



African Episcopal Church of Saint Thomas’ Ministries/Guilds/Organizations

“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you” – Philippians 4:19

Members of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas support our parish commitment to an open Christ centered community in which the Gospel is taught, lived, and spread. This support is illustrated regularly through the active participation of members in a broad scope of guilds, organizations and programs.

The guilds and organizations of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas are diverse in scope offering service, spiritual enhancement as well as fundraising and fun raising activities. They provide an opportunity to use ones talents and spiritual gifts, for Christian fellowship and for engendering a true sense of church family.

Throughout the year special events such as musical concerts, trips, seminars and exhibits are planned. Chat and Chews are hosted on Sundays following the worship service, by guilds, organizations and those parishioners wanting to memorialize or honor their loved ones.

Acolytes
Altar Guild
Angels in Motion
Bible Study
Caribbean Committee
Catto Ministry
Chosen 300
Church School
The Order of the Daughters
of the King
Ed Muse Memorial
Photography Ministry
F.E.N.C.E
Gardeners
Girls Friendly Society
Guild of the Christ Child
Greeters Ministry
(The Monarchs)
Health Ministry
Historic Scout Troop #133
Historical Society
Jessee F. Anderson
Scholarship Fund
Knitting Club
Lectors and Intercessors

Live Stream
Men's Ministry and
Fellowship
Music Committee
Music Ministry
Pentecost Committee
Prayer Warriors
Property Committee
Reach Out and Touch
Retired Peoples
Ministry
Shepherds Ministry
Sisterhood Ministry
Stewardship Committee
Tree of Lift Ministry
Transportation Ministry
Videography Committee
William J. Burke, Sr.
Memorial Ushers
Women's Ministry
Youth and Young Adult

For further information about these guilds and organizations,
please visit our website www.aecst.org

Acolytes

Purpose

The purpose is to serve at Christ's altar and to assist the priest in all forms of worship.

The Acolyte Guild trains, inspires, and encourages children, young men and women to be faithful and dedicated Christians through service and fellowship. The overall thrust of this program is to assist the priest in serving the congregation during worship.

The Acolytes report directly to the rector.

Who may join? Any individual, male or female, youth or adult.

Altar Guild

“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you”
– *Philippians 4:19*

Purpose:

The *Altar Guild* maintains and prepares the church for the celebration of the Holy Sacraments, creating an environment for the spiritual development of the congregation.

The offering of the Holy Sacraments in worship is done in dramatic fashion. The success of any drama requires the presentation, care and maintenance of sets (altar hangings, vessels) and costumes (vestments). In the church this is performed by a special group of women and men known as the Altar Guild.

Who may join? Any male or female who enjoys using a little spiritual elbow grease.

Angels in Motion

“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you” – Philippians 4:19

A Church Dance Ministry for Youth and Adults

Purpose:

Using the gift of dance to enhance our worship.

Who may join? All youth and adults, male or female interested in furthering their experience in the art of dance within worship.

Bible Study

Adult Bible Study With Father Jay

Tuesdays via Zoom - 7:00 PM. Please email him at associatepriest@aecst.org so he can send you the zoom link.

Young Adult Bible Study with Father Daren

Wednesdays 6:00 PM in the Absalom Jones House. Please email him at associaterector@aecst.org.

Caribbean Committee

Celebrating the richness and gifts of our many parishioners with Caribbean roots. Annual Caribbean Sunday is celebrated each year.

OCTAVIUS V. CATTO (Voter Education Ministry)



MISSION STATEMENT

The Octavius V. Catto Voter Education Ministry of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas is a non-partisan ministry that honors the legacy of our church member, Octavius Valentine Catto, who was a voter rights, civil rights and social justice activist. Our faith calls us to seek equity and justice for all. Through this ministry we will educate, engage and motivate our community to act through civic engagement to become full participants in our democratic process.

Chosen 300 Ministries

Uniting The Body Of Christ To Reach The World!

