



THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven:
“You are my Son, whom I love;
with you I am well pleased.”

Mark 1:8-11 NIV



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

THE VERY REVEREND CANON MARTINI SHAW, 17TH RECTOR

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

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

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

**THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY/
THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD
January 11, 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
First Sunday after the Epiphany

The Baptism of Our Lord (Renewal of Baptismal Vows).

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

Wishing you a very Happy and Blessed New Year.

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

JOIN US AT THE JORDAN!

Come and receive a SPECIAL BLESSING this Sunday, January 11, 2026 with holy water from the Holy Land (Jordan River), where Jesus was baptized.

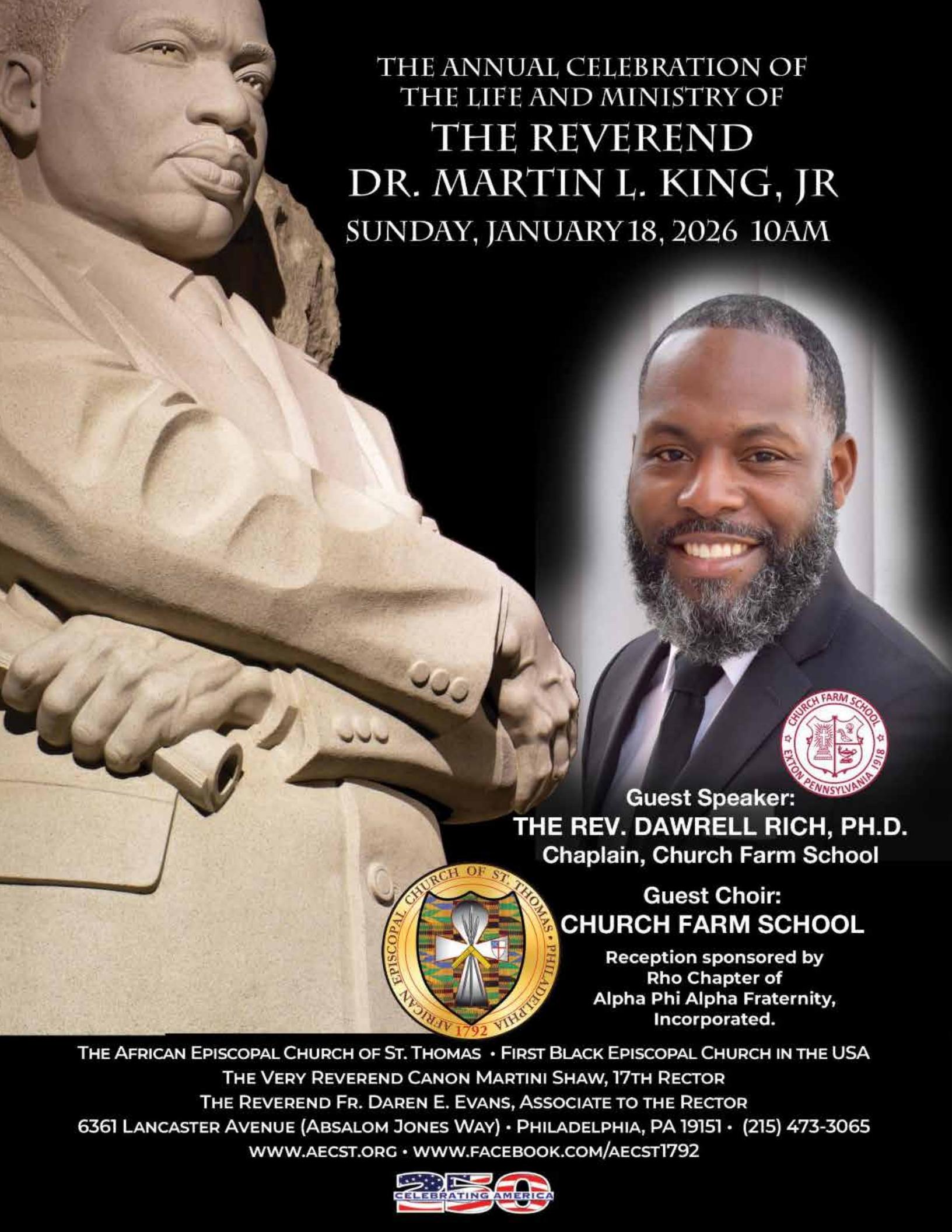


A “2026 LITURGICAL NEW YEAR TOAST”
from Us to You (in several languages).

