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OFFICE HOURS:

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

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Important Notice

St. Thomas' is taking a survey regarding who would like to receive a printed copy of *Tidings* in addition to the usual on-line version. If you would like to receive a printed copy, please let Rose Novak know. You can e-mail her at rnovakhamilton@gmail.com or call her at 315-824-2082. We will be happy to accommodate your wishes.

From St. Thomas' Episcopal Church

Tidings



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

Words from Your Wardens

With the expanding hours of daylight and rise in temperatures, we can finally feel fairly confident that summer is on the way!

As many might expect, the past month continued to be bustling with activity at St. Thomas'. In our worship services we were blessed to find supply clergy coverage for most Sundays. This included a number of Sundays that were covered by the Rev. John Crosswaite, for whom we are especially grateful. Not only did Father John lead us in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist for several services, he also performed the ceremony for the lighting of the new Paschal candle for the Easter season. As we head into the month of June, we are looking forward to having Father John lead our worship once again for the special celebration of Pentecost!

Beyond our worship services, you may have noticed that the long-awaited water line project for the Memorial Garden is finally underway. This is one of the several projects slightly derailed as a result of Covid. We know that Lynn Staley and the entire Memorial Garden Committee are especially grateful for the convenience this water supply will bring as they tenderly care for the spectacular flora that graces our garden. In the midst of the routine activities that are being accomplished, our

Parish Administrator, Nan Schmitt, has decided to retire after 21+ years of service to St. Thomas'. We are truly grateful for all the work Nan has done for St. Thomas' over the years and while we will miss Nan in the Parish Office, we know we will continue to enjoy her presence and support at other St. Thomas' activities.

In closing, we want you to know that Father Brooks continues to convalesce and make steady improvements. We also want to remind everyone that he is eagerly looking forward to his return when he can once again lead and mentor us in our spiritual journeys. In the meantime, your Wardens and Vestry are deeply grateful for all who have committed so much time and effort into keeping St. Thomas' ministries alive and vibrant. As with any family facing challenging times, our parish family has rallied together with tremendous support and love for one another. Our hearts are overflowing with appreciation for our St. Thomas' family!

Love and blessings to all of you!!

Hannah McClennen, Senior Warden
Deb Barker, Junior Warden

Update on Brooks

Hello, St. Thomas' Community,

On the one hand there's not much to report, but really there's quite a bit – just not all about Brooks. The slow progress of Brooks' recovery from long Covid continues. After spending several weeks with my family in Destin, Florida, he has returned to Hamilton and resumed physical therapy to strengthen his heart and diaphragm. He successfully navigated the return trip on his own but was very grateful to find an empty rocking chair during his layover in Charlotte. My nieces and nephew miss their "Uncle Sleptown" terribly!

The reason for our visit and the heavy news to share is that my sister, Lisa, has been diagnosed with small cell neuroendocrine carcinoma, a rare and aggressive form of cancer. Median survival with treatment is one year, but we're hoping that her incredibly healthy baseline and expert medical support can help us extend that timeline. I am currently on leave from work for an undetermined length of time to help care for her and my family (my mom, Anita, just had two retinal surgeries). Please keep us all, but especially Lisa, her husband Derick, Theo (8), Emerson (5), and Kennedy (3 next month) in your prayers.

Best,
Becca

Leah Schmitt Named New Parish Administrator

As many of you are well aware, Nan Schmitt officially retired as Parish Administrator from St. Thomas' effective May 31. After serving as an integral employee for more than 20 years, the Parish was extremely blessed in the daunting task of finding her replacement. On June 16, her daughter, Leah, will assume the position.

