



Saint Thomas Episcopal Church

To worship, to nurture, to serve, together in Christ.

Address

98 Sky Manor Road
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Pittstown, NJ 08867-0348
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Rector

The Rev. Canon Carol Horton
rector@stthomasepc.org
(908) 735-9559

Parish Administrative

Assistant

Mary Jo Kurtiak

Mon & Weds : 10:00am - 2:00pm
Thursday: 10:00am - 1:00pm
secretary@stthomasepc.org
908-996-4091

Service Schedule

8:00am Eucharist
10:00am Eucharist with music
9:45am Childcare and Church School

Office Hours

Please call the office to arrange for a home visit or to make an appointment.

Newsletter

Trinity Mikuta
908-442-3208
trinitymikuta@gmail.com

From the Rector...

Now the Green blade riseth from the buried grain,
wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green”
JMC Crum, #204, Hymnal 1982

How can we explain the Resurrection of Christ? Buried grain coming forth as green plant is one way. I have heard of resurrection being explained as something like a caterpillar in a cocoon, emerging after a time as a glorious butterfly. You may have heard others. All explanations have their merits, and all have their limitations.

What was dead and buried for three days emerged from the grave fully alive, and gloriously changed. This Jesus who was crucified and who died and was buried, is no longer dead, but alive. The people closest to Jesus had seen Lazarus risen from the dead — but this was different — this was more. They would only come to understand how different and how much more in the days and weeks to come — and I would suggest that we are still coming to terms with the Resurrection in our own time and in our own lives.

As I look at the photos from the inside of Notre Dame Cathedral, many of the results of the devastating fire are obvious in the gaping hole in the roof, the charred beams, and signs of smoke and water damage throughout the nave and choir. Immediately following the fire, money began to pour in from around the world for the rebuilding of the Cathedral. In tandem, in our own country, new awareness was made of the plight of the three predominately black churches in the south that had recently been burned down by arsonists in hate crimes. As a result, Gofundme sites have been set up to help rebuild those churches too, and well over a million dollars has been raised for that rebuilding. At the center of all these buildings is the cross of the Risen Christ, offering redemption and renewal for those seeking God. Resurrection, Renaissance, Renewal — all signs of God’s love at work in our world.

How can we explain the Resurrection? Perhaps we can't, at least not fully or adequately. But the final verse of the hymn cited above offers us a way to at least recognize and use what we might have trouble explaining:

“When our hearts are weary, grieving or in pain,
Thy touch can call us back to life again,
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.”

It is, as ever, the Love that makes all the difference. Love is come again...

Peace and blessing,

Carol+



Treasurer

Nicola Wallis

(609) - 851 - 0870

Vestry Members

Kathleen Cichonski

(908) - 399 - 5188

Gene Budsock

(908) - 612 - 4105

Daniela Johnson

(908) - 528 - 0745

Kevin Kapples

(908) - 328 - 5683

Bruce Kemmerer

(973) - 224 - 4268

Adam Rinehart

(832) - 330 - 6808

Greg Shutske

(908) - 797 - 5591

Lori Wolfe

(732) - 710 - 2053

From the Vestry...

We were fortunate enough to have come to St. Thomas, the little church practically around the corner from our house about 30 years ago — and we're still here! As so many of us like to say, this is our “Spiritual Home”. Similar to our residential homes, in that we come here for comfort, in familiarity, for encouragement, and a source of renewed strength. Nowhere else can I be certain to encounter a group of individuals, without exception, so sincere, so giving, and so kind.

We are unique in our historical building and beautiful rural setting that seem to be a pre-existing gift. The rest of what is worthwhile, is not done easily. I'm guessing that, because so much goes on “behind the scenes”, we may not even be aware of how much work is done by all, that we have to be appreciative of. Of course, St. Thomas continues to be here because of, and great thanks to, many people who have done, and continue to do so very much, in many various ways for our Church.

If you look at the photos in the hallway, of the congregation from years long ago, and if you block out the very funny-looking clothing, the faces look as though they could be any one of us, now. As they did their part, for the past 300 years or so, to make it possible for us to worship here now, it is our responsibility to continue to pave the way for the future.

