



Tidings

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

The Rector's Column

Every Summer, we try to give ourselves a breather to recover from the Easter whirlwind and prepare for the beginning of a new school year. So, while there's only one edition of *Tidings* for July and August, the pages hold some great stuff to keep all y'all busy until September.

We have a lot going on, especially during these summer months! At the beginning of July, we hired our new Parish Administrator, Kristyn Crossway, and she's getting up to speed brilliantly. On July Fourth, we celebrated with the rest of the community in some big ways. The very next day, we had an enormous baptism complimented by guest organist and Hamiltonian Christian Clough.

During the remainder of the summer months, things do slow down a tad, but in the office our gears are turning with ideas and projects to come. We're working on installing a pair of security cameras by the front and north doors of the church, the kitchen in the Parish Hall's getting spruced up bit by bit, and old maintenance issues (including a new paint job) are on the docket for the Rectory.

We're also working to rebuild our pool of volunteers for Sunday mornings. If you'd like to be an Usher, Reader, Lay Eucharistic Minister, or -- especially for kids -- an Acolyte, please let me know! If those words don't mean anything to you, ask, and I'll be happy to show you the ropes, or check the names on the back of the bulletin to see what each role entails live and in-person!

Finally, while we've experimented with different Christian Education offerings for kids since coming back post-Covid, we're looking for feedback and ideas for what to offer going forward. Most likely, we'll need volunteers to help with that, too.

St. Thomas' runs on the (sometimes thankless) work you amazing people do, and we'd love for all these ministries to become more robust and more sustainable. We just need some help along the way to bring our ideas to fruition. After all, it takes a village to raise a church!

Brooks+



St. Thomas' made quite the splash with our rainy day Fourth of July offerings for the community. We gave away 180 hot dogs and rode Eunice the Unicorn with the Hamilton Pride crew!



A Prayer

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

-Matthew 18:20



Tidings

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Friday 9:00 am -1:00 pm

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Nave Gazing

As the heat of the summer months looms and your priest gets even more acclimated to life in Central New York, you may've noticed I've been wearing fewer of those fancy robes. While it's certainly well within the tradition of the church to wear vestments in our services, there's an old rule that often supersedes the other rules of liturgy: "The space always wins." In other words, there's the things we want to on one side, and then there's what a specific context allows on the other. Put more succinctly, it's dang hot under all those ecclesiastical snuggies.

But what's with all those vestments anyway? It's not just to make priests sweaty in the summer months.

In fact, most of our vestments were developed to serve the needs of European clergy working in drafty churches. Some places even lined vestments with wool to make them warmer!

These days, vestments primarily indicate one's position or their role within a particular service. If you were to walk into a service knowing nothing about churchy stuff, you could reliably tell who fits where in the hierarchy based on how elaborate their robes are. The fancier the vestments, generally speaking, the higher up they go.

It's difficult to pin down where most clergy vestments originated. For example, some point to the Roman senate's toga as the origin of the white robe while others point to even older, widespread traditions that connected modest, white, and simply constructed garments with purity.

But other vestments, like the cassock, are really easy. Cassocks are the black robes; they originated as long tunics for everyday use by everyday people and only became associated with clergy when fashion trends moved on and the church was slow to adapt to change. Same thing goes for the clergy collar: it started as the predecessor to the cravat which, in turn, preceded the necktie. Secular fashion moved on; clergy fashion stayed put. (Look at a one-dollar bill, and you'll see Washington wearing a post-collar / pre-cravat iteration!)

The stole -- the long strip of fabric worn around the neck) -- may be rooted in status markers from Rome, or they may have more humble origins as little more than scarves. Priests' stoles hang straight down the front, and deacons' stoles hang diagonally across the torso and then straight down the right side. The latter came to be, most likely, as a result of the nature of diaconal ministry. Deacons are "servant ministers" (the ones that get their hands dirty, as it were), and they needed a convenient way to wipe their hands; since most people are right-handed, the stole draped down the right side made it easy to wipe those ministerial hands clean!

The chasuble, which comes from the Latin word meaning "little house," was a sort of all-weather poncho and occasional tent! A very handy garment indeed. The cope, which we saw Bishop DeDe wear for the processions at the beginning and end of the service, is a fancy version of what was once little more than a cloak worn on horseback. While the vestment is not strictly limited to bishops, it originated from the itinerant nature of episcopal ministry.

The pointy hat worn by bishops (both human and chess piece alike) is called a mitre. There's lots of debate among liturgical nerds on this one, but it's likely the hat is a cousin to monarchs' crowns with a single upwards point indicating where the true boss resides.

In the context of a Eucharistic service like what we offer on Sunday mornings, the white robe -- called an alb -- is a base layer, effectively serving the same purpose as a slip or an undershirt. If the robe has a hood, its wearer has taken monastic vows. The stole indicates that the person wearing it is ordained. If it's diagonal, they're a deacon; if it's straight down, they're a priest. Occasionally, you may see a stole with a small band, rope, or chain that makes the part sitting on the neck stand up rather than lie flat: that's called a preaching stole, and it indicates the wearer will deliver the sermon. The chasuble indicates the wearer will be the one leading the service. So now, if you see a gaggle of priests standing together, you ought to be able to guess who will do what in a service with a single look!

