



CELEBRATING A FEW OF OUR HEROES



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

(IS JUST NOT LONG ENOUGH)



**THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
THE FEAST OF ABSALOM JONES
February 15, 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. Daren E. Evans
Associate to the Rector

The Reverend Fr. Gerald Collins
Associate Priest



Scan the QR code or text "AECST" to 73256 to support our church and our 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.”

Psalm 100:4

Grace and Peace to you from God on this the **Last Sunday after the Epiphany and the Celebration of the Life and Ministry of The Reverend Absalom Jones.**

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., it is 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.

Today, we are very happy to welcome our bishop, **The Right Reverend Daniel G.P. Gutierrez, Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania; our Preacher, The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry, former Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church;** and many others worshipping with us.

Our parish boldly proclaims the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are an active, mission-minded, and growing church family. Whomever 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 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.

The Very Reverend Canon Martini Shaw,
17th Rector and Dean of the Schuylkill Deanery



WELCOME TO THE
HISTORIC AFRICAN EPISCOPAL
CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS



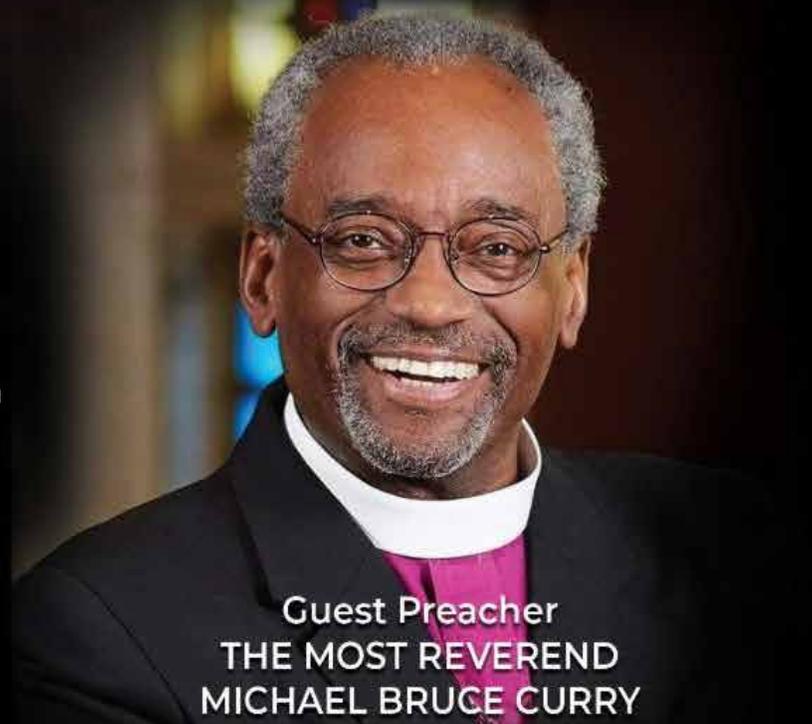
Celebrating

THE FEAST OF
ABSALOM JONES
Sunday, February 15, 2026, 4:00 PM

Celebrant

**THE RIGHT REVEREND
DANIEL G. P. GUTIERREZ**
(Bishop of the Diocese of PA)

PARTICIPATING IN THE CELEBRATION:
Christ Church, Philadelphia
St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia
Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church, Philadelphia



Guest Preacher
**THE MOST REVEREND
MICHAEL BRUCE CURRY**
Former Presiding Bishop and Primate
(The Episcopal Church)



THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS
FIRST BLACK EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE USA | FOUNDED 1792



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

BLACK HISTORY MONTH NOTE

February 15, 2026

According to Congress the U.S. Semi-quincentennial Commission is providing the leadership for official celebrations and events marking the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence; known popularly as America250. Historian and classicist Danielle Allen posts that the signers did so to find a political system that would give equality institutional form and thereby secure freedom for all. Congressman Dwight Evans, 3rd Congressional District, (St. Thomas' Congressman) is a member of the Commission which published a timeline of signature historical events.

The Museum of the American Revolution's website has a more detailed history timeline of the American Revolution divided by chronologically organized themes: 1754-1775, Pride and Protest; 1775-1783, War and Independence; and 1783-1807, A New Nation. The central aspects of the American journey to independence may be debatable but the objective to establish a more perfect union remains uncontestable.

Absalom Jones was brought enslaved to Philadelphia in 1761. His enslaver, Benjamin Wynkoop, paid a ten-pound tax levied by the Pennsylvania legislature on every slave brought into the Commonwealth. Absalom and all Black Philadelphians were subject to the racially discriminatory Act for the Better Regulation of Negroes that would remain in force until the passage of the Gradual Abolition Act in 1780. The War of Independence (also known as the American Revolutionary War) was not going well for the patriot cause in 1777 when the British defeated the Continental Army near Chadds Ford and occupied Philadelphia. Wynkoop took his family and fled to relatives in Delaware, leaving his house and store in the care of Absalom and his free wife Mary Jones, who were also property owners.

Enslaved Black Philadelphians who were married and owned property were least likely to seek freedom behind British lines. It would be almost ten years after the Declaration of Independence was promulgated that Absalom Jones would gain his freedom by manumission. No doubt, as he preached in The Thanksgiving Sermon, he surely expressed gratitude to God with a grateful heart sending praises and thanksgivings to the throne of grace.

