

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church



ANNUAL REPORT

168th Annual Parish Meeting

January 29, 2023

ST. THOMAS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

OFFICERS. STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

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

VESTRY

Outgoing Vestry Members:
Edmund Hartt, Junior Warden
Dean Jackson
Eileen Morelli
Sarah Groman (*completed one-year term*)

Terms End 2024:

Jan Lyle
Benjy Lowry
Kendra Watkins

Nominees for Vestry:

Br. Donovan Bowley, BSG – Junior Warden
Term Ending 2025:
Sarah Groman
Term Ending 2026:
Gwen Prosser
Jacqueline Recht

2023 Appointment to Clerk:

Anne Rogers-Popejoy

2021 PARISH STATISTICS

Communicants in Good Standing:

Average Sunday Attendance:

In-Person: 62

Online Viewing 2022: 34

Marriages: 0

Burials: 2

New Members:

Phyllis Barry
Antonia Benson
Russ and Noreen Eagleston
Kellie McGuire
Paul Popejoy, Anne Rogers-Popejoy & Ronan
Cheryl Reif
Steve Ruelke
Cheryl White
Ronald and Christine Zdrojeski

Deaths in the Community:

Jim Gambill
Mary Wheelwright
Paul Whittaker

*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.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Meeting Agenda Page 1

2022 Annual Parish Meeting Minutes Page 2

REPORTS

Rector Page 3

Deacon Page 6

Minister of Music Page 6

Senior Warden Page 6

Junior Warden Page 7

Financials

 Financial Review Page 8

 Statement of Activity Page 8

 Statement of Financial Position Page 9

 2023 Budget Projection Page 10

 2022 Results and 2023 Budget Page 10

Finance and Endowment Committee Page 11

Office Volunteers Page 11

Christian Formation Page 11

Bible Study Page 12

Education for Ministry Page 12

Acolytes Page 13

Altar Guild Page 13

Flower Guild Page 13

Liturgical Ministers Page 14

Camden Area Christian Food Panty Page 15

Video and Communications Page 15

MEET YOUR NOMINEES

Junior Warden and Vestry Members Page 16

Clerk of the Vestry and Vestry Members Page 17

NOTES Page 19

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. Discussion of St. Thomas' Finances
8. Presentation of the 2023 Budget, as approved by the Vestry
9. Goodbye to outgoing Vestry, and Introduction and election of new Vestry members
10. Election of Diocesan Convention delegates
11. Sabbatical Discussion and Q & A for the Rector
12. Closing prayer and adjournment

2022 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MINUTES

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
February 6, 2022
167th Annual Meeting (Hybrid meeting)

The meeting opened in prayer by The Reverend Canon Lisa Fry, Rector, at 10:19 am.

The rector is proud of all of us, as we have streamed Services successfully which will include streaming Wednesday Healing Services, Ash Wednesday Service as well as Holy Week Services. What we have accomplished throughout the Pandemic will affect future generations. This year Wi-Fi was installed in the Church which makes these solutions possible-- and more possible going forward. The Parish tried new ways of doing things and have adapted. The Diocese cannot believe all that we have accomplished. We continue to offer on YouTube Noonday prayer during the week and Compline twice a week with a wonderful following. Thank you to each of us for putting forth effort. We have been able to pivot quickly and in turn this meets the needs of everyone.

Senior Warden, Elizabeth Moran: There is work to be carried out on a revision of the bylaws and we are seeking volunteers to help accomplish this project.

A motion was made by Carlos Mello and seconded by Donovan to accept the 166th Annual Meeting Minutes of January 2021. All were in favor.

Treasurer for 2021, Terry Mello: The income was lower as were the expenses. We received \$41,000 from the Diocese (PPP) which left us with a surplus of \$12,000. The Endowment is in decent shape. Operational Expenses: Donations were down. Please consider pledging if you have not done so already. Terry thanked everyone for allowing her to be Treasurer for the last several years. Thank you, Terry, for all your work for the parish.

Treasurer going forward, Jim Ebbert: Compared to last year the percentage of income/revenue from pledges has increased. The Givers of Record have decreased. An expectation of using the trailing 3 years as an average of \$46,000 or 5% would have been used from the endowment and this will be included in the budget for 2022. The Diocesan assessment is \$32,280 for 2022. An added expense will be an outside bookkeeper at the cost of \$7,000. Facilities Expense: considering the upcoming energy deliveries (including oil) reflects the best estimate. The budget for this year is \$255,000 which is a \$16,000 deficit. Last year before PPP we had close to a \$30,000 deficit. If the Budget increases additional money will come out of the endowment. In 2016 the endowment was not touched and in 2020 only a small amount came out of the endowment due to the PPP loan. Please pledge especially if you follow us on YouTube.

