



WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

He said to them,
“But who do you say that I am?”

Simon Peter answered,
**“You are the Messiah,
the Son of the living God.”**

Matthew 16:15-16

THE HISTORIC AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS
FIRST BLACK EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE USA • FOUNDED 1792
THE VERY REVEREND CANON MARTINI SHAW, 17TH RECTOR



6361 LANCASTER AVENUE
(ABSALOM JONES WAY)
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19151



(215) 473-3065



WWW.AECST.ORG



WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/AECST1792

THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
AUGUST 23, 2026

**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 Reverend Fr. Gerald Collins
Associate Priest

The Reverend Patricia Downing
Associate Priest



Please scan the QR code or text "AECST" to 73256 to
contribute to the church ministries.

Please click on the link provided for the
Order of Service

“WELCOME TO THE MOTHER CHURCH”

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

Psalms 100:4

Grace and Peace to you from God on this,
Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

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, and proudly a part of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The first rector of this historic parish, The Reverend 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 welcome 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. Again, welcome!

Faithfully,

The Very Reverend Canon Martini Shaw

17th Rector and Dean of the Schuylkill Deanery

A NEW WORSHIP ENHANCEMENT!!!

You are invited and encouraged to now use our new Order of Service/Spearhead QR code to download to your phone each Sunday. You may find it at both entrances to the nave of the church.



SUMMER HOURS FOR THE CHURCH AND PARISH OFFICES

July and August business hours are Monday - Friday
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM.

The Church will be open Saturdays
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM



The Rector is away on summer vacation. If you have an emergency, please contact the Parish office, 215-473-3065, Fr. Jay Collins, associatepriest@aecst.org or Richard Jones, Rector's Warden, rectorswarden@aecst.org.

RECTOR'S WISH LIST

Our Audio/Visual/Media Systems sorely need upgrading.

- Anderson Hall sound system
- Livestream system
- Sanctuary sound system

Please consider donating towards our goal to raise \$10,000.00. You may contact Father Shaw if you have questions.

RECTOR'S REQUEST

Summer stewardship - During the summer month, churches often face financial difficulties as many parishioners are away on vacation. It is important to maintain your level of giving during this time. Please pray for our church's financial well-being.



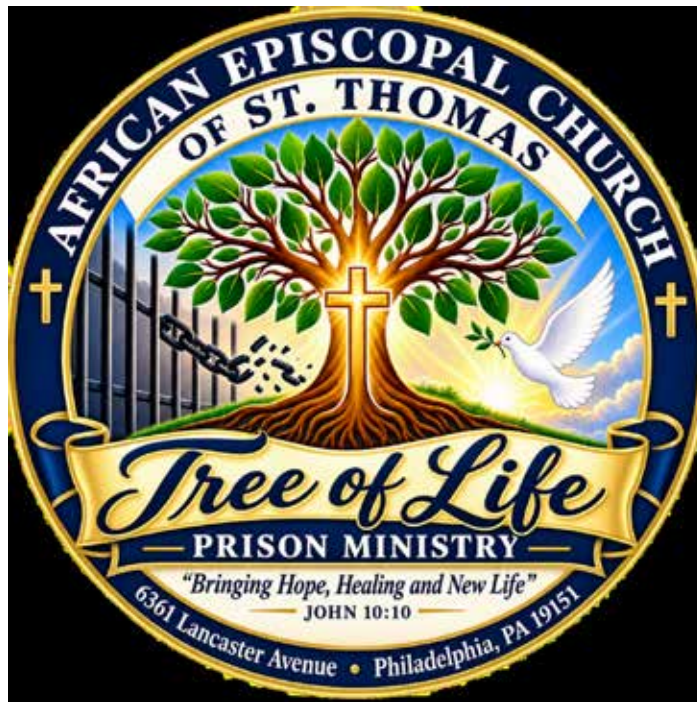
CALL TO WORSHIP

Please note, as you arrive at church, the playing of our beautiful carillon bells. The musical tunes were created by the late Joseph Stevenson.