Mission

To bring people of different membership groups together; helping them to realize that despite our differences in our race, ethnic group, denomination, social class, economic classes, or the diverse ways we practice our faith; we can unify ourselves for the common good.

Purpose

The purpose of this ministry is to distribute meals and services to the homeless.

The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas Meets Chosen 300

Tim Barksdale asked God what was next after completing his term as President of AECST Men's Ministry & Fellowship. The answer came when Fr. Bonney invited the Rev. Brian Jenkins to speak to St. Thomas about his calling. Tim was so energized by that presentation of June 2008, that he immediately contacted Rev. Jenkins about leading the church on the mission of feeding the homeless. After getting Fr. Shaw's blessing, Tim signed up over 120 volunteers from the congregation and raised the money to make this AECST/Chosen 300 alliance an official St. Thomas outreach ministry. Today with the help of many devoted St. Thomas volunteers, hundreds are fed and ministered to every month. The group continues to thrive from the support provided by the church guilds, music ministries and dedicated St. Thomas donors.

Church School

“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you” – Philippians 4:19

We joyfully welcome and encourage the youth of our families, friends and guests to join the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas' Church School on our spiritual journey. This journey takes us through the Bible where we learn to apply the good news of Jesus Christ to the events of our daily lives, we learn about faith, and about building a lifetime relationship with God and family.

Our focus is on prayer, fellowship and worship. The lessons are taught through our age level Bibles, songs, and games. Our lessons are tailored to follow the Episcopal lectionary, the same lessons that are being read during the service, providing an excellent opportunity for parent-child interaction at home.

We recognize every child as a vital link to the growth of the AECST family. We strive to give our children the tools needed to help them with their Christian walk in life, assuring them of God's love, mercy and grace.

We meet every Sunday morning (except the fourth Sundays) starting at 9:45 AM. We offer healthy snacks and strongly encourage our parent's involvement. A variety of teaching methods are used: storytelling, question and answer, drawing, painting, posters, crafts, Bible study handouts, spoken and written prayers, poems, stories and parables, singing, skits, puppets, role play, Bible quizzes and games.

We encourage the children to form friendships with one another, strengthening our church family, giving them a sense of belonging to a community that encourages them to return to church regularly continuing their walk of faith.

The Order of the Daughters of the King (DOK)

*“With heart, mind and spirit uphold and bear the cross.”
FHS-For His Sake*



The **Order of the Daughters of the King** is an international religious order for women. Its mission is the extension of Christ’s kingdom through prayer, service, and evangelism. The Order was founded in 1885 by Margaret J. Franklin at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in New York City. Currently, women who are communicants of the Episcopal Church and certain other denominations are eligible for membership.

The St. Thomas Chapter of the Order came into being in the Spring of 1948. In keeping with their vows, members undertake the Rule of Life, incorporating the Rule of Prayer and the Rule of Service. Through daily prayer, each Daughter devotes herself to deepening her relationship with our Heavenly Father. Through her Rule of Service, each Daughter promises to take part regularly in the worship, study and work of the church; undertake a personal program of evangelism to bring others to Christ; give aid to the Priest-in-charge for the up-building of the parish; and minister to God’s people wherever she is.

Daughters at St. Thomas support the work of the church through two annual events, the distribution of food baskets to needy families at Thanksgiving and the Maundy Thursday-Good Friday Prayer Vigil in the Sanctuary. All women of the church are eligible to join the Order. However, a prerequisite for those who seek admission is completion of an eight-week course of study and discernment.

In September of 2020, the St. Thomas Chapter formed the Anti-Racism Initiative Committee (ARIC) to actively pursue the goal of promoting racial justice, reconciliation, and healing, consistent with our Baptismal Covenant and the Motto of our Order. Among other things, the group has created some supporting documents, including a [Prayer for Racial Equity and Healing](#), a [Glossary of Anti-Racist/Bias Terms](#), and a list of [Suggested Resources that Support Anti-Racism Efforts](#).

Meetings of the Order are currently held on the 4th Saturday of the month from September through June.

Who may join?