We come here for worship, to give thanks, and for fellowship. We realize our part in the larger Episcopal church by doing all we can to give support in ways such as our local outreach projects, Fair Share, and the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund. Our growth may not occur in even increments. We didn't always have a Parish Hall, and like the people in the archival photos, we won't know what growth there is yet to come. We need to do whatever we can to bring St Thomas into the future, as the ancestors of this Parish have done. There is so very much that we are all privileged with, maybe we can think of our stewardship as giving back, in Thanksgiving for all the many Blessings that we have.

— Kathleen Cichonski



Church News

St Thomas Prayer List

Please help us keep our prayer list up to date. Please contact MaryJo in the parish office to have someone included on the prayer list. Please also contact her when it is no longer necessary for that person to be included on that list.

Mary Jo's email: secretary@stthomasepc.org

Weekly Email Blast

"Good News From St Thomas" goes out weekly from the church office, usually on Thursday afternoons, as a way to keep you updated on news and events important to St Thomas Church. Please email information by Thursday morning to MaryJo at secretary@stthomasepc.org for inclusion in that week's eblast.

Condolences

To the Searles/Valeiko family on the death of Warren F. Searles, father of Warren, and grandfather of Jake and Patrick Searles and

To the Mikuta family on the death of Larry's brother, Daniel.

May they rest in peace and rise in Christ's glory

Late May and June in a Nutshell

On the Sixth Sunday of Easter, May 26 this year, we celebrate **Rogation Sunday**, the Church's own Earth Day. Long before April 22 was designated as "Earth Day", the Church marked the four days before the Feast of the Ascension as "Rogation Days", a time to give thanks for the earth and its bounty, and to pray for those who till the land, care for the earth, and thus help to sustain life on this planet. The word *rogation* comes from the Latin verb *rogare*, which means "to ask", which reflects the beseeching of God for a good growing season and harvest, and for protection for the fields and crops from calamities, plagues and natural disasters.

Forty days after the Resurrection, this year on May 30, we mark **Ascension Day**, the day of Jesus' last earthly appearance before ascending to the Father. The liturgical color is still the white of Eastertide.

Fifty days following the Resurrection, June 9 this year, we celebrate **Pentecost**, when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples like tongues of fire, and they began their public ministry to all people. This is often called the Birthday of the Church. The liturgical color for the day is **red**, for the Holy Spirit. It is one of the days set aside by the Church as particularly appropriate for baptisms, or for the renewal of baptismal vows.

The Sunday after Pentecost is **Trinity Sunday**, when we celebrate the non-scriptural but deeply theological concept and mystery of The Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Three in One and One in Three.

Church News

Saint Thomas Women's Retreat

Community of St. John Baptist, Mendham, NJ

June 29, 2019

It may be only an hour away from St Thomas, but it will feel like a world away as we spend a day in fellowship and spiritual reflection. Many women find it challenging to devote the loving, nurturing and compassionate qualities we give to others upon ourselves. Taking time for a retreat shows we recognize the importance of self-care, growth and sisterhood in our lives.

Please join with the women of St Thomas on June 29 for a day to remember. In addition to spiritual contemplation and discovery, we will have time for exploring the beautiful ground, walking the labyrinth, and perhaps doing some writing or artistic expression. The cost of the day is \$35 (non-refundable), and includes use of the beautiful retreat house and lunch. Please contact me if you are interested in attending so you can register and make your payment. There is a limit of 15 people.

Elisabeth Chiminec (erchim@aol.com)

Help Wanted

Time to get out those thinking caps...how can you help out?

- Supper Club Coordinator
- Womens Group Coordinator
- Vestry member (2 vacancies still need to be filled)
 - Finance Committee
 - Altar guild
 - Eucharistic minister
- Vacation Bible School Leader(s)

And, of course, we always need people to sign up for coffee hour, flowers and ushering! Oh, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that there's the choir as well.

Talk to any vestry member if you have questions. But please consider how you can share your time and talent. We sure can use you!

Chili Fact

The first recorded batch of chili con carne in America was in 1731 by a group of women who emigrated from the Spanish Canary Islands which was noted as "spicy Spanish stew".

It was popularized in the mid-1800s during the Gold Rush. In the 1880s a market in San Antonio started setting up chili stands from which chili, or bowls o' red, were sold by women who were called Chili Queens. A bowl would cost 10 cents which included bread and a glass of water.

It gained notoriety around the nation when it was featured at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. By the Great Depression there was hardly a town that didn't have a chili joint which meant the difference between starvation and staying alive because chili was cheap and crackers were free. Chili joints were often just shacks around which patrons would stand eating bowls of chili.



