



Love Sunday

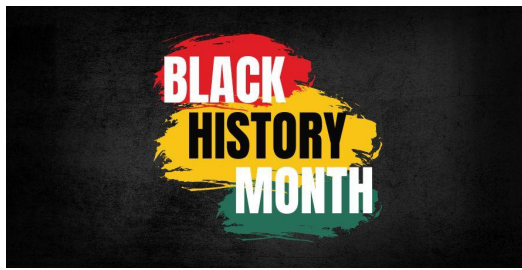
Sunday, February 18, 2024
10:00 am

THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS • FIRST BLACK EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE USA

THE VERY REVEREND CANON MARTINI SHAW, 17TH RECTOR

THE REVEREND FR. DAREN E. EVANS, ASSOCIATE TO THE RECTOR

6361 LANCASTER AVENUE (ABSALOM JONES WAY) • PHILADELPHIA, PA 19151 • (215) 473-3065



THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT, LOVE SUNDAY
February 18, 2024

“WELCOME TO THE MOTHER CHURCH”

“Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Give thanks unto Him and bless His name”.

Psalm 100:4

Grace and Peace to you from God on this **First Sunday in Lent, and Love Sunday.**

On behalf of the Clergy, Wardens, Vestry, and People of God, welcome to the historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, founded in 1792 as the first Black Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. The first rector of this historic parish, The Rev. Fr. Absalom Jones was also the first Black Episcopal priest in the nation. Our parish boldly proclaims the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are an active, mission-minded and growing church family. Whoever you are and wherever you may find yourself on your spiritual journey of faith, you are always welcomed at St. Thomas' Church, where we are joyfully and enthusiastically committed to Jesus' message of love, hope, prayer, acceptance and faith. Today, as you worship in this place, may you experience and feel the presence of the Lord, and may you leave feeling renewed, refreshed and revived. Whoever you may be and however you may find yourself experiencing life's journey, do know that St. Thomas Church welcomes you. Again, welcome!

Faithfully,
Martini Shaw +

(The Very Rev. Canon) Martini Shaw, 17th Rector
and Dean of the Schuylkill Deanery



A "History Note" from Arthur K. Sudler, Director
St. Thomas Historical Society and Archives

REPRESENTATION MATTERS

Today will mark the 228th time that the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas has held an election for parish vestry. Founders William Gray, Henry Stewart, and James Oronoko Dexter were on the first vestry elected in 1796. So was a young James Forten. But it is only the 158th time that St. Thomas has been able to elect representatives to the annual diocesan convention, or that St. Thomas clergy can "sit in Convention." A "quid pro quo" established between the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania and St. Thomas in 1795, known as "the eighth revised regulation", guaranteed that Absalom Jones, as a candidate for ordination, would be exempt from the canonically required ordination examination in Greek and Latin - so long as - it is understood that "the African Church" is not entitled "to send a Clergyman or Deputies to the Convention, or to interfere with the general government of the Episcopal Church, this condition being made in consideration of their peculiar circumstances at present." The condition made in consideration of the peculiar circumstances at present continued for seventy years - long after St. Thomas, in 1834, called as rector, The Rev. William Douglass, an ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church who Bishop William White ordained as an Episcopal priest. Fr. Douglass possessed a classical education and was "learned in Greek and Latin." He served St. Thomas until his death in 1862. But neither he, nor wealthy successful businessman, and longtime vestryman, James Forten, ever attended the annual diocesan convention.

Forten, largely responsible for recruiting Douglass, likely thought Douglass' background would overcome the prohibition on diocesan convention participation. Seemingly, it was not until 1849, the year after Forten's death, that St. Thomas sent a formal petition to the Diocese seeking to repeal the eighth revised regulation. The petition was referred to a committee. The membership of the committee is unclear but the majority report - which opposed admitting St. Thomas - was written by George Mifflin Wharton grandfather of a future U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania George Wharton Pepper, Esquire, founder of the law firm of Pepper Hamilton which merged in 2020 with Troutman Sanders becoming Troutman Pepper. Wharton wrote that the prohibition stemmed from the color of the congregants, their political and social condition, and their defects of education and cultivation all of which resulted in their "consequent unfitness" for participating in the governance of the Church. The minority opinion - which supported the admission of St. Thomas - was written by The Rev. Fr. Henry E. Montgomery. Diocesan Convention in 1850 voted to continue to exclude St. Thomas. The clergy vote was 44 to 42. The lay delegations voted 51 to 16 with one delegation divided on the question. The fact that the laity was overwhelmingly opposed to admitting St. Thomas is not surprising given that anti-Black racial violence had beset Philadelphia since 1829 and the city's pro-slavery/pro-Southern sympathies earned it the reputation of being the northern city most hostile to African Americans. It is likely that this battle for voice and vote in ecclesiastical affairs was instructive and inspirational to our heroic martyred vestryman Octavius V. Catto who would represent St. Thomas in diocesan convention in 1870 and also fight for the right to vote in the secular realm. St. Thomas' Octavius V. Catto Voter Education Ministry reminds us all that "representation matters."



THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS

232ND ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

(1792 - 2024)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2024

PLEASE JOIN US AFTER SUNDAY'S CHURCH SERVICE.

The Agenda at the Parish Annual meeting on **February 18, 2024**, will include the Vestry's **November 16, 2023** approval of the Amended Bylaws. Copies will be available.

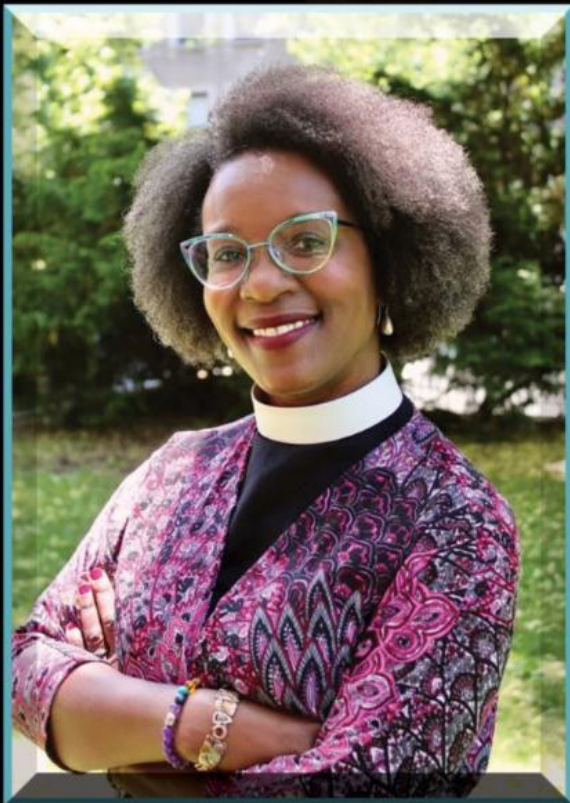
The Church and Parish Offices will be closed on Monday, February 19, 2024, in observance of Presidents Day.

Please click on the link provided for the [Order of Service](#) for this Sunday



PLEASE JOIN US FOR
A SERVICE
OF
CELEBRATION

The Life and Ministry
of
THE REV. ABSALOM JONES
and the
ANNUAL MARDI GRAS JAZZ MASS



Sunday, February 11, 2024
at 10:00 am

~ Guest Preacher ~
The Reverend Canon
STEPHANIE SPELLERS
Canon to Presiding Bishop,
The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry

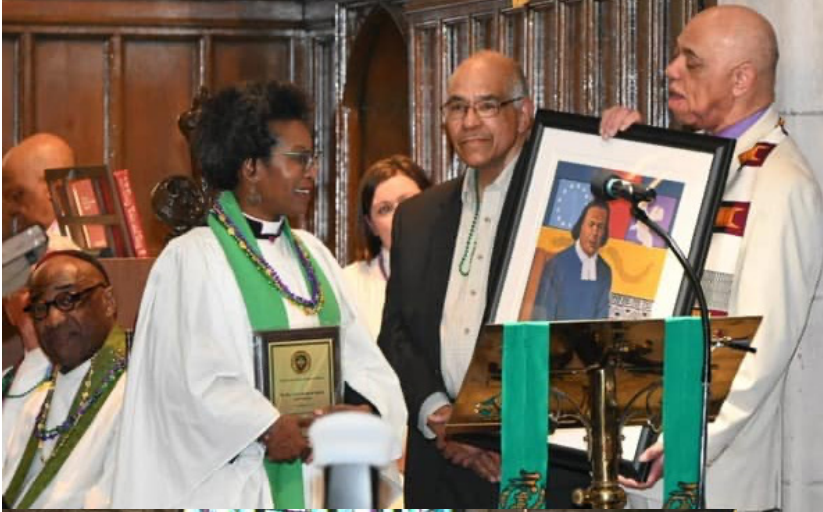
Joining us in celebration:
~ Christ Church (Philadelphia) ~
~ St. Peter's Church (Philadelphia) ~
~ Church Farm School ~
~ Most Worshipful Prince Hall
Grand Lodge ~

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WWW.AECST.ORG • WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/AECST1792

Last Sunday after Epiphany February 11, 2024.







