

WELCOME TO THE  
HISTORIC AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS

# YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT SUNDAY SCOUTS' SUNDAY HONORING HISTORIC TROOP 133



# A M E N

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

**THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT**  
**February 22, 2026**

**The Historic African Episcopal Church  
of St. Thomas**

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

[www.aecst.org](http://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.

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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  
**First Sunday in Lent, Scout Sunday, Youth  
and Young Adult Sunday.**

On behalf of the Clergy, Wardens, Vestry, and People of God, welcome to the historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas. Founded in 1792 as the first Black Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., 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.

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 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. Whomever you may be and however you may find yourself experiencing life's journey, do know that St. Thomas Church welcomes you. Again, welcome!

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



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  
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## **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](#).

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## **THIS YEAR'S LENTEN SERIES**

**“Resistance & Resilience While in the Wilderness”**

**Wednesdays During Lent**

6:00 PM - Holy Eucharist

6:30 - 7:15 PM 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

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*Religious  
Freedom:  
Then & Now*

# **THE BLACK RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD**

**HOSTED BY**

**MOTHER BETHEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH &  
THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS**

**Due to expected weather conditions,  
this event has been **POSTPONED**  
to Sunday, March 1, 2026, 1:00-3:00 PM  
Mother Bethel AME Church  
419 S 6th St, Philadelphia, PA 19147**

## **“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, March 1, 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/](https://www.interfaithphiladelphia.org/phila250_motherbethel/)

Come learn, reflect, and help keep these stories alive.  
**Mother Bethel AME Church | The Historic African  
Episcopal Church of St. Thomas (AECST) | Arch Street  
Quakers Congregation | Mikveh Israel Community  
Christ Church | Philadelphia Historic St. George's United  
Methodist Church & Museum | Gloria Dei (Old Swedes')  
Episcopal Church | Old Pine St. Presbyterian Church |  
Old Saint Joseph's Catholic Church**

**#Semiquincentennial #America250 #history  
#Philadelphia #philly #philadelphiahistory  
#America250PA #Philly2026 #visitphilly  
#PHAmbassadors**

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### **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](mailto:1792@aecst.org).

## **BLACK HISTORY MONTH NOTE - FEBRUARY 15, 2026**

**“We have it in our power to begin the world over again.”**

*“Thomas Paine - from his 1776 pamphlet Common Sense, advocating for American independence and a new political system.”*

The late historian of the American Revolution and of Black colonial Philadelphia, Gary B. Nash, and the other co-editors of “Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation,” wrote that “Although the Declaration of Independence claimed that people had ‘the right to alter or abolish’ their form of government if they had exhausted all other means to express their grievances, the traditional founders did not wish to ‘alter or abolish’ the institutional structures that protected their claim to rule.” But “[b]y contrast, many of their contemporaries [including African-Americans] wanted to strike at the heart of existing inequalities and radicalize governmental structures.” Not surprisingly, we see a similar conflict playing out with regard to competing visions of what it means to celebrate America250.

The Presidential Executive Order, titled “Restoring Truth and Sanity in American History,” directed that the Secretary of the Interior shall “take action, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law, to ensure that all public monuments, memorials, statues, markers, or similar properties within the Department of the Interior’s jurisdiction do not contain descriptions, depictions, or other content that inappropriately disparage Americans past or living (including persons living in colonial times), and instead focus on the greatness of the achievements and progress of the American people...” As a result of this Executive Order The President’s House and Slavery Memorial exhibits at Independence National Historic Park were dismantled – including the panels that addressed the contributions of Absalom Jones, Richard Allen, James Forten, and others, to the greatness, achievements, and progress of America. \*

Curiously, consistent with the effort to “strike at the heart of existing inequalities,” and accurately depict American history, The President’s House page on the National Park Service website continues to spread the important message that “this unique exhibit” was intended to “[focus] on the contradiction of liberty and enslavement” and to “examine the paradox between slavery and freedom” in the new nation by sharing stories “from the perspective of enslaved individuals who lived and worked” there. While some wield power in order to protect their claim to rule, we have it within our power to fight the erasure of our history, and to continue that sacred effort intended to begin the world over again by forming a more perfect Union, establishing Justice, and insuring domestic Tranquility.