Church School & Youth Group News

Gnome in Your Home

Thank you to our hosts — Roger Prince and Diane Gunson as well as David White, Antonia Mattei and Ana White! We had a wonderful group driven around by Tom Wolfe. Our gnomes, Wiggle Pickle and Scotchwizzle, were delivered to each of our hosts' homes. We look forward to having this event again next year! The traveling gnomes are always ready for a meal.



Fifth Sunday

Sunday, March 31st was our Fifth Sunday Service. Our thanks go to Julia Rinehart for reading, Amelia Wolfe for acolyting, and Wesley Wolfe for ushering. You all did a wonderful job!



April Meeting

Our Youth Group meeting for April will be on Sunday, April 28th at 7pm. We are having food competitions, but not cooking competition. There will be blind taste tests and smell tests. There will be a pasta relay and a measure up competition. Ending with a recipe scramble!

Hope we will see all the youth there! Please RSVP to wagners88@comcast.net

Confirmation News

A diocesan wide confirmation service will be at the Cathedral in Trenton on Saturday, May 11th at 10am. Confirmands and sponsors need to be there by 9:15am. This group is collecting for the Open Cupboard food pantry. The list of needs and donation box are in the church hall.

June Service Sunday

The church school and youth group will be using their last class time on Sunday, June 2nd for Service Sunday. They will be making snuffle mats with the help of Daniela Johnson. If you have any old t-shirts (jersey material not undershirts) or leftover fleece, please bring them into church and put them in the nursery area. We can use these to create our snuffle mats and donate them to our area animal shelters. What is a snuffle mat you ask? The snuffle mat is a homemade toy that provides the dog with an opportunity to sniff and search for hidden treats. The snuffle mat consists of fleece/jersey strips tied on to a rubber mat with holes in it. The loose ends of the fabric are on top and provide the hiding spots for the treats. Dogs should always be supervised when using the snuffle mat.

From Roger Prince...

Simon of Cyrene, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus

The Easter story has three characters who are sometimes neglected in our rush to move from the Heartbreak of the Crucifixion to the Glory of the Resurrection; Simon of Cyrene, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

All three Synoptic Gospels tell us that **Simon of Cyrene** was dragooned into carrying the cross to Golgotha after the flogging at Pilate's command left Jesus too weak to carry it himself. Beyond that, we learn little about him except that he had two sons, Alexander and Rufus, whom tradition believes eventually became missionaries. Cyrene, now known as Shahat, lies in a lush valley in the Jebel Akhdar uplands of Libya on the Mediterranean coast. This is more than 1000 miles from Jerusalem, reminding us that people travelled widely even before modern transportation.

Joseph of Arimathea is named in all four Gospels as the man who arranged for the burial of Jesus. While not one of The Twelve, he was a wealthy and respected member of the Jewish Council, and also a follower of Jesus. Joseph purchased the linen shroud that would be found empty on Easter morning, and offered the use of a newly hewn tomb that he was presumably saving for family use. No one seems sure where Arimathea was, but many stories grew up around this man, including one celebrated in the hymn sung at Rugby matches around the world: *And did those feet in ancient time?*, a poem by William Blake (1757-1827) sung to the tune *Jerusalem* by C.H.H. Parry (1848-1918) which is used for Hymn 597 in our hymnal. The story is that Jesus travelled to England with Joseph, who was a tin merchant, in the years before Jesus began his ministry. After Jesus' death and resurrection, an additional legend has Joseph returning to England with the Holy Grail, this time to Glastonbury in Somerset, and when he laid his staff on the ground it miraculously took root. Known as the Glastonbury Thorn, a species of Hawthorn (*Crataegus*), the plant thrives in the area, and (almost miraculously) flowers for Christmas — a flowering branch is sent to the monarch every year as a Christmas gift from the town. For many years an Abbey was on the site with what was believed to be the original tree, but the Abbey was closed under Henry VIII (reigned 1509-1528), and the tree cut down by Cromwellian troops during the English Civil War (1642-1651). Cuttings from other survivors maintain the lineage.

Nicodemus is only mentioned in the Gospel of John, but John gives us three stories about him. The first identifies him as a Pharisee visiting Jesus at night to discuss Jesus' teachings (John 3), and it is this meeting that gave rise to the famous John 3:16 —

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

The second has him rebuking the Sanhedrin that they must formally hear Jesus before condemning him (John 7), and the last (John 19) has him bringing about a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes' for the embalming of the body in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb.