More pictures may be found on our [Facebook](#) page.



FROM THE RECTOR:

Enormous Thanks to Arlene Singletary, Clare Mae Daniels, Judy Tillman, Deborah Matthews, and Dottie Archey, who served in the Parish Office during Gladyce's absence following surgery.

We give thanks to God for Gladyce's return and continued healing.

Any Group, Guild, Ministry, or Fellowship wishing to have a flyer placed in the bulletin will have to provide the copies to the office no later than Wednesday for insertion in the Sunday bulletin.

DO YOU PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT?

Have you ever thought about using that talent to glorify God in worship? Please prayerfully consider joining our St. Thomas Jazz Ensemble, St. Thomas Chancel Choir or St. Thomas Gospel Choir. If interested, please contact Gladyce in the Parish Office ASAP to get details on upcoming scheduled rehearsals.



Girls' Friendly wants to thank St. Thomas for their generous participation in Souper Bowl of Caring. The Media Food Bank was thrilled with our donation of 225 items and \$100. We look forward to the next Souper Bowl!



Chosen 300
"Have a Heart"
for the homeless,
sheltered,
underserved

Our 2024 Fundraiser for Chosen 300 will begin in "Heart Month" on **Sunday, February 18th**. The funds will provide meals to be served at the **Chosen 300** Spring Garden St. site and the Lancaster Ave, site.

Checks should be made payable to:
AECST Chosen 300: Put Chosen 300 and your envelope number on the memo line. Mail checks to: St. Thomas Church
6361 Lancaster Ave., Phila. PA 19151
Attention: Chosen 300 or Place your check in the collections plate. Questions:
[Cynthia Muse](#)

2024 Liturgical Calendars are on sale for \$8.00 Please see Clare Mae Daniels or any member of the Altar Guild to purchase one.

UPCOMING SUNDAYS

February 18, 2024

Annual Church Meeting after church.

Love Sunday (In celebration of St. Valentine/Valentine's Day) Tokens of love will be distributed to all in attendance.

Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge
Founders Day Service- 4:00 PM

February 25, 2024

Youth and Young Adult Sunday
Scout Sunday

St. Thomas Celebrates Episcopal HBCUs

***Coffee Hour (Chat and Chew)**

Have you ever considered hosting a Coffee Hour (Chat and Chew) following Service in thanksgiving for a blessing received or in memory of a departed loved one? Please contact Gladyce for further details.

MEMBER INFORMATION FORMS

In an effort to get correct member information, we are asking **EVERY** parishioner to fill out a Member form. The church has received many returned mailings because of bad addresses. We would appreciate your new address, phone number, and email address. Please fill out the [form](#) and return it to the [church office email](#). Please fill out 1 form for each adult member of your family, children may go on one of the forms.

Forms are also available on the table in the back of the church.

Thanks so much for your help with this.



OUR LENTEN JOURNEY BEGINS
Ash Wednesday Services
(Imposition of Ashes and Holy Eucharist)

February 14, 2024
7:00 AM, 12 :00 Noon
6:00 P.M.

Wednesdays in Lent
Lenten Theme: "From Gaza to Calvary"
6:00 PM - Holy Eucharist
6:30 PM - 7:15 PM
Lenten Presentation / Discussion

Confirmation Classes are on Sundays at 8:30 A.M. Please speak with [Fr. Daren](#) or [Seminarian Kathryn Brossa](#) for further details.



**A REMINDER TO ALL GUILDS, ORGANIZATIONS,
MINISTRIES, AND INDIVIDUALS:**

ANY and **ALL** Activities using the church facilities (ie; Anderson Hall, the Undercroft, the church) or the Absalom Jones House **MUST** be scheduled and approved by the Parish Administrator: [Gladyce DuBrey](#) or call (215-473-3065) and **NOT** the **SEXTON** beforehand. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that all activities are listed on the calendar of the Parish Office.

A busy day at St. Thomas!!! Preparations are underway for this upcoming orchestra and choral musical. We are so proud of our own Dr. Jay Fluellen (composer) and Dr. Rollo Dilworth (contributing choir director) YOU ARE INVITED.