We had a running joke in seminary that, no matter the context, if you leave clergy to their own devices long enough, every conversation will eventually lead to clergy fashion. Collars, what kind of collars, what material for collars, to starch or not to starch, what kind of cassock, how many buttons, where the buttons go, what the buttons symbolize, how many seams, how long, to lace or not to lace, to tab or not to tab, what kind of jewelry, what kind of knots, what kind of shoes, what kind of socks, etc.

But, of course, a great irony in all this vestment and hierarchy talk is the most enduring image of Jesus: nailed to a cross with a delicately draped cloth around his waist. The most important thing, as my liturgy professor used to say, lies in the answer to this question: whether you fret over vestments, love the beauty of these liturgical tidbits, or just want to hurry up and get to coffee hour, is Christ praised?



Announcement from
Kristyn Crossway

Dear parishioners,

My name is Kristyn Crossway. Hamilton is my hometown, and despite doing a little bit of traveling the last few years or so with my husband, Greg, we are very happy to finally be home for good! We have two children -- an 8-year-old son named Roy and a (almost) 2-year-old daughter named Molly Mae. They absolutely keep me on my toes when I have downtime, but it makes life worthwhile in all the best and most challenging ways.

A little bit about me beyond being a mom. I own a small business making organic soaps and candles, I have a dog named Dorothy and a cat named Dewey that I love dearly, and before coming here I spent a few years on and off working as a pastry chef/cake decorator. I love food and everything about it. (If you or anyone you know ever needs help cooking, needs a meal train set up, or you simply have a birthday cake you don't feel like making/spending an arm and a leg to buy, I'm your girl!)



My husband is now retired from the US Marine Corps after an 8-year contract. We are discovering our “new normal” after active duty life. For the most part we are just thrilled to be local again and around familiar faces. We bought our house last summer and are slowly working to make it our own. Life has an interesting way of taking you places you don't always expect to be, and I'm excited it has now brought me here to be your new administrator!

I will do my best to make sure everything is done accordingly, with love at the source. I'm excited to meet everyone in the near future and glad we can all work together to support and serve our community in some of its most vulnerable moments. I know I have some big shoes to fill here; I will try my best.

If you ever have questions for me or just want to be a little nosey, feel free to send me a message or pop into the office anytime! My family likes to say I am a “certified yapper.” So long as I am here, there's always something to chat about.

Take care this summer, It's a hot one!



Coffee Hour Hosts

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 do so, and you can bring some goodies! If you have any questions, reach out to Linda Jenks at jewels2grams@gmail.com or 518-369-3384.



Happy Highlight

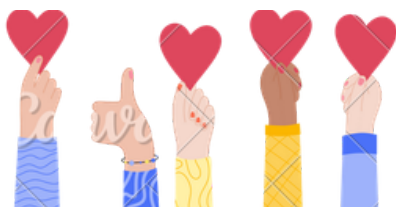


Free Hot Dogs (& Carrot Dogs) on the 4th of July!



Aiden Smith, Maggie Timofy, Katie Smith,
Colleen McNerney, Kim Cataldo

Despite the heavy rain, St Thomas' gave away 180 hot dogs & carrot dogs following the festivities in town. Everyone had a great time together. We appreciate all who volunteered.



Join the Conversation: Bible Study

Join us every Thursday morning from 9:30 to 11:00 in the Parish Hall or follow the link to the recording in the weekly Notices to stay up to date on the latest and greatest!

Zoom Etiquette

St. Thomas' Church is pleased to see so many folks on Zoom each week during our Sunday 10 am services. To help keep the focus on the service itself, all participants will have their audio and video automatically turned off, but the chat will be left open.

Bishop's Podcast and Recommendations

When Bishop DeDe was with us at the end of May, she suggested a few ways to stay plugged in with the goings-on around the Diocese and the larger Episcopal Church. You can find those here:

- **The Messenger** - The Diocese of Central New York's weekly newsletter
<https://cnyepiscopal.org/news-events/messenger/>

- **@cnyepiscopal** - The Diocese's YouTube Channel where you can join Bishop DeDe for a virtual coffee every Tuesday morning
<https://www.youtube.com/@cnyepiscopal>

- **Speaking of Faith** - Bishop DeDe's podcast
<https://cnyepiscopal.org/speaking-of-faith/>

- **For the Rest of Us** - Canon Megan Castellan's podcast
<https://cnyepiscopal.org/for-the-rest-of-us/>

Celebrating Disability Pride Month

In honor of Disability Pride Month, I wanted to share a few thoughts on why this time is so important to our community and to our church, as well as how we can better support anyone who may be struggling.

Disability Pride Month is a vital time for our community to celebrate the visibility, uniqueness, and invaluable contributions of people with disabilities. For our church, it serves as a meaningful reminder of our commitment to being an inclusive, welcoming, and accessible space for all of God's children.

