

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church



ANNUAL REPORT

167th Annual Parish Meeting

February 6, 2022

ST. THOMAS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

OFFICERS. STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Rector: The Rev. Canon Lisa Fry
Deacon: The Rev. Abby Pettee
Deacon Emeritus: The Rev. Dr. Rosalee Glass
Senior Warden: Elizabeth Moran
Junior Warden: Edmund Hartt
Treasurer: Terry Mello
Clerk of the Vestry: Shirley Fierro
Minister of Music: Clarissa Brown
Sexton/Groundskeeper: Jon Elwell
Communications: Terry Mello
Office Volunteers:
Suzanne Scott
Jan Lyle
Diane Kirkman
Grayce Sivigny

VESTRY

Outgoing Vestry Members:
Bill Freeman
Br. Donovan Bowley
Kendra Watkins (*completed one-year term*)

Terms End 2023:

Dean Jackson
Eileen Morelli

Terms End 2024:

Troy Bickham
Jan Lyle

Nominees for Vestry:

Sarah Groman
(*to complete one-year term ending 2023*)
Kendra Watkins
(*to complete two year term ending 2024*)

2021 PARISH STATISTICS

Communicants in Good Standing: 222
Average Sunday Attendance:
In-Person (May – December): 64
Online Viewing 2021: 83
Parish Marriages: 2
Burials: 1

New Members:

Rachel Bok Goldman
Jim and Lucy Nutter
Sarah Runnion-Bareford
Grayce Sivigny
Susan and Bob Sneed

Deaths in the Community:

Susan Conrad
Joan Foxwell

*Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord;
and light perpetual shine upon them.
May they, and all the departed,
through the mercy of God,
Rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.*

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MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to order
2. Opening prayer
3. Comments from The Rev. Canon Lisa Fry
4. Comments from the Senior Warden
5. Comments from the Junior Warden
6. Report of the Clerk and call for approval of minutes
7. Presentation by the Outgoing Treasurer of the 2021 Financial Results
8. Presentation by Incoming Treasurer of the 2022 Budget, as approved by the Vestry
9. Goodbye to outgoing Vestry, and Introduction and election of new Vestry members
10. Questions and answers for the Rector
11. Tower Project Overview
12. Closing prayer and adjournment

2021 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MINUTES

The 2021 Annual Parish Meeting was held via ZOOM.

Below is a summary of the meeting:

- The Reverend Canon Lisa Fry called the meeting to order.
- The meeting began with an opening prayer.
- A video was presented that shared our Outreach activities in 2020.
- Rev. Lisa thanked everyone for attending, gave a brief overview of the challenges of 2020 and thanked the Vestry for their leadership during this challenging time
- Carlos Mello gave a brief overview of the past year and thanked the St. Thomas' congregation for their resilience as he ended his 3-year term as Sr. Warden
- Edmund Hartt our Jr. Warden talked about the projects that were completed while we were shut down – all the spotlights in the nave and chancel were replaced with LED bulbs, the entire facility now has Wi-Fi connectivity, and the weatherproofing of the tower was completed.
- Minutes of the January 2020 Annual Meeting were approved.
- Terry Mello presented the 2021 budget and gave a summary of the 2020 results. Discussion followed. She shared with the congregation that she has agreed to serve as Treasurer for one more year as the pandemic made it impossible for St. Thomas' to transition to a new Treasurer. Her comment was: *You make plans, and God laughs.*
- Rev. Lisa thanked the outgoing Vestry members for their service (Sarah Groman and Elizabeth Moran). She shared the results of the online voting for the Sr. Warden and Vestry members. Rev. Lisa introduced and welcomed Elizabeth Moran as the new Sr. Warden; and Troy Bickham, Roy Gilley, Jan Lyle and Kendra Watkins as our new Vestry members. She thanked them all for their willingness to serve.
- There were no questions from the "floor"
- Rev. Lisa ended the meeting with the Lord's Prayer.

RECTOR

We came a long, long way in 2021. For nearly the first 6 months we were still out of the church, having service videos “beamed” to our houses. I want us to take a moment to remember that.

After Terry got us rolling with edited Sunday videos and editing them for nearly a year, in early 2021 she trained and handed over the production end of things to Ella Johanson and Clarissa Brown. For each Sunday, we had up to 7 individuals, 2 clergy, and 1 or more musicians taping individual prayers, readings, music and liturgy. Each person had to download their videos into the correct place, and the Video Editors had to upload them all individually to their home computers and spend 5-10 hours (depending on complexity) putting the finished video together. That involved a LOT of parishioners learning new things and stepping out of their comfort zones. I thank you all.

Then came Holy Week. Remember how we all read parts in the Passion Narratives on Palm Sunday? Imagine us all reading parts as we usually do—except that in 2021 we all taped *our individual lines*, requiring them to be edited together as just *one part* of that service video. That week we had more volunteers and both editors working on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter services! I’m so glad we finally got back into the church by Pentecost Sunday! Add to that the volunteers that are STILL doing Noonday Prayer and Compline live 6 days a week. We couldn’t have gotten through the past 2 years with lots of volunteers.

