
THE EPISTLE OF ST. THOMAS

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church
The Rev. Jeff Douglas

MAY 2015

Diocese of East Carolina
The Rt. Rev. Robert Skirving

It Began with Twelve

Pentecost is the birthday of the Church. A violent rush of wind blew through the disciples as they huddled in fear of what the authorities might do to them after Jesus' execution. This wind, this Spirit, invigorated, enlivened, and empowered them to overcome their fears and preach the Good News publicly with boldness. They told the story of God's mighty act in Jesus in words that could be understood by all the world's people in their own languages.



What could possibly turn a small group of fearful men into bold, courageous apostles making disciples of all nations? It was nothing less than the power of God that overcame their fear. The opposite of faith is never doubt. The opposite of faith is fear!

And we fear so many things in our society today. We fear that people will take our possessions. We fear that foreigners and globalization will take our jobs. We fear that the government will take all our money. We fear that government is depriving us of our privacy and liberty. We fear that terrorists and cancer will take our lives. Our lives are filled with messages that reinforce that fearfulness. Small wonder that fear dominates our lives.

And yet, as disciples of the risen one, we have nothing to fear because Jesus has promised that he is with us always, everyday, every moment of our lives. Through triumph and tragedy, in good times and especially in the bad times, God in Christ is with us. Even as we face our mortality, Jesus has shown us that death is not the end, that there is life beyond the decay of our mortal bodies. As He lives on so do we!

And as we adapt to the changes of life in this world, as painful as that can be, we find comfort in knowing that God is with us and not only with us, but for us. God gave us Jesus as the outward and visible sign of God's compassion, love and power to defeat all the obstacles that we put in our own way to becoming the whole and beautiful creatures we are meant to be.

Throw off the clouds of gloom and darkness. Roll away the rock at the entrance to your tomb and come, live in the light! Come live in the boundless joyous generosity and grace of the God of Love. May your life be a spark to spread that light wherever you go.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Jeff+

VESTRY NOTES by Daniel McCamish, Vestry Clerk

The Vestry and Rector of St. Thomas met on Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in the Parish House. Present were the Rector, Jeff Douglas, and Vestry members, Hugh Davis, Patsy Jones, Fred Liverman, Daniel McCamish, Gretchen Simons, Mike Steczak, and Lindsay Vaughan.

The Rector opened the meeting with a prayer.

Prior Minutes. The minutes of the March Vestry meeting were reviewed and approved with one minor correction.

Treasurer's Report. The treasurer's report for March, 2015, was read and approved. Included in this report is a large disbursement of capital gains from the Braxton Britt estate, due to the liquidation of stocks. It was moved and approved that the Treasurer will be directed to put these funds into an investment account; and that the Braxton Britt Committee (consisting of Ernie Carter, Gretchen Simons, Bubba Peele, and Johnny Griffin) will convene and discuss the future use of these funds.

Service. The Soup Kitchen will be held on Thursday, April 23rd and 30th.

St. Thomas will participate in *Stop Hunger Now!* with 1st Presbyterian and Ahoskie United Methodist Church on Saturday, April 25th. Cost will be \$1,000 per church. Ten thousand meals will be packed and stored for distribution in an emergency.

The Medical Mission trip to the Dominican Republic has been tentatively scheduled for August 28th – September 4th. However, the possibility of putting it off until next year was also discussed.

Worship. A joint Rogation Celebration service with St. Thomas, Windsor at Grace in Lewiston Woodville has been scheduled for May 17th at 11:15 a.m.

It was suggested that the musician should be commended for the times he plays the organ during services. Many parishioners enjoy the organ and would like to hear it every week.

Education. New teachers are needed as Gretchen Simons and Beth Douglas retire from teaching Children's Sunday School. This task could be shared by a group of people, who can also help design a curriculum for the small children who will be attending.

There will be two confirmations on May 24th (Pentecost) for Robby and Mary Outland, at St. Paul's in Edenton. The Rector is also working with Jackson and Christiana to get them confirmed sometime later this year or next.

Pastoral Care. The Rector has been visiting with several parishioners who are dealing with major health issues.

Jr. Warden's Report. It was moved and approved that we hire a contractor to remove shrubs and do other work on the landscaping in the Bazemore lot. This will take 2 people three days and cost \$670. Included in this motion was the hiring of another contractor to repair a storm drain at a cost of \$100 plus materials. If these contractors work out, we will consider hiring them to do more work.

The Junior Warden will look into options for replacing the water heater. Summer would be a good time to do this. Replacing the unit will save on electricity and potentially expensive service calls.

