

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
Www.aecst.org • www.facebook.com/aecst1792

The Historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas

6361 Lancaster Avenue (Absalom Jones Way) Philadelphia, PA, 19151 (215) 473-3065

www.aecst.org

The Very Reverend Canon Martini Shaw
The 17th Rector

The Rev. Fr. Daren E. Evans Associate to the Rector

The Rev. Fr. Gerald Collins Associate Priest

BIG NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT

The New Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church (U.S.A. Provinces) Prepares For Trip to Philadelphia!!



Please click on the link provided for the **Order of Service** for this Sunday.

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS January 12, 2025

"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 the First Sunday after the Epiphany, The Baptism of Our Lord (Renewal of Baptismal Vows).

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 USA. 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,

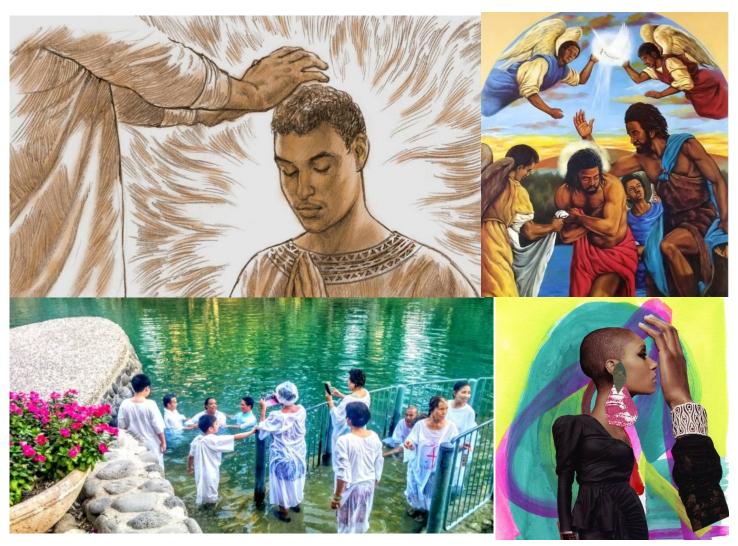
Martini Shaw+

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



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Come and receive a **SPECIAL BLESSING** this Sunday, January 12, 2025 with the Laying on of Hands and Anointing with water from the Holy Land - The Jordan River (where Jesus was baptized).



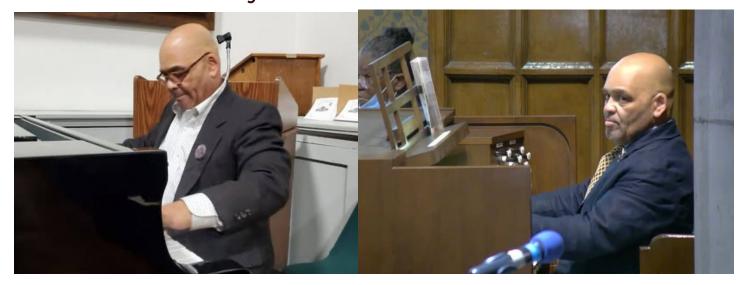


Thank you to the individuals who have submitted their 2025 Faithful Giving cards.

The list of names may be found here.



We are very pleased to officially welcome as a new member of St. Thomas, Robert Newton Davenport (Organist). His shepherd is Eugene Golson. Robert, it is an extreme joy to officially welcome you into the St. Thomas family. We look forward to continuing to be blessed by your musical talents.



Please assist the Vestry

in planning and providing for making the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas the best it can be in response to your Christian journey, by completing this questionnaire by today, January 12th.

You can respond online or use a paper questionnaire provided on a table at the back of the church. (We love online responses!)



Important Note from the Accounting Warden:

Please help us to end 2024 without a deficit by completing your financial pledge by the extended deadline for **TODAY**, **Sunday**, **January 12**, **2025**. If you are unsure of your balance, please contact Jeannette Jeffrey in the Fiscal Office Monday-Thursday 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM.

A CALL TO LEADERSHIP Share your leadership ability.