To truly support those in our congregation and wider community who may face mental, emotional and/or physical challenges, we must commit to listening to their needs, fostering an environment of empathy, and taking practical steps to ensure everyone feels seen and supported. Whether through offering targeted resources, ensuring physical accessibility, or simply checking in on one another, we can work together to uplift every member of our community.

Thank you for your continued dedication to making our church a supportive home for everyone.

-Kristyn Crossway



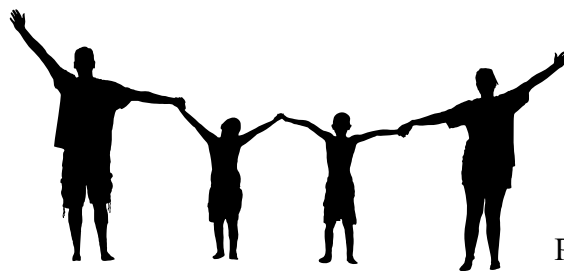
Historical Background

Many everyday technologies and tools, from Braille to the teletypewriter, were invented by people with disabilities to solve accessibility challenges, profoundly shaping modern life.

Audiobooks: The Talking Book Program, initiated in the 1930s for blind and print-disabled individuals, enabled literature to be recorded and distributed. Today, audiobooks and apps like Audible are widely used by the general public

Electric Toothbrush: Originally designed in 1954 to assist people with limited motor skills in maintaining dental hygiene, electric toothbrushes are now recommended for everyone due to their superior cleaning efficiency

Wheelchair-accessible vehicles and lifts: Ralph William Braun was an American businessman and founder of The Braun Corporation, hailed as the “Father of the Mobility Movement” for pioneering wheelchair-accessible vehicles and lifts. Diagnosed with muscular dystrophy at six, he invented the Tri-Wheeler scooter, the first accessible van lift, and expanded BraunAbility into a global leader in mobility solutions. Honored by the White House as a Champion of Change, his work transformed transportation access for people with disabilities.



In Conclusion:

The contributions of disabled inventors highlight the creativity and ingenuity that arise from addressing unique challenges. Their inventions have not only improved accessibility but have also shaped technology and design in ways that benefit society as a whole. By recognizing and celebrating these contributions, we can continue to foster innovation that is inclusive and beneficial for all.



If you, or someone you know may be struggling here are some resources that can come in handy:

AccessCNY's Family Support Services (FSS) help individuals with developmental disabilities and their families get the supports they need to live safely and happily in the community. (They can even help outfit your home to make it more accessible for you or your loved one!)

<https://www.accesscny.org/services/family-support-services-adults/>

6666 Manlius Center Rd.
East Syracuse, NY 13057
T: 315-410-3320

The Arc of Madison County

The Arc offers advocacy, inclusion, and support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. 701 Lenox Ave Oneida, NY 13421
(315) 363-3389

LIFE at RCIL Youth Services

Community services/non-profits in
Utica, NY 131 Genesee St, Utica, NY 13502
They provide independent living and accessibility services to enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. **(315) 797-1253**

Mobility & Transportation Assistance

American Cancer Society Road to Recovery

The American Cancer Society Road To Recovery® program eases your burden by giving free rides to cancer-related medical appointments. Our trained volunteer drivers are happy to pick you up, take you to your appointment, and drop you off at home. All for free. **Contact 1-800-227-2345**

Similar to the American Cancer Society services, there is also **Cancer Connects**, which helps cover transportation to cancer care treatments and medical appointments through an assistance program. For completing the application please visit cancerconnects.org or contact the information line at (315) 634-5004

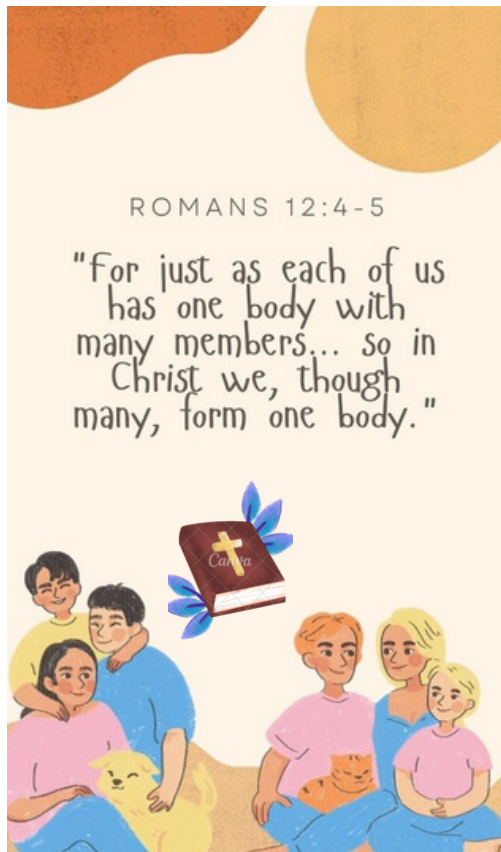
Go-Go Grandparent

A nationwide call center that coordinates rides, meals, more through Uber, Instacart, DoorDash for those that do not have access to a smartphone or cannot navigate the apps needed for the on-demand features. 1(855) 464-6872 ext 98552 - **Seniors can call Madison County Office of the Aging** to inquire about the current OFA Go-Go Grandparent partnership (315) 697- 5700

Mercy Medical Angels

MMA is a nonprofit organization that assists with transportation resources for people going through specialized medical treatments where transportation is a barrier. Some of the services provided are gas cards, Greyhound, Amtrak, and flight tickets for out-of-town medical needs. To apply for program go through mercymedical.org Contact (757) 318 - 9174 for any further assistance.

