
THE EPISTLE OF ST. THOMAS

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
The Rev. Jeff Douglas

June 2016

Diocese of East Carolina
The Rt. Rev. Robert Skirving

“And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.” (Book of Common Prayer, p. 366)

These words from the post-communion prayer set the standard for us in the post-Easter Church. The great fifty day celebration of Easter has passed and the work of ministry has begun. Quakers have good saying about our use of the word “service” when we mean “worship.” They say, “The service begins when the worship ends.” Our Sunday morning is devoted to the worship of God, not service in God’s name. Service is our purpose Monday through Saturday.



As baptized Christians, we are sent out as ministers of the Gospel each day. Our message is simple. We are all God’s children. Love created us, nourishes us and heals the wounds we inflict on others (and ourselves). The God of abundance has given us everything we need to have a life that overflows with blessing upon blessing. And God is always here, among us, to guide us toward God’s dream of a world where “want” is no longer a word because justice ensures there is enough and each and every person is afforded the dignity, respect and forbearance that we all wish for.

So, put your hand to the plow and do not look back. (Luke 9:62) Take your place as a shareholder, a partner in Christ’s ministry to reconcile the world to God’s ways, God’s values, for all human beings to live fully and in harmony with one another. The Prophet Isaiah tells us the ministry of the Messiah: “The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners...” (61:1). Jesus confirms this in the Gospel according to Matthew: “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them” (11:4-5).

We are sent out as “faithful witnesses” to this ministry, to carry it on in Jesus’ name. In the New Testament James and the First letter of John tell us what it means to be “faithful.” James writes, “If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead (2:15-17).” In the First Letter of John, it is written, “How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.” (3:17-18)

And so, with the power of the Spirit given to the Church at Pentecost, let us move outward beyond the limits of what we once thought possible and let the Spirit guide us toward what God dreams for us all.

+Jeff

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting, May 17, 2016
Minutes

The Vestry and Rector of St. Thomas' met on Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at 6:00 PM in the Parish House. Present were Rob Outland, David Simons, Brenda Hewitt, Claudia Griffin, Mike Steczak (Junior Warden), Hugh Davis (Senior Warden), Ernie Carter (Treasurer), & Jeff Douglas (Rector). Absent were Fred Liverman, Patsy Jones, & Daniel McCamish (Clerk).

The Rector called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM and opened the meeting with prayer.

Prior Minutes. The minutes of the April 19 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Treasurer's Report. The treasurer's report for April 2016 was read, reviewed, and approved. The Parish has submitted its Property Report to the Diocese. The parish does need to complete its 2015 Audit, as the church has already received an extension to complete and submit it.

Service. The **Soup Kitchen** for May will be held on Thursday, May 19 & 26. It will also be held in both June and July (a change from some earlier years). The **Medical Mission** is on target for its June 11-18 trip to the Dominican Republic. Members of the team will have an organizational meeting soon; the team is looking for old suitcases that can be used to help transport meds to those in need.

The Parish has received word from the **Ahoskie Food Pantry** that it is low on funds. This is an effect of growing need in the area and the growth of the Food Pantry's Backpack Ministry (now serving more than 200 children each week). The vestry moved to donate \$2,500 to the Food Pantry for their use.

Worship. In Jeff's absence, the parish will celebrate the rite of Morning Prayer on June 5, and the Rev. Bill Smyth will serve as supply for both the 8 and 10:30 services on June 12.

The service for **Rogation** on May 8 went well and saw a strong turnout from our peers at St. Mary's. Jeff reported that the Deanery Confirmation (held at Church of the Advent on May 15) went well. There will be an Albemarle Deanery-wide **Stop Hunger Now** event in the fall (likely held in Elizabeth City).

Education. The series on the Old Testament being viewed as a part of adult Sunday School has only six lectures to reach completion, so adult Sunday School will continue into the summer to complete it. All are welcome.

The church will plan a Youth Trip to DC this fall, including a visit to the (soon-to-open) African-American History Museum, the Holocaust Museum, and the National Cathedral.