Election of New Vestry Members: This has been a rough couple of years and all Vestry members were thanked by the rector for their ability to work through the many difficult facets of change. Two people have agreed to join the Vestry: Sarah Groman and Kendra Watkins. A motion was made by Edmund

Hartt and seconded by Jan Lyle to accept the nominations. The vote was unanimous to accept Sarah and Kendra as Vestry members.

We are considering reducing the size of the Vestry – electing 2 people a year instead of 3 people per year. No questions were asked at this time.

The Rector adjourned the meeting - discussion on Bell Tower Project began.

Respectfully submitted,
Shirley F. Fierro, Clerk of the Vestry

RECTOR

This is the first year since 2019 that we've had a whole year of worship—LIVE—in the church. It'll be a little while longer until we can say that we were live AND we streamed every service to our community and guests. We are getting closer to that goal with the assistance of Terry Mello and Luke Watkins, but we could use a couple more volunteers at both services. I would also like us to have the ability—if there is no volunteer on any given Sunday, to have the ability to just turn on the camera at the back of the church and let it run. We'll get there. It was only 3 years ago that this relatively new technology entered St. Thomas'.

We have welcomed 13 new parishioners this year. Since the pandemic began, we have added nearly 20 new members through our door, and so this year we have called together a newcomer welcome committee to try and ensure that the new members have a chance to meet fellow parishioners, vestry and clergy and get involved with whatever interests them.

A lot happened in St. Thomas parish in 2022: the vestry put a committee in place to look over and update our by-laws for St. Thomas'. The task force included Elizabeth Moran, Eileen Morelli, Kendra Watkins and me, and we have sent the adaptations of the By Laws to the diocese for review. We expect to vote on them as a parish very soon.

The Episcopal Church and the dioceses that comprise it have been tackling the subject of racial reconciliation and justice work. It was the subject of debate and resolutions at the General Convention this year, and a class called Sacred Ground was developed to facilitate discussion within churches. In preparation for Sacred Ground, our church offered a rector's class to read and discuss a book called, "This Book is Antiracist". It was challenging and eye-opening. Sacred Ground is a class that has been offered to the Episcopal Church to tackle the subject of racial justice and reconciliation. I'd like us to offer this to our parishioners and the larger community with the aid of a specially trained facilitator.

2022 saw the return of the Easter Vigil to St. Thomas, as we hosted the church year's most dramatic service. We had a full house as we hosted 4 congregations to participate in this glorious, ancient service, listened to our faith story and lit the fire of Christ in the crossing of our church.

Then, in May, the Fry's went on vacation and got Covid. Many parishioners followed suit, and we had a cluster of families go out of town, become ill, and live to tell the tale. It is a tribute to our hardiness

that it hardly fazed us. It definitely annoyed us, but our booster shots helped make the illnesses relatively mild.

2022 saw the General Convention return to our church—a year late and with MANY precautions. As I told you when I returned, it changed my life. It allowed me to see our church with all its diversity: many races, genders, neurodiversity's, ages, experience in church—it was glorious. We have a new director of the house of deputies: Julia Ayala Harris. And in 2024 we will elect a new Presiding Bishop. I was once again elected to be a part of Maine's delegation.

We opened a new lending library located at the far end of our Sunroom. It contains books not affiliated with our formal library that are free for everyone to take home without any sign out procedure, just returning them when finished.

We have started having coffee hour again, and it has been a resounding success. A huge thank you goes to Ruth Tolman and Kate Jackson for their unflagging support for this fellowship opportunity. Another huge thank you goes to our food volunteers who have outdone themselves again and again, and everyone is happy to have time to chat, catch up, and chase things down with swords. (If you don't understand that—you might want to drop in on coffee hour! 😊)

After a small hiccup, we have a great new Sexton, Tony Coyne. He does more to keep our building clean and set up in 10 hours a week than I thought humanly possible.

Mini ministries are very popular: these are small things that need doing around the church, which we publicize as needed. Thank you all—mini volunteers!

The bishop came for his annual visitation, talked with the vestry and rector at length, preached and celebrated at both services, and was feted with food three times that weekend. At the end of it all, he commented on how much he'd really enjoyed his stay. "Visiting your church has been so much fun!"

The Bookkeepers who have been working with us since last January are doing a great job.

With AA's financial assistance, we refinished the floors in parish hall, guild room and front hallway.

Now on to upcoming events.