Alexandra Rodriguez - English;
Eugene Phillips - Spanish;
Mueni Mwanzia - Swahili;
Dr. Rollo Dilworth - Mandarin;
Michael Grizzle - English;
and the Rector - America250 and AECST234



Video: Quentin Heyward (St. Thomas Videography Ministry)



THE ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF
THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF
**THE REVEREND
DR. MARTIN L. KING, JR**
SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 2026 10AM



Guest Speaker:

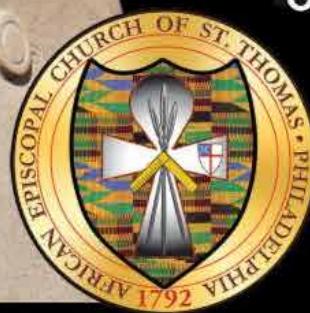
THE REV. DAWRELL RICH, PH.D.

Chaplain, Church Farm School

Guest Choir:

CHURCH FARM SCHOOL

Reception sponsored by
Rho Chapter of
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity,
Incorporated.



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SAVE THE DATE

ST. THOMAS, CHURCH FARM SCHOOL & ALPHA PHI
ALPHA FRATERNITY to celebrate the life and ministry of
The Rev. Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.

We welcome the new Head of School -
Dr. Troy Baker;

Guest Speaker: The Rev. Dr. Dawrell Rich - Chaplain;
Church Farm School Choir
and brothers of the Rho Chapter of
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated.
Church Farm School

MUSIC MINISTRY

The Locke Alliance, in partnership with
Boys' Latin of Philadelphia, invites you to experience
an inspiring afternoon of vocal artistry!

Join us **January 15th, 2026**,
from 1:00 - 3:00 PM,
as we welcome Dr. Kimberley Davis from
the University of Southern Mississippi,
for a special voice masterclass.

Watch talented vocalists engage in this
transformative learning experience and
be inspired by exceptional musicianship.

All are welcome. For more information,
please contact Renard Golden after church,
email renard.golden@thelockealliance.com,
or (215) 839-8382.



THE LOCKE ALLIANCE
WHERE THE ARTS, EDUCATION, AND ENRICHMENT CONVERGE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
BOYS' LATIN OF PHILADELPHIA HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

PRESENTS:

VOCAL MASTERCLASS

FEATURING CLASSICAL AND MUSICAL THEATRE PERFORMANCES
FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

JANUARY 14 & 15, 2026
1-3PM

AECST

ANDERSON HALL VISITING CLINICIAN

6361 LANCASTER AVE

PHILADELPHIA, PA 19151

Q&A SESSION TO FOLLOW

FREE ADMISSION



SCAN CODE TO RSVP



DR. KIMBERLEY DAVIS

ST. THOMAS DAY OF SERVICE – CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF REV. DR. MARTIN L. KING, JR.

The Chosen 300 Ministry has designated Monday,
January 19, 2026, as a Day of Service.

We will provide and serve food to our siblings in Christ,
that may not have a meal that day.

Please join us at:

Chosen 300 Outreach & Worship Center West

3959 Lancaster Ave., Philadelphia, PA, 5:30 PM

Contact Judy Tillman, 215-242-8117, for additional details
and to register for this activity.

ATTENTION: ALL GROUPS/MINISTRIES/ ORGANIZATIONS AND FELLOWSHIPS

The Council of Guilds meeting will take place Saturday,
January 10, 2026, at 10:00 AM via Zoom. We will put
events/Chat & Chew on the calendar from February 2026
to June 2026. Please make sure that a representative will
be present with your calendar events. If you did not get
the Zoom link, please email Gladysce at 1792@aecst.org
for the information.

OUR CONDOLENCES

to Lisa-Renee and Andrew Dumas, and their family
following the death of her father, **Wayne Arnold Whitfield**.
A memorial service will be held at Ivan M. Kimble Funeral
Home, 1100 North 63rd Street, Phila., Pa 19151 today,
Sunday, January 11, 2026, at 11:00 AM.