I am still fielding compliments regarding all we accomplished “virtually” from folks around the diocese. Give yourselves a round of applause—even the Diocese only did one video a month!

In 2021 we tried Virtual Coffee Hour again—this is really popular in many churches. Not so much with us. We are not a congregation that really bonded with Zoom for anything other than classes.

Then we went to coffee hours in person. We were just starting to build momentum again when Omicron struck. I am so glad this congregation has flexibility. We’ll make it work in 2022!

When Susie Crawford finished up in February, Gwen Fry volunteered for the short term to do the MailChimp—which sends out all email communications, St Thomas’ Tidings, and service bulletins. She did a great job but couldn’t continue because of her own commitments. In the fall, Terry volunteered to add what Gwen was doing as part of her role as Communications volunteer. She is joined by four wonderful parish volunteers: Suzanne Scott, Jan Lyle, Diane Kirkman, and Grayce Sivigny who work in the front office doing various parish related jobs. We are in the process of finding the most efficient way to use their talents, but our office is now open 4 days a week from 9-noon.

The bible studies class, my class and EfM continued for most of 2021—all online, and the altar and flower guilds reactivated in May. Next year, I hope, we can have a fair!

After meeting for services online and outdoors, we finally moved back into our church worship space in May. We’ve had to learn new dance steps with each new variant, but we have done so with grace and masks, and only a few cases of Covid (that I know of) and no transmissions. Hallelujah!

I would like to take a moment to thank the Covid Task Force for their expertise: medical, governmental, and practical. No decision about pandemic protocols was considered without their considerable, invaluable help.

I would also like to thank Terry Mello individually for her amazing ability to work with all things technical, financial, and even with those things requiring a leap of faith. She took on virtual worship without any expertise in that format, but with a willingness to learn new things. She bucked me up when I sorely needed it and gave me a push when I needed that! She has both courage and heart, and never wavered in her belief that all of us at St. Thomas' could get through this — together.

And now – where we are going....

I am delighted to introduce Jim Ebbert as our new Treasurer. I have never had the privilege of working with Jim in this capacity before, but he comes most highly recommended. I'm looking forward to our collaboration. Welcome aboard, Jim!

Bill Freeman has begun his tenure as head of the Finance Committee. Bill is a familiar face to many of you, both as a St. Thomas' parishioner, and as a committed board member of the Camden Area Christian Food Pantry. Welcome aboard, Bill!

I am encouraged that our church has welcomed a dozen or so new people into our fold in the past year, and one of these newcomers has answered the call to volunteer in the office! Light continues to dawn.

We now have the capability to stream services, thanks to the work of parishioners committed to making St. Thomas' worship services available to all, no matter what their particular circumstances. This is a work in progress, as we continue to improve the quality each week.

- We are streaming this Annual Parish Meeting on February 6, so everyone can participate in the event.
- We may stream the Wednesday healing service on occasion, since everyone is interested in healing at some point or another.
- Plans are in place to stream Ash Wednesday and all Holy Week services.
- While livestreamed services continue, ALL services will continue LIVE in the church, with no time changes planned *at this time*.

This new ministry positions us well, moving forward. The streaming of services is here to stay. It is a welcome addition to those who can't get here for a multitude of reasons: mobility, age, illness, vacationing — weather! Streaming the service gives everyone a chance to worship wherever we find ourselves.

The production console at the rear of the church is out of the way but gives a good view of the service to those producing. The camera is mounted unobtrusively and permanently under the rear window. Wiring is not in the flow of traffic. Soon, no one will notice the extra mics: they will become a familiar part of the church, just like the original church mic system eventually did after it was first put in.

I would like to say that I am so proud of every member of St. Thomas'. This Covid venture has been disruptive in many ways, for all of us, but we have accomplished so many things that future generations

of worshippers will thank us for: we have gained access to worship for *all* our parishioners, Wi-Fi is now in the church — which gives rise to many possibilities for the future, including holding more community events, talks and programs in the large sanctuary. I truly think the Holy Spirit is working through this pandemic to open our minds and hearts to new ways of being a follower of Christ, and daily gives us opportunities to share our love with each other by our choices, our sacrifices, and our love of Jesus. There has been loss, there has been stress—but there has been so much courage, a growing ability to try new things or to adapt with relative ease, and to give ourselves room to experience God in different ways.

I would like to thank the outgoing vestry members for their faith and dedication in what has been an extremely challenging time to be one of the leaders of the church. I imagine that each person participating in ministries at St. Thomas' will be remembered fondly by congregations in the future — as they look back to understand the decisions, the tough choices, and the innovations that we have imagined and brought to fruition. Thank you for being a part of that. Looking forward: let us continue to be there for each other.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa+

DEACON

The Rev. Dr. Rosalee Glass

Though I retired officially from regular diaconal duties at St. Thomas' Camden in May 2016, since then I have been asked to serve as needed when my St. Thomas' deacon colleague Abby Pettee has not been able to serve. During 2020 and the beginning of 2021, before vaccination against the coronavirus was available, I helped with pieces of St. Thomas' services by recording some Gospel readings and dismissals for St. Thomas' virtual services.