\*As of this writing a federal trial court judge has ordered the Trump Administration to restore the exhibits.

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

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**THE CATTO MINISTRY CORNER**  
Wendela P. Fox and Elaine C. Gillison,  
co-chairs

Come one! Come all! Join us on  
**MONDAY EVENING** on Zoom,  
as we discuss new and ongoing  
opportunities for civic education and  
engagement in the ministry:

**Topic:** Ongoing and New Opportunities

**Date:** February 23, 2026

**Time:** 7:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83909603402?pwd=avPurVFSUGaECSDUoMtFhIBeSHoS4Y.1>

Meeting ID: 839 0960 3402

Passcode: 891074

One tap mobile

+16469313860,,83909603402#,,,,\*891074# US



**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.

# A SOLD OUT SHROVE SUNDAY MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION! SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2026





More photos may be found on [Facebook](#)

Photos: William Edmonds  
St. Thomas Ed Muse Memorial Photography Ministry

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## UPCOMING SUNDAYS

### FEBRUARY 22ND

~Youth and Young Adult Sunday/Scout Sunday~

### March 1st

~Second Sunday in Lent~

~Lunch at Mother Bethel AME Church 12:00 PM~

~Philly250/AMERICA250 Special Interfaith Program~  
at 1:00 PM, Mother Bethel AME Church

### March 8th

~Third Sunday in Lent~

### March 15th

~Fourth Sunday in Lent~

### March 22nd

~Fifth Sunday in Lent~

~Girls' Friendly Society Sunday~  
Induction and Chat and Chew



## 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 23rd**

~ Catto Ministry Zoom meeting~ 7:00 PM  
see Zoom information on page 11

### **Tuesday, February 24th**

~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 25th**

~ Mass and Lenten Series~ 6:00 PM  
~St. Thomas Gospel Choir Rehearsal~  
7:30 PM in Anderson Hall

### **Thursday, February 26th**

~Vestry Meeting~  
via Zoom 6:00 PM

### **Friday, February 27th**

~Retired Persons Ministry~  
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

### **Saturday, February 28th**

~Daughters of the King Virtual Meeting~  
9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

~Girls' Friendly Society~  
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM in the Undercroft

~Scouts~  
1:00 AM - 4:00 PM in Anderson Hall

**THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY  
THE FEAST OF ABSALOM JONES  
FEBRUARY 15, 2026**

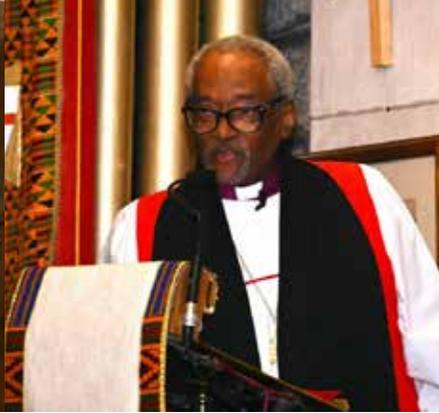
Afternoon celebration draws overflow crowd.





Photos: Bill Edmonds, Stephen Pugh, Brenda Johnson Best,  
and Justin Trotman  
St.Thomas Ed Muse Memorial Photography Ministry







More photos may be found on [Facebook](#)

Gathered in Absalom Jones House around the “holy altar” and “chair” used by Blessed Absalom, with, Bishop Daniel Gutiérrez; former Presiding Bishop Michael Curry; Bishop Samuel Lawrence Green, Sr, and Pastor Carolyn Cavaness of the A.M.E. Church.



