

Lent

**A Season of Reflection,
Renewal, and Preparation**



**THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS
FIRST BLACK EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE USA**

THE VERY REVEREND CANON MARTINI SHAW, 17TH RECTOR
THE REVEREND FR. DAREN E. EVANS, ASSOCIATE TO THE RECTOR
6361 LANCASTER AVENUE (ABSALOM JONES WAY) • PHILADELPHIA, PA 19151 • (215) 473-3065
WWW.AECST.ORG • WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/AECST1792

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

April 6, 2025

The Historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas

6361 Lancaster Avenue (Absalom Jones Way)
Philadelphia, PA, 19151
(215) 473-3065

www.aecst.org

The Very Reverend Canon Martini Shaw
The 17th Rector

The Reverend Fr. Daren E. Evans
Associate to the Rector

The Reverend Fr. Gerald Collins
Associate Priest



The African Episcopal
Church of St. Thomas |
About The AECST

www.aecst.org

Scan the QR code to support our church
and our ministries.

“WELCOME TO THE MOTHER CHURCH”

“Enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise.
Give thanks unto Him and bless His name”

Psalm 100:4

Grace and Peace to you from God on **the Fifth Sunday in Lent.**

On behalf of the Clergy, Wardens, Vestry, and People of God, welcome to the historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas. Founded in 1792 as the first Black Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., it is proudly a part of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The first rector of this historic parish, The Reverend Fr. Absalom Jones, was also the first Black Episcopal priest in the nation.

Our parish boldly proclaims the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are an active, mission-minded, and growing church family. Whoever you are and wherever you may find yourself on your spiritual journey of faith, you are always welcomed at St. Thomas Church, where we are joyfully and enthusiastically committed to Jesus’ message of love, hope, prayer, acceptance, and faith. Today, as you worship in this place, may you experience and feel the presence of the Lord, and may you leave feeling renewed, refreshed, and revived. Whoever you may be and however you may find yourself experiencing life’s journey, do know that St. Thomas Church welcomes you. Again, welcome!

Faithfully,

Martini Shaw +

(The Very Reverend Canon) Martini Shaw,
17th Rector and Dean of the Schuylkill Deanery

Please click on the link provided for the [Order of Service](#) for this Sunday.

FROM THE DESK OF THE RECTOR:

This is a reminder that the Mass (Service) ends following the Closing Hymn and Dismissal. Please make an extra effort to refrain from unnecessary chatter and departure from the Service before the conclusion. This request is being made in order to respect all gathered wishing to embrace the fullness of worship.

WELCOME

OUR FAMILY CONTINUES TO GROW!

We welcome Doris Olinger into our church family and look forward to getting to know her. Doris' appointed Shepherd is Monica Lewis Jones.



HOLY WEEK 2025

SUNDAY OF THE PASSION

(Palm Sunday) - April 13th - Arrive by 9:30 AM

Blessing and Distribution of Palms / Outdoor Procession / Holy Eucharist;
Worshipping with us: St. James School Community.

HOLY THURSDAY

(Maundy Thursday) April 17th

6:00 PM -Candlelight Dinner Hosted by the Vestry & Auxiliary Vestry.
Get your dinner tickets today (\$20.00/ person) *Limited Seating

7:00 PM -Service of Foot Washing; The Holy Eucharist;
Stripping of the Altar; and All Night "Re-Imagined" Virtual Vigil
Sponsored by the Daughters of the King (Please sign up for an hour of prayer.)

GOOD FRIDAY

April 18th, 12:00 Noon

Special Good Friday liturgy includes Stations of the Cross.
Worshipping with us: Members from Overbrook Presbyterian Church.

HOLY SATURDAY

April 19th, 6:00 PM

We join our sisters and brothers from the Schuylkill Deanery
at the Cathedral for the celebration of the Easter Vigil.

EASTER SUNDAY

(Resurrection Sunday) April 20th

6:00 AM - Early Sunrise Service

10:00 AM - Special Music and Dance; Choral Eucharist;
Easter Egg Hunt; Visitation of the Easter Bunny.



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IMPORTANT FINANCIAL UPDATE

March 31st ended the First Quarter of 2025. We ended the quarter with a **deficit** in our budget.

Enormous thanks to those who are current with their yearly pledge. It is very important to assure that we remain current in order for the church to fulfill its monthly expenses. You will soon receive your First Quarter statement. Please use the month of April to catch up if you are not already current.