Pastoral Care. The Rector addressed concerns about parishioners undergoing operations and reported on checking in with a parishioner who has been coping with both health issues and grief.

Junior Warden's Report. The Vestry discussed the ongoing plans to re-landscape the west side of the Parish Hall. Given the damage the shrubbery and growth have caused/are causing to the building, the growth needs to be removed, with excavation of the wall and repair completed (as necessary). The foundation will need to be water proofed, with the newly planted vegetation kept at least three feet from the building walls. A message

will be sent to the parish clarifying the upcoming work and allowing all to come pull from the garden as interested. The removal will be done after June 1.

Mike Steczak has completed several projects around the church, including installing an outlet in the Parish Hall to help with the ongoing project to install speakers, a projector, and screen into the PH and putting in a photocell for the lights at the office porch. The church has passed two of the issues raised by the fire marshal when he inspected and is working to resolve the final issue. The Bathrooms will be worked on for improvements. A question was raised about the cemetery plot on Braxton Britt's property. David Simons will make sure it is taken care of.

The Rector shared information about his rewarding experience at CREDO.

Calendar:

May 30-June 6: Michael & Jessica's Wedding (Jeff away)

June 11-18: Medical Mission to the Dominican Republic (the Rev. Bill Smyth supply on June 12)

June 30-July 4: Jeff's nephew's wedding in Toronto (Jeff away; the Rev. Peter Worthington supply on July 3)

July 7-13: Adventurers' Camp (Jeff away; the Rt. Rev. David Bane, Jr. supply on July 10)

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM with the Vestry's corporate recitation of the Lord's Prayer. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 21, 2016, at 6 PM in the Parish House.

Respectfully submitted,

Hugh H. Davis, Senior Warden

From the Senior Warden—



“Turn the World Around”

On Pentecost Sunday, Jeff reminded us about the need to be “a little crazy” and to perform such “crazy” acts as showing daily compassion and charity. Jeff's reference to the Presiding Bishop's idea of and call for some “Crazy Christians” further brought to mind the PB's sermon when he was installed into the leadership of our church. Both in that service and for our own Pentecostal celebration of the church's birthday, the congregations sang Marty Haugen's “All Are Welcome,” a hymn that reminds us, as we keep our doors open to all comers, that, in our church and in our lives, “the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face” in a call that we “bring an end to fear and danger.” Certainly, Jeff and Michael are right that ending (or even alleviating) fear and danger—especially today, when the 24-hour news cycle repeatedly reveals stories of violence, warfare, and paranoia at a regular rate—will require unconventional thinking, a new approach, and some rather “Crazy Christians.” Those actions will also help us all meet the charge Bishop Curry laid out that we “turn the world upside down.”

That message and reminder—the call to be and demonstrate the true meaning of Christianity—further brought to mind for me a Harry Belafonte song, “Turn the World Around.” Though there have been several covers of this number, the version I always think of comes from Belafonte’s appearance on *The Muppet Show*. At St. Thomas’, we all know and love Jim Henson (who is most definitely a hero of mine as well as one of the creative figures highlighted in the “Think Different” ads Jeff preached about on Whitsunday), and this song has often been named as his favorite from all of the powerful moments produced by the Muppets. Though it was featured in at least a pair of Muppet specials and even sung by Belafonte at Jim Henson’s funeral, it most famously concluded the *Muppet Show* episode Belafonte hosted (and one I still remember watching when it premiered). The song began in the dressing room, as Belafonte was explaining the song’s inspiration to Fozzie Bear. As he began to sing the song, solo and *a cappella*, specially-made puppets of African masks began appearing and joining in the song, and then the set dissolved into black, as Belafonte and the African Muppets sang of the circle and cycle of life. They were eventually joined by the regular Muppets, as the chorus grew and grew and reminded all of us that “we are of the spirit, truly of the spirit” and “only can the spirit turn the world around.” This anthem for renewal and revolution reminds us all that “so is life” when we seek to turn the world around. It is the core of our nature; it just seems crazy at times to think it can be done. Asking “Do we know who we are?”, Belafonte and the Muppets remind us of the need for every one of us to “see...one another clearly.” With some clarity of vision, we can turn the world around, and that can start even as we start our summers. The Medical Mission team will do their part in the Dominican Republic, but, as Jeff preached specifically about on Pentecost and as we are reminded each time we gather to worship, the possibilities for change are always just around the corner. We also can start global change with local action.