MUSIC MINISTRY HOMILY SERIES

During August, the St. Thomas' Ministers of Music: Waltier Blocker, Dr. Rollo Dilworth, and Dr. Jay Fluellen, will prepare several special musical homilies. Make sure you're in attendance to hear their dynamic presentations.



The Tree Of Life Prison Ministry is inviting the congregation to our "REORGANIZATION MEETING," to be held immediately after the service, **Sunday, August 23, 2026**, in the Absalom Jones House. All are encouraged to bring your talents, ideas, and suggestions to get involved in the "Reorganization" of the Tree Of Life Prison Ministry. If you have any questions, please contact Cathy Stafford, cathystafford1114@gmail.com or Ricardo Bostic, ricardobostic@comcast.net, Co-Chairs.



AECST
FOUNDED 1792



HOMECOMING SUNDAY

2026

*“Celebrating 234 Years
of relevant and vibrant ministry”*

ALL ABOARD THE AECST EXPRESS!!!!



SEPTEMBER 13, 2026 • 10:00 AM

(Reception to follow Service)

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

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AECST HEALTH MINISTRY NEWS

Saturday, September 19, 2026

11:00 AM to 1:00 PM Springfield Pharmacy & Medical Supply will offer a vaccine clinic at AECST, Absalom Jones House, 6361 Lancaster Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19151.

Available vaccines include Influenza, COVID-19, Pneumococcal, Shingles (a two-stage vaccine), and others upon request. Use the link below or scan the QR Code to register and choose a time to receive your vaccination. You will need to provide your Health Insurance information.

This form goes directly to the pharmacy.

<https://form.jotform.com/262226481081150>



For questions or to register for this free event, please contact Nikki Franke at nikki.franke@temple.edu or Michael McIntosh at michael.mcintosh46@gmail.com.