Submitted by: Arthur K. Sudler, Director, Historical Society & Archives, African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas Church.



A HOLY and HISTORICAL EXHIBIT

Immediately following this Sunday's celebration, please stop by the Absalom Jones House to view several of the artifacts that belonged to and were used by Blessed Absalom Jones.

Arthur Sudler Director,
St. Thomas Historical and Archival Society,
will be on hand to answer any questions.

A VIRTUAL INVITATION FOR YOU!
Please view and share & (NOTE 4:00 PM)



Video: Quentin Heyward
St.Thomas Videography Ministry



The Church and Parish Administrative Offices
will be closed on Monday,
February 16, 2026, in observance of
Presidents' Day.

ABOUT THE AECST A HISTORY OF ST. THOMAS

Originally established as the African Church, The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas was founded in 1792 by and for persons of African descent to foster personal and religious freedoms and self-determination. The original African Church was an outgrowth of the Free African Society, a mutual aid organization established in 1787 by Absalom Jones, Richard Allen and others, to assist the Black population in Philadelphia. The early religious services were held in private homes and in a school. Within the congregation were many who, because of growing racial tension and insults, had followed the lay preachers, Absalom Jones and Richard Allen, in an historic walkout from St. George's Methodist Church. Affiliation with the Episcopal Church was ratified in 1794. The Reverend Absalom Jones became the first Episcopal priest of African American descent and the first rector of St. Thomas' Church.

The original church house was constructed at 5th and Adelphi Streets in Philadelphia, now St. James Place, and dedicated on July 17, 1794. Subsequent locations of the church included: 12th Street below Walnut; 57th and Pearl Streets, (uniting with the Church of the Beloved Disciple); 52nd and Parrish Streets; and the current location, 6361 Absalom Jones Way (formerly St. Paul's Overbrook) in Philadelphia's historic Overbrook Farms neighborhood. The congregation has continued to be predominately African American.

The parish's Eucharist-centered liturgy has evolved over the years from a traditional Anglican/Episcopal high church worship experience to one that is enriched with an evangelical Afrocentric focus.

St. Thomas has been in the vanguard of action to sustain the legacy of humanitarianism and community outreach passed down from its founders. St. Thomas' clergy and parishioners have played key roles in the abolition/anti-slavery/ underground railroad movements and the early equal rights movement of the 1800's. Over the past fifty years, St. Thomas has figured prominently in the civil rights movement, The NAACP, Union of Black Episcopalians, Opportunities Industrialization Center, Philadelphia Interfaith Action and The Episcopal Church Women. Paramount, however, has been the movement to uphold the knowledge and value of the Black presence in the Episcopal Church. Today, that tradition continues with an ever-growing membership and through a host of ministries such as Christian Formation, the Chancel Choir, Gospel Choir, Jazz Ensemble, Men's Fellowship, Young Adult and Youth Ministries, a Church School, Health Ministry, Caring Ministry, and a Shepherding Program.

On November 10, 1996, the church dedicated the Absalom Jones Chapel with a Festal Eucharist and enshrined his ashes in the altar. In addition, the Absalom Jones Memorial Stained Glass Window was installed and dedicated in July 1997. A stained glass window featuring Black Saints, and Black Bishops past and present was also installed in 2000.

Today, the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas flourishes as an open, Christ-centered community of faith where the Gospel is taught, lived and spread.

ABOUT THE REVEREND ABSALOM JONES

Founder of The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas 1746-1818

The life and legacy of The Reverend Absalom Jones is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit, his faith, and his commitment to the causes of freedom, justice and self-determination.

Absalom Jones was born enslaved to Abraham Wynkoop, a wealthy Anglican planter in 1746 in Delaware. He was working in the fields when Abraham recognized that he was an intelligent child and ordered that he be trained to work in the house. Absalom eagerly accepted instruction in reading. He also saved money he was given and bought books (among them a primer, a spelling book, and a Bible). Abraham Wynkoop died in 1753 and by 1755 his younger son Benjamin had inherited the plantation. When Absalom was sixteen Benjamin Wynkoop sold the plantation and Absalom's mother, sister, and five brothers. Wynkoop brought Absalom to Philadelphia where he opened a store and joined St. Peter's Church. In Philadelphia Benjamin Wynkoop permitted Absalom to attend a night school for black people that was operated by Quakers following the tradition established by abolitionist teacher Anthony Benezet.

At twenty, with the permission of their masters, Absalom married Mary Thomas who was enslaved to Sarah King who also worshipped at St. Peter's. The Rev. Jacob Duche performed the wedding at Christ Church. Absalom and his father-in-law, John Thomas, used their savings, and sought donations and loans primarily from prominent Quakers, in order to purchase Mary's freedom. Absalom and Mary worked very hard to repay the money borrowed to buy her freedom. They saved enough money to buy property and to buy Absalom's freedom. Although he repeatedly asked Benjamin Wynkoop to allow him to buy his freedom Wynkoop refused. Absalom persisted because as long as he was enslaved Wynkoop could take his property and his money. Finally, in 1784 Benjamin Wynkoop freed Absalom by granting him a manumission. Absalom continued to work in Wynkoop's store as a paid employee. Absalom left St. Peter's Church and began worshipping at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church. He met Richard Allen who had been engaged to preach at St. George's and the two became lifelong friends.

