



AECST
FOUNDED 1792

WE WALK BY FAITH NOT BY SIGHT

2 CORINTHIANS 5:7

THE HISTORIC AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS • FIRST BLACK EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE USA
THE VERY REVEREND CANON MARTINI SHAW, 17TH RECTOR
6361 LANCASTER AVENUE (ABSALOM JONES WAY) • PHILADELPHIA, PA 19151 • (215) 473-3065
WWW.AECST.ORG • WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/AECST1792

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JULY 12, 2026

The Historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas

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

www.aecst.org

The Very Reverend Canon Martini Shaw

The 17th Rector

The Reverend Fr. Gerald Collins

Associate Priest

The Reverend Patricia Downing

Associate Priest



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

Please click on the link provided for the
[Order of Service](#)

“WELCOME TO THE MOTHER CHURCH”

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

Psalms 100:4

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

On behalf of the Clergy, Wardens, Vestry, and People of God, welcome to the historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas. Founded in 1792 as the first Black Episcopal Church in the 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. Whoever you are and wherever you may find yourself on your spiritual journey of faith, you are always welcome at St. Thomas Church, where we are joyfully and enthusiastically committed to Jesus' message of love, hope, prayer, acceptance, and faith. Today, as you worship in this place, may you experience and feel the presence of the Lord, and may you leave feeling renewed, refreshed, and revived. Again, welcome!

Faithfully,

The Very Reverend Canon Martini Shaw

17th Rector and Dean of the Schuylkill Deanery

A NEW WORSHIP ENHANCEMENT!!!

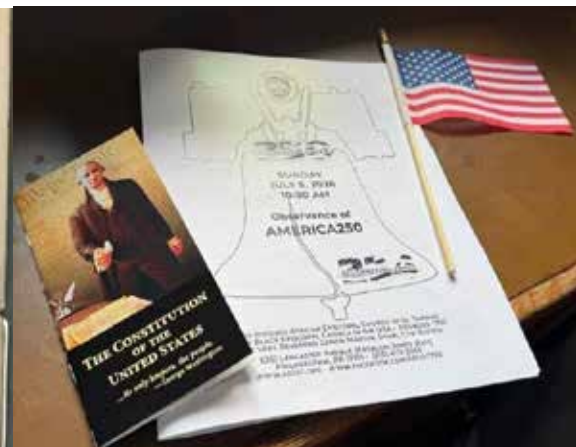
You are invited and encouraged to now use our new Order of Service QR code to download to your phone each Sunday. You may find it at both entrances to the nave of the church.

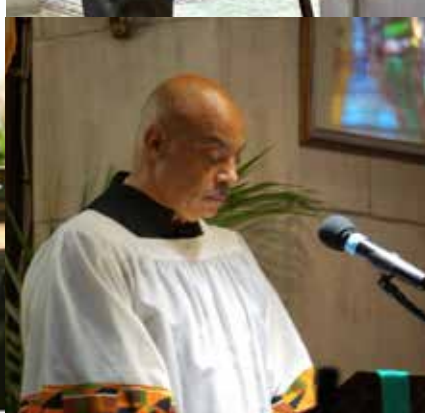


Summer hours for the Church and Parish Offices
July and August business hours are Monday - Friday
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM.

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

**THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
CELEBRATING AMERICA250
JULY 5, 2026**







Photos: William Edmonds, Justin Trotman,
Brenda Johnson Best, and Seth Williams
St.Thomas Ed Muse Memorial Photography Ministry

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



OUR LIVESTREAM MINISTRY NEEDS YOU!

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



MUSIC MINISTRY HOMILY SERIES

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

THIS WEEK AT AECST – JULY 13, 2026

Tuesday, July 14th

OPC Advocacy Outreach Group Meeting

6:00 - 9:00 PM in the Undercroft

ST. THOMAS HEALTH MINISTRY CORNER
MindSpring Mental Health Alliance July Webinars

July 1 | Understanding Hoarding: Beyond Clutter (NEW)

Hoarding disorder is a complex mental health condition rooted in anxiety, distorted thinking, and difficulty making decisions. Explore why letting go can feel overwhelming, how hoarding affects safety and relationships, and what effective treatment involves. We'll also cover animal hoarding and its unique challenges. Participants will learn the key signs of hoarding disorder in easy-to-understand terms & discuss ways for loved ones to support without making things worse. Gain a clearer, more compassionate understanding of hoarding disorder – and practical insights to help reduce frustration & promote safety. Register at: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/9716886587868/WN_FvyG9w6hTA-Rqk3bwG8qbw#/registration

July 13 | Navigating Divorce: Key Considerations and Communicating with Your Kids (NEW)

While staying together for the sake of the children may seem like the right choice, research shows that an unhealthy or unhappy marriage can negatively impact children's emotional health. Discuss the implications of staying together for the kids, trial separation, addressing blame, and how to tell your children about the divorce with a licensed therapist.

