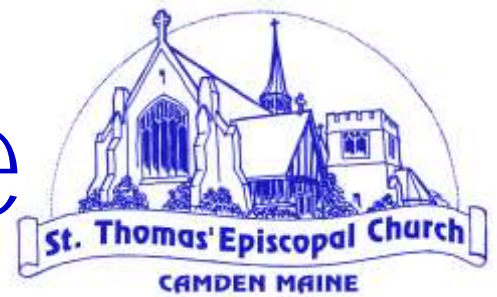


Chapter & Verse



THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. THOMAS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH
DECEMBER 2016

From the Transitional
Priest in Charge

Visitation

"In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David."

Luke 1:26

Greetings, St. Thomas Family and Friends,

It is with joy that I write and greet you. When I think back to the summer and how many of you were with us, it feels like it's been a long time since we had the whole St. Thomas family together. I trust that all is well and that most had a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends.

As many know, we are now into the wonderful season of Advent. Advent is such a different season from the long stretch after Pentecost. Advent comes with beautiful Mary's blue altar hangings and vestments. It comes with pine greens instead of flowers at the altar. The Acolytes wear black robes instead of red under their cottas. And of course, there is the beautiful Advent wreath that tells the story of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

On Sundays, we are pondering the meaning of the word *Ad-*

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A Note of Thanks to the Parish From Rosalee Glass

The Rev. Dr. Rosalee T. Glass has served as deacon at St. Thomas Church from the time of her ordination in 2005 to her retirement last month. She sent the following to the parish:

Dear St. Thomas family,

Yes, I have retired from regular diaconal service at St. Thomas. With this note, I want you to know how much joy these past 11+ years of service with you have given me and how much I feel honored by your love and care for me at this time of retirement.

Thanks to Bishop Steve, Reverend Suzanne, Deacon Abby, the Wardens, Vestry, staff, and all of this beloved St. Thomas' community. Your elaborate Coffee Hour send-off on November 13th, as well as your personal greetings, gifts, cards, and hugs, have helped dispel any heartache or sadness associated with this change in my ministerial role.

Though I am now a retired clergy person and have stepped away from diaconal leadership, I look forward to worshiping with you and collaborating with you in Education for Ministry Program as well as in other ministries that we all, as the Body of Christ, share.

With love and appreciation for all you have given me, I am

Your servant,
Rosalee



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Thanksgiving Dinner at St. Thomas'



Forty-one people were guests of the church at our annual free Thanksgiving Dinner, which featured a traditional menu of roast turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, butternut squash, brussels sprouts, cranberry relish and pumpkin and apple pie for dessert. Above, from left to right: Susan Fockler and Anne Edmonds enjoy the fireplace; Brother Donovan and company at dinner; Phillip and Sarah Groman and their friend; Pam Bardon, right and her friend Gail at dinner. This dinner was made possible by donations from the parish and by St. Thomas' Hannaford Clynk account.



A Month on Sabbatical

The view from Marie Joseph Spiritual Center in Biddeford Pool,

Sabbatical: a period of time during which someone does not work at his or her regular job and is able to rest, travel or do research.

...and that is just what I was able to do during my first ever month-long sabbatical this past August! Thank you to Lucy Ebbert, who in her capacity as Senior Warden, suggested that we look at my letter of agreement with St. Thomas' and lo and behold! We discovered that a month-long sabbatical was built in for after five years of employment (I've been here over ten years).

For many years I have been building in a yearly one-week long silent retreat; I had not had one in a few years, though. Folks will say to me "how can someone make you be silent?!" Well, it's the other way around: I long for the silence. I seek out safe places where this is encouraged and supported.

My first retreat was at All Saint's Convent in Catonsville, Maryland. I

had not been there for many years, so I was glad to return. The Sisters are unusual in that they wear full habits, head to toe, observe long periods of silence, and sing/pray all the daily offices. These include Lauds (6:30 am), Mass (7:00 am), Terce (9:30 am), Sext (12 noon), None (3:00 pm), Vespers (5:00 pm), Compline (8:30 pm). From 8:00 pm to after Terce the Greater Silence is observed. Apart from the Sisters I had my own little room and dining room which I shared with the other retreatants. It is tough to eat meals in silence! The Convent grounds border on Patapsco State Park, so it is very peaceful. However, I wasn't able to take my daily long walks very much since the daytime temperatures during that week were in the 90s (and very humid)! I had a lovely visit with Mother Virginia, a vibrant young 99 year old, who had been the active Mother there the last time I had visited. She invited me to practice on the organ (2 manual Möller) for an hour each af-

ternoon. I chose to practice on very soft flutes as I learned some new pieces for Advent. Later, it occurred to me that perhaps the Sisters would have loved to hear me open up to full organ at least once!