Any woman who is interested in pledging herself to a life-long program of prayer, service, and evangelism. For more information email: dok@aecst.org

Ed Muse Memorial Photography Ministry

Our purpose is to take photos of our church services, and any other events that are held at the church. Through Facebook and AECST website, our members near and far and others, can stay up-to-date on what is transpiring at St. Thomas.

Anyone who has a desire to take pictures is welcome to join The Photography Ministry.

F.E.N.C.E.

*“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you” –
Philippians 4:19*

FENCE is an acronym for Families of Episcopalians Nurturing within the College Environment. The goal of FENCE is to keep the AECST’s undergraduate college students involved in the life of the Episcopal Church while attending college away from home. FENCE is administered by a coordinator, with support from the AECST’s assistant rector who is responsible for youth and young adult ministries and programs.

The participation of a family from an Episcopal parish that the FENCE coordinator has identified to be located near the student’s college campus is an integral part of the FENCE ministry. Each student is matched with an active parishioner or family of parishioners, as identified by the parish’s rector or assistant rector. The families serve as surrogate parents for our college students - providing them with a means of getting to and from Sunday services, and any other church-sponsored programs of interest to the student. It is hoped that a relationship between each student and his/her surrogate family can be nurtured to the extent that the student becomes involved in other activities with the family, (e.g., home-cooked meals, college events, down-time spent with the family, etc.) Two-way communication is also very important to the success of FENCE. Students are encouraged to be responsive, in a timely manner, to all communications from their FENCE family, as well as the AECST’s clergy and FENCE coordinator. Year-end feedback from students and their FENCE family is the best means of assessing whether or not the goals and expectations of this component of FENCE have been achieved.

For more information about our mentoring program, please email your questions to the FENCE coordinator at fenceprogram@aecst.org.

The St. Thomas Gardeners

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin” Matthew 6:28

Purpose:

The **Garden Committee** works towards the beautification of the church grounds.

The St. Thomas Gardeners plan, plant and maintain the flower and ornamental shrub gardens on the church grounds. Once a year, in May, they hold a Flower Day, collecting donations to buy plants, soil, and mulch for the church grounds and garden.

Meetings are held as necessary.

Girls Friendly Society

“Bear ye one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.” – Galatians 6:2

What is GFS?

The Girls' Friendly Society (GFS) is an international, non-profit organization affiliated with the Episcopal Church for girls and young women founded in 1875 in England. The first branch in the USA was founded in 1877. It is a parish-based program with membership open to girls from the age of 3-21 of any race, religion, or nationality.

GFS provides a Christian-based support system that focuses on the emotional, physical and spiritual growth of its members. The emphasis on the spiritual growth helps leaders and members better understand themselves and their relationship with God, their family, each other, the community, and the world.

What is St. Thomas, West Philadelphia, GFS?

Our group is a local branch of GFS/ PA. It was first established in 1947 by a group of young women led by Ms. Julia M. Porter. Our program follows the traditional agenda of worship, study, service, and play. However, based on the needs of its members we are able to develop many of our own activities and events within the traditional context. A key component of our program is service to others. We serve our members by providing enriching study programs that focus on aspects of being young ladies in today's

society. We serve others through our community service projects through our branches, the dioceses of PA, and GFS branches around the world; to the Seaman's Church Institute, UNICEF, and the Episcopal Community Services.

What programs and activities does St. Thomas GFS offer?

The organization is composed of members, leaders, and sponsors. GFS offers programs for Juniors (ages 3-8), Intermediates (9-13) and Seniors (ages 14-21). Leaders (ages 21+) volunteer their time in order to assist members with crafts, study and service projects. Leaders also serve as mentors to the members. Sponsors (ages 22+) are the backbone of the organization providing the necessary support to GFS.

The following are a list of activities and events we participate in throughout the year: World Day of Prayer; GFS Day; GFS Week; Junior Week at Holiday House in Cape May, New Jersey; bringing holiday treats and cheer to those in nursing homes; arts and crafts; Founder's Weekend Trip; community service; ice skating; movie nights; theater shows; museums; and enrichment workshops.