In spring, 2021, Abby began an extended leave of absence from regular diaconal service. Soon after that, when in-person church services were again possible, the Rector asked me to fill in on a regular basis as deacon at the 10 AM Sunday Eucharist.

During the 2020-21 academic year, Br. Donovan Bowley and I mentored an Education for Ministry (EfM) group. We decided to take a break for the 2021-2022 year, and we hope to re-start EfM in-person next fall for the 2022-2023 academic year. I feel passionate about Christian formation and education, and over the last 21 years I have seen the Education for Ministry program both strengthen the Church and also transform many individuals' lives.

During the last two years of the COVID crisis, our St. Thomas' community has weathered a difficult time—an isolating time, when fellowship as we had experienced it has not been possible. But we have stuck together and lifted each other up. We did not give up when in-person church had to end. We have been finding alternate ways to be the Body of Christ.

The decision-making challenges that our Rector and Vestry have had to navigate these past two years have required unimagineable faith and courage. They have skippered us safely through not just choppy

waters, but through ever-changing winds. They believed in our ability to flex and pivot and become stronger in adversity. We have done so, and have truly lived these biblical words:

"Each one helps the other, saying to one another, 'Take courage!'" (Isaiah 41:6)

---Rosalee

MINISTER OF MUSIC

I would like to thank all who worship at St. Thomas' for your kindness and encouragement during this year of uncertainty. Covid 19 and its variants have affected everything possible in the music program, from rehearsal times to the presence of the Youth Choir. I have been forced to abandon certain goals that I had, and radically change in other areas due to the presence of Covid 19 in our community. It has been hard on all of us—I am hoping for a more peaceful and prosperous 2022 for our choirs.

Things that still have not changed:

- We are still offering music at the 7:30 AM Rite I service.
- Our Senior Choir, though reduced in number, continues to gather at 8:45 AM on Sunday morning to prepare for worship. I humbly thank them for their hard work and wonderful spirit. Please Join Us!!
- We offered two services on Christmas Eve--one at 4:30 followed by a pageant from our youth; one service at 7:30 PM.
- The organ is still without the Choir division, and that will remain the situation until the tower is repaired.
- We will be hosting the Great Vigil for the Easter season. The hope is that area churches and their choirs will join us.
- Depending on Covid 19, we are planning to hold the Noon Music Series during Lent.

Things that have changed:

- Our Youth Choir has not been meeting due to Covid 19. I hope we can start again this coming year.
- Our Senior Choir is now meeting on Sunday mornings only until the number of Covid cases drops.

I have been editing the once-monthly videos when the schedule warrants. Recently, thanks to Terry and Carlos Mello, we are introducing livestreaming. This will be a great help for those who are not comfortable attending church at this point or who are unable to come to services.

Thank you to all my family at St. Thomas'.

Faithfully,

Clarissa Brown, AAGO MM

SENIOR WARDEN

As Senior Warden, my main purpose is to support the Rector and to assist her in any duties and responsibilities she should choose.

As we all know 2021 was a year of transition and also a year of hope but also anxiety. As a parish led by our Rector we transitioned out of virtual worship to in-person services with joy that we could be together again, and a certain degree of “normalcy” returned in our spiritual lives. The uplifting service on July 4th represented that joy of once again being together. Then things changed and new fears and variants entered our lives. But St. Thomas’ stood strong and with safety precautions again in place once more we continued to gather together with patience, caring and love for our church and our parish family. Through all of this uncertainty, our Rector held us together, provided a path for us to follow and calmed our fears when things became difficult.

How did the year unfold from my perspective as Senior Warden? First on my agenda was to support the production of online services in the early months of 2021. Then later in the spring when we knew we could move to in-person worship, the Rector, Bill Freeman and I discussed how we could evaluate what we did during the 12 months of “being closed,” of worshipping virtually and what next steps should there be and what “in-person worship” should now look like. Asking the parish through a short survey seemed like the most effective way to determine those answers. Over 50 parishioners responded with insightful and constructive comments expressed. A summary of the results of the survey will be distributed shortly by the Rector and Vestry.

As in-person worship commenced, the duties of Altar Guild commenced, and Susan Freeman and Shirley Fierro worked diligently to get things organized. I am helping with this effort and hope to recruit more parishioners to assist us. Since many of the vestments as well as the silver and brass altar and communion pieces were not used as regularly as in the past, I am attempting to do an inventory of all our “treasures” in the church. Then an appraisal of all of our “fine arts” can be done for insurance purposes.

Also, as Senior Warden, I am an ex-officio member or active member of parish committees. I continue to serve as the “Garden rep” on the Building and Grounds Committee and will be focusing on placing appropriate signage in the All Soul’s Garden and re-planting the shrubbery in front of the newly restored east wall. As a member of the Archives Committee, I hope to organize the Archives Room during the winter months.

In the meantime, my primary role will be to be ready to help Lisa by close and regular communication, preferably while enjoying lobster rolls at Lincolnville Beach!! In addition, I hope to help her implement various parish activities, assist in communicating with parish members and assist her as needed as we continue along our path to worshipping together in a “new” post -pandemic time.

