

# THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS

PHILADELPHIA, PA

## A MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR

The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw

### THE STATE OF THE PARISH

#### **“The AECST Express Legacy Continues” (1792 – 2018)**

Following a full year of celebrations and programs during our previous year’s 225 Anniversary observance, 2018 was not a year of void of vibrancy and activities. After a year of celebrating 225 years of Legacy, Faith, and Hope, we continued to be a community of deep faith, steeped in Scripture, Tradition, Reason, Worship and Prayer.

The year had many highlights including, but not limited to these:

- + Kicked off the new year with the welcoming of many new members who joined our parish family during the preceding year.
- + Celebrated the lives and ministries of both the Rev. Martin L. King, Jr and the Rev. Absalom Jones.
- + Welcomed the new Missioner for Black Ministries of the Episcopal Church, the Rev. Ronald Byrd
- + Focused on a Lenten theme: The Jesus Movement each Wednesday during Lent.
- + Celebrated Women’s Day with Bishop Vashti McKenzie as the Guest Preacher.
- + Celebrated Men’s Day with Senator Vincent Hughes as the Guest Speaker.
- + Celebrated another very successful Caribbean Festival.
- + Joined in worship by Mayor Jim Kenney in the celebration of the life of Octavius V. Catto.
- + Continued our support and commitment to our outreach ministry of Chosen 300.

In addition to amazing ministry and service, we also accomplished several property and maintenance initiatives and goals.

- Numerous minor repairs around the edifice
- Restoration of large stained-glass window over the high altar, which now depicts characters of color.

- Installed the new brick memorial side walk, the Legacy Path.
- Purchased the new state of the art piano.

We give thanks to everyone, including our amazing Vestry and supportive staff and volunteers for their unyielding commitment and dedication. These individuals help to keep the AECST Express train on track and journeying from one destination to the next.

We also remember and mourn the lives of our faithful parishioners and loved ones who entered the joy of the heavenly Jerusalem during 2018. May their souls rest in peace and rise in glory.

In conclusion, 2018 was indeed another epic and amazing year for our parish. We shall continue to focus on expanding our Mission, Christian Formation, Evangelism, Outreach, Youth Development, Stewardship, and Worship Life.

I thank you for the grateful and joyous opportunity to serve as your shepherd / pastor / rector. Please remember me in your prayers as I shall always remember each of you in mine.

Let us continue to Trust in the Lord with all our hearts and lean not to our own understanding. In all our ways, let us acknowledge Him, and he will direct our paths.