
THE EPISTLE OF ST. THOMAS

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church
The Rev. Jeff Douglas

March 2016

Diocese of East Carolina
The Rt. Rev. Robert Skirving

The Easter Way of Life

The daily headlines read like Christ's crucifixion. There is unending war in central Asia, Main Street continues to struggle with the wolves of Wall Street continuing to profit, the gap between the "Haves" and the "Have-Nots" continues to widen and deepen. We live in a world with too many people are being "left behind", not just kids. All this hurts Jesus. All these are blows of the hammer nailing Jesus to the cross.

To enter into the joy of Easter and the qualities of light, I need reminders that Jesus was not "cured of death," as theologian James Alison puts it, but that Jesus kept fidelity with life.

His Way of Life begins in the light of an empty tomb. And so we should not cling to our ways of death but embrace those things which inspire us and give us hope; that our hope will inspire hope to live in others. And as Mary Magdalene, the first apostle, sent to bear the good news of Jesus resurrection to the Twelve, our hope shall rest in the living Christ, not just the Christ found in the gospels and the writings of Paul, but the Christ we see in the myriads of people we greet, talk to and break bread with each day. Like Jesus, on the road to Emmaus, the living Christ comes to us in the seemingly mundane things of life, breaking bread and sharing the joy, love and laughter and triumphs and even the tragedies of our lives.

In his Way of Life, Jesus breathes peace and forgiveness on his disciples. When people equate greatness with the ability to belittle and bully others; when voices decry the immigrant, those of a different faith or color as reasons to fear and cry for deportations and special identification cards; will we lift our voices to protect all of God's children? Will we have the strength to forgive our enemies; as we too, like St. Paul, were once enemies of the cross of Christ?

Jesus engaged Thomas' in the questions of his heart. Is our faith strong enough to hold amidst the doubts of our own hearts? Will we risk to engaging with those of a different faith, the Jew, the Muslim, the Hindu. Jesus teaches Peter about nature of love itself. Love is about feeding and caring for others and holding fast to each other when all around you are frightened and want to flee. Can we live as community, as family, not always agreeing but always loving and forgiving and maintain fidelity with one another when times are hard?

Jesus sends the disciples on *His Way*, into a new world to contend with the principalities and powers of this world, until their final defeat. Will we dedicate ourselves to bringing light to the corners of our neighborhoods that are held in darkness by addiction, poverty, prejudice and oppression? Will we honor our baptismal promises by respecting the God given dignity of every human being regardless of nationality, race, faith or sexual orientation? Will we engage in the struggle for justice and freedom for all people, not merely those who think, look and act like us? And will we by the sharing of our goods, secure that dignity, justice and freedom for all?

Hearing the darkness of our public discourse blaring in my ears, and confronting my own darkness that dogs me at every step this Lent, I am ready to embrace the Way of Life. After all, we are people of joy. We walk in illumination. Where we pass, may our footprints glow with the light of Christ and life will blossom along our path. Come, live in the Light!

Resurrection Happens!

Jeff+





SOUP SUPPER ASSIGNMENTS
Lent, 2016 - Evening Prayer at 6 p.m. followed by Soup

It's almost time for Soup Suppers! Here are the assignments.

If you need to exchange your date with someone, please do so and notify your team captain. **If you can't participate this year, I need to know. Please call me when you get this.**

Please bring bread or crackers with your soup. Be at the Parish Hall between 5:00 – 5:30 p.m. for set up. Plan to stay an hour after the fellowship to help with cleanup.

The donation is \$2.50 per person per week, or \$10 for the "season."
Children seven and under are free.

Thanks in advance to all who participate. I really appreciate your help.