This will be the year to get a paid Administrator back on board for 10 hours a week. Our volunteers are doing a fabulous job, but there are things that are still falling through the cracks. Our church deserves someone who can keep track of the many things that need to get done, and to delegate them, or do them.

I'm excited about my impending Sabbatical – not just because I will be taking time to rest, reflect and recharge, as well studying "New Ways to be the Church" –but I'm also excited about what you will be experiencing.

The vestry and I have discussed various scenarios of what we could do for worship from May through August. Here's what we have decided—and why:

- We'll worship together during those 4 months, one service at 9:00am.
- We'll do a mixture of Rite One and Rite Two—doing one for a month, then the other, then repeat.
- We'll have 4 different supply clergy, one for each month.

We could have just continued with our usual two services, but the vestry and I think it's important that the congregations have this chance to meet and mingle- get to know each other. While I'm away, the church will feel fuller and more vibrant with all of you worshipping together. I also think it's important to have each service shift its time—to make this more of a shared experience. Together you will encourage each other. Together you will get to experience the breadth of services. Together you will make new friends, enjoy one another's strengths, and enjoy the new Celebrants! Together you will experience our coffee hours! Envision this time as one where the only thing you'll have to worry about – is making room for a crowd! Don't worry, I'm not secretly planning to permanently go to one service. In September, we'll go back to 7:30 and 10:00, Rite 1 and Rite 2.

My rector's class came to a close in December, but we will soon be adding a women's book group. If you are at all interested, please let me know.

We continue partnering with the world's best AA group: opening our doors 7 days a week for meetings, making our spaces flexible on major holidays for special meetings and events, and they continue to contribute in by assisting us with financing the floor refinishing, extra money to assist with heating costs, and most recently—offering to help with small projects around the building.

Episcopal 101 has begun, and we discuss things unique to the Episcopal Church like the 3-legged stool, the number of sacraments, the Elizabethan Settlement... It's fun, it's interesting, and the people are great. Come join us on the 3rd Sunday of each month—taking a break during the summer in 2023.

We officially have more children attending St. Thomas than any other Episcopal Church in the area. Our Christmas pageant was written, acted and directed by youth with the assistance of the rector and parents. Our new Sunday School class: Sunday Theatre—is off to a messy, boisterous and fun start. It will continue to meet the first and second Sundays of each month—with a break for summer vacation May-August.

We are brainstorming ways to bring theatre to St. Thomas'. We already share our space with the Camden Shakespeare Festival, but wouldn't it be fun -and a good way to spread the gospel -with the visual and performing arts as well? The goal: to involve people from the community in this endeavor and, in doing so, to touch the hearts and minds of our artists and audience. Stay tuned for more.

As you can see, we have a lot on our plate for the upcoming year. Remember to enjoy your summer of worship, treat each other well, and always remember: Jesus loves you.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa+

DEACON

The Rev. Dr. Rosalee Glass

I have been retired as a regular member of the clergy at St. Thomas' Camden since May, 2016. Nonetheless, since the departure of The Rev. Abby Pettee in 2021, I have returned to serve liturgically as deacon at the 10 AM Sunday services. In addition, in October while the Rector was away on vacation, I worked with the Whittaker family and officiated at the Paul Whittaker funeral.

It has been a joy and a privilege to participate in the work of our parish community!

---*Rosalee*

MINISTER OF MUSIC

We have had a challenging year. Regrouping after Covid has been difficult. BUT--

- Your dedicated Chancel Choir meets on Thursdays at 5 PM to rehearse anthems and other music for St. Thomas'. Our music covers a wide range of styles, from hymn tunes to Shaker to early Renaissance. Besides the work of producing good music, we also have community, connection, and friendship. Some of our activities revolve around food, of course! We have a get-together and dinner to celebrate our return in the fall, and gather for a choir Christmas party. In between, we celebrate birthdays and other special occasions.
- St. Thomas' hosted the Easter Vigil, with several members of local choirs participating in the service with us.
- There was no Lenten music series this past year due to the pandemic.
- The organ and pianos were tuned for Christmas and Easter.
- I have ordered anthem books and some other music for the choir.
- Our Youth Choir is rehearsing, although their rehearsals do not happen every week.

We welcome new members! Come join us!!

Respectfully Submitted,

Clarissa Brown, AAGO MM

SENIOR WARDEN

From my perspective in 2022 as Senior Warden, it was a transitional year as we moved closer to normalcy after a very difficult period. Led by our Rector, we returned to in-person services every Sunday as well as in-person Vestry meetings and also various committee meetings. However we continued our online services on designated Sundays as well as during the week. This enabled our homebound parishioners to attend worship services. Many thanks to Carlos and Terry Mello for making worship online possible.