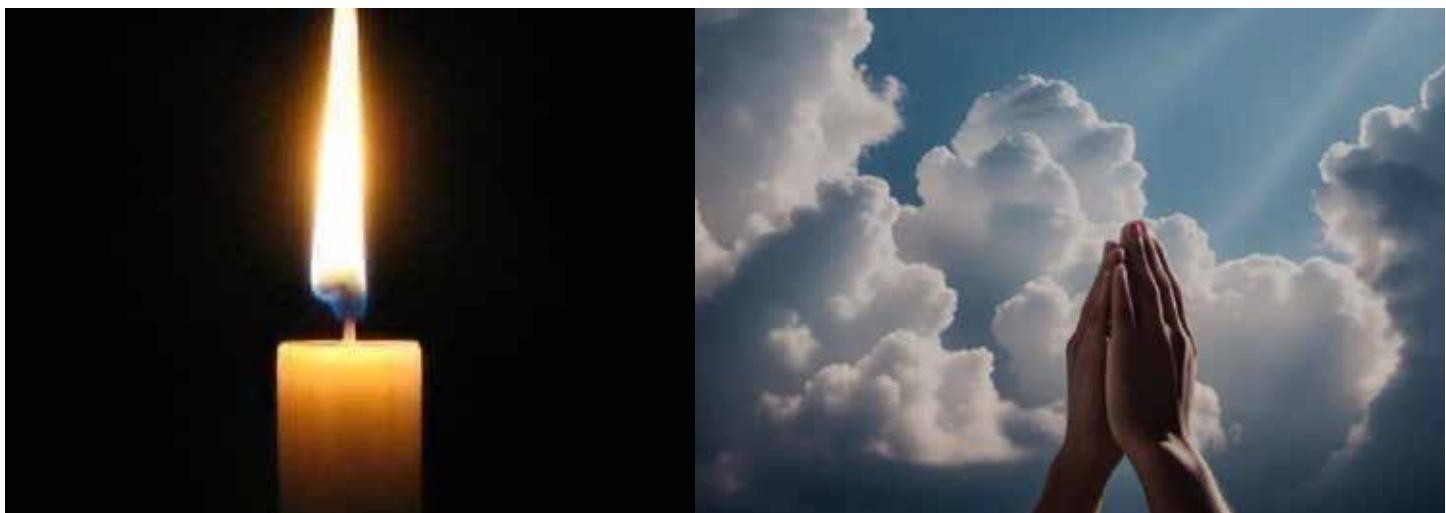
May the soul of Wayne rest in peace and rise in eternal
glory. Please pray for the family.

REST IN PEACE

We remember and celebrate the life of
Renee Nicole Good,

37 years old mother of three, killed yesterday in
Minneapolis, MN by an ICE agent. We pray for her family
who mourn her death.

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



Renee Nicole Good



NEW MEMBERS

Attention all members who joined St. Thomas in 2025. We will be recognizing and celebrating you during service on **Sunday, January 25, 2026.**

Please be present.

A CALL TO LEADERSHIP **Share your leadership ability.**

Nominations for Vestry, Auxiliary Vestry Positions, Delegates to the Schuylkill Deanery, Delegates, and an alternate delegate to the 2025 Diocesan Convention will be accepted from December 7, 2025, through January 11, 2026. Election information can be found at the links below, in the bulletin, and on the table at the rear of the church.

A Call to Lead **Candidate Profile**

**THE OBSERVANCE OF THE EPIPHANY
THE FESTIVAL OF CAROLS AND LESSONS
JANUARY 4, 2026**







Photos: Bill Edmonds & Stephen Pugh
(St.Thomas Ed Muse Memorial Photography Ministry)

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



As our city marks
America's 250th
anniversary, Interfaith
Philadelphia invites you to
reflect on one of our
nation's most enduring
ideals – religious liberty.

ST. THOMAS JOINS AMERICA250 CELEBRATION WITH 11 OTHER CONGREGATIONS.

(See list below)

The African Episcopal Church
of St. Thomas
Arch Street Friends Meeting
Christ Church
Congregation Mikveh Isreal
Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church
Historic St. George's
Methodist Church

Mother Bethel AME Church

Old Pine Street (Third) Presbyterian Church
Old St. Joseph's Church

St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church
Old St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church
St. Peter's Episcopal Church

**"Religious Freedom: Then & Now, Launching the
Semicentennial year"**

JOIN US!

VIRTUAL LAUNCH EVENT

**Thursday, January 15,
2026, 5:00-6:00 PM, FREE**

Please [**register here**](#) for the Zoom link.



FAITHFUL GRATITUDE

Please use this link to express and pledge your
Faithful Gratitude to God for 2026.

<https://forms.gle/yj3eujEaSZ58VMgK9>



2026 FAITHFUL GIVING CARDS

Enormous thanks to ALL who have submitted
Faithful Giving Cards.

Please add your name to the list this week by
submitting your card today.