A Scripture Lesson



A Poem

In the Light of Grace

The Father's love falls bright and clear,
In the warmest, longest days of the year.
The meadows bloom and the valleys sing,
Of the endless joy our Maker brings.
Beneath the blue and boundless sky,
Where the golden sun is riding high,
We feel the breath of the gentle breeze,
And hear His praise in the rustling trees.
The harvest grows from the quiet seed,
God faithfully supplies each need.
In every blossom and vibrant hue,
His mercies prove both fresh and new.
So let us walk in the radiant sun,
Rejoicing in all that the Lord has done.
For summer's grace and the warmth we feel,
Are holy reminders His love is real.

– Inspired by Psalm 118:24

A Prayer

Even when we are weary, lead us into moments that foster repair with open eyes and a sense of sympathy.

—Sojourners



Prayers of the People as of July 5th



For those in need:

Ian Blanchard, **Emily** Carroll, **Holly** Crouch, **Nan** Dietrich, **Aster** Dinku, **Joan** Fales, **Janet** Freeman, **Lee** Foreman, **Lisa** Gee & her children, **Laura** Ginter, **Kaia** Harding, **Amanda** Harlan, **Michelle** Heavner, **Mike** Hicks, **David** Hollis, **Josephine** Leposky, **Theresa** K., **Barb** Kershaw, **Mason** McDowell, **Pat** Osowski, **Jacob** Rozbruch, **Diny** Rupp, **Joe** Rupp, **Lynn** Ryan, **Patricia** Tayntor, **Paula** Tayntor, **Marilyn** Thie, **Lisa** Trivedi, **Ed** Vantine, **Becky** Vinopal, **Christine** Watkins, **Wanda** Warren Berry, **Deb** Willis ; the **Blum** Family, the **Dorgan** family, **Sarah** & her family, **Jerry** & **Roseann** Fitzgerald, **Anthony** & **Vincent** Pacillo; **Carol**, **Diane**, **Gordon**, **Jan**, **Janice**, **Kate**, **Kathy**, **Micaela**, **Paula**, **Scot**, **Shannon**, and **Susan**.



On The Lighter Side



The Book of First Opinions

(Probably Not Written by Paul)

Chapter 1

1. And it came to pass that the church gathered together for a meeting, saying, "Surely this one shall be brief."
2. And they were wrong.
3. For there arose among them a question concerning the color of the fellowship hall walls.
4. And one said, "Beige is the color of humility."
5. Another replied, "Nay, beige is the color of surrender."
6. Then a third stood and testified, "The Lord spoke unto me while I was in the paint aisle at Lowe's."
7. And everyone became suddenly uncomfortable.

Chapter 2: Concerning Music

1. There were those who declared, "The hymns of our youth are the only songs pleasing unto God."
2. Others answered, "The Lord has also created guitars and amplified keyboards."
3. This saying caused much weeping and gnashing of teeth.
4. Then an elder proclaimed, "What if we sang both?"
5. But no one heard him, for everyone was already composing strongly worded emails.

Chapter 3: The Thermostat

1. Blessed are they who control the thermostat, for they shall be accused by everyone.
2. The young declared, "It is too warm."
3. The old declared, "It is too cold."
4. The preacher quietly sweated through another sermon.
5. And the Spirit continued working despite the temperature.

Chapter 4: Parking

1. Verily I say unto you, if thy legs are able, park farther away.
2. Leave the closest spaces for the elderly, the disabled, and parents carrying children who have somehow misplaced one shoe.
3. For this is more pleasing unto God than placing thy family name upon a parking spot.

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Chapter 5: Potluck

1. Bring something.
2. If thou hast not prepared anything, bring ice.
3. If thou hast not brought ice, bring tea.
4. If thou hast brought neither, at least bring thyself with gratitude.
5. And whosoever complaineth concerning another's casserole shall wash every crockpot until the end of the fellowship.

Chapter 6: Meetings

1. Let every person who saith, "I have just one more thing," be viewed with suspicion.
2. If thy announcement requireth fifteen minutes, it is no longer an announcement.
3. If thy committee meeteth more often than it serveth, reconsider thy committee.

Chapter 7: Social Media

1. Before posting, ask thyself:
 2. Is it true?
 3. Is it kind?
 4. Is it necessary?
5. And if it beginneth with, "Some people need to hear this..." perhaps thou art one of those people.