THIS WEEK AT AECST - August 23, 2026

Monday, August 24th

~Parish office closed~

Tuesday, August 25th

~ OPC Advocacy Outreach Group Meeting~
6:00 - 9:00 PM in the Undercroft

Friday, August 28th

~Parish office closed~

UPCOMING SUNDAYS

September 13th

~Homecoming Sunday/234th Parish Anniversary~

~The blessing of the new officers of
the Tree of Life Prison Ministry~

~The commissioning and blessing of
Dr. Naomi Johnson Booker as a Verger~

~Celebrating our present ministries~
in Anderson Hall following service

~The launch of the AECST Legacy Path~

September 20th

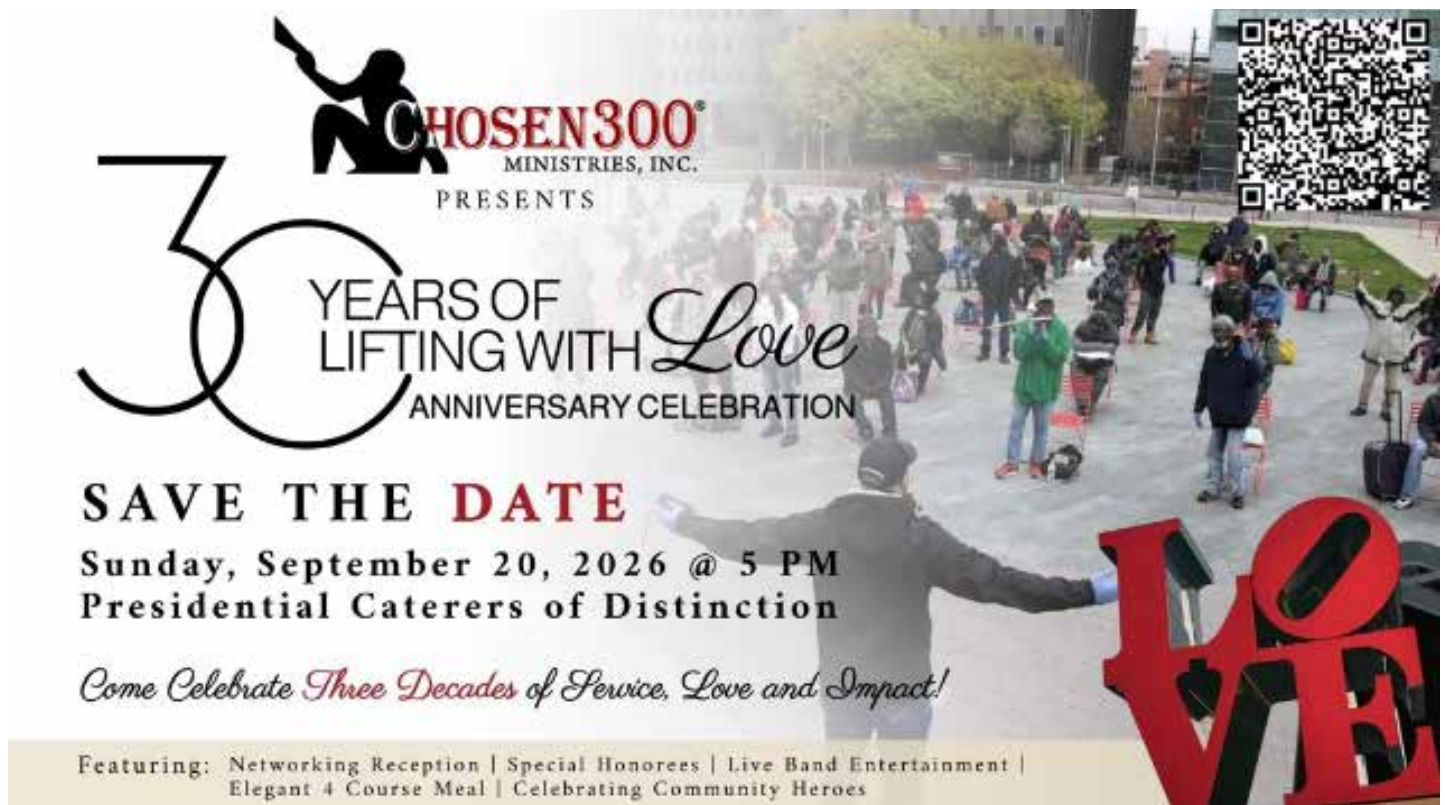
~Education & Back to School Sunday~

~The blessing of St. Thomas' Church School teachers,
staff, and all educators~

September 27th

~Youth & Young Adult Sunday~

~Ye Olde Philadelphia Club will join us worship~



Chosen 300 Ministry is celebrating its 30th anniversary-
Three Decades of Service, Love, and Impact.

Please join the celebration:

Sunday, September 20, 2026, at 5:00 PM

Presidential Caterers of Distinction

2910 Dekalb Pike, East Norriton Township, PA 19401

For more information, please contact Maria Sammy,
Chosen 300 Executive Director, at msammy@chosen300.org.

SUMMER WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP
The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
August 16, 2026





Photos: Bill Edmonds,
St.Thomas Ed Muse Memorial Photography Ministry



Curious when Church School begins?

Great question! The 2026 - 2027 Church School registration opens on **September 1, 2026**. Church School begins on **October 4, 2026**. All Students must be registered in order to attend Church School. Look for an email and a QR code in your bulletin!



ATTENTION ALL ACOLYTES:

Summer vacation is coming to an end. The first Acolyte rehearsal for Homecoming Sunday is on **August 29, 2026, 10:00 AM-Noon**. Please contact Nikkol Simms, njsimms@verizon.net, for more information.



— THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL —
CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS

The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw, Rector

— PHILADELPHIA —



EDUCATION SUNDAY



Equipping Minds. Enriching Lives. Empowering Communities.



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2026
10:00 A.M.

GUEST SPEAKER

AARON A. WALTON

President of Cheyney University



**CHEYNEY
UNIVERSITY**

FAITH • KNOWLEDGE • SERVICE

CO-CHAIRS

DEIDRE FARMBRY, Ed.D.