Together, in 1787, they founded the Free African Society a mutual aid benevolent organization that was the first of its kind organized by and for black people. Members of the Society paid monthly dues for the benefit of those in need. At St George's, Absalom and Richard served as lay ministers for the black membership. The active evangelism of Jones and Allen, greatly increased black membership at St George's. The black members

worked hard to help raise money to build an upstairs gallery intended to enlarge the church. The church leadership decided to segregate the black worshippers in the gallery, without notifying them. During a Sunday morning service a dispute arose over the seats black members had been instructed to take in the gallery and ushers attempted to physically remove them by first accosting Absalom Jones. Most of the black members present indignantly walked out of St. George's in a body.

Prior to the incident at St. George's the Free African Society had initiated religious services. Some of these services were presided over by The Rev. Joseph Pilmore an assistant St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The Society established communication with similar black groups in other cities. In 1792 the Society began to build the African Church of Philadelphia. The church membership took a denominational vote and decided to affiliate with the Episcopal Church. Richard Allen withdrew from the effort as he favored affiliation with the Methodist Church. Absalom Jones was asked to provide pastoral leadership and after prayer and reflection he accepted the call.

The African Church was dedicated on July 17, 1794. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Magaw, rector St. Paul's Church, preached the dedicatory address. Dr. Magaw was assisted at the service by The Rev. James Abercrombie, assistant minister at Christ Church. Soon thereafter the congregation applied for membership in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania on the following conditions: 1) that they be received as an organized body; 2) that they have control over their own local affairs; 3) that Absalom Jones be licensed as layreader, and, if qualified, be ordained as minister. In October 1794 it was admitted as the African Episcopal Church of St Thomas. The church was incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1796. Bishop William White ordained Jones as deacon in 1795 and as priest on September 21, 1802.

Jones was an earnest preacher. He denounced slavery, and warned the oppressors to "clean their hands of slaves." To him, God was the Father, who always acted on "behalf of the oppressed and distressed." But it was his constant visiting and mild manner that made him beloved by his congregation and by the community. St Thomas Church grew to over 500 members during its first year. The congregants formed a day school and were active in moral uplift, self-empowerment, and anti-slavery activities. Known as "the Black Bishop of the Episcopal Church," Jones was an example of persistent faith in God and in the Church as God's instrument. Jones died on this day in 1818.

PARKING OPTIONS FOR SUNDAY AFTERNOON 2/15/2026 ONLY

Overbrook Presbyterian Church, located at City and Lancaster Avenues, has graciously agreed that for Sunday afternoon's service and celebration, St. Thomas parishioners and guests may park in their church lot.

There are two entrances: one on Lancaster Avenue and one on City Avenue. Availability is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Street parking on all nearby streets is available; however, not all streets are free from snow and ice. **Please be careful and mindful not to block our neighbors' driveways.**

THE JESSE F. ANDERSON, SR (JFA) SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

invites you to Mardi Gras Lunch, Sunday, February 15, 2026, from 1:00 - 3:30 PM in Anderson Hall. Join us for an afternoon of celebration, good food, music, silent auction, prizes and fun! Adults \$25.00, Youth \$10.00, Children under 6 are free. Contact Thomasina Hack (215) 901-2773, Paula Lamb (215) 620-7250 or any JFA Member for tickets.

Come enjoy a delicious meal and fellowship before attending the **BIG CELEBRATION AT 4:00 PM.**
Don't forget your Mardi Gras beads!

THE JESSE F. ANDERSON SR. (JFA)

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

PRESENTS A



Mardi Gras
JAZZ
LUNCH

SUNDAY
February 15, 2026
1:00 - 3:30 PM
ANDERSON HALL

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC
SILENT AUCTION & SPORTS MEMORABILIA

ADULTS \$25.00, YOUTH \$10.00,

CHILDREN UNDER 6 ARE FREE.

CONTACT THOMASINA HACK (215) 901-2773

PAULA LAMB (215) 620-7250

OR ANY JFA MEMBER FOR TICKETS.



ENJOY A DELICIOUS MEAL
AND FELLOWSHIP
BEFORE ATTENDING
THE BIG CELEBRATION
AT 4:00 PM.

THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS
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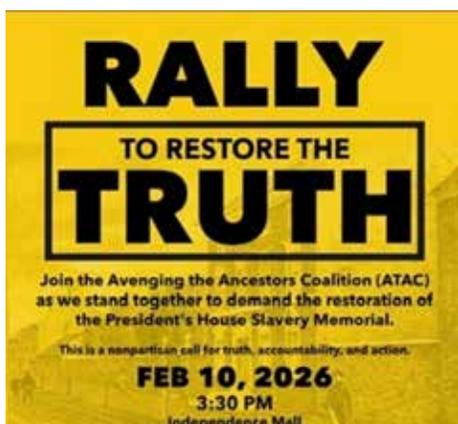
WWW.AECST.ORG • WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/AECST1792

Our Rector joined Pastor Carolyn C. Cavaness, Senator Vincent Hughes, Senator Sharif Street and Activist Michael Coard, Esq. at the Rally to REstore Truth.

Among the exhibits removed from the President's House at Independence Hall were Blessed Absalom Jones (St. Thomas Church) and Bishop Richard Allen (Mother Bethel AME Church).

Please sign petition in link below:

<http://change.org/restoreourhistory>

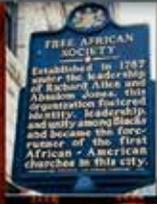


While some attempt to erase history, please join us in celebrating history.