On Sunday, April 6, 2025,
we place **Shirley A. Winkfield** in the Columbarium,
her final resting place.

A BUSY SUNDAY ABOARD THE AECST EXPRESS!

A few photos of activities/meetings following Service:
Health Ministry Awareness Presentation; Sisterhood Guild meeting; Pentecost/Caribbean Festival planning meeting; a few Church School children receiving a tour.





Our dedicated **"Reach Out and Touch" Committee** assures that our shut-in members receive our monthly news.



The New Members Manual has arrived. Please use the [link](#) to access it.

Hundreds filled the pews to continue their
Lenten journey:
The Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 30, 2025





More pictures may be found on our [Facebook](#) page.

AN AWESOME LEADERSHIP TEAM!
On Saturday, March 29, 2025, our Clergy, Vestry, and Auxiliary Vestry members gather for a day of retreat. Theme: "Reflections, Renewal and Preparation".





THE LENTEN SERIES - 2025

“The Role of the Church: Post 2024 National Election”

March 12th

Introduction - Political Structure of Government
(Facilitator: The Reverend Joe Watkins)

A basic description of the structure of our American government

March 19th

2024 National Election Results

(Facilitators: Ernestine Johnson and Julio Rodriguez)

What were the election results and what do they mean?

March 26th

The Role of the Church During the 1960's
(Facilitator: Arthur Sudler)

What has been the role of the Church following various election results and various political climates in our society?

April 2nd

Current Involvement of the Church and Faith Communities
(Facilitator: Lisa Sharon Harper)

In what ways are faith communities presently involved around the country?

April 9th

A Role for St. Thomas Church Post 2024 Election
(Facilitators: Elaine Gillison and Wendella Fox)

Are there ways that St. Thomas can be more involved following the recent election?

6:00 PM - Mass

6:30 PM - Presentation/Group Discussion

7:00 PM - Ending



MAUNDY THURSDAY SILENT NIGHT VIGIL

Then HE returned to HIS disciples and found them sleeping.
Simon, HE said to Peter, are you asleep?
Couldn't you keep watch for one hour?
Mark 14:37

The St. Thomas Chapter of the Order of the Daughters of the King invites you to pray with us on this year's **Maundy Thursday Silent Night Watch Vigil** on April 17, 2025 from 8:00 PM to 12:00 Noon on **Good Friday, April 18, 2025.**

This year we invite you to join us in a silent vigil where you can pray in your own space, in your own way, and share a deeper connection with God. In keeping with scripture and to ensure that we have continuous prayer throughout the night, we ask that you sign up prior to Maundy Thursday indicating which hour you and your family will be in prayer with us. As a note, this year there will be no in-person vigil.

Once you sign up, we will forward several suggested prayers and meditations as well as a list of readings on **Monday, April 14, 2025.**

You may sign up by sending an email to [Brenda Johnson Best](mailto:Brenda.Johnson@stthomas.org) or by using the signup sheet which will be on the table at the rear of the church.

AECST LIVE STREAM

Please join us for worship on the [St. Thomas website](http://stthomas.org), the [Live Stream Service](https://www.facebook.com/AECST), or on our [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AECST) page or [Youtube](https://www.youtube.com/AECST) every Sunday morning at 10:00 AM. You can also watch [Past Services](#).



HOLY WEEK & EASTER 2025
Sunday, April 13th
Palm Sunday (Sunday of the Passion),
April 13th - Arrive by 9:30 AM

Blessing and Distribution of Palms / Outdoor Procession / Holy Eucharist; worshipping with us: St. James School community



Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday),
April 17th, 6:00 PM: Candlelight Dinner
7:00 PM Service of Foot Washing;
The Holy Eucharist; Stripping of the altar;
and all night "Re-Imagined" Virtual Vigil

Good Friday,

April 18th, 12:00 Noon:

Special liturgy includes Stations of the Cross. Worshipping with us: Members from Overbrook Presbyterian Church



Holy Saturday, April 19th, 6:00 PM
We join our sisters and brothers from the Schuylkill Deanery at the Cathedral for the Celebration of the Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday (Resurrection Sunday)
April 20th:

6:00 AM - Early Sunrise Service
10:00 AM - Special Music and Dance
Choral Eucharist; Easter Egg Hunt;
Visitation of the Easter Bunny



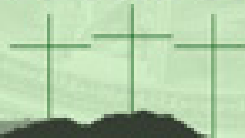
The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas +
The St. Thomas Gospel Choir



palmsunday

Annual Concert

Songs, Spirituals & Hymns in Remembrance of
Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ



SUNDAY
APRIL 13th
3:00PM

Free Will Offering
Concert Will Be Followed by a Reception



The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas

 6361 Lancaster Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19151

The Reverend Canon Fr. Marini Shaw, Rector
The Reverend Fr. Daren Evans, Assistant to the Rector

For More Information - 215-473-3065

LENTEN GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Rose or Laetare Sunday is the fourth Sunday in the season of Lent., in the Western Christian liturgical calendar. Traditionally, this Sunday had been a day of celebration, within the austere period of Lent. This Sunday gets its name from the first few words (incipit) of the traditional Latin entrance (Introit) for the Mass of the day. “Laetare Jerusalem” (Rejoice, O Jerusalem”) is Latin from Isaiah 66:10.

Flowers may appear on the high altar. Priests are given the option to wear rose-colored vestments at Mass on this day in place of the violet vestments normally worn during Lent. The term “rose” is used to describe this lighter shade of the color violet.

Why we don't say Alleluia during Lent: The Alleluia comes to us from Hebrew, and it means “praise Yahweh”. This praise has a joyful overtone to it and we use it especially during happy celebrations. While we do praise God all year round, during Lent we withhold a bit of our joy and happiness because of the season's penitential and sorrowful character. After all, we are anticipating Jesus' very passion and death.

In order to emphasize the penitential nature of that journey, the Church, during Lent, removes the Alleluia from the Mass. We no longer sing with the choirs of angels; instead, we acknowledge our sins and practice repentance so that one day we may again have the privilege of worshiping God as the angels do.

Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter. It commemorates Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and in many Christian churches, Palm Sunday is marked by the distribution of Palm leaves.

Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter that commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with the apostles. The significance is derived from Latin “mandatum” (a new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you), the statement Jesus made in John 13:34 by which He explained to the apostles the significance of His action of washing their feet.

Good Friday (“good” meaning pious or holy) is the Friday of Holy Week, observed primarily by Christians commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and His death at Calvary.

Holy Saturday is the day before Easter and the day of Holy Week in which Christians prepare for Easter. It commemorates the day that Jesus Christ’s body was laid in the tomb.

Triduum (TRID-uh-wum) is the period of three days that begins the evening of Maundy Thursday and ends the evening of Easter Sunday. It recalls the passion, burial and resurrection.



JOIN US ON THIS SPECIAL & HOLY NIGHT

Have you gotten your ticket(s) yet?

Only a few are now available.

Tickets are \$20.00

If you would like to purchase a ticket, a member of the Vestry/Auxiliary Vestry will be in Anderson Hall after service.

For more information, please contact [Cynthia Muse](#)

LENTEN SERIES CONTINUES

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

“The Role of the Church: Post 2024 General Election”
(Facilitator: Lisa Sharon Harper)

Please join us next Wednesday (last one) for our one hour
Lenten Mass and Presentation (6:00 PM - 7:00 PM).



ANNOUNCING OUR NEW MEMBERS AND CONFIRMATION CLASSES

Plans are underway to begin our New Members/Confirmation Classes soon. Most of these classes will be held via Zoom.

Please watch the bulletin and Spearhead for further information. Please speak with Fr. Daren or Seminarian Kathryn Brossa if you have questions.

JOIN OUR PARTNERS

The St. James School will be celebrating its Annual Benefit on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 6:00 PM. You may recall that our church was one of the past honorees for this beautiful celebration. This year, one of their honorees will be Former Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. If you are interested in attending, please speak with [Phyllis Cater](#) for more details.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS UPCOMING SUNDAYS IN APRIL

April 6th

Fifth Sunday in Lent
Inurnment of Shirley Winkfield

April 13th

Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion
9:45 AM Outdoor Procession/Distribution of Palms

April 20th

Easter Sunday
(Sunday of the Resurrection)
6:00 AM Early Sunrise Service- Celebrant: Fr. Shaw;
Homilist: Fr. Evans
10:00 AM (Festive Celebration with music and dance)
Celebrant and Homilist: The Rector

The Easter Bunny will make a special appearance and our Annual Easter Egg Hunt will follow the Easter Sunday Service.