AND MONICA JOHNSON TAYLOR, Ed.D.

SPECIAL MUSIC

**CHEYNEY UNIVERSITY
GLEE CLUB**

*Come and be blessed by an inspiring word
and uplifting music!*



*"Train up a child in the way he should go;
even when he is old he will not depart from it."*

PROVERBS 22:6

ANNUAL BACK TO SCHOOL/EDUCATION SUNDAY

The annual celebration of education, at the start of the new school year, will be held on Sunday, September 20, 2026. This year's theme is "Equipping Minds. Enriching Lives. Empowering Communities." The President of Cheyney University, Dr. Aaron A. Walton, will be our featured speaker! Additionally, the Cheyney University Glee Club will be musical guests. The students of St. Thomas should bring their back packs and school bags to church for a special blessing. Also, educators in our parish will be recognized in the Bulletin and Spearhead on September 20, 2026. If you are a new member of our congregation and work, or previously worked, in the field If you are a new member of our congregation and work, or previously worked, in the field of education, please send your name and position held to Cynthia Muse at musecyn@aol.com.



OUR LIVESTREAM MINISTRY NEEDS YOU!

Each week, many people who are away can worship with us via our amazing Livestream. Please prayerfully consider serving in this ministry. If interested, please communicate with Father Shaw.



**ATTENTION: All Groups/Ministries/Organizations
and Fellowships**

- Announcements and flyers for the Sunday Bulletin and digital Spearhead should be received on **Monday by 12:00 Noon**. If you have any questions, please contact Gladyce in the church office, (215)473-3065.
- Please submit a "Request for Meeting Space" form to the office for all meetings in the Church, and on the Church campus two weeks prior to the event. Please refrain from approaching the sextons. The church office maintains the calendar for all events. If you have any questions or need a form, please contact the church office at (215)473-3065 or email 1792@aecst.org.

OUR DEDICATED OUT-OF-TOWN FAMILIES

We give thanks to God for these active and dedicated members of St. Thomas who presently live in other cities, states, and countries, but remain connected weekly by various media platforms:

Constance Anderson - Florida

The Rev. Dr. Paul Bach & Dr. Julie Hergerather - Seattle, Washington

Deadra Cannon - Georgia

Dr. Tracy Collins - North Carolina

Nora Corbin - Illinois

Paula Cropper - North Carolina

Lee Daniels - New York

Stacey Davis - New York

Andrew and Lisa Renee Dumas - Portugal

The Rev. Fr. Daren Evans - Texas

Rashid, Christie, and Gabrielle Faisal - Michigan

The Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney - Texas

Richard & Gwenda Hart - South Carolina

Yvonne Hyde-Carter - New York

Dr. Calvin Johnson - Florida

Bettie Jones - North Carolina

Richard Jones, Jr. - Virginia

Dr. Sheila Jones-Smith - South Carolina

Steven & Jameela Lewis - Colorado/California

Gregory Lyles - Switzerland

Nohjay Nimpson - Texas

Zennetta Peters - North Carolina

Richard & Rebecca Scales - Florida

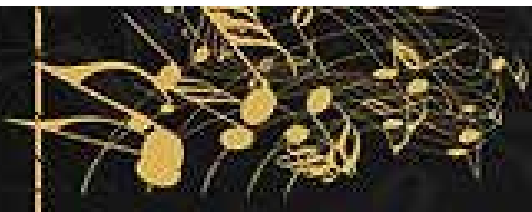
Shelly and Ann Stewart - Florida/Massachusetts

Howard Tucker - Brazil/Philadelphia

Allison Young - Maryland

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.