OUR HISTORY IS AMERICAN HISTORY



Learn More about these Founders Who were Ripped off!
Rev. Absalom Jones & Rev. Richard Allen



5th & Adelphi 1st Church Location

Religious Freedom: Then & Now



🕒 1:00 - 3:00 PM
📅 Feb. 22, 2026

📍 Mother Bethel AME Church
419 S. 6th Street
Philadelphia





“RELIGIOUS FREEDOM THEN & NOW”

Sponsored by Interfaith Philadelphia

As historic narratives disappear from public spaces, telling the full story matters more than ever. Join Mother Bethel AME Church and St. Thomas for a powerful conversation on Black religious life in colonial Philadelphia and the legacy that still shapes our city and nation today.

Moderators: The Reverend Carolyn Cavaness, Pastor, Mother Bethel AME Church and The Very Reverend Canon Martini Shaw
Facilitators/Panelists: Arthur Sudler, Director,
St. Thomas Historical and Archival Society and others

Date: **Sunday, February 22, 2026**

Time: **1:00 PM - 3:00 PM**

(Mother Bethel will host St. Thomas members for lunch at Noon)

Discover more about the legacies of Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, formerly enslaved men, who became visionary faith leaders and founders of the historic **Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas**. Through courage, conviction, and self-determination, they overcame racial injustice, reshaped American religious life, and built institutions that still impact Philadelphia today.

We invite **Philadelphia’s interfaith community to join us in preserving, sharing, and learning from the full stories of our shared past.**

Register here: https://www.interfaithphiladelphia.org/phila250_motherbethel/



Religious Freedom: Then & Now

Celebrating Philadelphia at 250

THE BLACK RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD

Hosted By

Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

&

The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas

Learn how Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, formerly enslaved, leaders and founders of the Free African Society, helped shape Black religious, social, and civic life in the colonial period. Their work—alongside movements such as Prince Hall Freemasonry—challenged racial injustice, built independent Black institutions, and laid foundations that continue to influence faith and Philadelphia.

As historic narratives disappear from public spaces, this program affirms the importance of preserving, sharing, and learning from the full stories of our past.

Moderators



Rev. Carolyn C. Cavaness
Pastor of Mother Bethel
African Methodist Episcopal
Church



The Rev. Canon Martini Shaw
Rector of The African
Episcopal Church of St.
Thomas

Religious Freedom: Then & Now is an initiative exploring 250 years of interfaith engagement and understanding in Philadelphia. Learn more at interfaithphiladelphia.org/religiousfreedom



1:00 - 3:00 PM



Feb. 22, 2026



**Mother Bethel AME
Church**
419 S. 6th Street
Philadelphia

FREE!

SCAN TO RSVP



[Click Here](#)



**Interfaith
Philadelphia**



Congratulations to St. Thomas' Lisa Sharon Harper,
on the release of her new book.

Author & Activist Lisa Sharon Harper will be the guest speaker at a free event at St. Peter's Episcopal Church at 11:30 AM Sunday, February 22. Harper will discuss her most recent book, "Fortune: How Race Broke My Family and the World--And How to Repair It All." Before the event, Harper will also be the guest preacher at the church's 10:00 AM Worship Service. All are welcome!

NOTE TO ALL GUILDS/ORGANIZATIONS/MINISTRIES:

The 2026 Parish Meeting is on

Saturday, February 21, 2026, at 10:00 AM.

Please submit a one-page, year-end report (formatted in Word) to the church office, on or before

Friday, February 6, 2026.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

During the Annual Parish Meeting, votes will be cast for candidates for Vestry, Auxiliary Vestry, Delegates to the Diocesan Convention, and a Representative to the Diocesan Convention.

Candidate Profiles can be found [here](#).



THE HISTORIC
AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH
OF ST. THOMAS
2026 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

*Please
Join Us*

**SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 21, 2026 - 10:00 AM**

*"Celebrating 234 Years
of Active Ministry & Service"*

**HIGHLIGHTING AND CELEBRATING
OUR 2025 MINISTRY ACCOMPLISHMENTS
AND EXCITING PLANS FOR 2026**



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



The Catto Ministry will host a one-hour Zoom meeting on **February 23, 2026, at 7:00 PM.**

Email Wendella Fox or Elaine Gillison at cattoministry@aecst.org for meeting credentials. We look forward to seeing you.

Wendella P. Fox and Elaine C. Gillison,
co-chairs

CATTO MINISTRY CORNER UPDATE

The desecration and dismantling of the enslaved memorial exhibit at The President's House Site, located at 6th and Market Streets, on Thursday January 23, 2026, was carried out in compliance with an executive order by the current President of the United States. This order mandates that federal agencies remove documents and exhibits depicting atrocities during the country's history, especially those illustrating the paradox of slavery and freedom. Key figures include the nine enslaved people that lived in the President's House as well as highlighting the community and abolitionist work done by Absalom Jones and Richard Allen.

The City of Philadelphia, Avenging the Ancestors Coalition (ATAC) and other groups are seeking legal methods to restore and return historical documents and displays to their rightful location.