How can I get more information?

We welcome new members and leaders who are interested in participating, interacting, sharing and contributing to our program, organization, and each others diverse experiences, backgrounds, and interests.

Guild of the Christ Child

*“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you”
– Philippians 4:19*

Purpose:

The purpose of the guild is to concern itself with the parents of candidates for Baptism, before and after the Baptisms. Baptisms occur on the five designated times in the Christian calendar, as cited in the Book of Common Prayer and when deemed necessary by the Rector

The Guild of the Christ Child is a feeder group to the [Church School](#). It coordinates the paperwork pertaining to Baptism. After the Baptisms, the Guild maintains contact with the child, so that at the appropriate age the child becomes a member of the Church School.

[The Guild of The Christ Child staff should be contacted](#) after submission of the [Online Baptism Application Form](#), or for any questions regarding the form or the Baptism process.

Who may join? Anyone, male or female, interested in preparing candidates for [Holy Baptism](#). Meetings are held as necessary.

Holy Baptism is especially appropriate Easter Vigil, on the Day of Pentecost, on All Saints' Day, and on the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord (the First Sunday after the Epiphany). It is recommended that, as far as possible, Baptisms be reserved for these occasions or when a bishop is present.

[About the Sacrament of Holy Baptism](#)
[Online Baptism Application Form](#)

Greeters Ministry (The Monarchs)

A welcoming ministry that greets individuals outside as they arrive for worship.

The Health Ministry

“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you” – Philippians 4:19

Purpose:

The purpose is to educate and inform our parishioners about health care issues. This group educates and informs by presenting forums, discussions, health fairs, blood drives, and other information on critical health issues. Meetings are held monthly. Contact the church office for information or email: healthministry@aecst.org

Who may join? Membership is open to all interested members of the congregation.

Historic Scouts Troop #133

“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you” – Philippians 4:19

Purpose:

To promote discipline, teamwork, and service to others among its youth members.

A structured program, parental support and committed adult volunteers help the pack to achieve its objective. The Boy Scouts collected pajamas and books for the children at the St. Barnabas Mission, collected cell phones for the Phone4Charity Project, collected eyeglasses for the needy, helped serve 500 pancake breakfasts to raise funds for the Overbrook School for the Blind, and served dinner to residents of St. John's Hospice.

The Cub Scout motto is “Do A Good Turn Daily.” Pack #133 incorporates these two principles into its program, with the expectation that the Cub Scouts live and practice these ideals every day.

The Pack meets on Saturday afternoons at 2:30 p.m.

Historical Society

“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you”
– *Philippians 4:19*

Mission

[Reverend Dr. Robert E. DuBose, Jr.](#) and Mrs. Elizabeth Forrester established the Historical Society of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in 1981. The Historical Society has two main goals as expressed in the mission statement. “The first is to collect, preserve, study and share the singular history and legacy of the first, and oldest, congregation in the Episcopal Church composed predominately of people of African descent. The second is to honor the life and Ministry of the first Episcopal priest of African descent and St. Thomas’s first rector, [the Reverend Absalom Jones](#) (1746-1818).” As a “function” of the church, volunteers carry out the activities of the Historical Society. The work of the Historical Society is managed through three committees, Administrative, Collections and Interpretation.

The Historical Society is responsible for the care of the [church’s archival collection](#). In order to give church members an understanding of the collection and the church’s history, the Historical Society has an exhibit several times a year with items from the collection. In addition, the Historical Society offers several historic trips a year, and a reading and sharing group meeting once a month. The members of the Historical Society give tours of the church for school groups and various visiting groups and organizations.

Mandate for Preservation

The commitment to preserve the church records is based on the records retention schedule for congregation as mandated in the [Constitutions and Canons of the Episcopal Church](#). The clergy and laity of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas have always been cognizant of their heritage. Concerted efforts to keep the church records have always been made. In 1981, it was formally recognized that the congregation had a duty to take appropriate care of the collection and thus established the Historical Society of the African Episcopal Church.