How did the year unfold for me as Senior Warden? As a member of the Building and Grounds Committee, I identified areas outside in our gardens that needed attention. We hope to create a

maintenance plan for the All Soul's Garden as well as design appropriate signage to remember those parishioners who rest there.

Last winter and spring, work began on organizing the church archives in our dedicated room upstairs above the parish hall. We were motivated to do so by a special visit by the grandson of Father Ralph Hayden who was the rector of St. Thomas from 1919 to 1933 and who chaired the construction programs for our church building and parish hall as well as for the Camden Public Library and Camden Amphitheatre.

A recent project has been an inventory and replacement of our worn Prayer Books. We are asking parishioners to help with this by donating funds to purchase new copies that may be given in memory or in honor of loved ones.

A new ministry is that of the "Birthday Card" ministry now that we have an up-to-date membership list.

Finally, the Rector and I hope to re-vitalize Altar Guild by seeking out and training new members. Also an inventory of our "treasures" needs to be done for insurance purposes as well as accurate record-keeping.

I would like to thank all the members of the parish for their love and support during this past year. My family was strengthened by your prayers and well-wishes.

Blessings to you all,
Elizabeth A. Moran

JUNIOR WARDEN

The Building and Grounds Committee and I have made good progress this past year.

- The roof plans for the chapel are just about complete. We are beginning to find qualified contractors to do the deconstruction and rebuilding.
- The floors in the Parish Hall and connecting hallways were refinished last spring. We urge all to not drag tables over the floor.
- The Wood St. entrance side of the building was repainted. It looks much better.
- The outside lighting on the Chestnut St. side of the church has been somewhat addressed. It works, but it needs an electric eye switch installed in the circuit, to turn it on and off as needed.
- We had several of the ventilator stained glass windows rebuilt, along with one in the chapel. Over time the lead between the pieces of glass oxidizes and expands, causing the windows to bulge and eventually fail. We had all of the windows assessed, in the future more will have to be rebuilt, as they last roughly 110 years.
- After review, the vestry has authorized the removal of the Vulcan stove in the kitchen, to be replaced with two domestic models that are easier to operate and will not pollute the indoor air.

Going forward, more exterior painting needs to be done. Replacing the gas fired water heater with a heat pump one should be considered. And the chapel roof project will continue.

Edmund Hartt

FINANCIALS

2022 Financial Review

As we enter 2022, we want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support of St. Thomas'. The St. Thomas' community, once again, has answered the call. Your support enabled us to send \$3,100 to charities, ranging from the Camden Area Christian Food Pantry, Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen, and other special needs of our community. In 2022 we awarded scholarships totaling \$7,500 to three of our students to help with their educational expenses. When we began the year, we projected a \$20,400 Operating Deficit. That projection did not come to pass because of your support and the work the staff and our many volunteers continue to do to keep our expenses down.

Following are two reports for your information— *2022 Statement of Activity* and *Statement of Financial Position (2022 and 2021)*. The *2022 Results and 2023 Budget* report can be found on page 10. As you can see, our financial position is healthy as we enter 2022. We would not be in this position without your support.

I want to personally take to opportunity to thank Rev. Lisa, Wardens, Vestry and the Finance and Endowment Committee for their support and trust you continue to provide to me. *"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."* – Helen Keller

Faithfully,
Terry Mello

2022 Statement of Activity

	Total	Unrestricted	Restricted
2022 Income Received (Excludes Capital Improvement Income)			
Total Operating Income	222,993	222,993	-
Bequest	50,000		50,000
Outreach Donations	7,756	-	7,756
Weymouth Altar Guild Interest	496	-	496
Interest Received from Non-Operating Bank Accounts	126		126
Other Restricted Income (Bequests, Flowers, Music, etc.)	2,647	-	2,647
Total Income	284,018	222,993	61,025
2022 Disbursements (Excludes Capital Improvement Disbursements)			
Total Operating Expense	(235,558)	(235,558)	-
Outreach Disbursements	(3,046)	-	(3,046)
Scholarships from RI Thomas	(7,500)	-	(7,500)
Other Expenses (Flowers, Music, etc.)	(3,989)	-	(3,989)
Total Expense	(250,094)	(235,558)	(14,536)
2022 Capital Improvement Income			
Capital Improvement Donations	500	-	500
Interest Earned on Building Fund Accounts	701	-	701
Total Income	1,201	-	1,201
2022 Capital Improvement Disbursements			
Capital Improvements	(52,089)	-	(52,089)
Depreciation Expense	(50,818)	-	(50,818)
Total Disbursements	(102,906)	-	(102,906)
Net Investment Earnings/(Losses)	(212,342)	-	(212,342)
Total Income/(Loss) for all Activities	(280,122)	(12,565)	(267,557)