"I know I have big shoes to fill, but look forward to the challenge," said Leah, whose job experience is well suited to taking on the role. As the title implies, the Parish Administrator manages the day-to-

day clerical functions of the church, as well as serving as the Rector's office assistant. In her previous positions at Golden Artist Colors in New Berlin over the last 9 years, Leah "worked her way up the ladder" from intern to a marketing and production staff member to her most recent position as education program administrator. Her communications skills and computer proficiency correspond nicely with the job requirements at St. Thomas'. Since 2013, Leah has also part-owned and served as dance instructor at Schmitt Sisters Dance in Sherburne. Her time commitments there – mainly weeknights – match well with the 20-hour work week at St. Thomas'.

Leah is a graduate of Cazenovia College with a degree in visual communications. She has been attending St. Thomas' since she was a young girl and helped provide childcare at church in her high school years. Welcome aboard, Leah!

Many thanks (especially to Nancy and Dan Schult, and Amy Jerome) for all their help and hard work in the last few months to keep the parish office operational.

- John Orr

Congratulations Are in Order!

This month two of St. Thomas' youth will graduate from Hamilton Central School: **Juliana Catania and Bergen Linden.**

Juliana is excited to be graduating with an advanced designation regents diploma with honors. This fall Juliana will attend Siena College as a communications/journalism major. She is looking forward to studying abroad as well.

Bergen is graduating from Hamilton Central School as the Salutatorian of the Class of 2022! This year he was Secretary of the National Honor Society. In the fall Bergen will attend Rochester Institute of Technology in the engineering explorations program. He anticipates studying mechanical engineering and possibly pursuing a combined bachelor's and master's degree.

St. Thomas' is indeed proud to claim Juliana and Bergen as two of our own.

--Rose Novak

People in Our Parish: An Interview with Valerie Morkevičius

Valerie and Matas Morkevičius arrived in Hamilton with their growing family eleven years ago, when Valerie accepted a tenure track position teaching in the Colgate political science department. She knew very little about this small liberal arts college at the time, except that a friend of Matas' had gone here. She had previously been a research fellow at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD and taught at DePaul and Saint Xavier Universities in Chicago. Matas, who is trained as a pulmonologist, looked for his first post-fellowship job in the area, and was finding that the medical practices here were very small, so there was lots of weekend work and little time off. So, upon completing his work at the University of Illinois, Chicago, he accepted a standing offer at Aurora Bay Care in Green Bay, Wisconsin, in critical care. Most ICU doctors are pulmonologists. He works two to three weeks at a time in Green Bay, living in the hospital hotel, then returns home to Hamilton for two to three weeks. He also practices in his specialty a few days a month, here at the Community Memorial Hospital Family Health Center.

Matas grew up in Lithuania and went to medical school there. He and Valerie met in 2001 when she and her mother traveled to Lithuania for the first time, on a Volunteer Ophthalmological Services for Humanity mission. VOSH collects eyeglasses and provides eye exams and services around the world. Valerie was working with a nurse to set up eye charts and Matas was acting as a translator while a medical student.

Valerie had grown up in Chicago speaking Lithuanian with her grandmother who was her babysitter. Her mother did not speak the language. She says her Lithuanian used to sound like she is someone from the 1920s, her grandmother's era. She didn't learn formal grammar growing up, but taught herself to read and write on her own, after meeting Matas. She did this when she spent nine months in Vilnius reading Lithuanian newspapers for a research project, while Matas waited for his U.S. visa. She says that the language is more phonetic than English. She and Matas speak Lithuanian with one another and their kids, although sometimes they speak in English to make things clear about school or work. The kids answer in Lithuanian or English. They read and write the language, as they attended Lithuanian school, partly online, from the small village where they lived for over a year, during the height of

Covid. Lithuanian children learn English as a second language in elementary school and start a third language in middle school.

Valerie is now tenured as an associate professor and will begin a three-year term as department chair this year. With twenty faculty, political science is one of the largest departments on campus. Valerie recently returned from giving a talk at St. James Episcopal Church in Newport Beach, California about the ethics of war and faith and how to respond to the war in Ukraine. She participated in a Friday evening dinner conversation and did a Sunday morning interview in place of the sermon. As a political scientist who studies the ethics of conflict, Valerie supports just war to protect against aggression and believes that to be a Christian in the world requires action. She was contacted to speak when a parishioner read an op-ed piece that she wrote for *The Conversation* on March 5, 2022, entitled, ["How do Russia's reasons for war stack up? An expert on 'just war' explains."](#) In the article, she enumerates six principles to evaluate the justness of war: legitimate authority, just cause, proportionality, likelihood of success, last resort, and right intent.