**Thank you to the following persons who have submitted
their 2026 Faithful Giving Cards.**

CLERGY

The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw
The Rev. Fr. Daren E. Evans
The Rev. Dr. Paul Bach
The Rev. Fr. Gerald Collins
The Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney

VESTRY

Dr. Tim Barksdale
Deadra Cannon
Albert Dandridge, III
Clare Mae Daniels
Deborah Camp Frye
Eugene Golson & Marie Golson
Kelvin & Pam Johnson
Monica Lewis Jones
Richard Jones
Patricia Lynch
Deborah Matthews
Judith Simkins-Booth

AUXILIARY VESTRY

Conchetta Brewer
Sharon Bullock
Ronnie Collins
Elaine Gillison
Dr. Monica Johnson Taylor
Cynthia Muse
Bobby & Judith Tillman

MEMBERS

Patricia Akins	Zenobia Dancy
Carmen Alexander	Elaine Davis
Constance Anderson	Jasmine Davis
Dorothy Archey	Karen Davis
Jeanne Arnold	Stacey Davis
Natasha Bagwell	Johanna Daye
Brenda Battle	Carl Dean
Jennifer Bell	Dr. Rollo Dilworth
Susan Ben	Muso Karmi Doe
Deborah Billups	Ginger DuBrey
Waltier Blocker	Andrew & Lisa Renee
Dr. Naomi Booker	Dumas
Guy Booth	William & Quincina
Ricardo Bostic	Edmonds
Alice Bowman-Cropper	Jonathan Edwards
I. Page Bowser	Lynette Edwards
Michelanne Bradwell	Carol Etlen
Theresa Bramwell	Erika Etlen
Lorita Brockington	Rashid &Christie Faisal
J.R. & Alfreda Brockman	Larry & Diedre Farmbry
Carmen Brown	Yaseen & Alaina Farooq
Marilyn Brown	Loretta Ferguson
Julia Bryant	Marceline Fitzwilliam
Kenneth Bundy	Dr. Jay Fluellen
Cornelia Camp	Marcia Forde
Charlotte Card	Stephen & Donna Foster
Phyllis Cater	Wendella Fox & Herb
Eleanor Chestnut	Wetzel
Suzanne Clossen	Norman &
Lynada Coleburn-Bryant	Nikki Franke
Terry Corson	Barry Frye
Gwendolyn Cottman	Irenda Gates

>Edita Gauthney	Diana Hutchins
Edward & Kathryn Geiger	Kim Hyde
Barbara Glenn	Yvonne Hyde-Carter
Swanie Goldsmith	Diann Jacox
Josephine Graham	Simone Jeffers
Clarice Grant	Evelyn Johns
Arlene Gray	Bobby Johnson
Linda Greaves	Dr.Calvin Johnson
Michele Green	Dr. Frank Johnson
Presko (PJ) Grier	Vernetta Johnston
Dr. Derek Griffith	Bettie Jones
Thomasina Hack	Clarence Jones
Joan Hall	Donna Jones
Lisa Harper	Eric Jones
Sharon Harper	Eric & Tracy Jones
Katrina Harris	Kelly & Tracy Jones
Roosevelt, Sr. & Gail Harris	Robert & Joyce Jones
Thomas & Lynn Harris	Dr. Sheila Jones-Smith
Walter & Nicole Harris	Tyrone Keller
Deborah Harrison	Reggie & Sherilynn Kimble
Richard & Gwenda Hart	Jurdina Koilor
Gregory Hayes	John Kortue, Sr.
Maurice Hayes	Paula Lamb
Rene' Hayes	Nancy Lee
Denise Henderson	Doris Levin
Julie Hergenrather	Joyce Levin
Quentin Heyward	Steven & Jamella Lewis
Synethia Hill	Karen Leys
Erica Hill-Yates	Landon Leys
Ashley & Lena Hines	Kimberly Lloyd
Merle Hopson	Michele Lofton
Fleta Howell	Adrienne Logan
Robert Hugh	Alonda Lord
Donald & Patricia Hunt	C. Adjoa Love-Dorsey

James Lowe Cynthia Ray
Winston Lowe Dolores Redmond
Gregory Lyles Clarence Rice
Thomas Lynch, IV Caryn Rivers
Constance Lyons Victoria Rivers
Stephen & Michelle Mack Julio & Alexandra McFadden
Stacey McCoy-Ndiaye Rodriguez
Michael McIntosh Cassandra Ruffin
Denise McKinney-Gibson Yvonne Ruiz
Laura McNeil Sandra Rushin
Regina Meacham Devero Edwin & Sharahn Santana
Deidre Milanes Barbara Savage
Colin & Helen Mitchell Samira Savoury
Donald Moore & Dorothy E. Georgia Sawyer
Roberts Sheila Sawyer McCullough
Elsie Moto Richard & Rebecca Scales
Velma Morris-Nembhard Leah Sheppard
Mueni Beatrice Mwanzia Kayma Sherman Knuckles
Vincent & Lisa Napoleon Nikkol Simms
Mercy Natt Shaine Simms
Ingrid Nembhard Arlene Singletary
Chinwe Onyekere Anita Smith
Debbie Otey Dorothy Smith
Carolyn Paige Rackell Smith
Samuel & Deidre Patterson Catherine Stafford
Charles & Zennetta Peters H. Lynn Starr
Eugene & Karina Phillips Daryn Stewart
Kim Phillips Joyce Ann Stewart
Mary Ann Phillips Shelly & Ann Stewart
Simone Pollard Brandon & Rashanda
Stephen Pugh Perryman Stiff
Wendy Puryear Sheila Stubbs
Audrey Pyles Arthur & Michele Sudler
Karem Ragin Carolyn Summers
Karen Ragland Lynda Tapper Smith
Ella Randall Wanda Tarawaly