Glenna - 332-7707

February 17th

Martie Tayloe, Capt.
Gail Carter
Amy Brown
Glenna Sullins
Beth Douglas
Gretchen Simons

February 24th

Patsy Jones, Capt.
Becky Johnson
Claudia Griffin
Mary C. Pierce
Bea Vaughan

March 2nd

Cheryl Stezcak, Capt.
Jerrie Taylor
Sue Liverman
Julie Shields
Barbara Outland
Tomma Jenkins

March 9th

Sarah Davis, Capt.
Lindsay Vaughan
Mac Griffin
Anne Aycock
Margaret Newbern
Ann Hughes

March 16th

Lois Sawyer, Capt.
Linda Shotwell
Brenda Hewitt
Carolyn Peele
Becky Hoggard

ECW DATES TO REMEMBER

March 2	Soup Supper
March 9	Soup Supper
March 16	Soup Supper
March 20	Palm Sunday
March 20-25	Stock Easter Baskets
March 24	Maundy Thursday
March 25	Good Friday
March 27	Easter Sunday
April 27	Diocesan Annual Meeting
May 8	CPC Sunday
August	Trinity Annual Gathering
November 6	UTO Ingathering
November 17	Annual ECW Luncheon
November 18-22	Stock Thanksgiving Baskets
November 27	Advent 1
December 18-22	Stock Christmas Baskets



ECW Easter Baskets: The ECW will provide food baskets for Easter for twelve families in the area. Hams will be provided by the ECW. Non-perishable items for the baskets should be brought to the church narthex or the parish hall kitchen beginning Sunday, March 20th through Friday, March 25th.

For questions concerning the Easter baskets, please contact Gail Carter or Julie Shields.



Announcements

NEWS FROM THE FLOWER GUILD

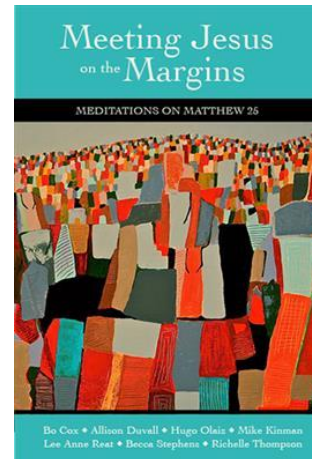


If you would like to help grace the altar with special flowers for Easter Sunday, please fill out a form and put it with your check in the offering plate or turn

them in to the church office by Monday, March 21st.





WHERE DO YOU MEET JESUS?



**Come and meet Jesus
this blessed Lenten season
after Soup Supper
on Wednesday evenings
as we continue to discuss
these meditations
written by some leading Episcopal guides:
Mike Kinman, Becca Stevens,
Allison Duvall, Bo Cox,
Hugo Olaiz, Lee Anne Reat,
and Richelle Thompson.**

Lenten Study on Wednesdays:

**March 2nd
March 9th
March 16th**

 **AHOSKIE ROTARY CLUB** 



PANCAKE & SAUSAGE

Thursday, March 3rd

AHOSKIE ARMORY

Lunch 11:00 a.m to 1:00 p.m.
Supper 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

TICKETS IN ADVANCE OR AT THE DOOR
\$8.00 DONATION

 **Soup Kitchen** 

Where: St. Thomas Episcopal Church
When: Last Two Thursdays of every Month
Food Served: 5 pm to 6pm
Next date: Thurs. March 17th
Thurs. March 31st

  Questions - call 332-3263

LYRA

Once again, we here at St. Thomas welcome **LYRA** from St. Petersburg, Russia!
If you did not get a chance to hear them perform before, DO NOT MISS the concert on April 26th at 7p.m.
More information will follow in upcoming bulletins and in April's newsletter.
For now, here is one of their reviews:



A review from The Washington Post

Lyra 2004

Although the Russian Orthodox Church has inspired vocal music of incredible beauty, that music doesn't get sung much by stateside ensembles: There's a language barrier, and few singers can navigate complex modal harmonies without accompaniment. The solution? Import a Russian ensemble. Belsville's Lutheran Church of the Abiding Presence brought in six members of Lyra, a St. Petersburg-based vocal collective, Saturday night. Despite the church's flat acoustics, Lyra produced a pure a cappella sound that could both fill the intimate space and drop to an edge-of-your-seat whisper, and the ensemble coordination remained impeccable through even the most complex polyphony. The group's clear harmonies gave a sense of how the unique flavor of Orthodox music persists in both the clean, bright music of 17th-century Dmitri Bortniansky and the aching chromatics of turn-of-the-last-century Pavel Tchesnokov. Dobri Khristov's "Praise the name of the Lord" made the greatest impression of all, though, because it featured a solo by Vladimir Feliauer, one of those force-of-nature Russian basses, whose tone was rock-solid and velvet-smooth no matter how low he went. After the sampling of intense, elevated Orthodox music, the singers' post-intermission entrance in traditional dress and singing a jaunty folk tune brought everything back to earth. The simpler music offered showcase solos for most of the singers, and lots of broad acting, like Ekaterina Isatchenko's charmingly coquettish posing in "Black-browed, black-eyed fellow", partially made up for the lack of texts and translations. Yet it was the Russian Orthodox music, especially in Lyra's fine performances, that left one wanting more.

--Andrew Lindemann Malone

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting, February 16, 2016
Minutes

The Vestry and Rector of St. Thomas met on Tuesday, February 16, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Parish House. Present were the Rector, Jeff Douglas, the Treasurer, Ernie Carter, and Vestry members, Hugh Davis, Claudia Griffin, Brenda Hewitt, Patsy Jones, Fred Liverman, Daniel McCamish, David Simons, and Robert Outland.

The Rector opened the meeting with a prayer.

Prior Minutes. The minutes of the January 26th Vestry meeting were reviewed and approved.

Treasurer's Report. The treasurer's report for January 2016 was read and approved. This year we will only need an internal audit, so a committee will be formed to take care of it.

The annual **Parochial Report** is being prepared. The Vestry will see a copy in March. All Vestry members have signed the **Vestry Declaration and Promise**, and the **Sexual Ethics Policy**. The **Leadership Report** to the Diocese is also being prepared, containing a list of names and addresses of the Vestry officers.

The **Soup Kitchen** will be held on Thursday, February 18th and 25th.

A **Medical Mission** to the Dominican Republic is being planned for June 11th – 18th.

In February and March, the topic for **Lent Study** will be the book, Meeting Jesus at the Margins: Meditations on Matthew 25.

Pastoral Care. The Rector has been visiting with several parishioners who are grieving the loss of a loved one, and/or dealing with major health issues.

A detailed **Junior Warden's Report** was provided to the Vestry. The estimate for upgrading the **sound system in the church**, at an approximate total cost of \$3,000, was approved at the January meeting. This time it was reaffirmed, and a copy was signed by the Clerk. An estimate for **yard work**, totaling \$1,800, was tabled until more information could be obtained.

Security has become more of an issue since someone stole the altar candles, a brass collection plate, and several metal folding chairs prior to the Sunday, February 14th services. The police were contacted, and an effort is being made to recover the items. It was generally agreed that we should keep the sanctuary locked, and only allow access to approved guests. It was moved and approved that a **coded lock** be installed on the choir entrance, just like the one leading to the Sacristy. Also, **Lock boxes** have been installed on the **thermostats** to keep guests from changing the settings.

Calendar:

Thursday, February 18th and 25th: Soup Kitchen.

Wednesday, February 17th, 24th; March 2nd, 9th, 16th: Lent Soup Suppers.

Sunday, March 20th: Palm Sunday.

Thursday, March 24th: Maundy Thursday.

Sunday, March 27th: Easter.

Sunday, May 8th: Rogation.

Saturday, June 11th – Saturday, June 18th: Medical Mission to Dominican Republic.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 15, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Parish House.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel McCamish
Clerk

From the Senior Warden:



“We are one in the Spirit...We are one in the Lord”