VOCALISTS & MUSICIANS *Wanted*

**To Join
A Professional Recording Gospel Choir**

The St Thomas Gospel Choir
Directed By, Walt Blocker
of the
African Episcopal Church of St Thomas
Philadelphia, PA

WWW.STTHOMASGC.ORG

(484) 816-STGC (7842)



**The Bible Readings for
the Elventh Sunday after Pentecost
August 23, 2026**

The First Lesson - [Exodus 1:8-2:10](#)
[Psalms 124](#)

The Second Lesson - [Romans 12:1-8](#)

The Holy Gospel - [Matthew 16:13-20](#)

**The Holy Gospel Readings for the week
of August 23, 2026**

Sunday - [Mark 6:1-6](#)

Monday - [John 5:19-29](#)

Tuesday - [John 5:30-47](#)

Wednesday - [John 6:1-15](#)

Thursday - [John 6:16-27](#)

Friday - [John 6:27-40](#)

Saturday - [John 6:41-51](#)



PILGRIMS ON A JOURNEY BIBLE STUDY

are on vacation for the summer. Class will resume on **September 8th**. If you are interested in joining the ministry, please contact Fr. Jay

at associatepriest@aecst.org.

ALTAR FLOWERS

To order flowers, please return this form (please print) with payment to Alfreda Brockman or the Church Office.

You can also order via the church website or scan the QR code below to order and pay for flowers.

Flowers on the High Altar - \$80.00 each
Flowers on the Absalom Jones Altar - \$70.00 each
Flowers on the Columbarium - \$60.00



NEW REALM STATEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Thank you to everyone for maintaining your financial pledge/faithful giving. During the summer months please submit your offering through Realm or by mail if you're not going to be in church. That will be appreciated. Also, if there's a need to adjust your pledge, please email me at:

stewardship@aecst.com

Thank you again.

Judy Tillman, Stewardship Chair



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.](#)



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 **Livestream/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.
- as **Acolytes** to serve on the altar. Please contact [Fr. Shaw](#) 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](#).



SICK AND SHUT-IN/THOSE REQUESTING SPECIAL PRAYERS

IN REHAB:

Francina Norris - St. Francis Nursing Home

IN LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENCES:

Helena Allen-Simpson House; Gwendolyn Langford - Arden Courts of Cherry Hill; Ola Bass - Atria Lafayette Hill

AT HOME:

Robert Brown, Cornelia Camp, Eleanor Chestnut, Regina Meacham Devero, Vernetta Dow, Virginia DuBrey, Patricia Walker-Ellison, Stephen Hannum, Roosevelt Harris, Sr., D. Lynn Joell, Karen Ragland, Joyce Stewart, Gail Harris, The Rev. Dr. Paul Bach, Waltier Blocker

SPECIAL PRAYERS:

Carmen Brown, Edita Gauthney, Joan Hall, Richard Jones, Jr., Dr. Cassandra Ruffin, Cathy Stafford, Carolyn Summers, Daryn Stewart, Justin Trotman, Lisa Woodley, Charlene M. Wiltshire

WE PRAY FOR: those who are Incarcerated and their families, as well as those affected by their actions.

If you have prayer requests and wish to be added to this list, please call Gladyce in the church office or email 1792@aecst.org.

CALLING ALL YOUTH



What's an Acolyte? Am I old enough? Why do I want to be one? These and other questions can be answered by Father Shaw! No prior experience is necessary to serve in the **Acolyte Ministry**. Rehearsals are on Sundays, immediately after service. This is an excellent opportunity for children and youth to become involved in the life of the church. Contact [Fr. Shaw](#) for details.



CHAT AND CHEW

Have you ever considered hosting a Chat and Chew following service in thanksgiving for a blessing received or in memory of a departed loved one? Please contact [Gladyce](#) in the church office for further details.



IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE RECTOR

St. Thomas celebrates children and youth not only as the church of TOMORROW, but also the church of TODAY! We welcome and encourage their full presence and participation in our Sunday worship.



Tiny Tykes Temple is located in the beautiful library of the Absalom Jones House for infants, children (under 3 years old) and parents. Parents who may find it necessary to step away from mass for a moment are encouraged to take advantage of this wonderful space.