Growing up, Valerie attended a United Methodist Church. Her family tradition was to attend the church nearest to their home. Her mother's family was Roman Catholic until her mother was in middle school and her father's family had been Mormon. In graduate school, the nearest church was Episcopalian. She joined the congregation and was received into the church at the cathedral in Chicago. In Hamilton, near their University Avenue home, the Morkevičius family attended Park United Methodist Church for several years. While there, she taught in the Sunday school with Erin Loranty. As she was in the classroom, she rarely attended services. She moved her family to Saint Thomas' around 2016.

Valerie has taught Godly Play at Saint Thomas' and has entertained audiences with her improvisational storytelling at Friday Night Lights. This is her first year on Vestry, where she is doing her best to support Debbie, Hannah, and Heidi through a challenging time. She has re-established the habit of going to church in person with the kids.

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Emilija, sixteen, is in tenth grade at Hamilton Central School and runs cross-country and track. She is a talented singer, pianist, and actor. Ingrida, fourteen, in ninth grade, also runs, and is a dancer. She takes many classes at The Spot dance center in town. She enjoys decorating bullet journals and stationery. Lukas, twelve, is in sixth grade. He plays soccer and basketball, and loves rockets and airplanes. Jonas, eight and in second grade, also plays soccer, plus Minecraft and Legos. He is interested in World War II.

The kids have questions about their faith. Valerie has been thinking for some time about hosting dinners for them and their friends, without parents, but with guests who can talk about the relevance of faith in their lives and field their questions. The Morkevičius family loves cooking and having people over. Valerie says that if anyone doesn't want to eat alone some night, they should feel welcome to invite themselves over for dinner, if they don't mind some chaos!

—Kerry Linden

A Prayer

Spirit, be our comfort in our mourning. We cry out for comfort so we can act in love.

—Sojourners

June Thanksgivings

Birthdays: Ginny Lash (6/3), Juliana Catania (6/4), Janet O’Flynn (6/10), Sharon Stevens (6/10), Peter Balakian (6/13), Maureen Fox (6/16), Susan Cerasano (6/17), Elizabeth Vantine (6/23), Ida June Schaupp (6/26), Anne Perry (6/26), Maxwell Johnson (6/26), Bergen Linden (6/29).

Wedding Anniversaries: Wanda Warren Berry (6/1), George and Susan Geier (6/3), Jeffrey and Rachel Knapp (6/5), Harold and Fay Cole (6/12), Ida June Schaupp (6/22), Donnel and Janet O’Flynn (6/28).

Baptism Anniversaries: Jessica Rivington (6/3), Daryl Wilson (6/4), Linden Muller (6/9), David Sturges (6/11), George Geier (6/14), Barbara Page (6/17), Paul Schult (6/20), Maxwell Johnson (6/25).

Prayers of the People

Fr. Brooks Cato, Melanie Chant, Pam Cristiano, Aster Dinku, Teddy Engle, Kathy Fischer, Jerry & Roseann Fitzgerald, Danny & Anne Foust, Mary Frances, Francine Garrison, Lisa Gee, Daniel Ghent, Donna Hayes, Marlene Houck, the Hubbard Family, Danielle Jones, David Kellogg and family, Janna Keser, Susan Leclair, Michael McArn, Dianne McDowell, Liam Meyer, Anthony & Vincent Pacillo, Joni Resnick, Nancy Rivington, June Schaupp, Candace Schult, Sheryl Scott, Colin Slafkosky, Mark Spearing, Keith Stage, Carol Strozyk, Sandy Van Dyke, Margaret Wehrer, Deb Willis, Ryan Wilson, Joan Winkler, Roberta Winsman, David, Janice, Kayla, Lee Anne, Lauren, Marshall, Nick, Rebecca, Sandy, Scot & Terry.