More photos may be found on [Facebook](#)



**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](http://www.aecst.org)

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



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

## 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](mailto:churchdirectory@aecst.org)

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

**Attention:** The Directory Committee is offering another day of FREE photos for the Church Directory. If you have not had your photo taken, please sign up for **Saturday, March 21st**. Photos will be taken from 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM in the Absalom Jones House. Sign up today, **Sunday, February 22nd, and March 1st, 8th and 15th**. Or you may call Charlene Wiltshire to sign up or for more information at [cwiltshire@comcast.net](mailto:cwiltshire@comcast.net).

Our Bishop, Clergy, and Vestry members welcomed Bishop Michael Curry to Philadelphia and St. Thomas.

Photos: Quentin Heyward

St.Thomas Ed Muse Memorial Photography Ministry



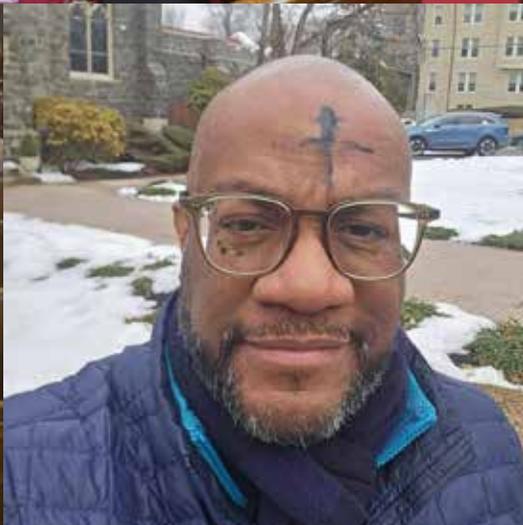


More photos may be found on [Facebook](#)

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A few faithful St. Thomas members pictured here beginning their lenten journey with the Imposition of Ashes.





## IN THE NEWS

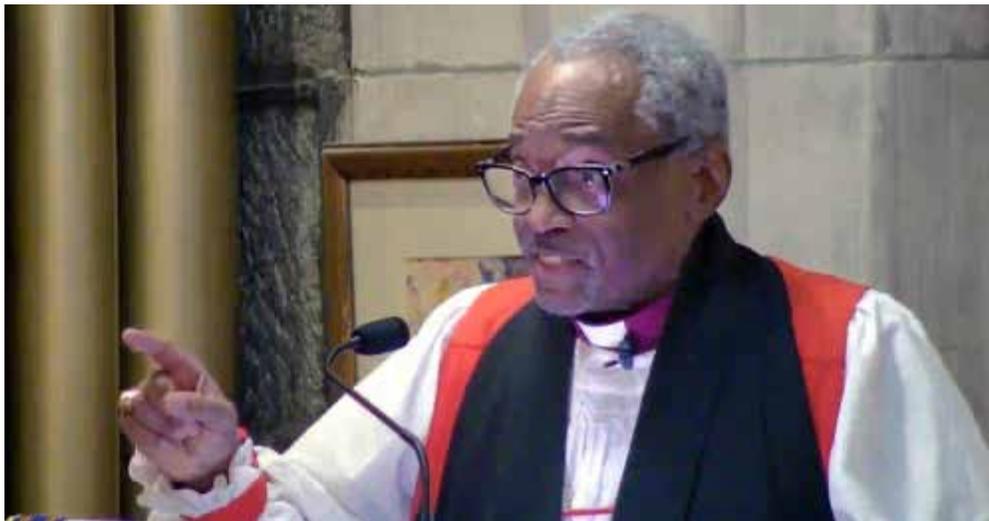
From around the world, thousands join us in remembering and celebrating the life and legacy of Blessed Absalom Jones.



Pennsylvania Episcopalians, church to celebrate life and legacy of Absalom Jones. Article in the [link](#)

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His remarks were part of the annual service celebrating the life and ministry of the Rev. Absalom Jones, the first Black Episcopal priest. The service took place at the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which Jones founded in 1792.