Blessings to you all,
Elizabeth A. Moran

JUNIOR WARDEN

Again, this past year the repair of the Bell Tower demanded our attention. I, along with the Building and Grounds Committee and the vestry, learned about the choices confronting us concerning the Bell Tower. We had the able assistance of Chuck Campbell, an architect, and Cordjia, an engineering firm. We will be presenting our recommendation to the congregation at the Annual Meeting.

The Church has contracted with a floor refinishing business to refinish the floors in the Parish Hall, Guild Room, and entry hall to those spaces. This work will occur in late April and early May of 2022.

We hope to get some exterior painting done on the southern side of the building this year. There are other repairs and replacements needed the building. The stucco on the outside west wall needs repair. Several single glazed windows should be replaced with double glazed ones. There are some outside lights that need rewiring.

Edmund Hartt, Junior Warden

FINANCIALS

2021 Financial Review

As I write my last financial report, I am amazed as to how much we have accomplished and how resilient we all are. As we enter 2022, we want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support of St. Thomas'. Over the past two years we have weathered the storm and hopefully we will come out stronger. St. Thomas' community, once again, have answered the call. Your support enabled us to send \$12,040 to charities, ranging from the Camden Area Christian Food Pantry, Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen, and other special needs of our community and abroad. In 2021 we also awarded scholarships totaling \$7,500 to three of our students to help with their educational expenses. The Diocese applied for a Paycheck Protection Program on behalf of all the parishes in the diocese; St. Thomas' portion enabled us to forego taking funds from Endowment and resulted in a \$12,500 surplus for 2021. Following are two reports for your information— *Statement of Financial Position (2021 and 2020) and 2021 Statement of Activity*. The *2021 Results and 2022 Budget* report can be found on page 11. As you can see, our financial position is healthy as we enter 2022. We would not be in this position without your support.

On a personal note, I want to thank you all for the honor and privilege of serving as St. Thomas' Treasurer for the past seven years. I am confident that St. Thomas' finances are in good hands with our current Treasurer, Jim Ebbert...welcome!

Faithfully,
Terry Mello

Statement of Financial Position
As of 12/31/2021 and 12/31/2020

	2021	2020
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 499,848	\$ 138,263
Investments	1,249,466	1,431,226
Account Receivables	12,286	24,680
Other Current Assets	6,399	1,950
Total Current Assets	1,767,999	1,596,119
Fixed Leasehold Assets (Net of Depreciation)		
Building	1,366,958	1,730,356
Other Property	100,000	100,000
Equipment	7,491	9,758
Total Net Fixed Assets	1,474,449	1,840,114
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 3,242,448	\$ 3,436,233
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$ 3,228	\$ 7,750
Other Current Liabilities	30,675	44,381
Long-Term Liabilities		
Expected Capital Campaign Income	400	14,537
Other Long-Term Liabilities	1,678	28,749
Total Liabilities	35,981	95,417
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted Net Assets	1,519,144	1,804,954
Restricted Funds		
Investment Accounts	1,200,595	1,135,221
Building Funds	383,238	318,617
Other Restricted Funds	96,906	70,616
Outreach Funds	6,583	11,408
Total Net Assets	3,206,467	3,340,816
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 3,242,448	\$ 3,436,233

2021 Statement of Activity

	Total	Unrestricted	Restricted
2021 Income Received (Excludes Capital Improvement Donations)			
Total Operating Income	193,550	193,550	-
Grant from Diocese for PPP Funds (2020 and 2021)	68,627	68,627	-
Outreach Donations	7,872	-	7,872
Weymouth Altar Guild Interest	447	-	447
Income from Investments for Scholarships	19,331	-	19,331
Other Restricted Income (<i>Flowers, All Souls, Music, etc.</i>)	27,182	-	27,182
Total Income	317,010	262,177	54,833
2021 Expenses (Excludes Capital Improvement Disbursements)			
Total Operating Expense	(222,812)	(222,812)	
Outreach Disbursements	(12,040)	-	(12,040)
Scholarships and Educational Grants (<i>Disbursed from RI Thomas Scholarship and Sarah Davenport funds</i>)	(7,500)	-	(7,500)
Other Expenses (<i>Flowers, All Souls Garden and Music Expense</i>)	(1,782)	-	(1,782)
Total Expense	(244,134)	(222,812)	(21,322)
2021 Capital Improvement Income			
Capital Improvement Donations (<i>Building Fund, East Elevation, Tower</i>)	63,073	-	63,073
Total Income	63,073	-	63,073
2021 Capital Improvement Expenses			
Capital Improvements	(7,598)	-	(7,598)
Depreciation Expense	(373,263)	-	(373,263)
Total Disbursements	(380,861)	-	(380,861)
Net Investment Earnings/(Losses)	102,966	-	102,966
Change in Net Assets	(141,947)	39,365	(181,312)

2022 Budget Projection

Before discussing the projected budget for 2022, I would like our parish members to understand how much time Terry Mello, our retiring treasurer, has spent over the last seven years in fulfilling her responsibilities. Many of the systems now in place were developed and instituted by Terry, so when and wherever you bump into her, please express your appreciation. Her work will make mine a lot easier.