Statement of Financial Position
As of 12/31/2022 and 12/31/2021

	2022	2021
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
NonRestricted Accounts	53,611	42,692
Restricted Accounts	441,840	457,156
Investments	1,025,343	1,249,466
Account Receivables	10,347	12,286
Other Current Assets	4,819	6,399
Total Current Assets	1,535,960	1,767,999
Fixed Leasehold Assets (Net of Depreciation)		
Building	1,370,475	1,366,958
Other Property	100,000	100,000
Equipment	5,245	7,491
Total Net Fixed Assets	1,475,720	1,474,449
Other Assets		
Diocesan Supervised Investments	125,398	152,527
TOTAL ASSETS	3,137,078	3,394,975
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	7,697	3,228
Other Current Liabilities	26,695	30,675
Long-Term Liabilities		
Other Long-Term Liabilities	3,136	2,078
Total Liabilities	37,528	35,981
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted Net Assets	1,510,110	1,521,405
Restricted Funds		
Investment Accounts	976,473	1,200,595
Building Funds	311,985	380,977
Diocesan Supervised Investments	125,398	152,527
Restricted Funds	63,927	46,668
Restricted Donations	100,364	50,238
Outreach Funds	11,293	6,583
Total Net Assets	3,099,550	3,358,994
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	3,137,078	3,394,975

2023 Budget Projection

Each year the Treasurer, Vestry and Finance Committee work together to develop a reasonable budget for the current year. This year was especially difficult. As you can see in the below presentation, the projected Pledge and Donations are down by 6.7% and Expenses are up by 12.8%. In order to present a balanced 2023 Budget, it was agreed that we would use the undesignated surpluses from 2015, 2016, 2019 and 2020, totaling \$38,370. We will continue to do our best to be good stewards of our church finances. *“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap, for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”* – Luke 6:38

Faithfully,
Terry Mello

2022 Results and 2023 Budget

	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	2023 Budget
Operating Income			
Pledge and General Donations	161,600	158,287	147,700
Endowment Income used for Operations	46,000	31,409.58	44,000
Rental Income and Facility Use Donations	31,276	33,240	32,500
Fundraising Income	-	-	3,000
Other Income and Donations	100	56	100
Total Operating Income	238,976	222,993	227,300
Operating Expense			
Salaries and Benefits	158,272	140,406	160,370
Diocesan Allocation	32,280	32,280	26,800
Church Facilities Expenses	35,445	37,992	47,350
Administrative Expenses	27,600	22,666	27,900
Other Operating Expenses	5,800	2,214	3,250
Total Operating Expense	259,397	235,558	265,670
Net Operating Income/(Loss) before adjustments	(20,421)	(12,565)	(38,370)
Vestry Approved use of Prior Years' Surplus	-	12,565	38,370
Net Operating Income/(Loss) after adjustments	(20,421)	-	-

FINANCE AND ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Current members of the Finance and Endowment Committee are Phil Groman (Chair as of June, 2022) and Bob Bannon. Ex Officio members are Rev. Lisa Fry (Rector), Elizabeth Moran (Senior Warden), and Terry Mello (Treasurer). We acknowledge and thank outgoing members Jim and Lucy Ebbert, Bill Freeman, and Suzanne Scott for the many valuable contributions they made during their time on the committee.

Meetings are held quarterly primarily to monitor our investment funds, review our financial reports, and assist in creating the annual budget at year end. On a monthly basis via email Terry shares the status and analysis of our finances.

Allen Insurance Agency and Financial, as our investment advisor, attends our regular meetings twice yearly in order to provide and update on the financial markets, review our investment performance, and recommend changes should any be necessary.

Overall, in retrospect it has been a surprisingly calm year thanks to Terry's experience and skills. We need two more voting members on the committee in order to meet St. Thomas' By-Law regulations. If this committee is of interest to you, which I know it really is, please contact any of our members for further information.

Respectfully submitted,
Phil Groman

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

The office volunteers enable St. Thomas' office to be open Tuesdays through Thursday, 9 a.m. until noon. This team (Grayce Sivigny on Tuesdays, Jan Lyle on Wednesdays, and Diane Kirkman on Thursdays) works with Rev. Lisa to ensure that St. Thomas' is a welcoming church, and that parishioners and visitors have access to the information and services they need.