On the first night of this year’s Diocesan Convention, I experienced a powerful evocation of the Holy Spirit and felt energized by our church. As my mother mentioned when she reported on convention in church, we filled St. Cyprian’s (New Bern) for a concert by the St. Augustine’s University Choir (an enjoyable and spiritually fulfilling concert in itself); however, the choir was delayed, so we passed the time with an impromptu hymn sing, as two youth delegates alternated on piano, and, proving the Episcopal Church has feet planted in both the past and the future, since we sat in hymnal-less pews, we looked up lyrics to traditional hymns on smart phones. Never one to turn down a chance to sing, I certainly sang out, and so did many others, as we made our voices one through this spontaneous celebration of faith and grace. With the need to look on for lyrics (particularly on later stanzas), the number of voices shifted at times, but it was jointly joyful and calming with each hymn. Our final hymn, sung just as St. Aug’s singers arrived, proved the most powerful in multiple ways. The youth delegates called for us to sing “We Are Christian,” and this proved to be the song with the most voices. From throughout our congregation, all seemed to know this familiar tune, so smart phones didn’t have to be consulted. I first learned this song as a child at Camp McDowell (in Alabama), and, with one exception from several years later (but also several years ago), I have not sung it since. However, as we started singing it, the words comfortably fell into place. That comfort resonated especially as we sang in a blended voice “And we’ll guard each man’s dignity and save each man’s pride.” Given all the Episcopal Church is dealing with today, particularly in terms of our relationship with the rest of the Anglican Communion, this line echoed throughout St. Cyprian’s, as a lyrical reminder of the church’s mission, and, despite this happening “off script,” this moment was a musical introduction to one of Bishop Skirving’s themes for the convention: Unity.

Throughout the meetings, we discussed tapping potential already within the Diocese to unite, align, and grow. As I said when reporting about Convention, there was a tremendous sense of harmony throughout the convention floor, and that had a further uplifting effect. We have as our Bishop a

man who is both graceful and gracious, and his calming and quick-witted style serves both him and the Diocese well. In his first year, he has taken measure of our Diocese and is working to help bring parishes together despite the challenges we at times face in terms of both population and geography. Much of that work will come through work within the Deaneries, and with our “very groovy” rector Jeff now Dean of the Albemarle, it is exciting and refreshing to know that St. Thomas’ will play and take a significant role in these efforts. The church at all levels faces challenges, but, just as Bishop Skirving reminded us as we used the convention theme of “Equipping the Saints” to lead us through our discussions, the leadership is in place to equip and prepare all for the challenges to come, and the potential—in the Diocese and the parish—is there and waiting to be tapped.

In this Lenten season, like the church itself, we once again face many of the same challenges of the (recent) past, and the potential for finding a path around or to overcome those challenges must be tapped. However, just as Bishop Skirving was able to offer a positive and hopeful view of the challenges faced by the church, so, too, may we find the positivity and hope that surrounds us, both as a parish and as individuals. His calm and level approach can help us see ways that we might respond to adversity or confusion, and it certainly offers a way to remember unity as we seek to “save each man’s pride.”

When I was a freshman in college, I heard a singer & storyteller named Paula Larke. Throughout her performance, she sang a mixture of new and traditional songs, primarily in the folk tradition, interspersed with story-telling. At the end of her show, she asked us all to sing along with her on one final number, and she began quietly singing “We are Christian,” building the volume with each verse. Just like the moment in St. Cyprian’s, the song came back to me almost immediately. As Ms. Larke ended the song and her concert, however, she shifted the lyrics to “And they’ll know we are *human* by our love.” As she explained afterwards when a few of us got to talk to her, she did not mean to suggest being human and Christian were synonymous; instead, she felt that what we needed to share throughout humanity was our love, and she said she struggled to understand how one people couldn’t share their love. For her, sharing and showing love was as natural as breathing, and, to her, singing was a bonding experience that helped evoke the power of the spirit. All of us felt her joy at that show and the energy that came from blending our voices into a single reminder of our charge as both Christians and humans. At Convention in New Bern, I felt that same sense of electricity, for, though the song was not planned, it most definitely pulsed throughout the congregation and reminded us of the unity of Christian love. At St. Thomas’, especially, we are bound and driven by our unity of Christian love, and I was certainly very proud to represent our parish at convention; may all continue to know the humans of St. Thomas’ as we reach out throughout our community with our love.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Will Carter
- 6 Amy Brown
- 9 Will Blanchard
- 11 Jim Shotwell
- 12 Bill Burgess
- 18 Mike Steczak
- 21 Robby Outland
- 23 Mark Boyd
- 30 Cecelia Jones
- 31 Becky Johnson