The Historical Society recognizes the renewed interest in early African American history and wants to be prepared to be an integral part of this exploration of the past. James Oronoko Dexter, a member of the [Free African Society](#) and member of St. Thomas's first vestry, is featured in the new [Constitution Center at Independence Park](#). The church archives contain some original and unique information on James Dexter that helps put his life and contributions in the appropriate historical context. This example of the use of the archives supports the need to preserve the collection to further the understanding of the history of this one congregation, [the City of Philadelphia](#), [the Episcopal Church](#), and the African-American community. The collection immediately gained national and international exposure when the Constitution Center opened in July 2003.

Jesse F. Anderson, Sr. Scholarship

“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you” – Philippians 4:19

Mission

Jesse F. Anderson Sr. Scholarship, is part of The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas outreach program. One of the many concerns of our late rector, Jesse F. Anderson, Sr. was in the field of higher education and its relevancy to African–American youth in Philadelphia.

He deeply felt that financial assistance in any form was essential, if the aspirations of our youth were to become a reality. In 1972, the vestry allocated funds, from the endowment fund to start the scholarship.

A renewable, one year scholarship was established for our neighborhood schools, Overbrook, University City and West Philadelphia High Schools. This year Lambertson High was included. The students are not selected because of high grades but for financial need and potential. The principal or school scholarship committee of each school selects the students.

In 1997, The St. Thomas Book Award was established for the youth of St. Thomas Church. Students must attend St. Thomas church regularly, participant in St Thomas youth activities, provide a letter of acceptance from a two or four year institution of higher education.

Our major fund-raiser is Scholarship Month, usually in June. From the inception of the scholarship the congregation has been involved in fundraising. We are constantly raising money for this worthy cause.

The Knitting Club

“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you” – Philippians 4:19

Purpose:

The purpose is to provide an opportunity for fellowship, outreach into our community, sharing our time and talents with anyone desiring to learn, re-learn, or practice an old art forms – knitting and crocheting.

In addition to our own personal projects, the Knitting Club has produced caps and blankets for Einstein Hospital’s Neo-natal unit, scarves and hats for children at Stenton Family Manor, scarves for the Houston School, and anti-bullying caps for St. James School.

The group meets every Tuesday at 10 a.m.

Who may join?

Any individual, male or female, St. Thomas member or not are all welcome.

St. Thomas Lectors and Intercessors

“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you”
– *Philippians 4:19*

Purpose:

The purpose is to read the lessons and lead the prayers for the day's worship service.

Lectors may, on occasion and at the discretion of the rector, read from non-biblical Christian literature, and narratives, and may also be asked to serve at other services, such as funerals.

Meetings are held as necessary.

Who may join? Anyone interested in sharing in liturgical and/or dramatic readings at worship.

Live Stream/Sound Ministry

Vision:

To provide an alternative for “all” to view the church services, if not physically able to worship in person.

Overview

The ministry provides livestream service for each Sunday service. Livestream and amplified sound services are available for additional church related activities on a requested basis, and as members are available.

This ministry is open to any interested person willing to share their gifts.

Men's Ministry and Fellowship

“What does it profit my brethren, if someone says he has faith, but does not have works?” - James 2:14

Purpose:

This ministry is a Christ centered brotherhood of the men of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas committed to spreading the Word to the men and boys in our communities through spiritual and secular ministries.

Activities:

Over the years, it has been proven that serving the LORD and fellowship can go hand in hand. Past sponsored events have included bowling parties, theater night out, crab feasts, cabarets and events for the youth. The Men's Ministry & Fellowship is also responsible for organizing and operating the Annual Church Outing, a free event that promotes family togetherness, evangelism and outreach, as well as fellowshiping with other men's ministries within the Diocese.

Who may join?