Nominations for Vestry, Auxiliary Vestry Positions, Delegates to the Schuylkill Deanery, Delegates, and an alternate delegate to the 2025 Diocesan Convention will be accepted until **January 19, 2025**.

Election information can be found here and nomination information may be found here.

Attention all Guilds, Organizations and Fellowships!!!!
The Council of Guilds meeting will be held on Saturday,
January 11, 2025 at 10:00 AM. Please come with your 2025
dates and Chat and Chew requests.

ATTENTION ALL GUILDS/ORGANIZATIONS AND FELLOWSHIPS:

The Parish Annual meeting is on **Sunday**, **February 16, 2025**, immediately after church.

End-of-the-year reports for the Annual Parish meeting must be submitted no later than the deadline of **February 10, 2025.** Your 2024 report should be 1(one) page and include: Your vision, 2024 activities, 2025 planned activities, and any other information you would like to share. Please send reports to **Gladyce**.



ATTENTION ALL NEW MEMBERS OF ST. THOMAS WHO JOINED IN 2024. We will be recognizing and celebrating you during the Service on Sunday, January 26, 2025.

Are you receiving robocalls from the Rector about special upcoming events? Do you know someone who does not receive the electronic Spearhead every week? If not, please send your email and cell number to Gladyce DuBrey.



We are saddened to announce the death of **Deborah "Binky" Seay**.

Her memorial service will be held at St. Thomas on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at 10:00 AM.

Please pray for the family. May her soul rest in peace and rise in glory.

We are sadden to announce the death of Lydia Ruth Daniels-Rooks, daughter of our own Clare Mae Daniels, and sister of our own Lee Daniels. Requiem mass will be held at St. Thomas on Thursday, January 16, 2025 at 11:00 AM.

Please pray for the entire family.

May the soul of Lydia rest in peace and rise in eternal glory.

Condolences and prayers to the family of **Cynthia Ann Rider**.

Her service will be held at St. Thomas on Friday,
January 17, 2025. Special presentation at 10:45 AM.
Requiem mass will be held at 11:00 AM.
Please pray for the family.
May the soul of Cynthia rest in peace and rise in glory.

Please pray for Edita Gauthney, Bobbi Jones,
Stephen Pugh and family
on the death of their cousin, **Sylvia Morris**.
May the soul of Sylvia rest in peace and rise in glory.