Friday, February 23, 2024 - 8PM

Winter Concert

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church
625 Montgomery Avenue
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

The Main Line Symphony Orchestra

Don Liuzzi, Music Director

WORLD PREMIERE

Dr. Jay Fluellen

Mass for The Light Becoming

*with members of The Philadelphia
Community Mass Choir, Singing City, and
Philadelphia Chorale*

Rachmaninoff

Piano Concerto #2

Priscila Navarro, soloist

Vocalise #14

Tchaikovsky

Pezzo Capriccioso

*Kwanyun Loo,
soloist*

Photo by Chris Swisher

More information:



Tickets available at the door and online:

https://MLSO_Winter_Concert_2024.eventbrite.com

MLSO.org

DAILY RECOMMENDED BIBLE READINGS

READINGS FOR the first Sunday in Lent February 18, 2024

The First Lesson: [Genesis 9:8-17](#)
[Psalm 25:1-9](#)

The Second Lesson: [1 Peter 3:18-22](#)
The Holy Gospel: [Mark 1:9-15](#)

The Holy Gospel Readings for the Week of February 19, 2024

Monday - [Matthew 25:31-46](#)

Tuesday - [Matthew 6:7-15](#)

Wednesday - [Luke 11:29-32](#)

Thursday - [Matthew 7:7-12](#)

Friday - [Matthew 5:20-26](#)

Saturday - [John 15:1,6-16](#)



Bible Study with Fr. Jay is every Tuesday evening at 7:00 PM. If anyone is interested in joining the group, contact [Fr. Jay](#).

RE-IMAGINING OUR MINISTRIES

Persons are needed:

-to lift their voices on the **Comfort Choir** during funeral services at St. Thomas. Please contact [D. Lynn Joell](#) if interested.

-to serve with the **Sound Ministry** for Sunday morning service and weekday funeral services. If interested, please contact Gladyce in the Parish Office.

-to serve on the **Altar Guild**. This amazing group of individuals prepares our altar each week for the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Interested people should contact [Alfreda Brockman](#).

-to serve as **Readers and Intercessors** to read the Holy Scripture during our weekly services. Interested persons should contact Gladyce in the Parish Office to sign up.

-to join the **Transportation Ministry**. The main mission of the ministry is to provide transportation to parishioners who attend Sunday Service who may be parked in a nearby remote parking lot. Please contact Gladyce in the office if you are interested.

-as **Acolytes** to serve on the altar. Please contact [Fr. Daren](#) if you are interested.

-**Photography Ministry** is in need of additional photographers. You do not need to be a professional photographer but do enjoy taking pictures. Anyone interested can contact [Bill Edmonds](#) or [Dale Williams](#).

The Shepherds Ministry is still in need of many more volunteers to be able to shepherd all households of our congregation. Shepherds set their own schedules to be in regular touch with their households of sheep by phone, email, text or various social media platforms. Each is assigned no more than 4 households. All Ministry meetings are held via Zoom. Please note that the Vestry will continue to shepherd, for one year, all new members joining the congregation. For more information, or to volunteer, please contact [Charlene M. Wiltshire](#).

JOIN THE GIRLS FRIENDLY SOCIETY!

Meetings are on Saturdays from 11am -1pm. All girls aged 3-30 are welcome. Girls participate in: Service Projects, Gir Talk, Arts & Crafts, World Day of Prayer, Founder's Day, Mission Day and GFS Day, along with trips to the Theatre, Museums, Ice Skating, Mini Golf, trips to the Pumpkin Patch and Holiday House in Cape May, NJ. **If you would like to volunteer as a leader or sponsor, please contact the Branch Advisor, Nikkol Simms at njsimms@verizon.net**



Young Adult Bible Study

Fr. Daren is offering a Bible Study series for Young Adults on Wednesdays at 6:00 PM.

Fall Topic:

“If It’s Not About Love, It’s Not About God”

Calling for Youth Acolytes!



All youth of our church are invited to serve in the AECST Acolyte Ministry. No prior experience is needed as training will be provided. This is an excellent way for our children and youth to be involved in the life of the church. For more information please speak with [Fr. Daren](#).

Scout Troop #133 - Our Cub Scout Program is open to children grades 1-5. The Cub program meets at 2:00 PM. on Saturdays. Our Boy Scout Program is open to children aged 11-17 years old. The Scout Program will meet at 3:00 PM on Saturdays according to the schedule. Please contact Scout [Master Howard Chapman](#) for more information.

Church School begins at 10:00 AM.