The AECST Men's Ministry & Fellowship Invites any man to Join and Be a Part of the Greatest Brotherhood that You Will Ever Know

The Music Committee

*“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you”
– Philippians 4:19*

Purpose:

The purpose is to assist in raising funds to be used to enhance the music of the church service, and to provide funding to minority students who are enrolled in a college or university pursuing study and training in voice or piano through the James T. Townsend Scholarship Fund.

The James T. Townsend Scholarship Fund was established in 1974. In 1994 the Music Committee was blessed with the donation of a second scholarship award for piano, given in memory of Sidney DeKnight by his wife and daughter.

The Music Committee also presents Spring and Fall concerts of talented individuals or college choirs, and the proceeds are used to provide second place scholarships as well.

The Music Committee meets on the second Sunday of the month after service.

Who may join?

Anyone interested in the planning and execution of interesting and exciting events.

The James T. Townsend Vocal Scholarship Award

The vocal scholarship is named in honor of James T. Townsend, former organist and Choirmaster of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas. Mr. Townsend served in this capacity for more than fifty-seven years and was the moving force in the

implementation of the College Concert Series which provides funds for this award.

The Scholarship is awarded annually to an African American student under age of 25 who is pursuing studies and training in voice at an accredited college or university, or with a master teacher affiliated with an accredited school of music. Applicants must be in good academic standing. The winner of the vocal auditions held at the church in May of each year is awarded two thousand dollars.

The Sidney DeKnight Piano Scholarship Award

The piano scholarship is given in honor of the late Sidney DeKnight by his widow Jacqueline and Daughter Sylvia. Mr. DeKnight, who received a degree in music from Bluefield State College, West Virginia, was a special education teacher in the Philadelphia School System. He was also an accomplished pianist.

The DeKnight family, members of St. Thomas Church, are music lovers who felt that sponsoring an additional Scholarship Award in conjunction with the Music Committee's outreach program would be a fitting memorial to Mr. DeKnight.

The Scholarship is awarded to an African American student pursuing studies and training in piano at an accredited college or university. The winner of the piano auditions held at the church in May of each year is awarded two thousand dollars.

Scholarship Announcement Flyer | Scholarship Application Cover Letter | Scholarship Application

Music Ministry

Chancel Chorus

Chancel Choir is the oldest choir ministry of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, dating back to 1888.

The Chancel Choir performs on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month and as requested by the rector.

Gospel Chorus

In 1991 the Gospel Choir was introduced to St. Thomas by Waltier Blocker. It is a Christ centered choir that uses music to spread the gospel to the lost and to edify Christ through song. Evangelism through music is a very important factor in the choir's ministry.

The Gospel Choir ministers on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month and as requested by the rector.

Jazz Ensemble

The Jazz Ensemble is an instrumental group started by the late Mr. Joseph Stevenson, a retired public school teacher, jazz musician and part-time jazz instructor at Lincoln University. The introduction of jazz first occurred at St. Thomas in the 1990s with a jazz mass. The repertoire includes familiar hymns arranged by Mr. Stevenson in the jazz idiom.

This ministry is open to any interested persons willing to share their instrumental gifts. Rehearsals are scheduled by the Director.

Men's Chorus

The purpose is to encourage the men of the parish to join their brothers in lifting their voices to the Lord.

The Male Chorus was formed and commissioned in 2003. The men may sing on the 5th Sunday of the month, and on special occasions as requested by the rector.

Voices of Comfort

The Voices of Comfort Choir was established in the Fall of 2012 by The Rev. Fr. Martini Shaw.

Voices of Comfort Choir's purposes is to enhance the singing of hymns during funeral services and to provide a comforting ministry of music to bereaved family members and friends.

Parishioners are needed to join us in song.

Youth Chorus

This musical chorus ministers on the fourth Sunday and as requested by the rector.

Open to all interested children.

Rehearsals are held during some scheduled church school sessions.

The Pentecost Committee

The purpose of the Pentecost Committee, formerly the Revival Committee, at The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, is to support renewing the spiritual life of believers for restoration and renewal as well as nurture spiritual enhancement through a host of programs and activities.

The committee's support includes:

Revival, Pentecost Sunday and Rector's Birthday

Meetings are held as called. Membership is open to all members of the congregation.