Rosita Taylor	Scott & Ashley Williams
Jillian Theorgood	Stephanie Williamson
Kellen & Sarah Shaw-Thomas	Gillian Wilson
Calvin Thompson	Jenelle Wilson Johnson
Gloria Thomas	Laura Wilson
Teri Tillman	Lorna Wilson
Harold Townsend	Tynecia Wilson
Carole Townsend Harrell	Carole Williams Green
Arnott Trotman	Charlene Wiltshire
Justin & Lee Anne Trotman	Denise Wing
Louise Trotman	Diane Winkfield
Howard Tucker	Edgar Wise
Joe Tucker & Alycia Horn	Wanda Wood
Robin Vann-Lynch	Khalita Wright
Karen Vaughn	Paula Wright
Barbara Wiley	Daphnie Wright-Gilstrap
Michele Wilkinson	Alice Young
R. Seth Williams	M. Elaine Young

NOTE TO ALL GUILDS/ORGANIZATIONS/MINISTRIES:
The 2026 Parish Meeting is on
Saturday, February 21, 2026, at 10:00 AM.
A one-page year-end report, sent in Word format,
is due to Gladysce in the church office by
Friday, February 6, 2026.

UPCOMING SUNDAYS

January 11th

**The First Sunday after the Epiphany /
The Baptism of our Lord**

Congregation blessed with Holy Water
from the Jordan River

January 18th

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Observance and Celebration of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.

Guest Speaker: The Rev. Dr. Dawrell Rich, Chaplain,
Church Farm School

Guest Choir: Church Farm School

January 25th

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany

GFS Induction Sunday

Liturgical Welcome to the new members of 2025

Youth and Young Adults

Youth and Young Adults Sunday

ALL GROUPS, MINISTRIES AND FELLOWSHIPS

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 call the church office @ 215-473-3065 or email 1792@aecst.org.

THIS WEEK AT AECST

Tuesday, January 13th

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, January 14th

Bible Study with Fr. Daren
6:00 PM in the Absalom Jones House

St. Thomas Gospel Choir Rehearsal
7:30 PM in Anderson Hall

Thursday, January 15th

The Locke Alliance Masterclass
1:00 -3:00 PM in Anderson Hall

Religious Freedom Kick-off Event
via Zoom - 5:00 PM

Vestry Meeting
6:00 PM via Zoom

Saturday, January 17th

Men's Ministry and Fellowship
8:30 AM - 11:00 AM in Anderson Hall
A full breakfast will be served.

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 Gladys in the church office, 215-473-3065.

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

1) Glaucoma is a leading cause of irreversible blindness in the US. It has no noticeable symptoms in its early stages, and vision loss progresses so gradually that people affected by the condition are often unaware of it until their sight is already compromised.

During Glaucoma Awareness Month, the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) advises the public that the best defense against developing glaucoma-related blindness is by having routine, comprehensive eye exams. For more information, visit: American Academy of Ophthalmology | www.aao.org

2) <https://glaucoma.org/articles/january-is-glaucoma-awareness-month>

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](#).

HEALTH MINISTRY NEWS
“Setting Realistic New Year’s Resolutions”
Making Healthy New Year’s Changes”

- 1) Set realistic goals.** Write down the steps that will help you achieve them.
- 2) Plan for obstacles.** Figure out how to overcome them. Don’t give up just because you’ve slipped.
- 3) Track your progress.** A journal or diary is one of the best tools for helping you stay focused and recover from slip-ups.
- 4) Get help.** Ask friends and family for support. Consider enrolling in a class or program.
- 5) Reward yourself.** Give yourself a healthy treat when you’ve achieved a small goal or milestone.
- 6) Add variety.** Keep things interesting by adding new activities or expanding your goals to make them more challenging.

Zoom Link for **Thursday, January 15, 2025, 7:00 PM-8:00 PM**
<https://temple.zoom.us/j/97303336914>

Meeting ID: 973 0333 6914

Topic: “Overview of Trauma & PTSD: It’s Cumulative Effects in Black Women?”