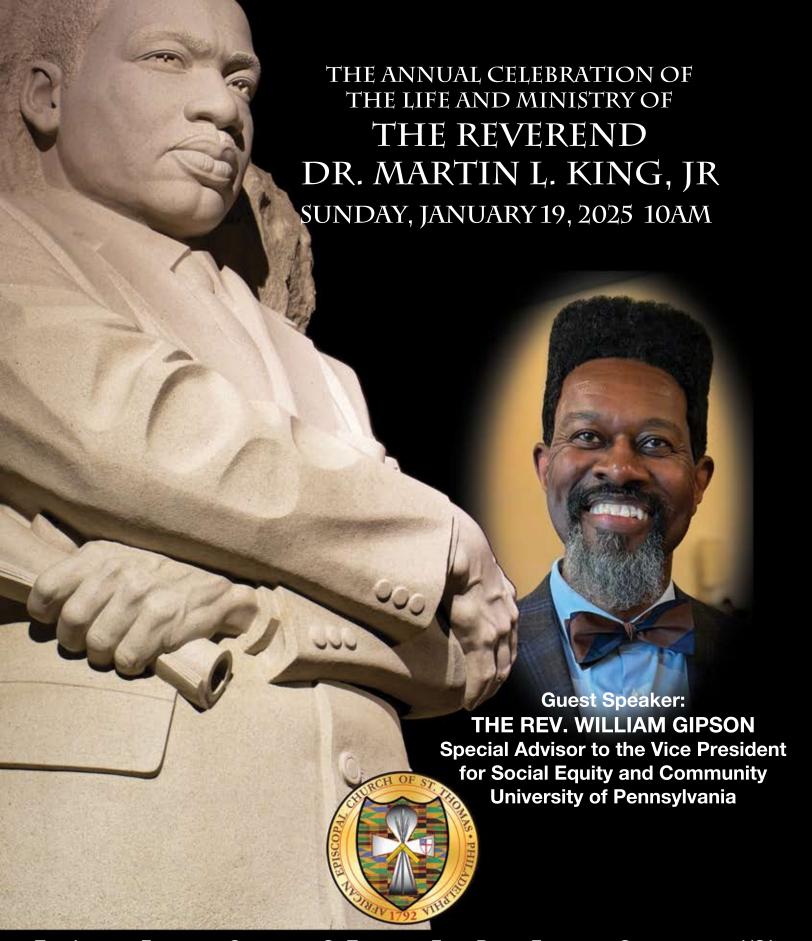
A RECTOR'S REQUEST FOR DONORS

Our beautiful three banners hanging outside the church are in desperate need of replacement. Are you interested in being one of the donors? The cost for each is \$750.00.



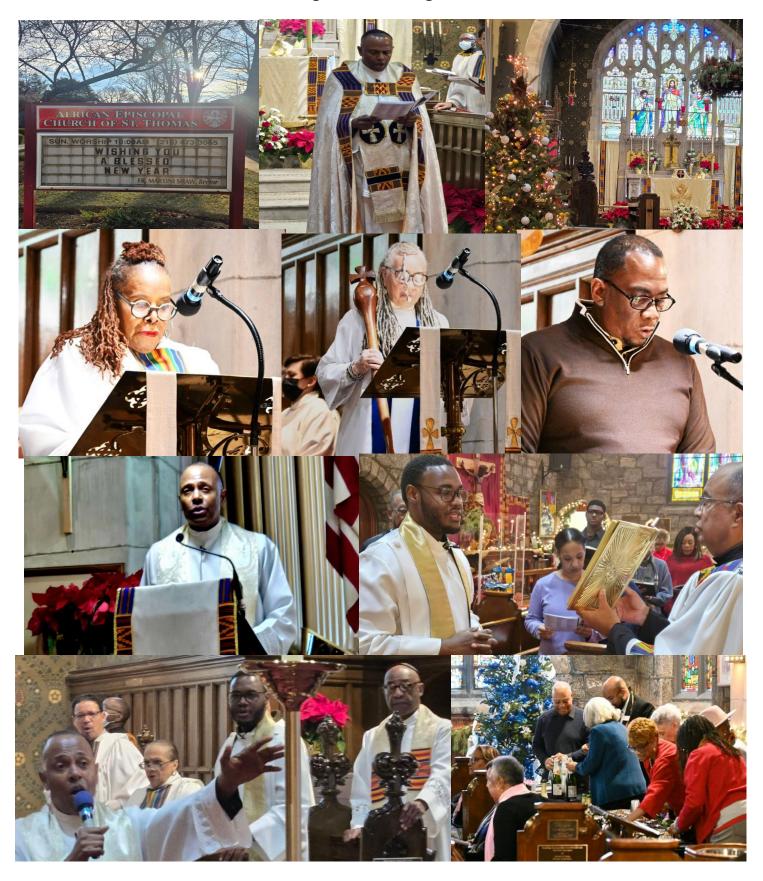
We also need sponsors to cover the donkey rental for Palm Sunday, April 13, 2025. Donors can contribute in thanksgiving for a blessing or in memory of a loved one.

"The New Members Manual" has finally arrived!
Please use the link to access it.



THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS • FIRST BLACK EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE USA
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THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS The Eve of the Epiphany Sunday, January 5, 2025





Photos credit: William Edmonds and Stephen Pugh (St. Thomas Ed Muse Memorial Photography Ministry)



More pictures may be found on our Facebook page.

AECST LIVE STREAM

Please join us for worship on the <u>St. Thomas website</u>, the <u>Live Service</u>, or on our <u>Facebook</u> page or <u>Youtube</u> every Sunday morning at 10:00 AM. You can also watch <u>Past</u> <u>Services</u>.