The Prayer Warriors

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." Matt 18:20

Purpose:

The purpose of this on-line ministry is to give intercessory prayers on behalf of someone in need of prayers for an illness, family problems, employment problems or to give praise and thanksgivings to the Lord for the things He has done. Anyone can send in a request which will be sent out to all evangelistic groups, i.e., prayers warriors, Daughters of the King, and anyone wishing to join in the prayer group.

Who may join? Anyone who is willing and committed to praying for needs of others.

Contact prayerwarriors@aecst.org

Property Committee

The Property Committee assists the Vestry Property Chair with the general supervision and maintenance of the church property. The Committee consists of members of the church who express an interest in and/or have expertise related to the maintenance of the church property. The Committee may meet as necessary to carry out their responsibilities. The Property Chair reports on the activities of the Committee to the Vestry at each of their meetings.

Reach Out and Touch

The Reach Out and Touch Committee provides AECST Bulletins to our members who are infirmed, sick, shut-in and are otherwise unable to attend church in person on a regular basis. Any AECST member is eligible to receive a monthly bulletin upon request. Interested AECST Members are welcome to join this Ministry. Please contact the Parish Office.

Retired Peoples Ministry

“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you” – Philippians 4:19

Purpose:

The purpose is to meet the interests, concerns and needs of the senior members of St. Thomas church and the community.

The Retired Peoples Ministry is a blend of St. Thomas Church and Overbrook Presbyterian. They seek to bring information concerning health and welfare matters, social and cultural concerns, and endeavor to find affordable entertainment for the members of the group.

Meetings are held each Monday at 10 a.m.

Who may join?

Any male or female ages 55+ interested in sharing their time and talent with other like individuals.

Shepherds Ministry

Shepherds for Christ is an evangelism program aimed at retaining members of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas. The ministry's primary goal is to help new members (sheep) get acclimated spiritually and socially in the life of AECST. Through one-on-one contact that comes from spiritual and social fellowship, shepherds can support sheep in finding a niche at AECST where the sheep can actively engage their "time, talents and treasure."

Responsibilities

1. Commit to one year of shepherding a new member (sheep).
2. At least once a month fellowship with our sheep by having meaningful contact. This includes but is not limited to sitting with our sheep during service, attending coffee hour or other church events in which he/she may be interested.
3. Find out the sheep's specific interests and introduce him/her to other church members, including officers and members of guilds and organizations.
4. Keep the Flock Captain to whom you are assigned apprised of any concerns you have about your sheep and of any specific assistance (prayer, transportation, etc.) the sheep may need. If there is sickness or injury, ask the sheep if it is OK for the clergy to be informed.
5. Take notice of the sheep's attendance at Sunday service. If you do not see your sheep for 3 consecutive weeks, please notify the rector.

The Sisterhood Guild

“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you” – Philippians 4:19

Purpose:

The purpose is to participate in and develop Christian leadership through service to others within the church and community; to encourage regular church attendance of Sisterhood Guild members; and to contribute annually to the [Jesse F. Anderson Memorial Scholarship Fund](#) for college-bound students.

The Sisterhood Guild provides support and spiritual nourishment to its members but also moves beyond the walls of the church to perform services that benefit the community.

Meetings are held on the 4th Sunday of the month immediately following the service.

Who may join? Any adult female member of St. Thomas Church.

Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee provides learning opportunities for parishioners to grow in expressing their thankfulness to God for His many blessings. The committee develops ideas to encourage and inspire others to share their Time, Talents, and Treasure. The annual pledging activity is organized by this committee and takes place the month of October. During the pledging season we ask the congregation to fill out Faithful Giving Cards so the church can complete their upcoming year's budget.

Please note that we offer multiple ways of giving; online, using offering envelopes that are provided, by sending a check through the US Mail and electronic giving which provides an easy, secure method where you can contribute weekly, monthly, once a year or simply whenever you desire. Donations can be made via our website at <http://www.aecst.org/donations.htm> or through the GIVI App.