To learn more and participate in the process to restore this historical site and its accurate representation of our nation's history, you can join Avenging The Ancestors Coalition (ATAC). Find more information and involvement opportunities at www.avengingtheancestors.com

“Resistance & Resilience While in the Wilderness”



ASH WEDNESDAY

February 18, 2026

(Imposition of Ashes and
Holy Eucharist)

7:00 AM, 12 Noon and 6:00 PM

Wednesdays During Lent

6:00 - Holy Eucharist

6:30 - 7:15 Presentation/
Discussion

Week 1: Moses and the Exodus

Week 2: Abram and Sarai

Week 3: Birth of Jesus and flight to Egypt

Week 4: Sermon on the Mount

Week 5: The Cross

Facilitators:

Fr. Shaw, Fr. Daren, Lisa Sharon Harper and Arthur Sudler



HEALTH MINISTRY NEWS

The AECST Health Ministry will be hosting a Zoom Presentation on **Thursday, February 19th** from **7:00 PM - 8:00 PM**.

Topic: "Understanding common respiratory illnesses and keeping our lungs healthy "

Presenter: Dr. Carole A. Guy

Dr. Guy is a pulmonologist in Newark, Delaware and is affiliated with multiple hospitals in the area, including Christiana Care Hospitals and St. Francis Hospital-Wilmington. Pulmonologists treat disorders of the lungs and respiratory system, including pneumonia, tuberculosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and emphysema. Dr. Guy received her medical degree from Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University and has been in practice for more than 20 years. She specializes in treating sleep issues, pneumonia, and pulmonary heart disease.-

Zoom Link:

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/84022027638?pwd=pOTjlatwYXj1wRAibxxLyHmYnq7Wpl.1>

Zoom Meeting ID: 840 2202 7638

Passcode: gXa1vY

OUR LIVESTREAM MINISTRY NEEDS YOU!

Each week, many people who are away are able to worship with us via our amazing Livestream. Please prayerfully consider serving in this ministry. If interested, please communicate with the rector.

UPCOMING SUNDAYS

FEBRUARY 15TH

~Celebration of the Feast of Absalom Jones~

4:00 PM service

You are invited to wear your Mardi Gras beads for this celebration.

~Jesse F. Anderson, Sr. Annual Scholarship Fund~

Mardi Gras Lunch

1:00 - 3:00 PM in Anderson Hall

FEBRUARY 22ND

~Youth and Young Adult Sunday/Scout Sunday~

~Lunch at Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church~ 12:00 PM

~Philly250/AMERICA250 Special Interfaith Program~
at 1:00 PM, Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church



AECST LIVE STREAM

Please join us for worship on the St. Thomas [website](#), [the Live Stream Service](#), on our [Facebook](#) page or [Youtube](#) every Sunday morning at 10:00 AM.

You can also watch [Past Services](#).

THIS WEEK AT AECST

Monday, February 16th

~Church and Administrative Offices closed
for Presidents' Day~

Tuesday, February 17th

~OPC Advocacy Outreach Group Meeting~
6:00 - 9:00 PM in the Undercroft
~Pilgrims on a Journey Adult Bible Study~
with Fr. Jay via Zoom - 7:00 PM

Wednesday, February 18th

~Ash Wednesday Service and
Imposition of Ashes and Holy Eucharist~
7:00 AM, 12 Noon, and 6:00 PM
~St. Thomas Gospel Choir Rehearsal~
7:30 PM in Anderson Hall

Thursday, February 19th

~Vestry Meeting~
6:00 PM
~Health Ministry Zoom Meeting~
7:00 PM

Saturday, February 21st

~Annual Parish Meeting~ 10:00 AM
~Men's Ministry and Fellowship Meeting~
8:30 AM - 11:00 AM in the Undercroft
~Girls' Friendly Society~
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM in the Undercroft
~Scouts~
1:00 AM - 4:00 PM in Anderson Hall



CHOSEN 300 “HAVE A HEART” -
For the homeless, sheltered,
and underserved.

The 2026 fundraising campaign for Chosen 300 has begun “Heart Month.” The funds will provide meals that are served at Chosen 300’s west Philadelphia location.

Checks should be made payable to: **AECST Chosen 300.**
Please include Chosen 300 and your envelope number on the memo line.

Mail checks to: St. Thomas Church
6361 Lancaster Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19151
Attention: Chosen 300

You may also place your check in the collection plate or donate online: www.aecst.org

Click on “donations,” and then select “Chosen 300.”
If you have any questions, please email: scmci@aol.com



NEWS FROM THE CHURCH PICTORIAL DIRECTORY COMMITTEE

In addition to our member and family photographs, the new pictorial St. Thomas Church Directory will include:

- our bountiful history
- a special in memorial page
(listing members who have transitioned since 2017)
- greetings from the rector
- group photographs of AECST ministries

**A new category has been created entitled:
“With Love and Blessings.”**

You can add your name to this section with patron, business or ministry ads. It would be wonderful to have your support and expressions of gratitude included in the directory.