Register at: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/9716886587868/WN_WcgkS8sTQ-C6ey4Kc4lPw#/registration

July 14 | Understanding Toxic Relationships

Toxic relationships are characterized by controlling, manipulative, or abusive behaviors that slowly wear away at a person's self-worth, self-esteem, and overall happiness. Learn to recognize the signs of a toxic relationship and discuss communication skills, accountability, and personal boundaries with a licensed therapist.

Register at: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/9716886587868/WN_7_dM1N6ERhmKBtACq5vQVA#/registration

July 15 | Responding to Difficult Behavior with Confidence (NEW)

Understanding why difficult behavior is on the rise and what's really happening beneath the surface changes the way we respond to challenging customers. Discuss the causes and types of difficult behavior in the workplace and learn practical tools for emotional regulation and boundary setting using real-life examples, so you'll feel confident knowing what to say and how to say it. This course offers actionable insights and strategies to help you navigate challenging interactions with greater ease and resilience.

Register at: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/9716886587868/WN_4bQHafolTsmZWfIVXaJTUA#/registration

July 15 | Setting Healthy Boundaries in Relationships

Maintaining a balance between caring for loved ones and setting healthy boundaries for yourself can be challenging. Learn how to express your own needs without guilt, strike a healthy balance between caregiving and self-care, and tips for negotiating compromises with a licensed therapist.

Register at: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/9716886587868/WN_Vsx3qfUVSA-zSX4cXz3m5Q

July 16 | Breaking the Cycle: Understanding Intergenerational Trauma & Substance Use (NEW)

Understand how intergenerational trauma shapes substance use, family dynamics, and community patterns. Identify trauma-driven behaviors and apply practical, trauma-informed strategies to better support individuals, families, and communities.

Register at: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/9716886587868/WN_eDayGjIjRfe9VDLFF6nG9Q

RECTOR'S WISH LIST

Our Audio/Visual/Media Systems sorely need upgrading.

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

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

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 Gladyce DuBrey at 1792@aecst.org with your mobile number and email address.

CONGRATULATIONS WALTIER!

With the help of his St. Thomas family and friends, Waltier has made the Quarter Finals in the “Fave Chef” Competition.

Please go to <https://favchef.com/2026/walt-blocker> to vote. Voting resumes on **July 13th at 10:00 AM.**

—  —

THANK YOU,
my St Thomas Family!

—  —

**I MADE
THE CUT
AGAIN!**



Walt Blocker
— Favorite Chef 2026 —

 Keep voting, sharing, and praying!

 Vote here: favchef.com/2026/walt-blocker

NEW REALM ANNOUNCEMENT

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

stewardship@aecst.com

Thank you again.

Judy Tillman, Stewardship Chair

YOUNG ADULTS 18-45

Join the Young Adult Fellowship Ministry for brunch following service on **Sunday, July 26, 2026**. Come for good food, great company, and a genuine connection with a growing group within the St. Thomas community.

Scan the QR code to RSVP and complete a short questionnaire by Friday, July 24.

AECST YOUNG ADULT Brunch Fellowship



SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, September 12, 2026 - Annual Youth Fun Day!



AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH
OF ST. THOMAS
PRESENTS

YOUTH FUN DAY

Acolytes **2026** Church School

**SATURDAY
SEPT. 12TH
12PM-3PM**

All are welcome!

**SIGN UP FOR OUR YOUTH GROUPS
PLUS:
RAINGUTTER REGATTA
MINUTE TO WIN IT GAMES
READING NOOK
BOUNCE HOUSES
CRAFTS
DOUBLE DUTCH
CORNHOLE AND MORE...
COME FELLOWSHIP WITH US!**

Refreshments will be served!

**CHALLENGE:
MAKE IT TO
EVERY STATION
FOR A PRIZE!**

For more information, contact
Wendela Fox at wpfox3008@verizon.net
or Nikkol Simms at njsimms@verizon.net

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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, and on the Church campus two weeks prior to the event. Please refrain from approaching the sextons. The church office maintains the calendar for all events. If you have any questions or need a form, please contact the church office or email 1792@aecst.org.