THIS WEEK AT AECST

Monday, April 7, 2025

~Meeting of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.~
6:00 - 9:00 PM in Anderson Hall

Tuesday, April 8th

~Advocacy Outreach Group Meeting~
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM in the Undercroft
~Pilgrims on a Journey Adult Bible Study~
with Fr. Jay via Zoom 7:00 PM

Wednesday, April 9th

~Lenten Series~
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM in the Church
~Angels in Motion Rehearsal~
7:30 PM in the Church
~St. Thomas Gospel Choir Rehearsal~
7:30 PM in Anderson Hall

Saturday, April 10th

~Girls Friendly Society Meeting~
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM in the Undercroft
~Community Choir Rehearsal~
2:30 PM - 3:00 PM

AECST HEALTH MINISTRY NEWS

April Is Stress Awareness Month

Everyone experiences stress — the condition caused by a reaction to physical, chemical, emotional, or environmental factors. However, they feel it in different amounts and react to it in different ways.

Constant, or chronic, stress can cause many health issues. It can cause the body to remain in high gear for extended periods of time, which causes breathing and heart rate to speed up and blood pressure to rise.

Stress may affect many of the risk factors and behaviors for heart disease, such as high blood pressure, smoking, physical inactivity, and poor eating habits.

Learn more about stress and heart health from the American Heart Association by clicking [here](#)



Are you receiving robocalls from the Rector about special upcoming events? Do you know someone who does not receive the electronic Spearhead every week? If not, please send your email and cell number to [Gladyce DuBrey](#).

SAVE THE DATE!



HEROES' SUNDAY

MAY 18, 2025 10:00 AM

**Philadelphia Fire Commissioner
JEFFREY THOMPSON, GUEST SPEAKER**



ALL first responders are invited to attend!

- * All First Responders are encouraged to arrive by 9:45, attend in uniform and proceed into church together.
- * There will be a reception with light refreshments in the church hall immediately following mass.
- * For More Information Please Contact: Seth Williams
Seth@SecondChanceStrategies.Net

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Guest Speaker: Philadelphia Fire Commissioner Jeffrey Thompson. Please invite all first responders to attend.

OUR OUT OF TOWN DEDICATED FAMILIES

We give thanks to God for these active and dedicated members of St. Thomas who presently live in other cities, states, and countries, but remain connected weekly by various media platforms: Constance Anderson, Dr. Paul Bach, and Dr. Julie Hergerather, Christopher Burks, Deadra Cannon, Nora Corbin, Dr. Ted Corbin, Lee Daniels, Rashid and Christie Faisal, The Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney, Bradley Hammond, Richard and Gwenda Hart, Dr. Calvin Johnson, Bettie Jones, Rae Scott Jones, Richard Jones, Jr., Dr. Sheila Jones, Steven and Jameela Lewis, Gregory Lyles, Dr. John Rich, Richard and Rebecca Scales, Shelly and Ann Stewart, Howard Tucker, and Allison Young.

A RECTOR'S REQUEST FOR DONORS

The three beautiful banners hanging outside the church are in desperate need of replacement. Are you interested in being one of the donors? The cost for each is \$750.00.

Please contact [Gladyce DuBrey](#) in the church office to make a donation.



Sponsors are still needed to cover the **donkey** rental for **Palm Sunday, April 13, 2025**. Donations can be made in thanksgiving for a blessing or in memory of a loved one. Envelopes may be found at the back of the church. The cost of the donkey is \$1550.00.

Please contact [Gladyce DuBrey](#) in the church office to make a donation.

SAVE THE CHANGED DATE!!

St. Thomas Men are Cooking - May 4th

Chefs! Get your recipes ready!

The Men's Fellowship will be outside of the church to sign up chefs for the event and recipes for the cookbook. More info to follow.

Men, check your email for deadlines.

ATTENTION AECST STUDENTS:

The Jesse F. Anderson Sr. Scholarship Fund is offering the St. Thomas Book Awards for graduating high school seniors who are members of the African Episcopal Church of St.

Thomas (AECST) and plan to attend a school of higher learning in Fall 2025. Additionally, applications are available for AECST members enrolled in a full-time graduate program. The application deadline is May 12, 2025.

For more information contact [Paula Lamb](#) (High School Seniors) or [Diana Hutchins](#) (Graduate Students) or [Thomasina Hack](#).

The St. Thomas Chancel Choir is growing!!

We are seeking to purchase new choir robes and scapulas. Are you a seamstress? Do you know of someone who makes choir robes? Is there a black owned company that makes church choir robes? We would appreciate any information that you may have. Our congregation is a vast network of amazing people. If you have any information that can help, please email Jay Fluellen at chancelchoir@aecst.org.