Bishop Michael Curry tells worshipers to 'keep going' and 'wear this world down' in the fight for justice. Article in the [link](#)

## **Philadelphia Inquirer News!**

Afternoon celebration draws overflow crowd  
(see news article below)



A service honoring Absalom Jones took on added meaning this year for his church.

This year's celebration of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas' founder, the Rev. Absalom Jones, was intrinsically political after his legacy was stripped from the President's House Site. Please use this [link](#) for the article.

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### **"New Court Ruling" (See article below)**



**UPDATED: Judge orders Trump administration to restore Philadelphia slavery exhibit.**

Article in this [link](#)

**Philadelphia slavery exhibit featuring Absalom Jones reinstalled at the President's House. Article in this [link](#).**

## **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](mailto:1792@aecst.org).

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### **BREAKING NEWS!!!**

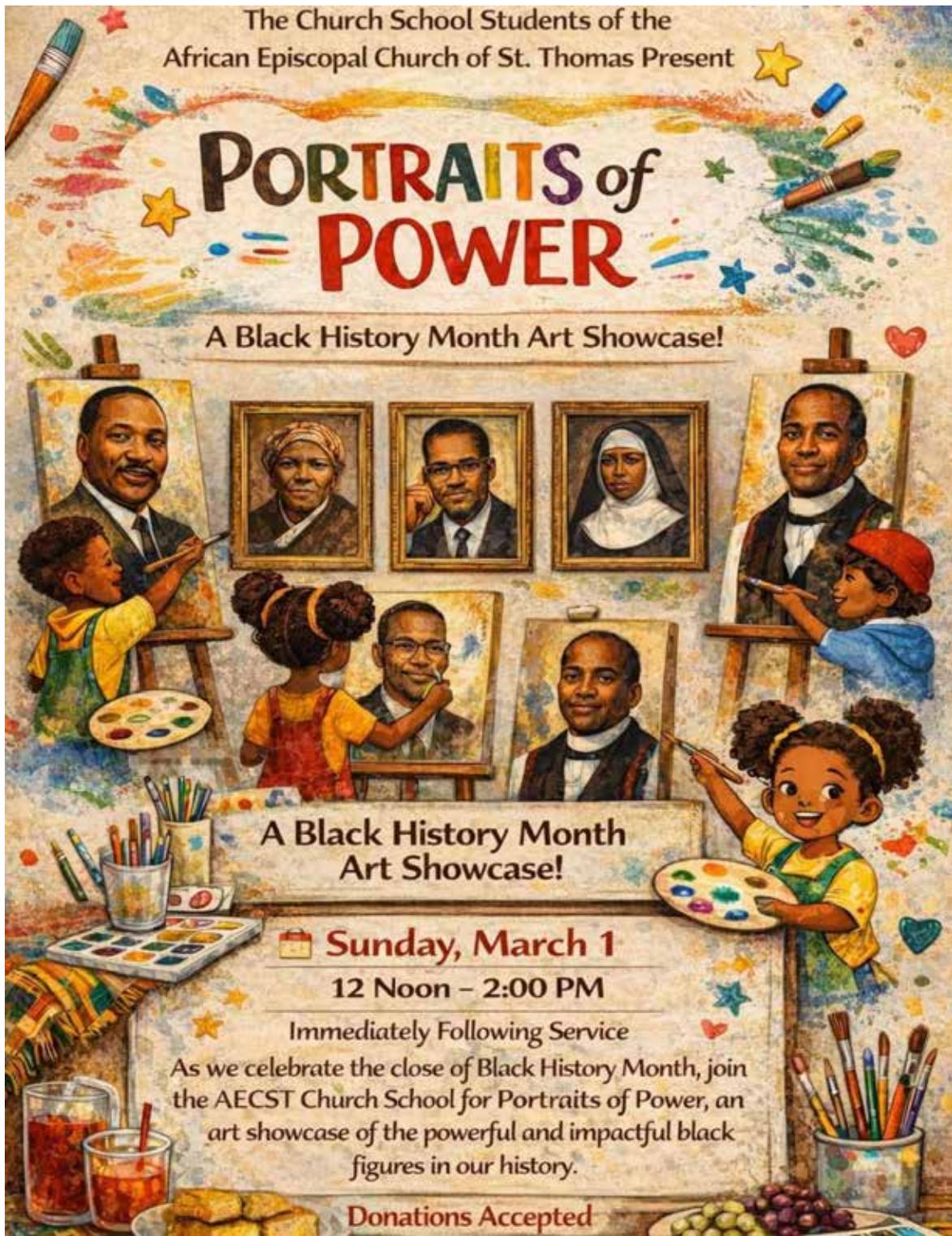
Siblings in the prayerful struggle together. Our Rector with the Rev. Carolyn C. Cavaness, Pastor, Mother Bethel A.M.E Church.