Patron ads - \$5.00 per name

Business or Ministry ads:

- Full page \$150.00 - 8"x10" portrait
- 1/2 page \$75.00 - 8"x5" landscape
- 1/4 page \$50.00 - 4"x5" portrait
- 1/8 page \$35.00 - 4"x 2 1/2" landscape

Email: Camera ready ads to: churchdirectory@aecst.org

Checks may be mailed and payable to:
The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas
6361 Lancaster Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19151

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, Anderson Hall, Absalom Jones House, parking lot and/or the Great Lawn 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.
- **Presidents of Guilds/Ministries and Organizations:** Please submit the names of the people in your guild or organization, to the Directory Committee, in alphabetical order in a horizontal format, using Word, document to: Patricia Hunt, dhunt37261@aol.com by February 1, 2026

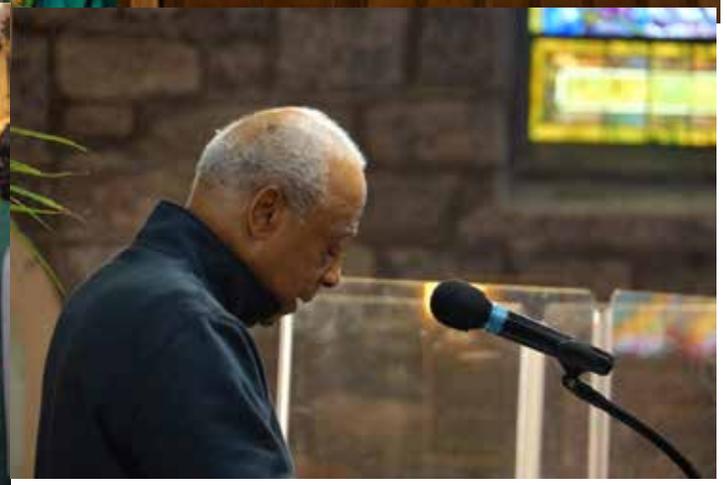
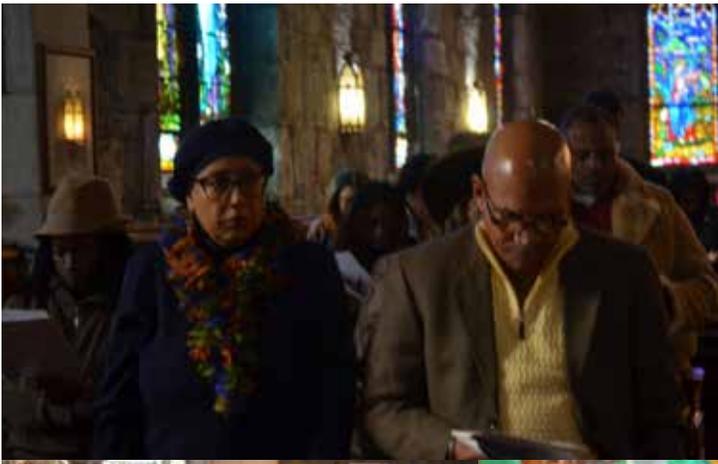
Are you receiving the weekly electronic Spearhead? If not, please email Gladyce DuBrey at 1792@aecst.org with your mobile number and email address.

**THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
LOVE SUNDAY
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2026**

The frigid cold did not prevent a joyous worship.







On a frigid, cold morning, folks gather:

- Girl Scout sold cookies;
- Girls' Friendly Society sold hot soup;
- Members of the Sisterhood Guild met, and
- tickets were sold for the upcoming Mardi Gras Scholarship Brunch



COMING SOON!!! Portraits of Power Presented by The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas Church School Sunday, **March 1st** from 12 Noon - 2:00 PM

As we celebrate the close of Black History Month, join the AECST Church School for Portraits of Power, an art showcase of the powerful and impactful black figures in our history.

The Church School Students of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas Present

PORTRAITS of POWER

A Black History Month Art Showcase!

A Black History Month Art Showcase!

Sunday, March 1
12 Noon - 2:00 PM

Immediately Following Service

As we celebrate the close of Black History Month, join the AECST Church School for Portraits of Power, an art showcase of the powerful and impactful black figures in our history.

Donations Accepted

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)

CONFIRMATION / REAFFIRMATION / RECEPTION CLASSES

have started for in-person and Zoom
classes are as follows:

In Person	By Zoom
Sunday, 11/02/2025	Monday, 11/17/2025
Sunday, 12/07/2025	Monday, 12/02/2025
Sunday, 01/04/2026	Monday, 01/19/2026
Sunday, 02/01/2026	Monday, 02/16/2026
Sunday, 03/01/2026	Monday, 03/16/2026
Sunday, 04/05/2026	Monday, 04/20/2026
Sunday, 05/03/2026	Monday, 05/18/2026

Sunday 6/7/2026 – Confirmation Day!

Please connect with Fr. Daren, 215-473-3065 or email, associaterector@aecst.org if you have not received any information or have questions, ASAP.



Oops! **Karina Phillips**, Happy Belated Birthday. Your name was accidentally omitted from the Birthday List. We will get it right next time.

REALM CONNECT CONVERSION COMPLETE

As a reminder St. Thomas went through a system conversion this year. Realm Connect is an updated solution for the management of our ministries, stewardship, media, communications and church events calendar. The staff will use Realm Connect to perform administrative and accounting tasks.

Church Online Giving

GIVI is no longer available for online contributions. Realm Connect has taken its place. Realm Connect is not just a tool for electronic giving; it affords one the opportunity to access their giving records and offers congregants the ability to interact and communicate directly with each other. If you give directly via the church website, or by using the QR code, you will see a new <https://onrealm.org/AfricanEpiscopa/-/form/give/now> webpage link on the website and a corresponding QR code that will take you to that new webpage. Please note that we offer online electronic giving which provides an easy, secure method to contribute weekly, monthly, yearly or simply whenever you desire. Donations can be made at <https://onrealm.org/AfricanEpiscopa/give/now> or through the Realm Connect App. (If you don't already use the app and don't have an account, it's safe and easy to obtain. Download the app Realm Connect from the app store.