Several of us have on our vehicles (but even more of us know in our minds and hearts) a slogan/bumper magnet for St. Thomas’. Its message reads simply: “Love God. Love Your Neighbor. Change the World.” This summer seems like a good time to start. Let’s get crazy.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPaKWihFs_Q

—Hugh H. Davis



Soup Kitchen

Where: St. Thomas Episcopal Church
When: Last Two Thursdays of every Month

Food Served: 5 pm to 6pm
Next date: Thurs. June 23rd
Thurs. June 30th

Questions - call 332-3263



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Leigh Jenkins
- 3 Al Vaughan
- 4 Brenda Hewitt
- 8 King Jones
- 13 Hugh Davis
- 25 Anne Aycock
- 29 Kim Bunch
- 30 Lois Sawyer



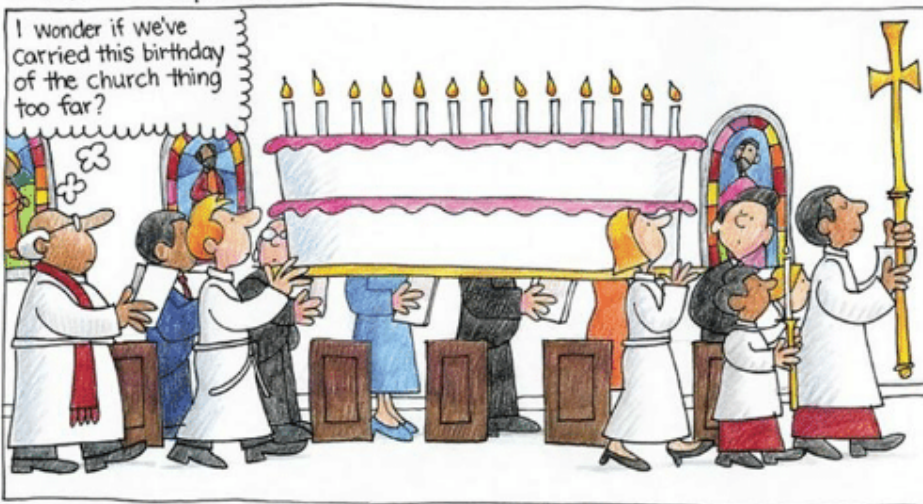
"O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor; we pray, on your servants, **Leigh, Al, Brenda, King, Hugh, Anne, Kim, Lois**, as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**"

JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

- 8 Michael and Brenda Hewitt
- 12 Jeff and Beth Douglas

"O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church: Send therefore your blessing upon **Michael and Brenda, Jeff and Beth**, that they may so love, honor, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**"

IT HAPPENED ONE PENTECOST...





St. Thomas Episcopal Church – Schedules for June 2016

Acolytes

- 5 Charles Sawyer
- 12 Jerrie Taylor and Mary Outland
- 19 Bill Blanchard and Robby Outland
- 26 Hugh Davis and Gretchen Simons

Altar Flowers

- 5 The Rev. and Mrs. Jeff Douglas
- 12 Mr. and Mrs. John Davis
- 19 Ms. Nonie Turville
- 26 Mr. and Mrs. Lee Lipsitz

Altar Guild

Brenda Hewitt and Tomma Jenkins

Food Pantry (Note-Wednesdays)

- 1 Dicky Hoggard
- 8 Jim Shotwell
- 15 Peggy Vann
- 22 Bubba Peele
- 29 Patsy Jones