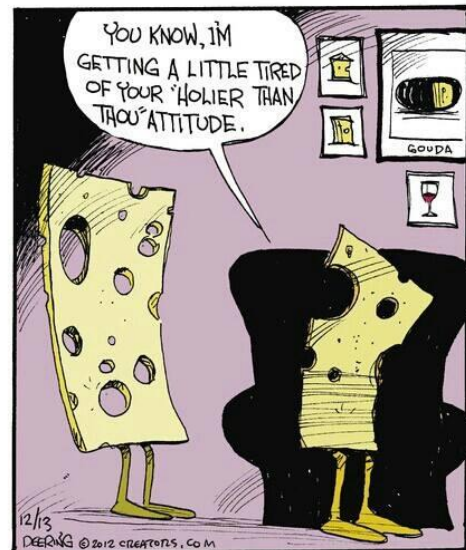


*"O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor; we pray, on your servants, **Will, Amy, Will, Jim, Bill, Mike, Robby, Mark, Cecelia, Becky,** as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."*

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

- 16 John and Sarah Davis
- 31 Kevin and Carolyn Wiggins

*"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 **John and Sarah, Kevin and Carolyn,** 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."*





St. Thomas Episcopal Church – Schedules for March 2016

Acolytes

- 6 Bill Blanchard and Robby Outland
- 13 Hugh Davis and Gretchen Simons
- 20 Daniel McCamish
- 27 Charles Sawyer

Altar Flowers

- 6 Dr. and Mrs. Julian Taylor * *Lent IV*
- 13 Mr. and Mrs. Jamie Johnson * *Lent V*
- 20 Flower Guild * *Palm Sunday*
- 27 Flower Guild * *Easter*

Altar Guild

Sarah Davis, Becky Johnson and Cheryl Steczak

Food Pantry (Note-Wednesdays)

- 2 Dicky Hoggard
- 9 Jim Shotwell
- 16 Peggy Vann
- 23 Bubba Peele
- 30 Patsy Jones

Lay Readers

- 2 6:00 pm Evening Prayer Colin Jones
- 6 10:30 am Morning Worship John Davis
- 9 6:00 pm Evening Prayer John Davis
- 13 8:00 am Morning Prayer OPEN
- 10:30 am Holy Eucharist Jim Shotwell
- 16 6:00 pm Evening Prayer Jim Shotwell
- 20 10:30 am Holy Eucharist Hugh Davis
- 23 6:00 pm Evening Prayer Hugh Davis
- 27 10:30 am **EASTER** Buck Suiter
- 30 6:00 pm **NO EVENING PRAYER**

Colin J

Ushers

Johnny Griffin and Jack Vaughan

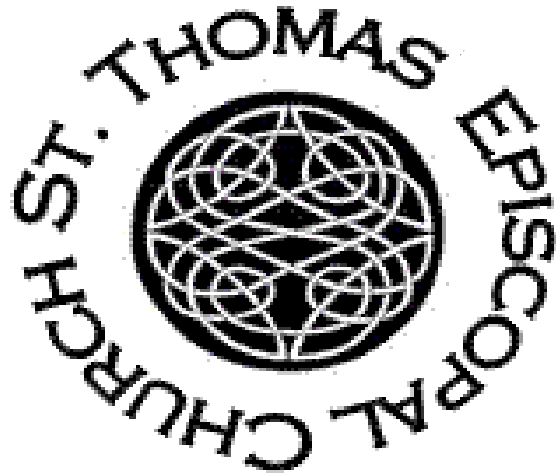
Yard Work

- 6 Bubba Peele and Clyde & Ann Hughes
- 13 Bubba Peele and Clyde & Ann Hughes
- 20 Julian Taylor and Jamie Johnson
- 27 Julian Taylor and Jamie Johnson

March 2016

Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																	
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