**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](http://WWW.STTHOMASGC.ORG)

(484) 816-STGC (7842)

**CONFIRMATION / REAFFIRMATION /  
RECEPTION CLASSES**

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

**In Person (8:45 AM)**  
**Sunday, 02/22/2026**  
Sunday, 03/01/2026  
Sunday, 04/05/2026  
Sunday, 05/03/2026

**Zoom (6:00 PM)**  
Monday, 03/16/2026  
Monday, 04/20/2026  
Monday, 05/18/2026

**Sunday 6/7/2026 – Confirmation Day!**

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

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## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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=NTA0MzUyN2QtODZhZS00NDJhLTg5MWQtYjMzZTAxMDViMzVI>

Sincerely,  
African Episcopal Church Of St. Thomas

## 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  
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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)

## **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  
THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT  
February 22, 2026**

The First Lesson - [Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7](#)  
[Psalm 32](#)

The Second Lesson - [Romans 5:12-19](#)  
The Holy Gospel - [Matthew 4:1-11](#)

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

Monday - [Matthew 25:13-46](#)

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

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

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

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

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



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**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](mailto:associatepriest@aecst.org).

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**WEDNESDAY IN-PERSON BIBLE STUDY**

Bible Study with Fr. Daren will be on break beginning  
Wednesday, February 11, and throughout the season of Lent.  
All are encouraged to attend the Lenten series held each  
Wednesday during Lent.

## **ALTAR FLOWERS**

Flowers are not placed on the High Altar in Lent except for  
**Rose Sunday, March 15, 2026.**

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

Flowers on the High Altar - \$125.00 each

Flowers on the Absalom Jones Altar - \$90.00 each

Flowers on the Columbarium - \$70.00

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## **EASTER FLOWERS AND LILIES**

Your gift of an Easter Lily will help beautify the church and  
will be a beautiful tribute to your loved ones, or a token  
of Thanksgiving for a blessing received. Use the QR Code  
below to order and pay for flowers.

Deadline: Monday, **March 23, 2026**





## **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](#).

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## **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

### **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.

## GFS FRIENDLY FACT (Una) Winifred Atwell (1914 – 1983)



- First Black woman to achieve a number one hit in the UK singles chart (currently titled Official Singles Chart)
- Talented musician and entertainer, born in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Became a popular entertainer in Britain and Australia during the 1950(s).
- Known for her rapid and honky-tonk piano music style (boogie-woogie and ragtime genres)
- Atwell sold over 20 million records and remains the only female instrumentalist to reach number one in the UK.