The office hallway in the Parish House needs to be painted. This hasn't been done in 20 years.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 19, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in the Parish House.

NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Harvest for Hospitality

Dear Father Jeff:

We are grateful for your generous donation to the Harvest for Hospitality Campaign benefiting the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry from the congregation.

You may not be aware of some of the important programs the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry offers to over 3,500 farmworkers each growing season in Johnston, Harnett, and Sampson Counties in eastern North Carolina. EFwM provides clothing and toiletry kit items to farmworkers; pesticide education and training as well as outreach visitation to the farmworker camps. When we include the families of farmworkers; we reach an additional 10,000 people.

In 2014, over 7,000 individuals utilized the monthly food bank and 2,000 people sought immigration assistance services. The Episcopal Farmworker Ministry is the only entity in the area to serve farmworkers. The ministry additionally provides programming to assist with English as a Second Language classes, income tax preparation, transportation and translation services as well as a thriving sacramental ministry.

The generous donation of \$671.25 to the Harvest for Hospitality campaign will ensure the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry will be sustained for decades to continue the important work of welcoming the stranger at our door. Again, thanks to you and the parishioners of St. Thomas, Ahoskie.

Best Regards,
Patti Trainor

NEPAL AID

Dear Parishioners:

I appreciate all the concerns aired by the congregation about my friends in Nepal. The recent 7.9 earthquake destroyed over 70% of the villages between Kathmandu and Pokhara. If you would like to help with some of the needs at the Kids Learning Centre in the Lalitpur District of Kathmandu, please consider a special contribution to St. Thomas' in their honor. These donations will go to help the school and hostel repair some of the damages caused by the quake and, if enough is given, the rest will go to the students' families that are suffering the most.

Also, please continue to keep them in your prayers! School starts back on May 8th. Thanks for your prayers and support! Jonathan

CPC Sunday is May 3rd

Sunday, May 3rd has been declared Church Periodical Sunday. This is a great opportunity to support the worthy enterprise of spreading the printed word throughout our country and the world. The sole purpose of CPC is to supply free Bibles, prayer books, literature and periodicals to deserving recipients throughout the Anglican Communion.

Thank you in advance for your support of this worthwhile ministry.

CPC envelopes will be in the May 4th bulletin for you to put your offering in or I will happily collect your contribution before or after May 4th.

God Bless,
Claudia Griffin

Rogation Service: Sunday, May 17th

A joint Rogation Celebration service with St. Thomas, Windsor at Grace in Lewiston Woodville has been scheduled for May 17th at 11:15 a.m. A covered dish luncheon will follow the service.

O God, who spoke the word and the earth brought forth plants of every kind yielding seed and living creatures of every kind: [We ask you to] Bless these pastures and meadows, and all growing grass and green fields; may they remain healthy and unspoiled to the benefit and service of both man and beast. [We ask you also to] Bless these fields and all the crops that grow in our countryside; may the soil be wholesome and the crops sound; may the weather be favorable and the workers in good heart. O gracious God, multiply the seed of the sower, the bread of those who eat, and the fruits of righteousness in all your people; in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

VBS Announcement



The Cooperative Vacation Bible School will be held from Sunday Aug. 9th – Thursday August 13th from 6 – 8PM at the Ahooskie United Methodist Church. Volunteers are needed to help with all aspects of making this VBS a continuing success. Please consider helping as part of your ministry at St. Thomas.

FLOWER SCHEDULE

May 24, May 31, and June 7 are open dates - if anyone is interested in taking those Sundays, whether just for this year or on a permanent basis, please call Martie at 287-5282. Thank you for your support!

MAY BIRTHDAYS

3 Buddy Jones
6 Cheryl Steczak
7 Jackson Vaughan
9 Tom Newbern
11 Gates Vaughan
13 Betty Suiter
15 Mary Outland
21 Nancy Cowan
22 Briley Rascoe
22 Laura Brown
31 Jenny Jenkins



*“O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor; we pray, on your servants, **Buddy, Cheryl, Jackson, Tom, Gates, Betty, Mary, Nancy, Briley, Laura, and Jenny**, 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.”*

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

25 Jim and Glenna Sullins



*“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 **Jim and Glenna**, 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.”*

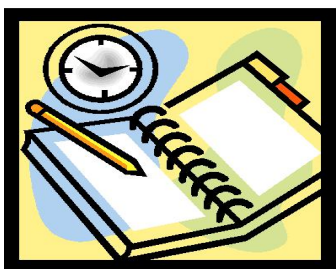
Soup Kitchen Dates for May

Thursday, May 21st at 5:00 pm

Thursday, May 28th at 5:00 pm

Thank you for your support.