AECST members have begun and will continue to receive email invitations from the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas (notifications@onrealmmail.org) titled, "African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas: Join our online community!", which will enable you to register on the site and view many of the available functions. Please request a **Membership Information Form** from the Stewardship Ministry (Stewardship@aecst.org) and one will be sent to you. Please complete and return the form so that your profile can be updated accordingly. Once the form is returned corrections can be made and you will be sent a Realm Connect invite.

IMPORTANT, for your contributions in Realm Connect to be successful, **your email address and cell phone number must match exactly with realm connect records.** Envelope numbers serve as an additional layer of security, especially in cases where members may have similar names (soon those people without an envelope number will be issued one). We want to make sure contributions are properly credited to your account.

Powered By



African Episcopal Church Of St. Thomas: Join our online community!

Hi [REDACTED]

We at African Episcopal Church Of St. Thomas have an online community where we can connect with each other outside our Sunday gatherings. We'd love for you to take part!

Create an account: <https://onrealm.org/AfricanEpiscopa/account/CreateAccount?token=NTA0MzUyN2QtODBhZS00NDJhLTg5MWQtYjMzZTAxMDViMzVI>

Sincerely,
African Episcopal Church Of St. Thomas



**Happy birthday to all our Parishioners who are
celebrating birthdays in February**

2/1	Lisa Rene Dumas
2/3	Karen Vaughn
2/4	Signe Griffin, Leah Sheppard
2/5	Winston Lowe
2/6	Robert Myers, Bernadette Wyche
2/7	Ronald Jones, Arlene Gray
2/8	Asia Archey Riddick, Dieynaba Diagne
2/9	Angela Kelly
2/11	Courtney Williamson
2/12	Robin Lynch, Carole Williams Green
2/13	Arthur Sudler, Rosalind Roberts Smalls, Edward Geiger
2/14	Robert McNeal
2/15	Anita Robinson, Lisa Smoots
2/16	Muso Doe
2/18	Justin & Jason Brockman, Dr. Jay Fluellen, Erica Hill-Yates
2/19	Katrice Mathurin
2/20	Gordon Sedziafa, Iuyn Williams
2/21	Sharon Harper
2/22	Alaina Farooq
2/23	Nancy Lee, Jumba Mugwanya
2/24	Denise Wing
2/26	Shawn Evans
2/27	Page Bowser, Derede McAlpin
2/28	Clara Watson Williams

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 - Bloomsburg, PA

Christopher Burks - Rhode Island/New York

Deadra Cannon - Georgia

Nora Corbin - Illinois

Dr. Ted Corbin - Illinois

Paula Cropper - North Carolina

Lee Daniels - New York

Stacey Davis - New York

Andrew & Lisa Renee Dumas - Portugal

Rashid, Christie, & Gabrielle Faisal - Michigan

The Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney - Texas

Bradley Hammond - Mississippi

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

Gregory Lyles - Switzerland

Nohjay Nimpson - Texas

Zennetta Peters - North Carolina

Dr. John Rich - Illinois

Richard & Rebecca Scales - Florida

Shelly & Ann Stewart - Florida

Howard Tucker - Brazil/Philadelphia

Allison Young - Maryland

**The Bible Readings For The
LAST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
February 15, 2026**

The First Lesson - [Isaiah 42: 5-9](#)
[Psalm 126](#)

The Second Lesson - [Ephesians 4: 1-6](#)
The Holy Gospel - [John 15: 12-15](#)

**The Holy Gospel Readings for the
week of February 16, 2026**

Monday - [John 18:15-18, 25-27](#)

Tuesday - [John 18:28-38](#)

Ash Wednesday - [John 18:9-14](#)

Thursday - [John 17:1-8](#)

Friday - [John 17:9-19](#)

Saturday - [John 17:20-26](#)



**PILGRIMS ON A JOURNEY
BIBLE STUDY** is held on Tuesdays
7:00 PM via Zoom.

If you are interested in joining
the ministry, please contact Fr. Jay
at associatepriest@aecst.org.

WEDNESDAY IN-PERSON BIBLE STUDY
with Fr. Daren is held on Wednesdays - 6:00 PM.
See you then!

ALTAR FLOWERS

Flowers on the High Altar are in memory and celebration of the life and ministry of Blessed Absalom Jones.

To order flowers, please return the form with payment to Alfreda Brockman or Gladyce in the church office.

Flowers on the High Altar - \$80.00 each

Flowers on the Absalom Jones Altar - \$70.00 each

Flowers on the Columbarium - \$60.00

Please use the QR Code below to order flowers or contribute to our church ministries.



AECST PODCAST



Our **AECST Podcast Series** returns with an important new episode! Fr. Daren is joined by Licensed Clinical Social Worker **Mrs. Lasheena Riley Duval** for a conversation on **supporting children through medical care**. Tune in!



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 **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. 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](#).