Preparing 2022's budget was in some ways straightforward while in other ways a bit of speculation. The revenue or income side was straightforward, based on a combination of pledges received and historical giving. The primary drivers are pledges, projected donations from givers of record (those who give regularly but do not pledge), endowment withdrawals, and rents from the apartment and parking lot. It is encouraging to see that several 2021 givers of record have pledged for 2022, which is the reason the latter category's projected 2022 total is expected to decrease from 2021. In contrast to 2020 and 2021, a withdrawal from the endowment will be necessary in 2022. Finally, the rentals shown for the apartment and parking lot are subject to contractual agreements.

On the expenditure side, approximately 85% of the total can be considered fixed. The 85% includes staff salaries and benefits, the diocesan allocation, heating oil and utilities. Administrative expenses,

consisting of office expenses and independent contractor expenses (the largest amount being \$7,000 for the outside accounting firm), constitute another 10%. The remaining line items are small and are trickier to budget. Both Terry and I took separate stabs at these based on our respective business experiences, judgments, and St. Thomas' past history. Mostly, I deferred to Terry's amounts because she has had seven years of experience with the church's accounts. The one troubling me the most, reflecting my pessimism, is the cost of heating oil. My pessimism is based primarily on price, as the church is not locked in on price. Using five years of past usage history from PJ Willey, I estimated the gallons used in a normal year (not 2020 or 2021) and took a guess at future prices given the commodity markets, our country's current bias against US production and global events.

The proposed budget (*shown on next page*) does show a deficit of \$16,000, even after the \$46,000 withdrawal from the endowment. The \$46,000 is based on 5% of the trailing three-years' average endowment balance. While I don't normally like to propose a budget deficit, we need to be realistic given the current uncertainty. Clearly, if the budget is close there will need to be additional funds withdrawn from the endowment. Given the absence of withdrawals during the past two years, I do not have a philosophical problem with this. However, if this trend continues into 2023, we will need to have some discussions on how to deal with it. Assuming the deficit comes to \$16,000, the total percentage withdrawn during 2022 will be slightly under 7% of the trailing three-years' average endowment balance.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Ebbert

2021 Results and 2022 Budget

	2021 Budget	2021 Actual	2022 Budget
Operating Income			
Pledge and General Donations	172,000	162,095	161,600
Endowment Income used for Operations	33,000	-	46,000
Rental Income and Facility Use Donations	27,800	31,405	31,276
Fundraising Income	-	-	-
Other Income and Donations	200	50	100
Total Operating Income	233,000	193,550	238,976
Operating Expense			
Salaries and Benefits	159,600	142,534	158,272
Diocesan Allocation	39,500	39,362	32,280
Church Facilities Expenses	25,100	21,633	34,982
Administrative Expenses	23,500	17,284	24,600
Other Operating Expenses	5,300	1,999	4,600
Total Operating Expense	253,000	222,812	254,734
Grant from Diocese - PPP Loan	-	41,827	-
Net Operating Income/(Loss)	(20,000)	12,565	(15,758)

FINANCE AND ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

In January the Finance and Endowment Committees were combined to form one single committee at the direction of the Rector, allowing for better organization and flow of information.

Members of the combined Finance/Endowment Committee (FEC) are William Freeman, Lucy Ebbert (Chair) and Suzanne Scott. Ex Officio members are Rev. Cannon Lisa Smith, Rector; Elizabeth Moran, Senior Warden; and Terry Mello, Treasurer. Bill Freeman has taken over as Chair effective January 1, 2022. With the combining of the committees, the objective was for the (FEC) to meet quarterly to review financials and semi-annually to discuss endowment.

The (FEC) focused on these projects:

- Consolation of Endowment Accounts
- Short-term investing
- Listing and funding of the Obligation Accounts (Restricted Funds)
- Working with Terry Mello to define her role as treasurer and structure transition procedures
- Interviewing accounting agencies and discussing candidates for treasurer
- Budgeting for calendar year 2022

In looking into the future, the (FEC) needs to begin working on a legacy strategy. Gifts of this nature have helped the church with both brick/mortar projects and educational projects.

Personally, I want to thank Terry for her seven years of dedication and loyalty to the church as treasurer. She has worked fearlessly for seven years, especially during the transition and COVID, to ensure that St. Thomas' was using "best accounting procedures." Her integrity has elevated St. Thomas' standards. Again, many thanks to Terry for an incredible job!