STEWARDSHIP NEWS

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

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver”. 2 Corinthians 9:7. NIV

The Stewardship Committee of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas recognizes that stewardship may take form in several ways: your time, talent, or 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 treasure. Prayerfully consider donating by using the QR Code below:



The African Episcopal
Church of St. Thomas |
Abou...

www.aecst.org

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

1) Sunday Offering Plate

2) Church Website - <http://www.aecst.org/donations.htm>

the button(s) on the page that represents where you'd like your payment to be applied, i.e., pledge, the AJ house, Easter, etc.

3) Members and visitors who previously donated through GIVI will use **Realm Connect**. If you donate via the church website, either directly or by using the QR code, you will see a new webpage and a corresponding QR code.

4) **Cellphone:** Text "AECST" to 73256 to donate.

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](#) and select the Building Fund button on our Capital Improvement Donation button on our [website](#).

MINISTRY STAFF

Bishop	The Rt. Rev. Daniel G P Gutierrez	
Rector	The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw	rector@aecst.org
Associate to the Rector		
Associate Priest	The Rev. Fr. Gerald (Jay) Collins	associatepriest@aecst.org
Associate Priest	The Rev. Patricia Downing	psdowning@verizon.net
Executive Asst. to the Rector	Gladyce DuBrey	1792@aecst.org
Fiscal Administrator		
Sexton	LaDon Elliott	1792@aecst.org
Asst. Sexton	David McGillberry	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@tlgattorneys.com
Altar Guild	Alfreda Brockman	fredabee@verizon.net
Baptism Co-Chairs	Gail Hinton Harris	baptism@aecst.org
	Patricia Walker-Ellison	p.walker.ellison@gmail.com
O. V. Catto Voter Education Ministry	Wendella Fox Elaine Gillison	cattoministry@aecst.org
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
Health Ministry	Nikki Franke Dr. Michael McIntosh	1792@aecst.org
Jazz Ensemble Director	Jay Fluellen, DMA	chancelchoir@aecst.org
Live Stream Ministry	Yaseen Farooq Teri Tillman	livevideo@aecst.org
Memorial Flowers	Alfreda Brockman Clare Mae Daniels	fredabee@verizon.net
Memorial Tribute Ministry	Victoria Rivers	memorialtribute@aecst.org
Roy Ellison Monarch Greeters	Ashley Hines	1792@aecst.org
Parish Vergers	Eugene Golson Karen Ragland	1792@aecst.org
Parish Webmaster	Gail Hinton Harris	webmanager@aecst.org
Property Chair	William J. Burke	property@aecst.org
Scout Pack 133	Howard Chapman	howchapman@gmail.com
	Arlene Gray	bsapack0133@gmail.com
St. Thomas Daughters of the King	Sharon Bullock	scmci@aol.com
Stewardship Chair	Judy Tillman	stewardship@aecst.org
Videography Ministry	Quentin Heyward	recordedvideo@aecst.org
Visitor's Ministry	Edita Gauthney Michele Green	visitorsministry@aecst.org
Voices of Comfort	Robert Davenport	1792@aecst.org
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 - Pamela Johnson | Treasurer - Albert S. Dandridge, III Esq.
Stewardship Chair - Judy Tillman | Property Chair - William J. Burke

Dr. Tim Barksdale	Clare Mae Daniels	Eugene Golson
Judith Simkins Booth	Mary Sandra Dean	Monica Lewis Jones
Deadra Cannon	Elaine Gillison	Deborah Matthews

THE AUXILIARY VESTRY

Brenda Johnson Best	Gwenda Hart	Cynthia Muse
Sharon Bullock	D. Lynn Joell	Dr. Monica Johnson Taylor
Ronnie Collins	Kelvin Johnson	Darryle (Bobby) Tillman

DELEGATES TO THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION

Albert S. Dandridge, III Esq. | Dr. Cassandra Ruffin | Alternate: Tyrone Keller

DELEGATES TO THE SCHUYLKILL DEANERY

Phyllis Cater | Mary Sandra Dean | Alternate: Tyrone Keller