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR PARISHIONERS WHO ARE:

IN REHAB:

Francine Norris and Lisa Woodley - St. Francis Nursing Home
Alletta Parris Olday - Saunders House

IN LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENCES:

Helena Allen - Simpson House; Linda Holmes - Saunders House; Gwendolyn Langford - Arden Courts of Cherry Hill; Ola Bass - Atria Lafayette Hill; Ridart "Butch" Farmer - Centennial Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center

AT HOME:

Robert Brown, Thelma Silvers, Patricia Ellison, Mary Ann Jones, Shirley Caldwell, Wendell Whitlock, Verger Stephen Hannum, Joyce Stewart, Virginia DuBrey, Alice Young, Deborah Harrison, D. Lynn Joell, Regina Meacham Devero, Elaine Young, Erica Hill Yates, Alice Bowman - Cropper, Katrina Harris, Gloria Moses, Carolyn Summers, Karen Ragland

KEEP IN PRAYER:

Justin Trotman, Cathy Stafford, Daryn Stewart, Arlene Gray, Adinah Edwards, Waltier Blocker, Santee Ruffin, Carl Dean, Angela Holloway, Mary Ann Phillips, Yvonne Syndor, Adrian Gray, Sharon Harper, Quincina Edmonds, D. Lynn Joell, Edita Gauthney, Carmen Brown, Stephen Pugh

WE PRAY FOR:

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

A MESSAGE FROM DAKOTA MOSLEY- GFS ST. THOMAS MEMBER

The Girls' Friendly Society is proud to support the work of Tackle Hunger and their annual Souper Bowl of Caring event. If 213 million people watch "the big game," think about how much money we could give if each person donated one dollar to a food bank. Media Food Bank is helping tons of people who can't afford food. GFS has extended collecting donations until **March 1st**.

The collection bin is in the Undercroft.

Tackle Hunger to tackle the game!

MEDIA FOOD BANK'S MOST NEEDED ITEMS

Newborn diapers

Size 5 Diapers

4T/5T Pull Ups

COMMUNITY CHOICE ROOM

Bottled juices

Corned beef

Honey

Vegetable cooking oil

White sugar

Canned beets

Sardines

Shelf stable dairy milk

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 Daren! 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.Daren](#) for details.

YOUTH ACHIEVEMENTS

We want to highlight the achievements of our youth and young adults! If your child has excelled in academics, sports, the arts, or community service—or you are a young adult working on a significant personal or professional project—we would love to hear about it. Please contact [Fr. Daren](#) so we can share your story with the congregation!

THE YOUNG ADULTS (ages 20's and 30's) meet immediately after service every 4th Sunday of the Month in the Absalom Jones House.



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.

Church School begins at **10:00 AM** in the **Undercroft**.

You **must** register your child for church school for the 2025-2026 school year. Please use this [link](#) to register your child/children.

Call for Church School Teachers - If you feel the calling by God to volunteer your time in church school, please fill out the registration [link](#). If you were a teacher last year, please fill out this year's registration.



Tiny Tykes Temple is now 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:



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

1) Sunday Offering Plate

2) Mail in your check or money order to the church.

Please use the following address:

The Historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas
c/o Fiscal Administrator
6361 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19151

3) Bring your check directly to the Fiscal Office during regular business hours, Monday - Friday, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM. After business hours, drop your envelope in the door mail slot located on the front patio of the Absalom Jones House.

4) 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., your pledge, the AJ house, Easter, etc.

5) REALM CONNECT - Members and visitors who use GIVI must use **Realm Connect**. If donate via the church website, either directly or by using the QR code, you will soon see a new webpage and corresponding QR code.

6) Cellphone: Text "AECST" to 73256 to donate.

IMPORTANT: Please make sure your name, envelop number and amount is placed on the offering envelope. This is particularly important for bookkeeping accurate. If you are unsure of your number, please email stewardship@aecst.org. We appreciate your assistance.

IMPORTANT: Please make sure your name, number, and amount is placed on your offering envelope. This is very important to keep bookkeeping accurate. If you're unsure of your number, please email stewardship@aecst.org. We appreciate your assistance.

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	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	The Rev. Dr. Paul Bach	pauljaybach@gmail.com
Executive Asst to the Rector	Gladyce DuBrey	1792@aecst.org
Sexton	LaDon Elliott	1792@aecst.org
Asst Sexton	David McGilberry	1792@aecst.org
Chancel Choirmaster	Jay Fluellen, D.M.A.	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	Wendela 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
Jazz Ensemble Director	Jay Fluellen, D.M.A.	chancelchoir@aecst1792.org
Live Stream Ministry	Yaseen Farooq Teri Tillman	livevideo@aecst.org
Memorial Flowers	Alfreda Brockman	fredabee@verizon.net
	Clare Mae Daniels	happycmd05@aol.com
Roy Ellison Monarch Greeters	Ashley Hines	1792@aecst.org
Parish Vergers	Eugene Golson 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
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 Burke

Dr. Tim Barksdale	Clare Mae Daniels	Kelvin Johnson
Judith Simkins Booth	Elaine Gillison	Monica Lewis Jones
Deadra Cannon	Eugene Golson	Deborah Matthews
	Marie B. Golson	

THE AUXILIARY VESTRY

Brenda Best	Ronnie Collins	Dr. Monica Johnson Taylor
Conchetta Brewer	Mary Sandra Dean	Darryle (Bobby) Tillman
Sharon Bullock	D. Lynn Joell	Judy Tillman
	Cynthia Muse	

DELEGATES TO THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION

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

DELEGATES TO THE SCHUYLKILL DEANERY

Phyllis Cater | Mary Dean | Alternate: Tyrone Keller