Respectfully submitted,

Lucy Ebbert, Finance and Endowment Chair

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to our team of office volunteers, St. Thomas' office is open Tuesdays through Fridays, 9 a.m. until noon. This team (Susan Scott on Tuesdays, Jan Lyle on Wednesdays, Diane Kirkman on Thursdays, and Grayce Sivigny on Fridays) works with Rev. Lisa and Terry Mello to ensure that St. Thomas' is a welcoming church, and that parishioners and visitors has access to the information and services they need. They make sure the church is open Tuesday through Friday mornings; answer the phone and emails; greet visitors; mail Tidings and sermons to shut-ins without Internet service; proof, post, print, and fold the bulletins; manage the calendar and the service schedule; email readings and prayers of the people to readers; pick up the mail; and perform all the other tasks that any office administrator might be asked to handle—all for the love of this community.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Rector's Class — This class continued through the fall 2021. We studied the *Enneagram*, and the Rt Rev Steven Charleston's book *The Four Vision Quests of Jesus*, among other offerings. These classes were facilitated or taught by the Rector and others. All classes are open to everyone. Classes are slated to resume in Lent this year. They will be held either on Zoom or in person or in a combination of both.

Bible Study — *Brother Donovan Bowley*—Wednesdays, after the 9:30 am service from 11 am-12 pm on Zoom. When we come together in person again, there will be a fellowship hour with tea/coffee/cookies at 10 am before the bible study starts. All are welcome.

EfM (Education for Ministry) — Co-mentors: *Brother Donovan Bowley and the Rev. Dr. Rosalee Glass*. Wednesdays, conference room 4:00-6:30 pm. After our building shut down due to the pandemic, this course moved online, successfully. A 4-year course in Holy Scripture, Church History and Theology offered (now in its 21st year) at St. Thomas' and provided by the School of Theology at Sewanee, University of the South. Good course for those who have the interest but do not want to take a degree in Theology. EfM will be on sabbatical during 2022.

Forum/Book Studies/Classes — Forum 11:00 am-12:00 pm, Guild Room, usually convenes on an ad-hoc basis when there is interest or a timely topic. This coming year we are working on offering a special series called *Sacred Ground*, a facilitated discussion on the topic of racial injustice which is offered through the Episcopal Church.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Canon Lisa Fry

BIBLE STUDY

As we near the end of this second year of the pandemic, we are realizing that some of the “temporary” changes have been useful in ways we did not anticipate. We have been meeting entirely online by Zoom since early in the pandemic. Some call in by phone (landline and smartphone). Others join the meeting by computer. Those with smartphones and computers can see each other on screen; everyone can be heard.

Every Wednesday morning St. Thomas' Church sends out the log-in link for our meeting via Mailchimp. We meet from 11 AM to noon on that day, for a very lively informal discussion of the scripture readings for the coming Sunday. We encourage participants to log in a bit early, about 10:15, to allow for occasional log-in problems. All will enter via the Zoom “waiting room.” The host will bring you into the meeting from there. Come join us online!

This past year, we've had about 10 regular participants, including one from Michigan and another from a different parish. We do look forward to eventually resuming our accustomed meeting around the St. Thomas' conference table, with refreshments, but with the added ability to still allow folks to participate from where they are, via Zoom.

Br. Donovan Bowley, BSG

EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

Since March 2020 we have met by Zoom on Wednesday afternoons, September to June, from 4:00-6:30 p.m. This is a 4-year course in Holy Scripture, Church History and Theology (this was its 21st year at St. Thomas!), and it is provided through the School of Theology at Sewanee of the University of the South. We cover Hebrew Scriptures in a student's first year, then New Testament in the second year, history of Christianity in the third year, and contemporary church issues and theology in the fourth year. Each year we can accommodate folks in any year of study, as this is a "one-room school," with the advantage that while concentrating on their own year, each participant hears and can participate in discussion of the materials for all four years. Essentially, this gives them four years to become familiar with each study year. Graduates receive a Certificate of Completion from the School of Theology of the University of the South. This past year we had five students, two of whom (Gwen Prosser and Jacqueline Recht) graduated in June with their Certificates.

We would like to have interested participants register by the end of June, in order to begin early in September. Our limit is about 10 people in the seminar.

This year we are taking a break, but plan to resume in September 2022 if there are enough participants interested. If you would like to participate, please speak with either of us.

Co-mentors: *The Rev. Dr. Rosalee Glass and Br. Donovan Bowley, BSG*

ACOLYTES

"An acolyte's purpose is rooted in our love of God, our faithfulness is seen in our willingness to serve responsibly, and our loyalty is determined in how carefully we carry out our duties." – A Manual for Acolytes (Michno)

An acolyte's role is critical within each service. These dedicated youth and adults ring the Sanctus bells, light the candles, carry the cross and torches, help the priest or deacon set the Lord's table, move sacred items from place to place, and occasionally help the priest when the inevitable unexpected things happen.

This year's adult acolytes were Sandy Lyle, Shirley Fierro and Pam Bardon. This year's youth acolytes were Lola Black, Hettie Bickham, George Bickham, Bea Bickham, Esme Black and Charlotte Watkins. This fall they were joined by Olivia and George Johns, and Volly Watkins.

Our teams were smaller this year, as we distanced for Covid, but all acolytes have been very faithful and even attended a "back to serving" refresher course, where the older acolytes, the deacon and the rector trained new youth for service.