The volunteers open the church when the office is open; answer the phone and emails; greet visitors; proof and edit Tidings; mail Tidings and sermons to shut-ins without Internet service; proof, post, print, and fold the bulletins; manage the service-assignment schedule; schedule events; email readings and prayers of the people to readers; order supplies; and perform all the other tasks that any office administrator might be asked to handle.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Sunday School Theatre: For kids of all ages, acting out the bible stories and discussing their relevance in the kids lives. All kids (and their friends) are welcome. 1st & 2nd Sunday of each month in the yellow room at 9:00am! On vacation from May – August in 2023.

Rector's Class: This class was on hiatus for most of the year, coming together in the fall to delve into "*This Book is Antiracist*", a prelude to Sacred Ground, which will be offered in 2023. All classes are open to everyone. Respect for others and their opinions required. All are welcome.

Episcopal 101: For people who want to learn more about the Episcopal Church, whether you've attended a lot of Christian Formation—or none since you were a child! 3rd Sunday of the month at 9:00am in the Conference room. On vacation from May – August in 2023.

Women's Book discussion group, details still being formed.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Canon Lisa Fry

BIBLE STUDY

We have been meeting entirely online by Zoom since early in the pandemic. Most participants join the meeting by computer. One person calls in by phone (landline. 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 10:45, to allow for occasional log-in problems. All enter via the Zoom "waiting room." The host or co-host brings each participant into the meeting from there. Come join us online!

This past year, we've had about 10 regular participants, including one of our former parishioners from Michigan who is our co-host, as well as another person from a different local parish. We do look forward to when we can resume our accustomed meeting around the St. Thomas' conference table, with refreshments - but with the added ability to still allow folks to participate from wherever they are, via Zoom. Whether coming from a distance or ill at home, folks can continue to participate.

If you are interested in Bible Study with us, please contact me.

Br. Donovan Bowley, BSG

EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

For about 21 years, until the second year of the pandemic, St. Thomas Church has had a group of participants in the four-year course, Education for Ministry, sponsored by the School of Theology of the University of the South. Most all of that time it has been ably led by our Deacon, Dr. Rosalie Glass. I have assisted. Due to graduation of two of the participants, we fell below the minimal number at the end of last year's session. We look forward to resuming this interesting course of studies – Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, and Current Developments and Issues in the Church. If you would be interested in participating, please contact me.

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: Shirley Fierro, Sandy Lyle and Pam Bardon
- This year’s youth acolytes : Lola Black, Esme Black, Charlotte Watkins, Wolfe Watkins, Volly Watkins, BC Lowry, Lucy Lowry, Olivia Johns, George Johns.

We welcome new acolytes to be trained. Any child, 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

Everyone is welcome to join the Altar Guild, a service ministry that prepares the table for God’s Eucharist. We currently have 11 people on our roster to help with the various tasks. Join this fun group for this important ministry by offering your time and talent to the care and spirituality that comes from serving God in peace and grace.

FLOWER GUILD

Our mission is "to worship in beauty". We serve in love, with joy, humility, wonder and praise.

St. Thomas' Flower Guild is responsible for all altar arrangements and, also, occasionally for parish events and funerals.

Donations are being accepted for flowers through 2023. Flowers may be given in memory of someone or for some other reason (birthday, anniversary, prayers answered, etc.). There are 3 ways to give flowers: bring your own garden flowers, purchase flowers and bring in or give a donation of \$50 - put "Flower Fund" in the memo, and the Flower Guild will purchase the flowers. In this way the Flower Guild can be self-sufficient. If you wish to donate flowers, there is a sign-up sheet located on the table in the Sun Room.

Volunteers are always welcome; no previous experience is necessary, and on-the-job training is provided. Various tasks include: purchasing and/or procuring flowers, arranging and watering. Thursday/Friday are arrangement days starting 9am/10am and may take 1-2 hrs. Please consider joining this dynamic group: Connie Bock, Sarah Groman, Kate Jackson, Kay Lehr (summer months only), Kelli McGuire, *Corallie Murray, *Gay Schueler and Grace Sivigny.

The Flower Guild wants to especially thank each and every one of you who participated in the Greening of the church and Kate Jackson who was responsible for ordering the wreaths, greens, and Poinsettias.

We are indebted to Corallie Murray for her leadership, instruction, wisdom, wit and encouragement, and her continued participation even after she announced "enough"!