THIS WEEK AT AECST - JANUARY 13, 2025 Tuesday, January 14th

Advocacy Outreach Group Meeting in the Undercroft - 6:00 - 9:00 PM Adult Bible Study with Fr. Jay via Zoom - 7:00 PM

Wednesday, January 15th

The Memorial Service for Deborah "Binky" Seay. 9:00 AM - Ritual services. Service at 10:00 AM

Bible Study with Fr. Daren - 6:00 PM in the A.J. House St. Thomas Gospel Choir - 7:30 PM in Anderson Hall

Thursday, January 16th

Funeral service of Lydia Daniels Rooks Viewing 9:00 - 11:00 PM. Service at 11:00 AM

Friday, January 17th

Funeral service of Cynthia Ann Rider Service at 11:00 AM

Saturday, January 18th

Men's Ministry and Fellowship 8:00 - 11:00 AM

MARK YOUR CALENDARS UPCOMING SUNDAYS IN JANUARY/FEBRUARY

January 12th

The Baptism of our Lord (congregation blessed with Holy Water from the Jordan River)

January 19th

Observance and Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Guest Speaker: The Rev. William Gipson, Special Advisor to the Vice President for Social Equity and Community, University of Pennsylvania

January 26th

Welcome/Fellowship to new members of 2024 Girls Friendly Induction with a Chat & Chew following service

February 2nd

Black History Month Kick-Off

February 9th

Celebration of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. Absalom Jones

February 16th

Love Sunday and Parish Annual Meeting

February 23rd

Youth and Young Adult Sunday



CALLING ALL DANCERS!!!!

Opportunity awaits if you want to praise the Lord in dance and worship. The "Angels in Motion" dance ministry, a multi-generational ministry welcomes all ages, and skill levels in ballet, modern, jazz, and African dance to join! Interested? Please contact, Director, Pamela Johnson.

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 <u>Gladyce</u> in the church office for further details.



ALTAR FLOWERS

Flowers on the High Altar -\$60.00 Flowers on the Absalom Jones Altar - \$50.00 each Flowers on the Columbarium - \$40.00 each

To order flowers for the High Altar, Absalom Jones Altar, or Columbarium, please use this <u>link</u>.



VERGERS NEEDED!

Are you being called to this exciting ministry?
Want to know more about what a Verger does?
The Verger Guide may be found here
Please speak with Karen Ragland or
the Rector for more details.

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 <u>Gladyce</u> 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. Please contact <u>Gladyce</u> 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.



EXCITING NEWS!!! SPREAD IT!!!

Our new and exciting Family Podcast Series is ALIVE!! Two series are now available for your listening enjoyment.

#1 - Fr. Daren introduces the Series with **Fr. Shaw** as his guest. "Creating a Culture of Conversation". The podcast can be found using this <u>link.</u>

#2 - Fr. Daren welcomes **Pamela Johnson** as his guest. "Body Image: Good Enough for Jesus". The podcast can be found using this <u>link</u>.

#3 - Fr. Daren welcomes **Tynecia Wilson** as his guest. Conversation: "The Adultification of Black Girls". The podcast can be found using this **link**:





CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHERS NEEDED

Are you willing to serve, at least one Sunday per month, as a church school teacher? Please prayerfully consider this call. We are especially looking for young adults, men, and anyone who loves children. Please speak with Fr. Daren ASAP if you are interested.



At St. Thomas, we embrace and celebrate our youth. If you have children in your family or neighborhood, please invite or bring them to be a part of our amazing Church School program. When was the last time you invited someone to church?

Church School begins at 10:00 AM on Sundays in the Undercroft. Please see Church School Superintendent Tynecia Wilson for details.

Exciting News!!!!

Plans are underway to create a **Tots area** to be used on Sundays for children who are not yet Church School age. Please speak to <u>Fr. Daren</u> for more details.



ATTENTION ALL ACOLYTES

Rehearsals are EACH SUNDAY immediately following service. For more information, please speak with <u>Fr. Daren</u>.



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

ANY and ALL Activities using the church facilities (i.e., 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.