Transportation Ministry

The main mission of the ministry is to provide transportation to parishioners who attend Sunday Service or other activities. Please contact the Parish Office if you are interested.

Tree of Life Ministry

I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me. And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you? And the King will answer them. Truly I tell you just as you did it to one of the least of these who are my family, you did it to me. Matthew 25:36, 39-40

Mission

The purpose of the Criminal Justice Ministry (Prison Ministry) at the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, is to nurture God's gift of redemption through Jesus The Christ. This gift frees us from inactivity by reaching out to those in prison.

With a renewed understanding of our ministry, not as a people victimized by injustice but as converters of our unmerited suffering into reestablishing God-given powers to those incarcerated. Our prison ministry is young and growing.

We are blessed to serve an Episcopal congregation, St. Dimas, behind the walls of Graterford Correctional Institution, at Graterford, PA. We seek volunteers to worship with inmates during mass, for our pen pal connection, participate in a Christmas Party and gift giving for inmates' children, who we hope to mentor after Christmas.

As you can see, all volunteering is not face to face with inmates. Prison officials recommend all services to inmates. A prison ministry is very wide in scope. The same physical conditions exist in prison that exists on the outside. Young prisoners grow old, older prisoners grow older. They deal with health problems, family problems, broken homes without fathers and mother (female imprisonment is on the increase). From our blessing of Freedom we can serve the lease of them.

Videography Ministry

Purpose:

This ministry is designed to capture and publish video content of all parish-related events (on and off campus). This medium, ultimately, affords broader audiences around the world intimate experiences of a reimagined Anglican Church.

Who may join?

Any member with an interest in creating content for public consumption is encouraged to join. Experience in media editing softwares (like Adobe Premiere Pro) is helpful.

The William J. Burke, Sr. Memorial Ushers

“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, are seen in me, do and the peace of God shall be with you” – Philippians 4:19

Purpose:

The purpose is to assist with seating, greeting visitors to St. Thomas, and making them feel welcome at worship, and to assist the rector by directing traffic during communion, and to perform other tasks as needed.

The William J. Burke, Sr. Memorial Ushers are so named after former Accounting Warden, William J. Burke, Sr. who, along with Fr. Anderson, Jr. felt the need to relieve the Vestry from the responsibility of directing communion traffic. Ushers participate in all regular and special services.

Several also serve at funerals. Our ushers have also been asked to take part in special services at other churches and the Cathedral.

Meetings are held every 3 months.

Who may join? Anyone, male or female can serve St. Thomas in this capacity.

Women's Ministry

*Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God;
Your Spirit is good, Lead me in the land of uprightness
Psalm 143:10*

The AECST Women's Ministry serves to convene and engage ALL women of St. Thomas through awareness and opportunities for engagement in various organizations and programs that support, inspire and uplift women throughout the church.

The AECST Women's Ministry supports engagement through, but not limited to: The Altar Guild, Angels in Motion, Girls Friendly Society, Guild of the Christ Child, The Order of the Daughters of the King, and Sisterhood Guild.

Youth and Young Adults

Purpose:

To equip the youth with the skills and the spiritual maturity needed to face courageously and responsibly the transitional years of adolescence.

Teens meet on 1st -3rd Sundays: 10am to noon - 3rd floor Souldiers Room.

Facilitator: Adult Leaders

The SOULdiers for Christ Youth Program of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas offers a weekly spiritual formation opportunity for all teenagers, ages 11 through High School. The group meets for Christian formation instructions, fellowship and service. The class offers the teens the opportunity to explore and discuss four areas of their lives: self, spirituality, sexuality, and society, within a caring and loving environment.

In addition to the weekly Christian formation forums, the youth also get the opportunity to offer community service (such as, AIDS Walk), make educational and entertainment trips/outings, and play games (basketball, darts, table tennis, etc.).

Who may join?

All teenage youth, ages 11-18, are welcome to join in the fun and reward of meeting, learning, and growing together. See any Church school teacher to register.