St. Thomas' Flower Guild +

** Recent Past Members*

LITURGICAL MINISTERS

FIRST SERVICE:

The 7:30 service has a talented group of Lectors, which includes Edmund Hartt, Pat Ayers, Pam Bardon, Shirley Fierro, Terry Mello, Sandy Lyle and Jan Lyle. Our Ushers are also a hard working group, Peggy Daniels, Carlos Mello, Edmund Hartt and Jan Lyle. We also have three very reliable Lay Eucharistic Ministers. Pam Bardon, Shirley Fierro and Sandy Lyle. Having these volunteers makes our Sunday services go smoothly and more meaningful. We have plenty of room for others to join us, just speak with any one of the people mentioned above. Thank you to our faithful Lector, Ushers and Lay Eucharistic Ministers.

Peace to all.

Jan Lyle

SECOND SERVICE:

Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers

The 10:00 service also has a very dedicated group of Lectors and Lay Eucharistic Ministers. Our Lectors are Anna Black, Lola Black, Br. Donovan Bowley, Jeff Conrad, Millie Crocker, Russ Eagleston, Sue Foltz, Roy Gilley, Chris Glass, Sarah Groman, Dean Jackson, Kate Jackson, Benjy Lowry, John Mattern, Gwen Prosser, Jackie Recht, Charlotte Watkins, Sally Williamson. Our Lay Eucharistic Ministers are Roy Gilley, Dean Jackson and Jackie Recht. Thank you for your service to these ministries! If you are interested in either ministry, please contact the Parish Office or Rev. Lisa.

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 periodic special services. We are also thankful for a number of summer residents who regularly serve when they are in town.

During 2022 our group included Dean Jackson, Bill Freeman, Roy Gilley, Leamon Scott, Chris Groman, Phil Groman, Ed Williamson, Mike Moore and Lucy Ebbert. Unfortunately, Leamon and Bill are no longer available to usher, so we are down in volunteers. On a positive note, at least two individuals have expressed an interest in ushering and so my hope is that our numbers will increase in the near future.

In 2021 we were pleased to have the children serve once a month. It was our intention to have this resume in 2022 but it did not happen. It is an objective for 2023.

Moving into 2023 we are hoping that our protocols, which appear to have returned to normal, continue to be 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

CAMDEN AREA CHRISTIAN FOOD PANTRY

St. Thomas' is one of the five churches in Camden supporting the Camden Area Christian Food Pantry. Others in the group are Chestnut Street Baptist, First Congregational, John Street Methodist, and Our Lady of Good Hope. During 2022 food was provided each month to more than 200 families living in Appleton, Camden, Hope, Lincolnton, Rockport, Seasmont, Union, and Washington. Since its inception in 2001, the food pantry has been run with no paid staff. Our volunteers spend hundreds of hours each month procuring food, stocking shelves, and distributing food and personal items to all who come, regardless of their personal circumstances.

St. Thomas' is a very active supporter of the Pantry. During 2022 members of our congregation donated over \$1,900 in cash as well as a considerable quantity of non-perishable groceries and personal hygiene products.

Many thanks are due to Bill Freeman and Leamon Scott for their many years of leadership and active service as past members of the Food Pantry Board. The current representatives of St. Thomas' serving on the Board of Directors are Vicki Boetsch, Phil Groman, and Rebecca Vogt.

More details can be found on our website – www.camdenareachristianfoodpantry.org.

Thank you for your continued generosity.

Respectfully submitted,
Phil Groman

VIDEO AND COMMUNICATIONS

In 2022 we began livestreaming our services on YouTube. On average, there have been 32 views for each of the 34 services that were livestreamed. I want to take this opportunity to thank Luke and the Watkins' family for helping at the second service and especially for giving folks the opportunity to view the Christmas Eve Service with the Children's Pageant. If you are interested in helping in this ministry, please feel free to reach out to me.

We continued to strive to improve our communications and our website. We currently have 147 subscribers to MailChimp (email communications). Our daily emails include the in-person and virtual opportunities that are available; our weekly email is our Tidings newsletter. If you are not receiving our emails and would like to, please contact me. 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.

Faithfully,
Terry Mello

MEET YOUR NOMINEES

JUNIOR WARDEN:

BR. DONOVAN BOWLEY, BSG



Donovan has been a member at St. Thomas for the past 16 years, since retiring back to Maine, where his father's family has been since the 1740s. Here at St. Thomas', he has been a choir member, Eucharistic Minister/Acolyte, Worship Leader, and Eucharistic Visitor and Pastoral Associate, as well as serving on the Vestry and on the recent Search Committee for the Rector. He convenes the Wednesday Bible Study group, and after taking the Education for Ministry course led by Rosalee Glass, assisted her in EfM for several years.