Chapter 8: The Pastor

1. Thou shalt not expect the pastor to attend every meeting, every birthday, every hospital visit, every committee, every fundraiser, every rehearsal, and every softball game.
2. For the pastor is but one person.
3. Even Jesus occasionally slipped away to be alone.
4. And Jesus did not have email.

Chapter 9: Children

1. Let the little ones make noise.
2. For a noisy church is often a living church.
3. Fear not the sound of laughter.
4. Be more concerned when the halls grow silent.

Chapter 10: Benediction

1. Above all these things, love one another.
2. For no soul hath ever been persuaded by winning an argument about carpet.
3. Nor hath the Kingdom advanced because the bulletin used a different font.
4. But kindness hath converted hearts that cleverness never could.
5. Go now in peace.
6. And if thou must reply all... repent first.



Child Deeply Concerned To Hear There's A Bomb In Gilead

TULSA, OK —

Local child Stephen Reese became deeply worried during church this morning after hearing there is a bomb located somewhere in Gilead.

"Shouldn't we do something?" worried Stephen, anxiously looking around the congregation. "Why is everyone so calm??"

The church service had started innocuously enough, with Stephen receiving a popsicle stick as a "take-home" from a less-than-memorable children's sermon. Then, out of nowhere, the song leader stood up and suddenly proclaimed that, "There is a bomb in Gilead!" Stephen gasped in horror. The grown-ups around him seemed to be in a state of total shock. They stared blankly back at the song leader, and then began half-heartedly repeating over and over that there was, in fact, a bomb in Gilead.

With his little sister of no use, Stephen clambered across her and grabbed his father's pants leg. "This is awful! Do something, Dad!" he pleaded. To Stephen's dismay, his father merely shrugged and responded, "Sorry bud, there's nothing I can do. The song leader chose this." Stephen stared in disgust as the song-leading terrorist continued standing calmly at the front of the congregation, smiling with bizarre delight.

At publishing time, Stephen was again disturbed as the song leader followed the news about the bomb with a call for the congregation to "sing all hell to Jesus' name."

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church

Vestry Minutes

May 24, 2026

Present: Debbie Barker, Martha Berry, Brooks Cato (presiding), Connie Harsh, Mike Loranty, Valerie Morkevicius, Rose Novak, John Orr, Jane Welsh On Zoom: John Bowen, Jana Laxa Absent: Kate Hooks, Kerry Linden Call to Order. The meeting began at 11:45 a.m. in the parish hall. Valerie Morkevicius opened the meeting with a prayer.

Clerk's Report;

The minutes of the April 26th meeting were approved with one emendation to the draft sent out earlier. (This was an addition of one sentence by Connie Harsh regarding Brooks Cato's suggestion that she and Valerie Morkevicius would work with the Buildings Commission to explore renewable energy options, minutes of April 26th, p. 3.)

Approval was moved by Debbie Barker; seconded by John Orr. Treasurer's Report John Bowen submitted the following Report:

"In general

--Income remained strong.

--The expense side continued to be impacted by the seasonally adjusted village utility prices and lingering cold weather.

--The Balance Sheet showed recovery in all UIF accounts. MML covered the Spring Good Neighbor grants.

Benefits Bill Pay Problem;

The large Benefit Bill Pay overpayment last month was reviewed in detail and corrected. BBT is the recently adopted system for paying church property and health insurance premiums and pension payments. Funds were restored to St. Thomas' NBT account and will show in the May Balance Sheet. We reviewed the problem with Cathy Hobart, Diocesan Controller, and have put a process in place that is expected to be failsafe."

Rector's Report

Brooks Cato began his comments by acknowledging the incredible amount of hard work that our volunteers had done to make the Ellie Weyter funeral such a lovely occasion. He also expressed his gratitude to all of those who were now preparing for Bishop Duncan-Probe's visit on May 31st. Lastly, Brooks was pleased to announce that the recent Friday Night Lights get-together had been a real success; it had brought in \$300 for the Migrants' Discretionary Account. (This was one of the largest collections at an open mic event.

Martha Berry moved that the Report be received as submitted; Valerie Morkevicius seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

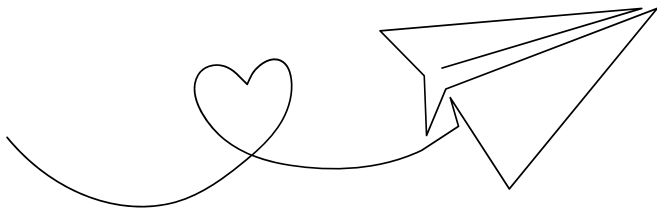
Wardens' Report;

Jane Welsh thanked Brooks Cato for the recent series of Adult Education meetings ("Episcopal 101"). She found that they were incredibly helpful, both in reviewing previous concepts and in discovering new ones. Debbie Barker agreed, adding that she is very appreciative of music at St. Thomas', which makes a real difference for our special (and weekly) services.