My second retreat was at Marie Joseph Spiritual Center in Biddeford Pool, Maine. This old-fashioned, 19th century, 4-story former hotel is right on the ocean! I chose to do a directed retreat, meeting once daily for about an hour with Sister Marie Claire, a wonderful spiritual director. I took an hour long walk along the beach before breakfast, another walk after lunch, and then a walk before bedtime. There are many shorebirds as well as water birds in the small pond on the property. I remembered to bring my bird reference books and my binoculars. It was lovely.

I came back to St. Thomas' renewed, refreshed, eager to be back at work, doing what I love. Thank you!

—Jane Schroeder, Minister of Music



Creche Raising



The men of the parish took part in that very Advent activity: the raising of the crèche. This year's volunteers included Fred Bucklin, Bill Freeman, Roy Gilley, Chris Glass, Phillip Groman, Dean Jackson, Sandy Lyle and Bert Ryan and others. At right, the architect of the crèche pauses for reflection. Thanks to all of you!



Kate Jackson helps the Sunday School children make Advent wreaths.

Sunday School News

The Sunday School, under the direction of Catherine Kitt, spent September and October studying the saints in preparation for All Saints Sunday on November 6. Each child chose a saint to represent and created costumes to wear. They practiced "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God"

The children, their "adopted" saints and their ministries were:

- Lily: St. Bernadette, France (healing)
- Lola: St. Brigid, Ireland (teaching)
- Lincoln P.: St. Christopher, The Holy Land (travelers)
- Esme: St. Luke, Greece (doctors)
- Olivia: Joan of Arc, France (soldiers)
- Will: St. Francis, Italy (animals and the environment)
- Lincoln W.: St. Nicholas, Turkey (children)
- Beatrice: St. Catherine, Italy (nurses)

In November, JoAnne Ryan and Kate Jackson lead a unit on gratitude and thanksgiving. They made gratitude pillows and a new altar cloth for the Sunday School as well as learned about the parts of the Eucharist.

Currently, all children are making Advent Wreaths and practicing for the Christmas pageant.

Advent Forum

JoAnne Ryan will be leading an Advent Forum on Sundays in Advent in the Guild room beginning at 10:45 am

From the Transitional Priest

Continued from page one

ventus: Coming. We've learned that *Adventus* refers to the coming of something that cannot be predicted by prior human experience. It is a coming towards us of something given by God that is wonderful.

During the four weeks of Advent we are invited to prepare for something that is a surprise. We know is that "it" is coming, but we don't know exactly what it will be. As I think about this paradox I find myself thinking about Mary and her visitation from the angel Gabriel; what a surprise! Angels are "bending near the earth" this time of year. They, too, are anticipating something that is coming.

Advent and Christmas are mysterious seasons where heaven and earth conspire to bring about something so wonderful that it is called The Good News. We, in our time can use some Good News. We can use some Good News that heals, Good News that restores, Good News that offers reasons to hope; Good News that brings about peace, unity and joy.

In faith, we know that this Good News is coming. In Mystery, we know that it will be a wonderful surprise. Our job is to stay awake, to look for those places in our lives where angels may be bending near to us.

From all of us at St. Thomas to all of you and your households, we wish you a blessed Advent and the merriest of Christmases.

May you all be visited by the Love of God that came among us and continues to dwell with us to this day.

In Christmas Joy,

Suzanne +



I want to thank you, Lord,
For being close to me
so far this day.

With your help,
I haven't been impatient,
Lost my temper,
been grumpy,
judgmental or envious of anyone.

But I will be getting out of
bed in a minute,
And I think I'll really need
your help then!

Amen

Calendar of Events

Saturday, December 17
11:30 am

Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen at St. Peter's Rockland

Sunday, December 18
Greening of the Church follows Coffee Hour

Saturday, December 24
4:30 pm

Christmas Service with Children's Pageant

10:30 pm
Choral Eucharist

Sunday, December 25
One Christmas Day Service at 9:00 am

Sunday, January 1, 2017
Services at 7:30 and 9:30 am

1:30 pm
Service at Quarry Hill

Sunday, January 8
The First Sunday after the Epiphany

Tuesday, January 17
5:00 pm—Vestry meeting

Saturday, February 4
Vestry Retreat

Chapter & Verse

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The Rev. Suzanne Colburn, Transition Priest in Charge ♦ The Rev. Abby Pettee, Deacon

VESTRY

Lucy Ebbert - Senior Warden ♦ JoAnne Ryan - Junior Warden
Terry Mello - Treasurer ♦ George H. Jones - Clerk

Sarah Akin (2018) ♦ Frank Beane (2018) ♦ Anna Black (2017) ♦ Br. Donovan Bowley (2018) ♦ Fred Bucklin (2017)
Susan Fockler (2019) ♦ Terry Mello (2017)

RECEIVING TREASURERS

Bonnie Achterhof ♦ Pat Ayers ♦ Joan Bennett

STAFF

Jane M. Schroeder, S.M.M, Minister of Music ♦ George H. Jones, Parish Administrator