He is a life-professed member of the Brotherhood of St. Gregory. Its members are not monks living at one location together in community but are individual friars dispersed throughout the United States, and in the Philippines, and Australia. He served several years as the Provincial of their New England Province.

After some 22 years at the Church of the Advent, he worked with St. John's Parish, Charlestown, Massachusetts; then joined the Parish of the Messiah in Auburndale, Massachusetts, serving there as Vestryman and Warden, coming to St. Thomas' Church from there.

He is a biologist and holds a Ph.D. in Biology from Boston University, where he taught on faculty for the last three years of graduate school. He has been a forest ranger, a regional planner, an environmental analyst, and managed the Technical Services section of the Massachusetts Drinking Water Program, retiring to Maine in 2007.

His current interests include local Maine history, and he works with several local historical societies as well as assisting as needed at the Walsh History Center at Camden Public Library.

CLERK OF THE VESTRY:**ANNE ROGERS-POPEJOY**

Anne has served as a vestry member, senior warden, clerk, Diocesan Council member, and cantor in the Diocese of South Dakota. She has worked with young adults living in intentional community in the Episcopal Church, with Thunderhead Episcopal Center, and is the secretary of the board for *Earth & Altar*, a publication for and by catholic and reformed Christians of all denominations who see an expansively conceived credal orthodoxy as fully compatible with LGBTQ inclusion, gender equality, and racial justice. Anne became an Episcopalian while attending Kenyon College, and was raised in the United Church of Christ in Connecticut. Her professional career has been

dedicated to working with and for non-profit organizations in small communities, delving into education, administration, and development. An ardent supporter of the arts and education, Anne worked with the Historic Homestake Opera House, Boys & Girls Clubs, and Northern Hills Alliance for Children in advocacy and fundraising. She currently works in development at the Strand Theatre in Rockland. Anne, Jamie, and Ronan (5) relocated to Maine in the fall of 2021, and can most often be found exploring outdoors, playing in costume, or trying something new in their kitchen.

VESTRY:**SARAH GROMAN**

Sarah grew up in England, one of 6 siblings and trained as a doctor in London. She met her husband, Phil, in Nepal and after 25 years in Africa and S. America they moved to Maine. They have been regular members of St. Thomas' since 2013. Their son, Christopher, lives with them in Union and their daughter, Anna, and son-in-law, Nathan, live in Rockland.



Sarah has served on the vestry before (4 years), was/is on the COVID task force, is currently a lector, leads Noonday Prayer on Mondays and is a member of the Flower Guild. She continues to meet monthly via Zoom with 4 other women who together embarked on the first Wayfinders course held at St. Thomas' in January 2020, right before the start of the pandemic.

Sarah loves flowers, the outdoors, walking, travelling, cooking and gardening.

GWEN PROSSER

Gwen graduated from Bryn Mawr College in English and U. Cal Berkeley in Social Work. She did social work for DHHS, Kno-Wal-Lin Home Health and Catholic Charities. She also taught in Christian Schools. She has lived primarily in Mid-Coast Maine and Northern California. She is currently working on a novel. She was confirmed at St. Thomas in 1995; she has supervised and taught Sunday School, and is currently a lay reader, attends Bible Study, and the Rector's class.

JACQUELINE RECHT

Formerly from Cardiff, Wales, Jacqueline came to the US when she was 20. She owned and operated *Jacqueline of Wales*, her own cosmetic store, in Concord, NH, where she did facials, applications and sold high-end cosmetics. She taught cosmetology classes at a local college.

Jacqueline graduated from Notre Dame College in Manchester, NH with a bachelor's degree in Religious Studies. She then completed a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education and was assistant to the minister briefly at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Goffstown, NH, where she preached and served for one term on the vestry. Jacqueline later graduated from EDS, in Cambridge, with an MDiv.

She then worked as a counselor in a women's rehabilitation center; at an alcohol- and drug-intervention center, and as a patient counselor-- all in NH. She moved to Maine to be with her daughter.

As a member of St. Thomas', she has sung in the choir, is a Lay Reader, and Lay Eucharistic Minister, Lay Eucharistic Visitor, leads Compline online for our church, and is on the Altar Guild. She has taken EfM (Education for Ministry at the School of Theology in Sewanee), is a hospice volunteer at Sussman House, used to sing with Downeast Singers, and is active with a local Shakespeare troupe. She is a Third-Degree Reiki Master, and a Oneness Blessing Giver. She has two lovely daughters, and 4 grandchildren.