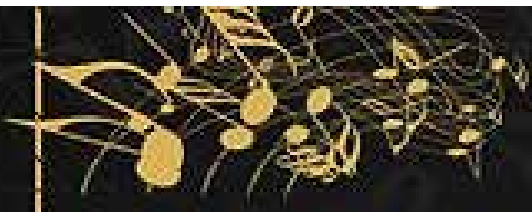


CHAT AND CHEW

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

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)

OUR DEDICATED OUT-OF-TOWN FAMILIES

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

Constance Anderson - Florida

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

Deadra Cannon - Georgia

Dr. Tracy Collins - North Carolina

Nora Corbin - Illinois

Paula Cropper - North Carolina

Lee Daniels - New York

Stacey Davis - New York

Andrew and Lisa Renee Dumas - Portugal

Rashid, Christie, and Gabrielle Faisal - Michigan

The Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney - Texas

Richard & Gwenda Hart - South Carolina

Yvonne Hyde-Carter - New York

Dr. Calvin Johnson - Florida

Bettie Jones - North Carolina

Richard Jones, Jr. - Virginia

Dr. Sheila Jones-Smith - South Carolina

Steven & Jameela Lewis - Colorado/California

Gregory Lyles - Switzerland

Nohjay Nimpson - Texas

Zennetta Peters - North Carolina

Richard & Rebecca Scales - Florida

Shelly and Ann Stewart - Florida

Howard Tucker - Brazil/Philadelphia

Allison Young - Maryland



The Bible Readings for the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 12, 2026

The First Lesson - [Genesis 25:19-34](#)
[Psalm 119:105-112](#)

The Second Lesson - [Romans 8:1-11](#)
The Holy Gospel - [Matthew 13:1-9,18-23](#)

The Holy Gospel Readings for the week of July 13, 2026

Monday - [Matthew 25:1-13](#)
Tuesday - [Matthew 25:14-30](#)
Wednesday - [Matthew 25:31-46](#)
Thursday - [Matthew 26:1-16](#)
Friday - [Matthew 26:17-25](#)
Saturday - [Matthew 26:26-35](#)



PILGRIMS ON A JOURNEY BIBLE STUDY

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

at associatepriest@aecst.org.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Flowers on the High Altar are in loving memory of
Carol Whitlock West, given by Wendell R. Whitlock.

Flowers on the Absalom Jones Altar are in loving memory
of **Helen Robinson Whitlock**, given by Wendell R Whitlock.

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.





CALLING ALL DANCERS!!!!

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



VERGERS NEEDED!

Are you being called to this exciting ministry?
Want to know more about what a Verger does?

The Verger Guide may be found [here](#)

Please speak with Karen Ragland or
the Rector for more details.

RE-IMAGINING OUR MINISTRIES

Persons are needed:

- to lift their voices on the **Comfort Choir** during funeral services at St. Thomas. Please contact [D. Lynn Joell](#) if interested.
- to serve with the **Livestream/Sound Ministry** for Sunday morning service and weekday funeral services. If interested, please contact [Gladyce](#) in the Parish Office.
- to serve on the **Altar Guild**. This amazing group of individuals prepares our altar each week for the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Interested people should contact [Alfreda Brockman](#).
- to serve as **Readers and Intercessors** to read the Holy Scripture during our weekly services. Interested persons should contact [Gladyce](#) in the Parish Office to sign up.
- as **Acolytes** to serve on the altar. Please contact [Fr. Shaw](#) if you are interested.
- **Photography Ministry** is in need of additional photographers. You do not need to be a professional photographer but do enjoy taking pictures. Anyone interested can contact [Bill Edmonds](#) or [Dale Williams](#).
- **The Shepherds Ministry** is still in need of many more volunteers to be able to shepherd all households of our congregation. Shepherds set their own schedules to be in regular touch with their households of sheep by phone, email, text or various social media platforms. Each is assigned no more than 4 households. All Ministry meetings are held via Zoom. Please note that the Vestry will continue to shepherd, for one year, all new members joining the congregation. For more information, or to volunteer, please contact [Charlene M. Wiltshire](#).



PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK AND SHUT-IN.

IN HOSPITAL:

Regina Meacham Devero-Penn Presbyterian Medical Center

IN REHAB:

Francina Norris - St. Francis Nursing Home;

Patricia Walker-Ellison - Rosewood Gardens Rehab, Broomall, PA

IN LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENCES:

Helena Allen-Simpson House; Gwendolyn Langford -

Arden Courts of Cherry Hill; Ola Bass - Atria Lafayette Hill

AT HOME:

Robert Brown, Shirley Caldwell, Cornelia Camp,

Virginia DuBrey, Stephen Hannum, Roosevelt Harris Sr.,

Joyce Stewart, Calvin Thompson, Vernetta Dow,

KEEP IN PRAYER:

Justin Trotman, Cathy Stafford, Adinah Edwards,

Teena Watson-Matthews, Waltier Blocker, Santee Ruffin,

Angela Holloway, Mary Ann Phillips, Yvonne Syndor,

Carl Dean, Arlene Gray, Adrian Gray, Quincina Edmonds,

D. Lynn Joell, Edita Gauthney, Carmen Brown,

Lisa Woodley, Richard Jones, Jr., Regina Meacham Devero,

Katrina Harris, Carolyn Summers, Karen Ragland,

Charlene M. Wiltshire, Joan Hall, Daryn Stewart

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 Shaw! No prior experience is necessary to serve in the **Acolyte Ministry**. Rehearsals are on Sundays, immediately after service. This is an excellent opportunity for children and youth to become involved in the life of the church. Contact [Fr. Shaw](#) for details.