DAILY RECOMMENDED BIBLE READINGS

Readings for the First Sunday after the Epiphany January 12, 2025

The First Lesson - <u>Isaiah 43:1-7</u>
<u>Psalm 29</u>

The Second Lesson - <u>Acts 8:14-17</u> The Holy Gospel - <u>Luke 3:15-17,21-22</u>

The Holy Gospel Readings for the week of January 13, 2025

Monday - <u>Mark 1:1-13</u>

Tuesday - Mark 1:14-28

Wednesday - Mark 1:29-45

Thursday - Mark 2:1-12

Friday - Mark 2:13-22

Saturday - <u>Mark2:23-3:6</u>



The Adult Bible Study Group

The Bible Study with Fr. Jay meets on Tuesdays at 7:00 PM via Zoom. Please contact <u>Fr. Jay</u> with questions/requests.

WEDNESDAYS IN-PERSON BIBLE STUDY

with Fr. Daren meets on Wednesdays in the AJ House at 6:00 PM. Our Spring study will be a journey through the Book of Revelation.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR PARISHIONERS WHO ARE:

IN THE HOSPITAL:

Kenneth Dow, Alletta Parris-Olday - Presbyterian Hospital; Carole Williams Green - PA Hospital; Arlene Gray-Bryn Mawr; Patricia Holmes - Fitzgerald Mercy

IN REHAB:

Helena Allen - Simpson House; Leotta Griffith, Linda Holmes - Saunders House; Gwendolyn Langford - Arden Courts of Cherry Hill; Inez Turner- The Residence; Veger Stephen Hannum - St. Francis Rehab

AT HOME:

Robert Brown, Ridart "Butch" Farmer, Ola Bass, Shirley Winkfield, Thelma Silvers, Lemont Johnson, Patricia Ellison, Mary Ann Jones, Shirley Caldwell, Barbara Douglas, Wendell Whitlock, Virginia DuBrey

KEEP IN PRAYER:

Justin Trotman, Cathy Stafford, Terri Taylor, Lisa Woodley, Adinah Edwards, Carl Dean, Patricia Holmes, Ann Stewart, Sandra Bryant Miller, Autumn Simmons, Donald Hunt, Jr., Ronald Coleman, Rene Hayes, Bobby Tillman, Daryn Stewart

WE PRAY FOR

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

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YOUTH COUNCIL

Do you feel called to work with Youth? Do you have great ideas that will help the church to connect with the youth of today (and vice versa)? You are invited to be a part of our parish Youth Council. Please contact Fr. Daren for more details.

YOUNG ADULT GATHERING

All young adults (those in their 20's and 30's) are invited to a time of fellowship on the 4th Sunday of every month in Anderson Hall immediately following worship.

GIRLS FRIENDLY SOCIETY

. All young ladies are invited to join us on Saturdays in the Undercroft at 11:00 AM. **The Girls Friendly Society does not meet every Saturday.**

Please contact <u>Nikkol Simms</u> for more information and the schedule.

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.

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 Scout Program is open to children aged 11-17 years old. The Scout Program meets at **3:00 PM on Saturdays**.

Please contact Scout <u>Master Howard Chapman</u> for more information.

HOW CAN I BE FAITHFUL TO GOD AND THE CHURCH THROUGH STEWARDSHIP?

"To whom much is given, much is required." -Luke 12:48

The Stewardship Committee of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas recognizes that stewardship may take form in several ways, your time, your talent or your treasures. The one commonality is that each of us must prayerfully ask God to guide us in making the right choices and have faith that He will guide us to the right decision.

Our church has a tremendous congregation that is thriving and growing. The ministries that we have serve all of God's children near and far. These endeavors require all three forms of stewardship: but especially your sharing of treasures. Prayerfully consider donating to one or all of the special requests below.

FAITHFUL GIVING CARD (PLEDGE)

Please pray for your Faithful Giving for 2024 and 2025. You'll be able to complete your <u>Faithful Giving Card</u> on the <u>church website</u>, or by using the paper Faithful Giving Card. Strong support is needed to meet the budget, our many endeavors and outreach projects at St. Thomas. Your Faithful Giving Card can also be placed in the Alms Basin or mailed to the church office.