Commission Reports;

Rectory Building Project: Brooks Cato presented the quotation submitted by Birdsall Painting for the exterior of the rectory. It came to \$25,800 and, as Birdsall noted, there will be extra fees for any mortar repair on the brickwork or carpentry repairs. Brooks explained that, under these circumstances, he normally requests 20%, in addition to the basic cost, to cover ancillary expenses.

Consequently, he was seeking vestry approval for \$30,000, to be taken from the Capital Maintenance account. Debbie Barker moved that the vestry should approve the costs as Birdsall Painting quoted them, along with the additional amount to cover any additional work. Jane Welsh seconded the motion. The vestry voted unanimously to approve the request for \$30,000. Following this, Brooks Cato raised a related issue: There is a section of skirting on the church that has developed problems, requiring the application of wood filler. When Birdsall arrives, he is going to ask them about the best way to handle the situation. (Birdsall Painting was the last firm that painted the church.)



Old Business;

- **Directory Update:** Brooks Cato reported that the directory remains a work-in-progress.
- **Security Camera Update:** Brooks Cato was pleased to inform the vestry that the equipment has arrived and is waiting to be installed. More news to come.
- **Kitchen Windows:** Brooks Cato stated that he is waiting for the window units to be fabricated. After he is notified of the next step, he will send a payment and the installation will follow.
- **Ramshaw Fund:** Brooks Cato informed vestry members that the notification had gone out in the *Tidings*; however, no applications have yet been submitted.

New Business;

- **July 4th Hotdog Festivities:** Brooks Cato announced that, once again, St. Thomas' will offer free hotdogs on the side lawn of the church. Debbie Barker, who regularly helps to manage the giveaway, will be out of town this year, but others can be recruited to join the crew.
- **Proposed Policy Change:** Brooks Cato—in consultation with the Budget & Finance Commission—proposed that the same policies governing funds from the Rector's Discretionary Fund should also be applied to the Migrant Discretionary Fund (which has recently risen to over \$12,000). (The policies governing the Discretionary Fund were distributed to the vestry in advance of the meeting.) Debbie Barker moved to approve this change; Mike Loranty seconded the motion. All agreed unanimously that the same policies should apply to both funds from here on.
- **Personnel Announcement:** Brooks Cato informed the vestry that Leah Brockway has submitted her resignation. She will be assuming a full-time position at Colgate University. The vestry thanked Leah for her service over the past several years and wished her all the best in the next phase of her professional life. We will miss seeing her in the office!

Following this, the vestry discussed procedures for finding a replacement for the part-time position that Leah will be vacating. It is to be hoped that we can again attract a candidate who will handle both the responsibilities of the administrative assistant and the bookkeeper. (If not, Brooks assured the vestry, we will deal with these duties separately.)

John Orr wondered whether the person assuming the position would also carry the responsibilities of the youth ministry. Brooks Cato responded, “perhaps this would be the case.

It will depend upon what the successful candidate brings to the position. We will have to wait and see.” Connie Harsh asked what was required, procedurally, in the hiring process. Brooks Cato, Debbie Barker, and Martha Berry (who have been involved in church-related hirings, at different levels) explained that this is very different from hirings in other, non-church-related situations. Martha Berry explained, for instance, that it is not even necessary to post the position. Nonetheless, in the short conversation that followed, vestry members noted that they would prefer that the position be posted in some manner. Connie Harsh then stated that it might be a good idea for the wardens to be involved.

John Orr noted that the wardens were both involved during the last hiring process. All agreed that this part of the procedure should be continued. Jane Welsh asked whether the salary level had been considered. Vestry members agreed that, currently, they are comfortable with the current level of compensation. In the conversation that followed vestry members decided that if it were to be raised, they would want to approve it formally, with a vestry vote. Brooks Cato commented that this is a situation in which it is difficult to draw a line between the rector’s responsibilities and the vestry’s responsibilities, but that the wardens would be a part of the process and all will be kept informed as the process unfolds.

Volunteer Appreciation: As part of the vestry’s ongoing conversation, Martha Berry suggested that the Annual Picnic might be moved forward to August 30th. This idea was well received by the vestry members.

Announcements: Announcements were made. Brooks Cato reminded vestry members that Bishop Duncan-Probe’s visit would be coming up soon.

Next meeting: The next vestry meeting will take place on June 28th.

Prayer Leader: Brooks Cato offered to lead prayer at the opening of the next meeting.

Martha Berry moved to end the meeting; everyone seconded the motion. The meeting ended at 12:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Cerasano, Clerk

Upcoming Events

- **Vestry Meeting; August 23rd following coffee hour**
- **Parish Picnic; August 30th**

A Prayer

God who is our solid ground, tear us away from the temptation to ignore repression for our own convenience.