The theme this year is :”Exciting Stories of the Bible.” Registration forms may be found on the tables in the Undercroft Sunday School room or the registration [link](#).

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR PARISHIONERS WHO ARE:

IN REHAB:

Helena Allen - Simpson House
Fr. Darryl James -Stapeley Rehab
Leotta Griffin - Saunders House
Thomas Snowden - University of Pennsylvania;
Terry Corson.

RECOVERING AT HOME:

Adinah Edwards, Robert Brown, Ridart “Butch” Farmer,
Gwendolyn Langford, Shirley Winkfield, Lemont Johnson,
Ronald Coleman, Thelma Silvers, Linda Holmes,
Alletta Parris-Olday, Kenneth Dow,
Joyce Harrison, Patricia Ellison, Carl Dean.

KEEP IN PRAYER:

Justin Trotman, Daryn Stewart, Cathy Stafford,
Teri Taylor, Lisa Woodley, Irving Stevenson,
Sandra Bryant Miller, Gladyce DuBrey.

WE PRAY FOR

those who are Incarcerated and their families, as well as
those affected by their actions.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Flowers are not placed on the altar in Lent except for Rose Sunday, March 10, 2024.

To order flowers, please return the form with payment to: Clare Mae Daniels or Alfreda Brockman. (Please do not place it in the collection plate or give to the church office.) Thank you.

- I would like to place flowers on the High Altar - \$60.
- I would like to place flowers on the Absalom Jones Altar - \$50.
- I would like to place flowers on the Columbarium - \$40.

(Please PRINT/ TYPE. You may use an additional piece of paper for more names.)

A) In memory of _____

B) In Thanksgiving for _____

Given by _____

Envelope # _____ Amount \$ _____

CAPITAL BUILDING IMPROVEMENT CAMPAIGN

Thank you to all who have contributed to the fund. Everyone is asked to please make a minimum sacrificial gift of \$40 per month. Please use the envelope from your packet or place Building Fund in the Memo section of your check or click the Donation Button or Capital Improvement [Donation Button](#) on our [website](#).

STEWARDSHIP NEWS

Please pray about your Faithful Giving for 2024. We need strong support for our budget and many endeavors and outreach projects at St. Thomas. You'll be able to either complete your Faithful Giving Card or go on our website, Spearhead, Facebook page, or this [link](#) to complete your Faithful Giving Card. You can also mail your Faithful Giving Card or bring it to the Altar at Church.

The Building Fund Envelopes have been placed in Anderson Hall beside the Offering Envelopes. Please pick them up with your offering envelopes. And if you've already picked your offering envelopes up please pick up your Building Fund envelopes. You can also do your Building Fund offering online once a month. Each box of Building Fund envelopes will include twelve envelopes, one for each month. Thank you

AECST LIVE STREAM

Please join us for Worship on the St. Thomas [website](#), the [Live Service](#), or on our [Facebook](#) page or [youtube](#) every Sunday morning at 10:00 AM. You can also watch [Past Services](#).

IMPORTANT: Please make sure your name, number, and amount are placed on your offering envelope. This is very important to keep bookkeeping accurate. If you're unsure of your number, please don't hesitate to [contact](#) me. We appreciate your help with this.

If you have moved and have not sent your new address to the church office at 215-473-3065 or [email](#), **please do so ASAP**. The church has received many returned mailings because of bad addresses. We would appreciate your new address, phone number, and email address. Thanks so much for your help with this.

If you have decided to use the Givi App or [Online Giving Donations](#), please [email](#) your name and envelope number. Thank you very much. Judy Tillman

A list of the Sick and Shut-In parishioners has been put in Anderson Hall with the Offering Envelopes. If you live near a parishioner who is unable to come to church, it would be much appreciated if you could slot their envelopes.

Thank you

WAYS TO CONTINUE TO BE FAITHFUL TO GOD AND THE CHURCH THROUGH STEWARDSHIP

“To whom much is given, much is required.” Luke 12:48

- 1) **Sunday Offering Plate.**
 - 2) **Mail in** your check or money order to the church.
Please use the following address:
The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas
c/o Fiscal Administrator.
6361 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19151
 - 3) **Use the Givi app.** If you don't already use the app and don't have an account, it's easy to obtain.
Please click the links below for the type of device you own to download the **givi app (givi IOS App)** for your Apple (iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch) or **(givi Android App)** for your Android device. If you have any questions, please speak with **Deadra Cannon**, 215-844-6115.
 - 4) **Bring your check** directly to the Fiscal Office during regular business hours (Monday - Thursday 10 am-2 pm) **After business hours**, drop your envelope in the door mail slot located on the front patio of the Absalom Jones House.
 - 5) **Church website - [Online Giving](#)**
Simply select the button/s on the page that represents where you'd like your payment to be applied, i.e. your pledge, the AJ House, Easter, etc. **NOTE:** Please remember to enter your envelope number in the Customer ID field, if you are a member of St. Thomas when filling out your online giving information.)
 - 6) **Pledge Cards** - Please send them via the US mail to the church or fill out the form [electronically](#) through the website or send an email to our [Fiscal Administrator](#).
- Thank you so much and thank you to all who have sent them in.