St. Thomas Episcopal Church – Schedules for May 2015

Acolytes

3 Hugh Davis and Gretchen Simons
10 Daniel McCamish
17 Charles Sawyer
24 Jerrie Taylor and Mary Outland
31 Bill Blanchard and Robby Outland

Altar Flowers

3 Hugh Davis
10 Martie Tayloe
17 Mr. and Mrs. Mike Steczak
24 **OPEN DATE**
31 **OPEN DATE**

Altar Guild

Mary C. Pierce and Becky Hoggard

Food Pantry (Note-Wednesdays)

6 Dicky Hoggard
13 Jim Shotwell
20 Peggy Vann
27 Bubba Peele

Lay Readers

3 10:30 am Holy Eucharist- Martie Tayloe
6 6:00 pm Evening Prayer- Claudia Griffin
10 8:00 am Morning Prayer- **OPEN**
10:30 am Holy Eucharist- Colin Jones
13 6:00 pm Evening Prayer- Colin Jones
17 10:30 am Holy Eucharist- John Davis
20 6:00 pm Evening Prayer- John Davis
24 10:30 am Holy Eucharist- Jim Shotwell
27 **Evening Prayer stops for the summer**
31 10:30 am Holy Eucharist- Hugh Davis

Ushers

Jim Shotwell and Buddy Jones

Yard Work

3 Colin Jones and David and Julie Shields
10 Colin Jones and David and Julie Shields
17 Dicky Hoggard and Johnny Griffin
24 Dicky Hoggard and Johnny Griffin
31 Jim Shotwell and Fred Liverman



**Robby and Mary Outland will be confirmed
as adult members of
Christ's one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church
by The Rt. Rev. Robert Skirving, Bishop of East Carolina
on Pentecost Sunday, May 24th at 4PM
at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Edenton, NC.
Your prayers and presence are welcomed.**

Robby and Mary have completed the catechumenal process led by Gretchen Simons and Beth Douglas, readying them for confirmation. Congratulations to them for their desire and commitment to take the next step in their faith journey. We look forward to their continued ministry in our church, our community and in our world. Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Project Lazarus has risen in our community!

Project Lazarus, a program to help communities deal with the increasing problem of opioid addiction in our community. As opioids, (Percocet, oxycodone, hydrocodone, etc.) have becoming more routinely prescribed for pain in our society; addiction rates have begun to soar. This has led to an extensive black market in the selling of these drugs and their illegal use and even given rise to increased heroin addiction as access to these medications is withdrawn. Project Lazarus has come to engage all facets of our community in raising awareness of this problem, providing for ways to safely dispose of these drugs when no longer needed and advocate for solutions for helping prevent and treat addiction. I am a member of the Project Lazarus team in our community. If you would like more information about this program, please talk to me. - Jeff

The Small Church Leadership Conference 2015

It Began With Twelve was the theme of the conference at Trinity Center from Apr 19th – 21st. Small churches were invited to send representatives to share and learn about the many varied ways small churches live and do ministry in eastern North Carolina. Forty-five people came from around our diocese to participate.

The Rev. Jay Sidebotham presented stories and ideas of what makes and keeps small churches vital places of mission and ministry. Our new bishop, Rob Skirving also began a conversation around what kind of structures: partnerships, clusters, etc. might look in our diocese to ensure that priestly presence continues in the context of rising costs and rural isolation in our diocese.

Workshops were presented on website availability through the diocesan office and the use of Facebook and other social media to communicate and promote the Gospel and parish. A workshop on Christian education was also presented.

What I found most intriguing was listening to the many creative ways in which small churches are doing ministry and witnessing in their communities. Preliminary readings of the evaluations showed that the people who attended also thought the conference was not only worthwhile but worth developing further. So look for another opportunity next year. The dates will be announced soon.
Jeff+

May 2015

Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																					
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Apr 2015</p> <table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Jun 2015</p> <table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td></tr> <tr><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> </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			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					1	2
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Easter 7 Rogation Sunday Joint Services at Grace Episcopal Church at 11:15 am Robby's and Mary's confirmation at St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 4 pm.	BS @ 7:00 pm Dame Julian Prayer & Study Group @ 5:00 pm	Vestry Meeting @ 7:00 pm	EP @ 6:00 pm	AA @ 8:00 pm Nancy Cowan Soup Kitchen @ 5:00 pm	Briley Rascoe Laura Brown																																																																																						
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