--Sojourners

**Sermon for the Sixth Sunday
of Easter: I Peter 3:13-22 &
John 14:15-21:
The Rev. Brooks Cato**

After a fine hot dog handout and a soggy parade, I'm happy to say that Eunice the Unicorn's returned to her stable for another year. She's a little worse for wear, as papier mache isn't known for its resilience in the face of downpours, but she is a resilient lady, and there's plenty of time to rest up before her next public appearance. Far as I know, the hot dog handout was a raging success, and while we didn't manage to give away all 250 franks, even the wettest of passersby found space in their hearts for "maybe just one more dog." The parade itself was mostly good, and while I can't vouch for the people walking or the roller derby team providing security on wheels, I can say that in the comfort of the cab of my pickup, the rain didn't bother me at all. We did see a couple of frowning faces, a few who wouldn't make eye-contact, more who made their opinions known with emphatic double thumbs down, and fortunately only a couple of extended middle fingers. Eunice the Unicorn's been in July Fourth parades since, I think, 2017, and I've had the pleasure of being her escort many of those years. One year, angry parade goers were so offended by that rainbow-bedazzled unicorn that they picked up only the pieces of hard candy our float tossed out and threw them back at our people, hard, using what we'd given away to make their point. Now, when it comes to the great bank of horrors human beings do to each other, throwing candy at someone, even hard, isn't the worst threat. But that doesn't mean it wasn't a threat at all, and it hurt. No long-term bodily injury but certainly enough to deliver a message: "We don't want you, we don't want your gift, and we'll turn that gift into a weapon to pelt you with."

That was the worst reception. Since then, Madison County Pride's float -- that's the one led by Eunice the Unicorn -- has worked with the parade organizers and some village officials to ensure a safe and less hateful arrangement. Even the Hamilton Police know to keep an extra eye out for us. And while we got our share of support and cheers and little kids gleefully shouting about the mythical unicorn, I saw more of those middle fingers than any year before. No one did anything or, far as I know, said anything, but it was clear enough that this was a complicated year to drive through town at walking pace with a rainbow bedecked pickup. I know it's a dangerous thing to imagine that I'm following Jesus just perfectly while everyone I disagree with is bad at being Christian, buuuuuut look at that Collect, that prayer meant for today. It says that we follow all -- ALL! -

- of God's commandments by loving God and loving our neighbor. Now, that's not just the Prayer Book being great, either. Jesus said that. Have you heard the old joke that Episcopalians love reading the Bible 'cause it quotes the Book of Common

Prayer so much?

Part of what I love about St. Thomas' and this little village is just how often and easily and clearly I feel that neighborly love. It's a joy to go into town 'cause I never know who I'll see and what light they'll bring into my day. Yesterday was no exception. I saw a couple I married years ago and their enormous kid!



I saw friends who moved away back in town just for the festivities. I saw an old veteran sitting in a lawn chair go from scowling at the audacity of the rain to beaming ear to ear when he saw us drive by, and he held up two crooked, arthritic thumbs that just about erased all those middle fingers scrawled into my memory. Just about. Maybe it was just the rain putting a damper on things, but I got the impression that people cheered less, scowled more, generally slumped in their chairs grumping their way through the holiday. Maybe it was the rain, maybe it was bigotry feeling more comfortable in the public square, maybe it was the cognitive dissonance of celebrating a nation that's actively breaking our hearts and itself. But driving felt different this year. It wasn't the joyful jaunt I've grown accustomed to. I was nervous, concerned, sad that I had to be on the lookout, watching for someone to act out more sharply than I watch for deer on backroads. It wasn't a celebration. In many ways, it was an act of defiance, but no great political act or anything. Just the defiance of driving through a beloved town full of neighbors proclaiming with the boldness of a wet unicorn that we exist. I know. It's tiring, and I'm sorry to put a damper on your holiday weekend, and Eloise, I'm sorry for going there at your baptism. I know it'd be a lot nicer if we just talked about how weird water is, go eat some cookies, and call it a morning. But I can't help but hear Paul echoing from one of my favorite and least favorite passages. He says, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ... when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand."

See what I mean? Kinda love it, kinda hate that he's right. It's so easy to want to do the right thing, even to know what the right thing to want to do is, but it's so hard to do it.

I know I shouldn't stew over the disgust I saw yesterday. I know I should dwell on the joy, the ear-to-ear smiles, the kindness, the concern, the worry, the love. I know that. And I know it's true for those scowling faces, too. Maybe some of them want to be more understanding or kinder or at least learn a little and for whatever reason just can't. Maybe never, maybe just not yet. Maybe they're here today or on Zoom or wondering if we'd have a place for them next Sunday. Maybe, and that shred of a "maybe" troubles me as much as my own Paul-like disbelief with my failures.

Eloise, this is what you're signing up for. God bless ya, it's a beautiful life full of joy and wonder and love and a whole lot of taking a step back and going, "huh. I coulda done that better." And when that happens, not if, but when that happens, you've got folks like us to turn to. I can't tell you how much I wish you and your family lived here.

One, y'all are great, but two, we're all making vows today right alongside you. You're promising to do amazing, aspirational, sometimes impossible things, and we're promising to support you in that. And you can call or text or zoom or whatever, and we'll be here. But sometimes "here" isn't enough. Sometimes you need someone you can sit with, weep with, celebrate with face-to-face, and sometimes that just can't be here. And when that happens, not if, but when that happens, I want all y'all to know something kinda cool. When we baptize in The Episcopal Church, you become a member of the church you're baptized in, which means St. Thomas'll send you a pledge card. But we also baptize you into the whole Episcopal Church. You're a member of St. Thomas', but you're also an Episcopalian. And there are Episcopalians everywhere.