These three characters have intrigued fellow Christians for two thousand years we might ponder them too...

Thanks be to God

Roger Prince

Schedules for May

	Eucharistic Minister	Acolyte(s)	Readers	Counters	Altar Guild
May 5th	Nicky Wallis	Brooke Testa	Doug Logg	Kim Testa _____	Linda Grieme Pat Neil
May 12th	Jan Davis	Amelia Wolfe	Roger Prince	_____	Maria Markovich
May 19th		Garrett DiRienz	Diane Kemmerer	Amanda DiRienz Kevin Kapples	Heidi Budsock Denise Buczek
May 26th	Lynn Logg			_____	Kathleen Cichonski Joyce Pradgat

Calendar May 2019

- 1 St Philip and St James, Apostles
Choir Rehearsal 7:15
- 5 The Third Sunday of Easter
Adult Forum at 11:15 am
- 8 Dame Julian of Norwich
Choir Rehearsal — 7:15
- 11 Diocesan Wide Confirmation service — 10:00AM
at Trinity Cathedral, 801 State Street, Trenton New Jersey
- 12 The Fourth Sunday of Easter
Mothers Day
- 15 Choir Rehearsal — 7:15pm
- 16 Vestry Meeting — 7:00 pm
- 19 The Fifth Sunday of Easter
- 21 The First Book of Common Prayer (1549)
- 22 Choir Rehearsal — 7:15
- 25 The Venerable Bede
- 26 The Sixth Sunday of Easter — Rogation Sunday
- 27 Memorial Day — Office closed
Rogation Day
- 28 Rogation Day
- 29 Rogation Day
Choir Rehearsal — 7:15pm
- 30 Ascension Day
Watchung Convocation spring meeting — 7:00pm
St Mark's, Plainfield
- 31 The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

THANK YOU

To St Thomas altar guild members for polishing, cleaning, washing and ironing to make our worship functional and beautiful, and to Gene and Gene Budsock for coordinating the stripping of the altar on Maundy Thursday;
 To Diane and Bruce Kemmerer for coordinating the palms for Palm Sunday and the flowers for Easter;
 To all who donated or loaned plants for the garden at the Altar of Repose for the Maundy Thursday Vigil and for the decorating of the church at Easter;
 To all who took part in the reading of the Passion on Palm Sunday and Good Friday;
 To Richard McIntyre and St Thomas Choir for wonderful music every Sunday, and especially during Holy Week;
 To Donna Kapples for scheduling our acolytes, and to all our acolytes (and their families) for their service at the altar each week;
 To St Thomas Youth Group for another fulfilled Easter Egg Hunt;
 To our coffeeshow hosts, and to all who provide food so regularly and so well, and specially on Palm Sunday and Easter Day;
 To all St Thomas readers and eucharistic ministers for all they do;
 To those who clean the church each week and tend to the gardens and grounds each season; Â
 To Trinity Mikuta and all who contribute to the Newsletter each month;
 To Daniela Johnson and Kevin Kapples, wardens of the Vestry, and to Greg Shutske, Clerk of the vestry; and
 To all who quietly do so much at St Thomas Church every week.

Birthday's & Anniversary's

2	Michelle Wagner	18	John Spies	12	Mark & Amanda DiRienz
	Sarah Rinehart		Jennifer Fischer	16	Kevin & Gail Kenny
	Madalyn Blomkvist	19	Brooke Testa	21	Wayne & Diane Salley
5	Lauren Niebuhr	21	Amelia Wolfe	25	Donald & Kelly Jordan
6	Gail Kinsey	22	Robert Spies		
	Kurt Fischer	24	Arthur Petroff		
7	Cheryl Ann Spies	28	William Petty		
	Clara Fischer	29	Jesse Wolfson		
9	Amanda DiRienz		Erin Salley		
10	Heidi Budsock	30	Catherine Eubank		
	Paige Dillard				
13	Mathew Salley				
14	Megan Ader				
	Kathleen Rule				
15	Jake Niebuhr				
	Kelly Abrunzo				



If you would like to be removed from the mailing list, please contact the Church Office:
by phone 908-996-4091 or by Email to secretary@sthomasepc.org

CHANGE ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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