Presenters: Tracy Collins and Sharon Harper

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.

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

SAVE THE DATE / MARK YOUR CALENDARS - A BIG CELEBRATION!!!!

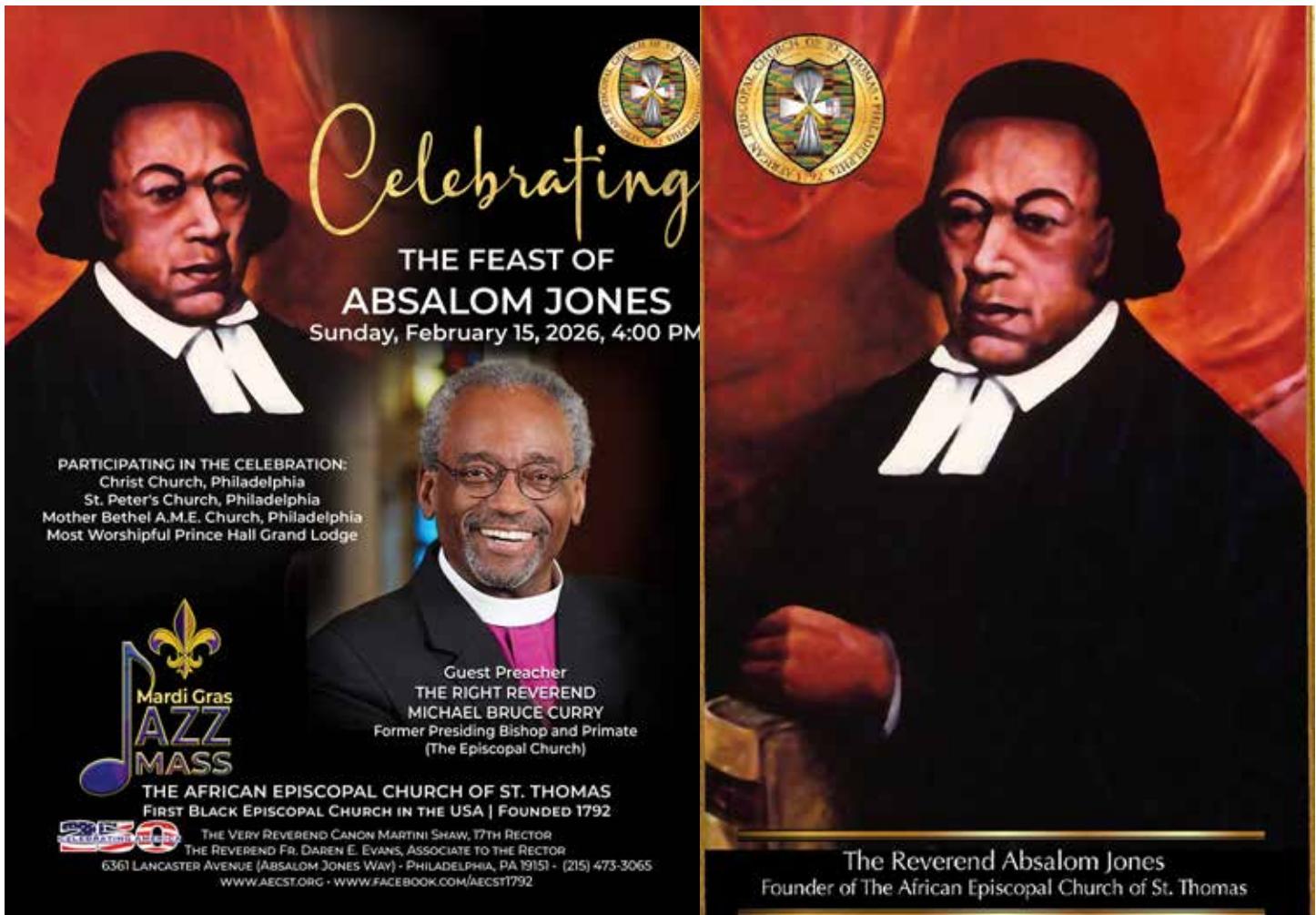
"Celebrating the Feast of Absalom Jones"

Guest Preacher: The Rt. Rev. Michael Bruce Curry, former Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church

Sunday, February 15, 2026; 4:00 PM
(This is the ONLY service this day)

Guest participants: Christ Church, Philadelphia, St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia, Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Philadelphia and Prince Hall Grand Lodge PA F. & A.M.

SPREAD THE WORD NOW!





SAVE THE DATE!