Lay Readers

- 1 6:00 pm **NO EVENING PRAYER**
- 5 8:00 am OPEN
- 10:30 am Morning Prayer Jim Shotwell
- 8 6:00 pm **NO EVENING PRAYER**
- 12 10:30 am Holy Eucharist Hugh Davis
- 15 6:00 pm **NO EVENING PRAYER**
- 19 10:30 am Evening Prayer Colin Jones
- 22 6:00 pm **NO EVENING PRAYER**
- 26 10:30 am Holy Eucharist John Davis
- 29 6:00 pm **NO EVENING PRAYER**

Ushers

Fred Liverman and Bubba Peele

Yard Work

- 5 Tom Newbern and Charles Pierce
- 12 Charles Sawyer and Beth Douglas
- 19 Charles Sawyer and Beth Douglas
- 26 Bubba Peele and Clyde & Ann Hughes

June 2016

Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																											
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">May 2016</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: small;"> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr> <tr><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Jul 2016</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: small;"> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td></tr> <tr><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td></tr> <tr><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					S	M	T	W	T	F	S						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31							<p style="font-size: 2em; color: #800000;">1</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; color: #800000;">2</p> <p>AA Meeting 8pm</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; color: #800000;">3</p> <p>Leigh Jenkins Al Vaughan</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; color: #800000;">4</p> <p>Brenda Hewitt Michael & Jessica's Wedding</p>		
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P.O. BOX 159
AHOSKIE, NC 27910



252-332-2145
252-332-8592 Fax
preschurch@embarqmail.com

AHOSKIE FOOD PANTRY

May 18, 2016

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church
PO Box 263
Ahoskie, NC 27910

Dear St. Thomas' Episcopal Church:

The Ahoskie Food Pantry appreciates so much for the \$2,500 donation you gave to us. This charitable project could not survive without the continuing help of friends like you. You have helped your neighbors. God Bless You!



Sincerely,

Dicky

R. N. Hoggard (Dicky)
Chairperson

*We love you! and thank
you so very much! "o"*

ALSO ...



CHURCH PERIODICAL CLUB

The Ministry of the Printed Word
The Second Century

in affiliation with
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

We have collected \$430.00 with an additional \$100.00 donation from ECW for CPC. Thanks to all that supported this mission.

God Bless, Claudia

Congratulations
GRADUATES!
 WE ARE PROUD OF YOU!



Samuel Austin Mann, Jr.
 grandson of Charles and Lois Sawyer,
 graduated from UNC at Chapel Hill.



Fields Pierce
 grandson of Buck & Betty Suiter,
 graduated from
 UNC at Chapel Hill
 with a Bachelor of Science in
 Business & Political Science.

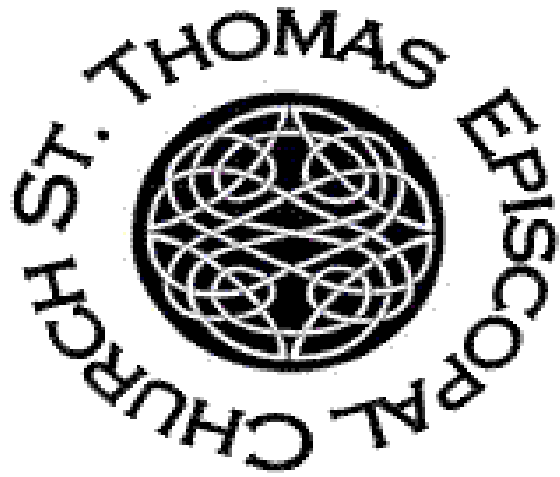


Charles Hoggard
 son of Jeffrey and Debbie Hoggard and
 grandson of R.N. and Becky Hoggard,
 graduated from Medical School.



John Hoggard
 son of Jeffrey and Debbie Hoggard and
 grandson of R.N. and Becky Hoggard,
 graduated from ECU Dental School.

Congratulations to **Susan S. Suiter**, daughter-in-law of Buck and Betty Suiter,
 on graduating from Barton College with a Master's degree in Nursing.



St. Thomas Episcopal Church
P. O. Box 263
Ahoskie, NC 27910