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church Vestry Minutes April 20, 2022

Present: Debbie Barker (presiding), Susan Beattie, Jana Laxa, Erin Loranty, Hannah McClennen, John Orr, Anne Perring, Heidi Riley, Dan Schult

Absent: Brooks Cato, Rick Geier, Valerie Morkevicius, Deany Wood

Opening Devotions

The meeting began at 7:02 p.m. John Orr opened with two pieces: a short reading from John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Thomas Merton's "The Merton Prayer."

Clerk's Report

The minutes of March 23rd were presented. Dan Schult moved to accept the minutes as submitted; the motion was seconded by Jana Laxa. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Debbie Barker presented the Report. She stated that owing to the placement of Easter Week it was difficult to process all of the data for the Report. Consequently, Budget & Finance was proposing that perhaps in order to have an accurate, well-prepared report, the vestry might, in the future, want to look at a report for two months previous, instead of the previous month's report. Or, possibly, the vestry meetings could be moved further back in the month (one week later) so that all of the data can be reflected in the Treasurer's Report. With the current software, the Report cannot be done on time for the vestry meeting as now scheduled. Discussion ensued and Hannah McClennen commented that the best solution seemed to be to have an up-to-date Report at the meetings. John Orr agreed. Debbie Barker moved that the meetings be moved to the fourth Wednesday in the month as a matter of procedure in the future; Heidi Riley seconded the motion. The motion carried. In future, the vestry will meet on the fourth Wednesday of the month.

Rector's Report

Fr. Brooks Cato is on medical leave so there was no report.

Wardens' Report

Hannah McClennen had nothing to report at this time.

Debbie Barker reported that she had been receiving great feedback from the congregation regarding the services and the supply priests who had come to assist with worship services over Holy Week, right up through Easter with the visit of Bishop Dede.

For her, this was so heart-warming, and it was so good to be back to in-person services. The choir was happy to be processing again and singing together. Debbie then thanked all of those who were helping to pull the pieces together in the many services that had occurred during Lent and up through Easter. All were truly wonderful. For May, there will be clergy for three Sundays and then there will be one Sunday of Morning Prayer on Memorial Day Weekend. The *Tidings* for April had gone out, as well, and work was already in motion for the May issue. The update on Father Brooks included two key components: first, that he would be getting some physical therapy to assist in building up his strength, and secondly, that he would be out for one more month. At the time of the meeting he was hopeful that perhaps he could start back on a part-time basis some time in June; but, as in all things medical, his doctor will have to help in making this decision.

Commission Reports

Buildings: Susan Beattie, as vestry liaison, noted that Millie Franklin reported that there is a broken window in the parish hall, but nobody seems to know what to do about it. What can be done? Debbie Barker responded that the Buildings Commission only has two members at the moment, so they're running on a shoestring. The clerk also recalled that there has been a repeated request for improved lighting in the kitchen and no action taken. Perhaps this could also be addressed as part of parish hall improvements.

Flower Guild: Jana Laxa reported that many flowers were taken from the church following the Easter service and delivered to persons who couldn't come to church. Much appreciation had been expressed by the recipients.

Old Business

Strategic Plan: tabled until further notice.

Sign: Debbie Barker reported that the large replacement sign is still caught up in supply chain issues. Jana Laxa reported that the small "9:00 service" sign had fallen off and needed to be put back up on the outside of the church. She offered to contact Ed Page about doing this.

Lights: Debbie Barker noted that there are still supply chain issues.

Video-recording update: Debbie Barker stated that delivery is being held up by supply chain issues.

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Paint selection bracket: Debbie Barker reported that this is on hold.

Land sale: Debbie Barker reported that this is on hold.