We always welcome new acolytes to be trained. Our next training will happen in the winter of 2022. Anyone aged 7 and up who would like to acolyte, please email the Rector at rector@stthomascamdenme.org.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Canon Lisa Fry

ALTAR GUILD

After a year of no in-person church services, the Altar Guild was finally able to re-group in March. Much had to be done so the church would look bright and shiny again. Linens were yellowed, silver was dull, candles needed attention and the sanctuary (altar area) needed a spruce up. With the help of Vicki Boetsch, Shirley Fierro, Elizabeth Moran, Jackie Recht and Bill Freeman this was accomplished.

At this point Pat Ayers launders all of the small linens weekly. Pat and Joan Bennett polish silver once a month. Vicki and Shirley come in every other Friday, when available, to set up for the Sunday services. Elizabeth and Jackie volunteer for the alternate Fridays. Jackie, Bill and I work after the 10:00 Sunday service. I launder the large linens.

We really need to increase our membership. Currently two of our members are unable to assist. By volunteering you would commit to one hour of your time around 9:00 or 10:00 on a Friday morning. Hopefully if we have several volunteers, it might be for one Friday a month. Right now, it would be for two Fridays a month. Men as well as women are invited. Anyone who joins us would be well trained and working with a current member.

If anyone would consider joining us, we would welcome you warmly. Please see me or call me at 236-2396.

Thank you,
Susan Freeman

FLOWER GUILD

Beautiful arrangements once again grace the altar and in the chapel weekly due in part to the Flower Guild. Thank you all—past and present—who prepare the flowers and who take such pleasure in honoring God. We encourage everyone to sign up to be a Flower Guild member—no experience required. Members will be available to instruct.

Flowers may be given in memory of, or thanksgiving for someone or something.

There are three ways to give flowers:

- Bring your own garden flowers
- Purchase flowers
- Write a check for \$50 and flowers will be purchased

Donations are being accepted now to give flowers throughout 2022! If you wish to donate flowers there is a sign-up sheet in the Sun Room.

Thank you all again—for old members, new members and donations in 2021!

Have a blessed year!
St. Thomas' Flower Guild

LITURGICAL MINISTERS

First Service:

The 7:30 service assistants began the year on Mother's Day 2021 with Pam Bardon and Sandy Lyle serving at the altar. A few months later Shirley Fierro joined them. We had seven lectors including, Pat Ayers, Pam Bardon, Shirley Fierro, Edmund Hartt, Jan Lyle, Sandy Lyle, and Terry Mello. Staring out there were seven ushers; three are currently taking a break for various reasons. The ushers are Isa Babb, Jean Cox, Peggy Daniels, Edmund Hartt, Jan Lyle, Carlos Mello and Marilyn Smith. All of these people have been volunteering for a very long time. I would like to thank all of them for serving the attendees of St. Thomas' 7:30 service. As we begin 2022, we have two serving at the altar, four lectors, and four ushers.

Yours in Faith and Love,
Jan Lyle

Second Service:

Lectors:

We appreciate the dedication of our members who each Sunday are responsible for reading the lessons and leading the Prayers of the People. 2021 was a challenging year with our readers stepping up to the task of both recording readings as well as in-person readings. Our youth members continue to actively read during services, which we all enjoy. During 2021 we welcomed Benjy Lowery, a new 10 AM reader. We appreciate the dedication of all of our readers. We are always interested in having new parishioners who would be willing to serve the church in this important ministry. Please contact Bill Freeman (236-2396) if you are interested in this ministry.

Our 10 a.m. Lectors in 2021 were: Anna Black, Bea Bickham, George Bickham, Hettie Bickham, Br. Donovan Bowley, Jeff Conrad, Millie Crocker, Bill Freeman, Roy Gilley, Chris Glass, Sarah Groman, Dean Jackson, Kate Jackson, Benjy Lowry, John Mattern, Haunani Wallace, Ralph (Doc) Wallace, Charlotte Watkins, and Sally Williamson.

Thank you for your faithful service to St. Thomas'.

Respectfully submitted
Bill Freeman

Ushers:

Ushering at St. Thomas' is an easy way for parishioners to serve our parish. Over the years we have been fortunate to have a core group of volunteers for the regular 10:00 AM services and occasional special services. We are also thankful for a number of summer residents who regularly serve when they are in town.

During 2021 Joan Bennett, one of our most trusted and reliable volunteers, retired. Joan has been an usher for as long as I can remember and probably is more adept at it than all of us other ushers combined. I remember when Joan injured one of her wrists, and I presumed she would be unable to usher for months. When mentioning this to her a week following the injury, she asked why I thought she could not usher. As she said, all you need is one arm and two legs. Joan could handle the entire sanctuary by herself, no need for a second volunteer. When you see or speak with Joan, please be sure to thank her for her years of dedicated service.

During 2021 our group, in addition to Joan, included Dean Jackson, Bill Freeman, Roy Gilley, Leamon Scott, Phil Groman, Ed Williamson, Mike Moore, Scott Chrysler and Lucy Ebbert. We were also pleased to have Ted Conlon when weather permitted the drive from Boothbay.

Additionally, we are pleased to have the children serve! This has been one of our group's objectives, and I am happy to say that it will resume in 2022 once the pandemic threats have receded. We regularly ask our youth to offer the oblations and to, as one of them likes to say, "do the money." Their participation helps bring them closer to our worship services. Their positive feedback, along with that of their parents, has been much appreciated.