THE BUILDING FUND ENVELOPES have been placed in Anderson Hall beside the Offering Envelopes. Please pick them up with your offering envelopes. 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. Each box of Building Fund envelopes will include twelve envelopes, one for each month. Thank you.

CAPITAL BUILDING IMPROVEMENT FUND

If you are actively contributing, thank you! Your gifts are truly appreciated. Everyone is asked to make a minimum sacrificial gift of \$40 per month. The Building Fund Envelopes are located in Anderson Hall beside the Offering envelopes. When using electronic payments select "Building Fund." If using checks write "Building Fund" on the memo line of your check.

STEWARDSHIP NEWS

The church has received many "undeliverable" mailings. If you have moved, please update your mailing address with the church office by **email** or phone 215-473-3065.

Can you help deliver offertory envelopes to our sick and shutin parishioners? If you live near a parishioner who is unable to come to church, it would be much appreciated if you would bring their envelopes to them. A list of our sick and shutin parishioners is located next to the offertory envelopes in Anderson Hall.

IMPORTANT: Make sure your name, envelope #, and amount are included on the front of your offering envelope. This is critical for bookkeeping accuracy. Help is just an email away. Contact <u>Judy Tillman</u>.

RECTOR'S PRAYERFUL WISH LIST

\$100,000.00. Our air conditioning units have provided over 30 years of comfort. They are now in need of being replaced. Please prayerfully consider donating toward the replacement and use the <u>link</u> provided. Thank you to those who have already given toward the new air-conditioning units.

There are several ways to submit your offering and tithes: church service offertory, use the QR code, website donations, download the Givi app, U.S. Mail or hand deliver it to the fiscal office.



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, (Absalom Jones Way).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 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 10:00 AM-2:00 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 **www.aecst.org** website or send an email to our **Fiscal Administrator**.

Thank you so much to all who have return them.

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 Priest** The Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney wilgafney@gmail.com Associate Minister pauljaybach@gmail.com The Rev. Dr. Paul Bach **Executive Asst to Rector** Gladyce DuBrey 1792@aecst.org Fiscal Administor Jeannette Jeffrey fiscal@aecst.org LaDon Elliott 1792@aecst.org Sexton David McGilberry 1792@aecst.org **Asst Sexton** Jay Fluellen, DMA chancelchoir@aecst.org Chancel Choirmaster **Gospel Choirmaster** Waltier Blocker gospelchoir@aecst.org Rector's General Counsel jtucker@tigattorneys.com Joe Tucker, Esq Altar Guild Alfreda Brockman fredabee@verizon.net **Baptism Co-Chairs** Gail Hinton Harris baptism@aecst.org Patricia Walker-Ellison p.walker.ellison@gmail.com churchschool@aecst.org Church School Superintendent Tynecia Wilson Ed Muse Photogrphy 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 Jay Fluellen, D.M.A. chancelchoir@aecst1792.org Live Stream Ministry Yaseen Faroog | Teri Tillman livevideo@aecst.org **Memorial Flowers** Alfreda Brockmam fredabee@verizon.net happycmd05@aol.com Clare Mae Daniels Monarch Greeters Ministry **Ashley Hines** 1792@aecst.org Stephen Hannum 1792@aecst.org **Parish Vergers** 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@aecst.org Judy Tillman

Stewardship Chair Transportation Ministry Videography Ministry Visitor's Ministry Voices of Comfort

Quentin Heyward Edita Gauthney | Michele Green Robert Davenport William Burke Ushers Ministry Arlene Singletary

recordedvideo@aecst.org visitorsministry@aecst.org robertnewtondavenport@gmail.com leaniepo302@gmail.com

VESTRY OFFICERS

Rector's Warden - Richard Jones | Accounting Warden - Deborah Camp-Frye Clerk of the Vestry - Clare Mae Daniels | Treasurer - Albert S. Dandridge, iii Esq. Stewardship Chair - Judy Tillman | Property Chair - William Burke

THE VESTRY

Deadra Cannon Wendella Fox Marie B. Golson Deborah Harrison D. Lynn Joell Kelvin Johnson Pamela Johnson Patricia Lynch Judith Simkins-Booth

THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. 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-determanation, 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.