And when you make those vows and you don't have us who made our vows with you, just about anywhere you go, you'll find other congregations, other people, other Episcopalians almost as cool as we are, and they've made these same vows, the same vows to do the impossible and the same vows to help the newly baptized. And St. Thomas', this won't be the last time we see Eloise. So we're here for her whenever she needs us. But also, we're here for all the Eloises who need us, all those who find their way here, all who need a community that's vowed to help each other do the impossible.

And all those who may want to get baptized some day or don't care about that kind of thing or even scowled from a curb in the rain, all those may need a place to learn to do right, to seek justice, to defend the oppressed, to walk humbly with God, to seek Christ in all persons, and -- because it wouldn't be an Episcopal Baptism without it -- to respect the dignity of every human being. And, when you or we or they fail, to love 'em anyway.



AA Meetings in Hamilton

TIME	NAME	LOCATION / GROUP	ADDRESS / PLATFORM	REGION
Monday, 7:00 PM	Hamilton on the Green _____	Hamilton on the Green _____ First Baptist Church	113 Broad Street 27 Broad Street	Hamilton
Wednesday, 7:00 PM	Colgate University _____	Shaw Wellness Institute _____	13 Oak Drive	Hamilton
Friday, 7:00 PM	Hamilton on the Green _____	Hamilton on the Green _____ First Baptist Church	113 Broad Street 27 Broad Street	Hamilton



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 in the pews. 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

Online Donations

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 if your contribution is meant to honor your pledge, please write "pledge" in the "Gift note/designation" line. The link to the online donation form listed above can also be found on our [website](#) on the home page and more details on the "[donate](#)" page.

Free St. Thomas' T-Shirts



St. Thomas' T-shirts are available for FREE in the office. Stop in to get one and wear it with pride!

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church

Hamilton, New York

Anchored in Hope

Growing in Love

Worth Repeating



One day, a stranger will remember you.
Not your name -- they lost that years ago.
They'll remember that you let them go
first
on a terrible day. That you told a tired
cashier to take her time. That you said,
"you're doing better than you think" to
someone who was about to give up
quietly.
You will never know which of your
smallest
kindnesses is still alive in someone's
memory; still doing its quiet work.
That's the secret: none of it disappears.
Kindness has no funeral. It just keeps
living
in people, long after you've walked
away.

--Author unknown

A Prayer

Source of All Love, help us welcome the fullness of who we are, so we can affirm others in turn.

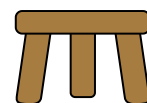
—Sojourners

Looking for Contributors

Interested in adding something to our monthly newsletter? We're always 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.



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. All are welcome!



July Schedule of Servers

JULY	LECTOR	LEM	USHER	ALTAR GUILD	FLOWER GUILD	NEWCOMERS	COFFEE HOUR HOSTS
5	1st: Emily Hutton-Hughs 2nd: Joan ford	Susan Cerasano	Ed Page	Emily Hutton-Hughs	Marieke & Anna Marie Kuiper	Colleen McNerney	Linda Jenks
12	1st: Adger Williams 2nd: Debbie Barker	Debbie Barker	Ed Page	Linda Jenks	Marieke & Anna Marie Kuiper	Linda Jenks	Martha Berry
19	1st: Martha Berry 2nd: Jane Welsh	Barbara Bowen	Ed Page	Colleen McNerney	Marieke & Anna Marie Kuiper	Debbie Barker	Millie/Emily H.H.
26	1st: Linda Jenks 2nd: Rose Novak	Amy Jerome	Ed Page	Wynn Egginton	Marieke & Anna Marie Kuiper	Colleen McNerney	George Weaver, Robert Maziarz, & Irene Brown

August Schedule of Servers

August	LECTOR	LEM	USHER	ALTAR GUILD	FLOWER GUILD	NEWCOMERS	COFFEE HOUR HOSTS
2nd	1st: Jane Welsh 2nd: Martha Berry	Debbie Barker	Ed Page	Wynn Egginton	Rose Novak	Linda Jenks	Joan Ford + Linda Jenks
9th	1st: Maureen Fox 2nd: Debbie Barker	Susan Cerasano	Ed Page	Emily Hutton-Hughes	Rose Novak	Linda Jenks	Linda Jenks
16th	1st: John Orr 2nd: Adger Williams	Barbara Bowen	Ed Page	Susan Beattie	Rose Novak	Linda Jenks	Maggie Timofy
23rd	1st: Linda Jenks 2nd: Kristin Strohmeier	Amy Jerome	Ed Page	Jane Welsh	Rose Novak	Debbie Barker	Cathy Lamphier
30th	1st: Kerry Linden 2nd: Lynn Staley	Susan Cerasano	Ed Page	Jane Welsh	Rose Novak	Jana Laxa	Parish Picnic



July-August 2026

Divings