The Jesse F. Anderson (JFA) Scholarship Committee
invites you to Mardi Gras Lunch,
Sunday, February 15, 2026, 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.
See Thomasina Hack 215-901-2773,

Paula Lamb 215-620-7250 or any JFA committee member
for tickets.

Come enjoy a delicious meal and fellowship before
attending the BIG CELEBRATION AT 4:00 PM.

A MESSAGE FROM DAKOTA MOSLEY-GIRLS FRIENDLY ST. THOMAS MEMBER

The Girls Friendly Society (GFS) is proud to support the work of Tackle Hunger and their annual Super 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.

The Media Food Bank is helping tons of people who can't afford food. That's why GFS is helping collect food until **February 1st**. Tackle Hunger to tackle the game!

GFS is hosting Chat and Chew on **January 25th**, after church on GFS Sunday. We will be collecting items for Media Food Bank for Souper Bowl of Caring. Items can also be put in our bin in the Undercroft **until Feb. 1st**.

Soups will be on sale \$10 a quart made by our GFS families, with proceeds going to Media Food Bank as well.

Stop on by to grab a snack, learn more about GFS Worldwide, our branch, our favorite place, Holiday House, and to welcome our newest members.

MEDIA FOOD BANK'S MOST NEEDED ITEMS

PHARMACY

Newborn diapers
Size 5 Diapers Size
4T/5T Pull Ups

COMMUNITY CHOICE ROOM

Bottles juices
Corned beef
Honey
Vegetable cooking oil
White sugar
Canned beets
Sardines
Shelf-stable dairy milk

CALLING ALL YOUTH, TEENS, AND YOUNG ADULTS!!!
Join us on **Saturday, January 31**, from Noon - 3:00 PM for
some games, fun, and refreshments!! See our flyer for
more details. Hope to see you there!



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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.

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 Gladys in the Parish Office ASAP to get details on upcoming scheduled rehearsals.

REALM CONVERSION COMPLETE

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

REALM will help us reach you to keep you informed. Ministry and group leaders will be able to communicate with their members outside of their meeting times and stay in touch.

Online Giving

The previous system GIVI is no longer available for online giving. REALM Connect has taken it's place. REALM is not just a tool for electronic giving; it affords one the opportunity to access their giving records and offer 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 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/AfricanEpiscopal/give/now> or through the Realm App. (If you don't already use the Realm app and don't have an account, it's safe and easy to obtain. Download the Realm app (which is named REALM CONNECT) in the app store.

Online and text contributions are linked to your profile based on the **email address and cell phone number** you have provided. Your **envelope number** serves as an additional layer of security, especially in cases where members may have similar names (in the near future those persons without an envelope number will be issued one). We want to make sure contributions are properly credited to your account.

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 invite.

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS:

In order for your contributions in REALM Connect to be successful, **YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS AND CELL PHONE NUMBER MUST MATCH EXACTLY WITH REALM 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.

Thank you for your continued support of St. Thomas.



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

Rae Scott Jones - Florida

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 First Sunday after the
Epiphany/ The Baptism of Our Lord
(Renewal of Baptismal Vows)**
January 11, 2026

The First Lesson - [Isaiah 42:1-9](#)
[Psalm 29](#)

The Second Lesson - [Acts 10:34-43](#)
The Holy Gospel - [Matthew 3:13-17](#)

**The Holy Gospel Readings for the
week of January 12, 2025**

Monday - [John 1:1-18](#)
Tuesday - [John 1:19-28](#)
Wednesday - [John 1:29-42](#)
Thursday - [John 1:43-51](#)
Friday - [John 2:1-12](#)
Saturday - [John 2:13-22](#)



PILGRIMS ON A JOURNEY
BIBLE STUDY is held on Tuesdays
at 7:00 PM via Zoom.
If you are interested in joining
the ministry, please contact Fr. Jay
at associatepriest@aecst.org.

ALTAR FLOWERS

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 to order flowers or contribute to our church ministries.



WEDNESDAY IN-PERSON BIBLE STUDY
with Fr. Daren will resume on Wednesday, **January 14**, at
6:00 PM. See you then!



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.

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!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR HEALING GARDEN!

Get your hands dirty for a great cause! The CLEAR Project (Children, Liturgy, Ecology, and Renewal) is creating a healing garden right here on our church campus. This is a hands-on way to live out our Christian calling to care for God's creation.

We need volunteers at all skill levels from expert gardeners to those who just want to help.

If you're interested, please contact
Fr. Daren (associaterector@aecst.org) or
Tynecia Wilson (churchschool@aecst.org).

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:

Francina 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

KEEP IN PRAYER:

Justin Trotman, Cathy Stafford, Daryn Stewart, Arlene Gray, Adinah Edwards, Waltier Blocker, Santee Ruffin, 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.