Treasurer Replacement Search: John Orr reported that Heidi Riley, Susan Beattie, and he drew up a target list of potential candidates. John Orr reached out to Barb Bowen who wasn't interested in the job, but who suggested that perhaps John Bowen might be. On April 4th John Orr spoke with John Bowen who expressed interest in the position. After Rick Geier and John Bowen spoke by phone on April 14th, John Bowen said he would take over the position. The transition process will start as soon as John Bowen returns from South Carolina at the end of the month. Rick will undertake the orientation and will involve John Bowen over a period of the next year so that the transition will occur slowly. The vestry thanked John Orr, Heidi Riley, and Susan Beattie (along with Barb Bowen) for finally solving the treasurer replacement issue.

Masking Requirements: Heidi Riley reported that some time ago she, along with Sheila Catania and Erin Loranty, had written up a proposal on re-opening the church for in-person services. A few months ago, Debbie Barker reached out to see if a more updated plan existed. Heidi Riley and Erin Loranty wrote up a description of what was then occurring. This is now on file in the event that the diocese needs it. Heidi Riley now wants to make a motion to lift the mask requirement. Heidi then explained the new contexts and diocesan directives, noting that "people are tired of not being seen and not seeing others." Further, Heidi explained that "seeing people is part of the spiritual experience." There's a high rate of vaccination in our area so it seems as if we might lift the mask mandate now. Erin Loranty agreed, noting that more highly effective masks are now available if people want to continue to wear them. Heidi Riley added that we should continue to support those who want to wear masks, even as we don't require them of people in the church. John Orr asked whether the wardens were looking

for a vote. Debbie Barker stated that this was the case since the vestry meets on a monthly basis. She followed up, noting that at her work place they are now unmasked and that it makes a noticeable difference in the way people interact. She was very much in favor of this change. Anne Perring, who studies issues that relate to this, noted that perhaps this is not the optimal time to abandon the mask regime. Heidi Riley agreed that a month and a half ago would have a better time. She acknowledged Anne's point. Erin Loranty stated that many persons would still probably continue to wear masks, but perhaps some persons will return to in-person services because they don't want to wear masks. Dan Schult noted that four persons contracted Covid-19 a month earlier, and thought that they had contracted it at church. Susan Beattie asked: "if we lift the mask mandate, could we ask persons to mask if they are unvaccinated?" Debbie Barker stated that, as a governing body, we can do what we want. Anne Perring commented: "we have a culture to care for each other, but we have to craft our language carefully." Hannah McClennen asked whether someone wanted to make a motion, or was the conversation too complex to move forward with a vote? Debbie Barker reminded the vestry that the situation can change at any time, so that any vote made at the meeting can theoretically be changed as the public health situation changes. John Orr suggested that language should be crafted and then circulated by the wardens to vestry members so that it can be voted on by email. All agreed that this would be the way that the vestry would proceed.

New Business

Christian Education: Debbie Barker reported that "she recalled Fr. Brooks indicated that Kat Catania had volunteered to chair Godly Play for the Fall, so the problem has been solved. Valerie Morkevicius and Anne Perring have agreed to assist Kat in putting a plan together to get this launched."

Buildings Commission: Deb-

Continued on Page 7

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bie Barker reported that the commission doesn't have a chair and hadn't been meeting regularly. Susan Beattie wondered who appoints chairs. John Orr responded that usually the Rector appoints the commission chairs and then the chair finds persons to serve on the committee. Susan Beattie responded that it seems that the right skill sets need to be tapped in finding members. Debbie Barker asked if someone would be willing to work with Terry Monty on Buildings. Susan Beattie volunteered to do this.

Vestry Opening: Debbie Barker announced that Deany Wood has decided to step down from her position at the end of June. This will leave one year of her term to be filled. She asked for the advice of the vestry on filling this position. All agreed to wait until the Annual Meeting to do this.

