANCE@GMAIL.COM

315-750-6040

Upcoming Events

March 10: Daylight Savings begins
Friday, March 15, 5:30 PM: Game Night!
March 24: Palm Sunday
March 28, 5:30 PM: Maundy Thursday Service
March 29, 12:00 PM: Ecumenical Service
March 29, 5:30 PM: Good Friday Service
March 31: Easter Sunday

Save the Dates

April 1: Office Closed
May 12: Gospel Eucharist & Fr. Brooks' last Sunday before sabbatical
August 12: Fr. Brooks returns from sabbatical

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.



Happening in the Area: AA Meetings in Hamilton, NY

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

Prayers of the People

As of March 1st

For those in need: Edith Allen, Leslie Andersen, Irene Brown, Aster Dinku, Andrea Duncan-Tanner, Joan Fales, Justin Fitzgerald, Barbara Frost, Lisa Gee and her children, Kaia Harding, Amanda Harlan, John Hart, Nancy Heck, Marlene Houck, John Hull, Oliver Jenks, Christopher Johnson, Sandra Jones, Kerry Linden, Deb Moudarres, Pat Osowski, Wilma Peters, Joe Rupp, Candace Schult, Mark Spearing, Patricia Tayntor, Ed Vantine, Chris Warren, Deb Willis, Joan Winkler, Pavla Zakova-Laney, Jerry & Roseann Fitzgerald, Anthony & Vincent Pacillo, William & Elena Muenckler, Pat & Damon Simonds, Melanie & Michael Clough, Charles & Susan, Cynthia & her family, Brian, David, Diane, Gordon, James, Jane, Janice, Jim, Mary, Nancy, Nick, Paula, Paul, Rebecca, Scot, Brice, Cassie, Charles, Dan, Grace, Kate, Nicole, Ryan, Travis, Jordan, Andrea, Russ, Evelyn, Ashley, and Taylor.

For the Departed: Alexei Navalny



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.

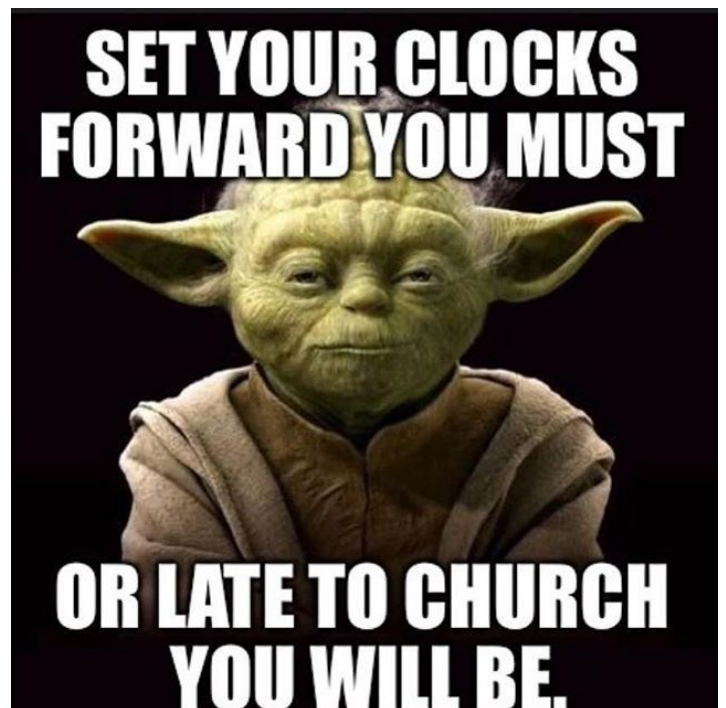
—Rose Novak & Jana Laxa for the Flower Guild

March Thanksgivings

Birthdays: Jessica Dakosty (03/02), Barbara Page (03/04), Hannah McClennen (03/06), Lucien Catania (03/06), Eleanor Weyter (03/08), Kristen Meadows (03/08), William Bouk (03/08), Dylan Lopez (03/10), Ginger Flor (03/11), Charles Wickert (03/11), George Geier IV (03/12), Jessica Rivington (03/16), Thomas Schmitt (03/17), Chloe LaFrance (03/17), Elizabeth van der Mandele (03/18), Jillian Helm (03/23), Dee Keller (03/23), Maureen Ghent (03/24), Wanda Berry (03/25), George Geier III (03/27), Taylor van der Mandele (03/27), Melanie Clough (03/28), Tyler Stith (03/30), Max Conti Porta (03/30), Tommy Dakosty (03/30).

Baptism Anniversaries: Susan Trueworthy (03/12), Dee Keller (03/17), Nancy Schmitt (03/18), Andrew Hengst (03/19), Allen Schult (03/20), Deborah Radford (03/23), Kathleen Catania (03/25), Eleanor Weyter (03/26), Nancy Heck (03/28), Melanie Clough (03/29), Jennifer DeAngelis (03/30), Charles Jerome (03/31), Madison DeAngelis (03/31).

**Daylight Savings
Starts March 10th**



St. Thomas' Episcopal Church

Scheduled to Serve

March 2024

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

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

DATE	LECTOR	LEM	USHER	ALTAR GUILD	FLOWER GUILD	NEWCOMERS
MARCH 3	OT Emily HH NT Linda Jenks	Amy Jerome	Ed Page	Colleen Mc Nerney	Jana Laxa	Colleen Mc Nerney
MARCH 10 <i>Rite One</i>	OT Kristin Strohymeyer NT Kerry Linden	Susan Cerasano	Ed Page	Jane Welsh	Jana Laxa	Colleen Mc Nerney
MARCH 17	OT John Orr NT Jane Welsh	Maureen Ghent	Ed Page	Jane Welsh	Jana Laxa	Colleen Mc Nerney
MARCH 24 <i>Palm Sunday</i>	OT Linda Jenks NT Ellie Weyer +PASSION GOSPEL	Susan Cerasano	Ed Page	Linda Jenks	ALL The Flower Guild	Colleen Mc Nerney
MARCH 28 <i>Mauandy Thurs</i>	OT Rose Novak NT Martha Berry +Sign Up	Debbie Barker	Ed Page	Susan Beattie	Jana Laxa	Colleen Mc Nerney
MARCH 29 <i>Good Friday</i>	OT Maureen Fox NT Emily Hutton-Hughes +PASSION GOSPEL	Maureen Ghent	Ed Page	Emily Hutton-Hughes	Jana Laxa	Colleen Mc Nerney
MARCH 31 <i>Easter</i>	OT Lynn Staley NT Adger Williams	Debbie Barker	Ed Page	Linda Jenks	ALL The Flower Guild	Linda Jenks & Colleen Mc Nerney



Qidings
March 2024

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