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.

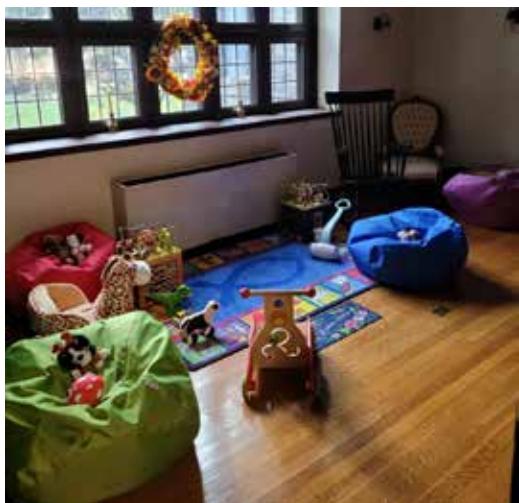


IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE RECTOR

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 - Our members and visitors who use GIVI to donate online will be switching away from GIVI to REALM Connect. If you give via the church website, either directly or by using the QR code, you will soon see a new

webpage link on our website and a corresponding QR code that will take you to that new page

6) Cellphone: Text “AECST” to 73256 to donate,

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@aecst.org
Rector	The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw	associatelector@aecst.org
Associate to the Rector	The Rev. Fr. Daren E. Evans	associatepriest@aecst.org
Associate Priest	The Rev. Fr. Gerald Collins	wilgafney@gmail.com
Associate Priest	The Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney	pauljaybach@gmail.com
Associate Minister	The Rev. Dr. Paul Bach	1792@aecst.org
Executive Asst to the Rector	Gladyce DuBrey	fiscal@aecst.org
Fiscal Administrator	Jeannette Jeffrey	1792@aecst.org
Sexton	LaDon Elliott	1792@aecst.org
Asst Sexton	David McGilberry	chancelchoir@aecst.org
Chancel Choirmaster	Jay Fluellen, D.M.A.	gospelchoir@aecst.org
Gospel Choirmaster	Waltier Blocker	jtucker@tlgattorneys.com
Rector's General Counsel	Joe Tucker, Esq.	fredabee@verizon.net
Altar Guild	Alfreda Brockman	baptism@aecst.org
Baptism Co-Chairs	Gail Hinton Harris	p.walker.ellison@gmail.com
O. V. Catto Voter Education Ministry	Patricia Walker-Ellison	cattoministry@aecst.org
Church School Superintendent	Wendella Fox Elaine Gillison	churchschool@aecst.org
Ed Muse Photography Ministry	Tynechia Wilson	edmon57@comcast.net
Fiscal Advisor to the Rector	William Edmonds	assistantfiscal@aecst.org
Girls Friendly Society	Deadra Cannon	njsimms@verizon.net
Jazz Ensemble Director	Nikkol Simms	chancelchoir@aecst1792.org
Live Stream Ministry	Jay Fluellen, D.M.A.	livevideo@aecst.org
Memorial Flowers	Yaseen Farooq Teri Tillman	fredabee@verizon.net
Roy Ellison Monarch Greeters	Alfreda Brockman	happycmd05@aol.com
Parish Vergers	Clare Mae Daniels	1792@aecst.org
Parish Webmaster	Ashley Hines	Kdrags415@gmail.com
Property Chair	Karen Ragland	webmanager@aecst.org
Scout Pack 133	Gail Hinton Harris	property@aecst.org
Stewardship Chair	William Burke	howchapman@gmail.com
Videography Ministry	Howard Chapman	bsapack0133@gmail.com
Visitor's Ministry	Arlene Gray	stewardship@aecst.org
Voices of Comfort	Patricia Lynch	recordedvideo@aecst.org
William Burke Ushers Ministry	Quentin Heyward	visitorsministry@aecst.org
	Edita Gauthney Michele Green	1792@aecst.org
	Robert Davenport	leaniepo302@gmail.com
	Arlene Singletary	

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 - Patricia Lynch | Property Chair - William Burke

Dr. Tim Barksdale
Judith Simkins Booth
Deadra Cannon

Clare Mae Daniels
Eugene Golson
Marie B. Golson

Kelvin Johnson
Monica Lewis Jones
Deborah Matthews

THE AUXILIARY VESTRY

Brenda Best
Conchetta Brewer
Sharon Bullock
Ronnie Collins

Mary Sandra Dean
Elaine Gillison
D. Lynn Joell
Cynthia Muse

Dr. Monica Johnson Taylor
Darryle (Bobby) Tillman
Judy 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 Dean | Alternate: Tyrone Keller