MINISTRY STAFF

Bishop	The Rt. Rev. Daniel G P Gutierrez	
Rector	The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw	rector@aecst.org
Associate to the Rector	The Rev. Fr. Daren E. Evans	associaterector@aecst.org
Associate Priest	The Rev. Fr. Gerald Collins	associatepriest@aecst.org
Associate Minister	The Rev. Dr. Thomas G. Snowden	dravidian@comcast.net
Associate Minister	The Rev. Dr. Paul Bach	pauljaybach@gmail.com
Executive Asst to Rector	Gladyce DuBrey	1792@aecst.org
Fiscal Administor	Jeannette Jeffrey	fiscal@aecst.org
Sexton	LaDon Elliott	1792@aecst.org
Asst Sexton	David McGilberry	1792@aecst.org
Chancel Choirmaster	Jay Fluellen, DMA	chancelchoir@aecst.org
Gospel Choirmaster	Waltier Blocker	gospelchoir@aecst.org
Rector's General Counsel	Joe Tucker, Esq	jtucker@tigattorneys.com
Altar Guild	Alfreda Brockman	fredabee@verizon.net
Baptism Co-Chairs	Gail Hinton Harris	thegail@hotmail.com
	Patricia Walker-Ellison	p.walker.ellison@gmail.com
Church School Superintendent	Tynecia Wilson	churchschool@aecst.org
Ed Muse Photography Ministry	William Edmonds	edmon57@comcast.net
Fiscal Advisor to the Rector	Deadra Cannon	assistantfiscal@aecst.org
Girls Friendly Society	Nikkol Simms	njsimms@verizon.net
Jazz Ensemble Director	Joe Stevens	jobopss@aol.com
Live Stream Ministry	Yaseen Farooq	livevideo@aecst.org
	Terri Tillman	
Memorial Flowers	Alfreda Brockmam	fredabee@verizon.net
	Clare Mae Daniels	happycmd05@aol.com
Monarch Greeters Ministry	Roy Ellison	s.royellison@gmail.com
Parish Vergers	Stephen Hannum	1792@aecst.org
	Karen Ragland	Kdrags415@gmail.com
Parish Webmaster	Gail Hinton Harris	webmanager@aecst.org
Property Chair	William Burke	property@aecst.org
Scout Pack 133	Howard Chapman	howchapman@gmail.com
	Arlene Gray	bsapack0133@gmail.com
Stewardship Chair	Judy Tillman	stewardship@aecst.org
Transportation Ministry		
Videography Ministry	Quentin Heyward	recordedvideo@aecst.org
Voices of Comfort	Robert Davenport	robertnewtondavenport@gmail.com
William Burke Ushers Ministry	Arlene Singletary	leaniepo302@gmail.com

THE VESTRY

Rector's Warden - Richard Jones
Accounting Warden - Deborah Camp Frye
Clerk of the Vestry - Clare Mae Daniels
Treasurer - Albert S. Dandridge, III Esq.

Brenda Johnson Best
Judith Simkins Booth
William Burke
Deadra Cannon
Wendella Fox, Esq.
Marie Golson
Deborah Harrison
D. Lynn Joell
Kelvin Johnson
Jonathan Muse
Judith Tillman

THE AUXILIARY VESTRY

Conchetta Brewer
Ronnie Collins
Eugene Golson
Dr. Monica Johnson Taylor
Pamela Johnson
Patricia Lynch
Cynthia Muse
Darryle "Bobby" Tillman

THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SAINT THOMAS is a Christ-centered community that welcomes all people. This community embraces and executes the core values of our founder, the Reverend Absalom Jones: leadership, morality, spirituality, equal rights, education, liberty, charity, justice, humanitarianism, self-determination, self-respect, and freedom. St. Thomas is an open, Christ-centered community of faith in which the Gospel is re-imaged, taught, lived and spread.