Moving into 2022, we are hoping that things get back to normal. If you or any of your children have ever thought of volunteering, please speak to one of us. You do not have to be asked to join our group. Ushering is not hard to do and is a wonderful way to serve St. Thomas'. And it comes with one bonus most jobs do not offer—no one is ever fired.

Sincerely,
Jim Ebbert

LOAVES AND FISHES MINISTRY

Thanks to the enthusiastic oversight of Ron Staschak, from St Peter's, the teams from local churches, synagogue, and youth groups, still alternate once a month to fill each weekend slot.

Because of concerns with indoor dining, exacerbating the spread of Covid 19 and its mutations, all luncheon meals are served take-out style in compostable containers. We serve from the door adjacent to the parking lot so people can drive right up and obtain a meal swiftly. Plastic cutlery is available if folks want to eat in their car. Many guests take more than one meal to take back to neighbors or family members.

I have been pleased to have the help of Cathy Harrel or Gwen Prosser on the third Saturday of the month, which is St. Thomas' day. Usually, I prepare the meal at home and reheat it at St. Peter's before serving. Anyone interested in preparing a side dish, casserole, or dessert, should contact me at 236-2421 so I can plan the next meal accordingly. I usually prepare enough food for 25 servings, although often fewer meals are needed.

Our church has been a contributing team to this ministry since the mid-nineties, and now more than ever during these uncertain times, it is a most necessary one.

Respectfully submitted,
Pam Bardon

VIDEO MINISTRY

For the first four months of 2021, a group of dedicated volunteers spent tireless hours working to provide an online service to you on most Sundays. They took a well-deserved break on the Sunday that the Diocese produced their diocese-wide service. But remember, they did not stop when we were able to open our doors! From May through December, at least one online service was produced monthly. This is truly a labor of love and a true testament to their dedication to St. Thomas' and our community.

Thank you to: Pat Ayers, Bea Bickham, George Bickham, Hettie Bickham, Rachel Bickham, Br. Donovan Bowley, Clarissa Brown, Jeff Conrad, Millie Crocker, Bill Freeman, The Rev. Gwen Fry, The Rev. Canon Lisa Fry, Michelle Gabrielson, Thor Gabrielson, Chris Glass, The Rev. Dr. Rosalee Glass, Sarah Groman, Edmund Hartt, Ella Johanson, Andrew Moran, Elizabeth Moran, The Rev. Abby Pettee, Doc Wallace and Haunani Wallace. St. Thomas' cannot thank you enough for your dedication; we could not have done it without you!

WEBSITE AND COMMUNICATIONS

In 2021 we continued to strive to improve our communications and our website. We currently have 151 subscribers to MailChimp (email communications). We were able to allow subscribers to choose what emails they want to receive. We send out daily emails of what is happening on that day and every Friday we send out our weekly e-newsletter, Tidings. We mail a copy of Tidings and Rev. Lisa's sermon to those members that do not have access to the internet or have requested hard copies.

Our website is updated weekly (sometimes more often). We continue to try and improve the website. If there is something that is not on the website that you would like to see, please do not hesitate to reach out and make a suggestion. We will do our best to accommodate your request.

MEET YOUR NOMINEES

VESTRY:

SARAH GROMAN



Sarah grew up in England and studied medicine in London. She and her husband Phil met in Nepal and married in 1984. Work took them to Africa and South America for 25 years and they moved to Maine in December 2010. They eventually bought an old farmhouse in Union and have been regular members of St. Thomas' Church since 2013. They have two adult children, Christopher and Anna who both live in Maine.

Sarah has been on the vestry before, from 2018-2021, is currently on the COVID taskforce, is a lector both for in-person and on-line services, including diocese-wide services, leads Noonday Prayer on Mondays and loves to arrange church flowers. Throughout the pandemic the Rector's class and Wayfinders on Zoom have provided vital fellowship and connection.

Sarah has always loved flowers, the outdoors, walking and travelling. Her current passions include gardening and discovering, appreciating and creating beauty. When she is forced indoors she has time to reclaim "lost" creative skills with the overall intention of using them to create beautiful spaces, inside and out.

KENDRA WATKINS



Kendra moved to Midcoast Maine in 2002 and took the position of the first Assistant District Attorney to specialize in juvenile matters for Prosecutorial District 6. Soon thereafter she was appointed by the Governor to the Board of Visitors for the Mountain View Youth Development Center. She met her husband Jon Watkins in 2004 at Camden Harbor while he was serving as the First Mate of S/Y *Sumurun*. They married in 2007, and in 2008 Kendra left the DA's office to start a solo legal practice specializing in representing children in juvenile defense, emancipation and as guardian ad litem. Jon and Kendra have four children, Luke, Charlotte, Wolfe and Violet, whom they homeschool. The family

began attending St. Thomas' when they moved from Thomaston to Camden in 2016. In 2018, Jon began his own company as a for-hire boat captain and property manager for private rental properties in Camden.