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.



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:



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

www.aecst.org

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

1) Sunday Offering Plate

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

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

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

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

CAPITAL BUILDING IMPROVEMENT CAMPAIGN

Thank you to all who have contributed to the fund.

Everyone is asked to please make a minimum sacrificial gift of \$40 per month. Please use the envelope from your packet or place Building Fund in the Memo section of your check or click the [Donation Button](#) and select the Building Fund button on our Capital Improvement Donation button on our [website](#).

MINISTRY STAFF

Bishop
Rector
Associate to the Rector
Associate Priest
Associate Priest
Executive Asst. to the Rector
Sexton
Asst. Sexton
Chancel Choirmaster
Gospel Choirmaster
Rector's General Counsel
Altar Guild
Baptism Co-Chairs

O. V. Catto Voter Education Ministry
Church School Superintendent
Ed Muse Photography Ministry
Fiscal Advisor to the Rector
Girls' Friendly Society
Health Ministry
Jazz Ensemble Director
Live Stream Ministry
Memorial Flowers
Memorial Tribute Ministry
Roy Ellison Monarch Greeters
Parish Vergers
Parish Webmaster
Property Chair
Scout Pack 133

St. Thomas Daughters of the King
Stewardship Chair
Videography Ministry
Visitor's Ministry
Voices of Comfort
William Burke Ushers Ministry

The Rt. Rev. Daniel G P Gutierrez	
The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw	rector@aecst.org
The Rev. Fr. Gerald (Jay) Collins	associatepriest@aecst.org
The Rev. Patricia Downing	psdowning@verizon.net
Gladyce DuBrey	1792@aecst.org
LaDon Elliott	1792@aecst.org
David McGilberry	1792@aecst.org
Jay Fluellen, DMA	chancelchoir@aecst.org
Waltier Blocker	gospelchoir@aecst.org
Joe Tucker, Esq.	jtucker@tlgattorneys.com
Alfreda Brockman	fredabee@verizon.net
Gail Hinton Harris	baptism@aecst.org
Patricia Walker-Ellison	p.walker.ellison@gmail.com
Wendella Fox Elaine Gillison	cattoministry@aecst.org
Tynecia Wilson	churchschool@aecst.org
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Deadra Cannon	assistantfiscal@aecst.org
Nikkol Simms	njsimms@verizon.net
Nikki Franke Dr. Michael McIntosh	1792@aecst.org
Jay Fluellen, DMA	chancelchoir@aecst.org
Yaseen Farooq Teri Tillman	livevideo@aecst.org
Alfreda Brockman Clare Mae Daniels	fredabee@verizon.net
Victoria Rivers	memorialtribute@aecst.org
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Eugene Golson Karen Ragland	1792@aecst.org
Gail Hinton Harris	webmanager@aecst.org
William J. Burke	property@aecst.org
Howard Chapman	howchapman@gmail.com
Arlene Gray	bsapack0133@gmail.com
Sharon Bullock	scmci@aol.com
Judy Tillman	stewardship@aecst.org
Quentin Heyward	recordedvideo@aecst.org
Edita Gauthney Michele Green	visitorsministry@aecst.org
Robert Davenport	1792@aecst.org
Arlene Singletary	leaniepo302@gmail.com

THE VESTRY

Rector's Warden - Richard Jones | Accounting Warden - Deborah Camp-Frye
Clerk of the Vestry - Pamela Johnson | Treasurer - Albert S. Dandridge, III Esq.
Stewardship Chair - Judy Tillman | Property Chair - William J. Burke

Dr. Tim Barksdale
Judith Simkins Booth
Deadra Cannon

Clare Mae Daniels
Mary Sandra Dean
Elaine Gillison

Eugene Golson
Monica Lewis Jones
Deborah Matthews

THE AUXILIARY VESTRY

Brenda Johnson Best
Sharon Bullock
Ronnie Collins

Gwenda Hart
D. Lynn Joell
Kelvin Johnson

Cynthia Muse
Dr. Monica Johnson Taylor
Darryle (Bobby) Tillman

DELEGATES TO THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION

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

DELEGATES TO THE SCHUYLKILL DEANERY

Phyllis Cater | Mary Sandra Dean | Alternate: Tyrone Keller