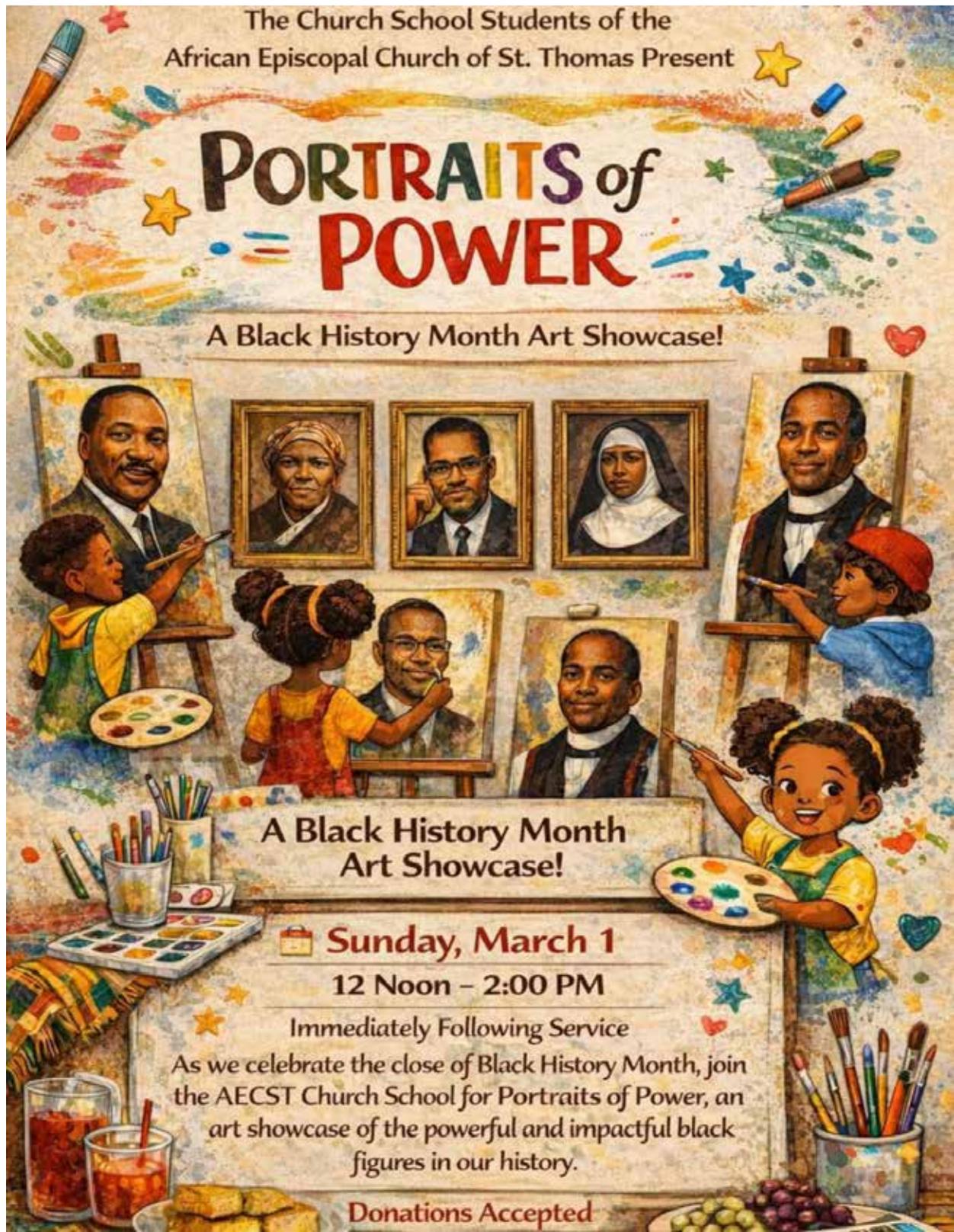
Our **AECST Podcast Series** returns with an important new episode! Fr. Daren is joined by Licensed Clinical Social Worker **Mrs. Lasheena Riley Duval** for a conversation on **supporting children through medical care**. Tune in!

SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, March 1, 2026 – Anderson Hall

St. Thomas Church School presents: "PORTRAITS OF POWER" A Black History Month Art Showcase

Immediately following service, please come and view portraits created by young students. Celebrate Black history through the eyes of our youth. Contributions are appreciated.



## 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.

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### 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!

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**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](mailto: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](mailto:stewardship@aecst.org). We appreciate your assistance.

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## **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](#).

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## 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

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## 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	

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## 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	

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## 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