Outreach Request (Books for HCS): There was a review of the recent general requests to Outreach and a specific request from HCS for **\$1500** to purchase books. Following discussion, the vestry decided that there needed to be a process by which written requests, including a clear statement of need, should be put together and submitted in the future.

Staffing: The vestry discussed the current situation and thanked those who are covering phones, etc.

Announcements were made and next meeting set at:
May 25th, in-person, with masks, in the parish hall
Prayer Leader for next meeting: Jana Laxa

Heidi Riley moved that the meeting be ended; Susan Beattie seconded. The motion carried.
The meeting ended at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Cerasano, Clerk

Scripture Lesson

Bear one another's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.

~Galatians 6:2

Ponder This

Hope is subversive precisely because it dares to admit that all is not as it should be. And so we are holding out for, working for, creating, prophesying, and living into something better.

--Sarah Bessey, *Out of Sorts: Making Peace with an Evolving Faith* (2015)

Spring

Just as we lose hope
she ambles in,
a late guest
dragging her hem
of wildflowers,
her torn
veil of mist,
of light rain,
blowing
her dandelion
breath
in our ears;
and we forgive her,
turning from
chilly winter
ways,
we throw off
our faithful
sweaters
and open
our arms.

~Linda Pastan (born 1932) is an American poet.
From 1991 to 1995 she was Poet Laureate of Maryland.

Bishop Michael Curry

“God of righteousness, you have granted our leaders, our president, the governor, members of Congress, the courts and legislatures power and responsibility to protect us and to uphold our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” Curry said in his livestreamed prayer. “Strengthen their devotion and our devotion to our common life, to find clarity of purpose for all.”

(To listen to Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s livestreamed prayer go to:

<https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/2022/05/25/another-tragedy-of-gun-violence-episcopal-leaders-grieve-for-21-killed-in-shooting-at-texas-school/>

Consider This

Faith is a force for good particularly when people are feeling beleaguered and in need of hope.

--Margaret Atwood

On The Lighter Side



Consider This

May we say yes to healing with our signatures, our prayers, our voices, our action, our doing justice and loving mercy and walking humbly.

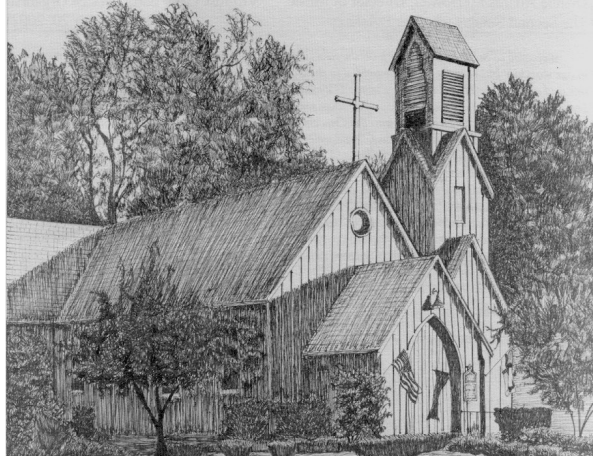
--Ashlee Eiland, author of *Human(Kind): How Reclaiming Human Worth and Embracing Radical Kindness Will Bring Us Back Together* (2007)

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church Scheduled to Serve June 2022

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DATE	WORSHIP LEADER/ CLERGY	LECTOR	LEM	USHER	ALTAR GUILD	FLOWER GUILD
June 5 - Pentecost	Rev John Crosswaite 9 AM – HE II	Lynn Staley	Deb Barker	Ed Page	Colleen McNerney	Liz Brackett
June 12	Rev John Crosswaite 9 AM – HE II	Kerry Linden	Barb Bowen	Ed Page	Linda Jenks	Liz Brackett
June 19	Wynn Egginton 9 AM – MP II	Rose Novak	N/A	Ed Page	Linda Jenks	Liz Brackett
June 26	Susan Cerasano 9AM – MP II	Jane Welsh	N/A	Ed Page	Jane Welsh	Liz Brackett



ST. THOMAS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Qidings
June 2022

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