***The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas
Presents***

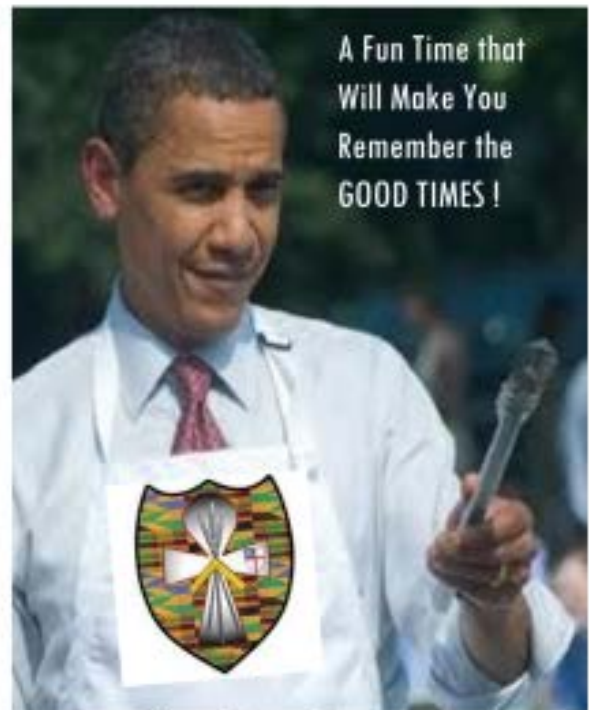
St. Thomas Men Are Cooking

**The Very Reverend Canon Martini Shaw, Rector
The Reverend Fr. Daren E. Evans, Associate to the Rector**

Calling All Men to Prepare and Serve your Favorite Dish(es) and to forward your recipe for the cookbook to be available close to the event
Email Recipes to Cookbook Editor & Event Organizer: Dr. Tim Barksdale :
Tim.Barksdale@Merakey.org

\$20.00 includes:

- Delicious Food, Dessert & Drinks
- Indoor & Outdoor Seating
- Table Service for Those in Need
- Door Prizes & Give-aways
- \$10.00 for those under 12 years
- Free for toddlers



Sunday, May 4th, 2025, Immediately after service

AECST Anderson Hall, 6361 Lancaster Ave. Phila. PA 19151

For More Information Contact
ED Geiger: 716-207-0405
Andrew Dumas: 917-325-4434

Get Tickets from
The Men's Ministry & Fellowship,
Edward Geiger, President

SAVE THE DATES

The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas Women's Weekend - 2025

“Revive, Renew, Restore: Finding Strength in Faith”

Saturday, May 31st | Women's Retreat

Sunday, June 1st | Annual Women's Day Celebration

You don't want to miss this exciting weekend!
More Information coming your way soon.

SAVE THE DATE

**This year Caribbean Sunday will be on June 8th,
which also happens to be Pentecost Sunday.**

The Caribbean and Pentecost Committees will meet
after church.

THE SISTERHOOD GUILD

is collecting items for the [Northern Children's Services](#)
throughout the season of Lent.

Any of the following items would be appreciated:
toiletries, feminine hygiene products, baby wipes,
disposable diapers, lotions, and diaper rash ointments. A
collection tote/box will be located in the back of the sanctuary.



The Women's Ministry Presents

The St. Thomas Women's Weekend

Saturday, May 31 - Sunday, June 1, 2025

REVIVE. RESTORE. RENEW.

FINDING STRENGTH IN FAITH

WOMEN'S WELLNESS RETREAT

Saturday, May 31, 2025 | 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas

FEATURED SPEAKERS:

~Karen Taylor Bass~

Certified yoga instructor, mediation coach, wellness trainer, author, Radio Show Host

~The Reverend Canon Toneh Smyth~

Canon for Missions of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania

~AND MORE~

FEATURED WELLNESS RETREAT EXPERIENCES INCLUDE:

Creative Expressions workshops | Get your Affairs in Order

Mindful Meditation | Closing Drum Circle

Tickets: \$50 per person

Checks payable to: St. Thomas Women's Ministry - Memo: Women's Retreat

Cash App payments: \$46DBM | Memo: Women's Retreat | GIVI App Memo: Women's Retreat

For more information, contact Deborah Matthews | email: debmadanco@verizon.net

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NEWS FLASH FROM THE CATTO MINISTRY CORNER

WWJD?

While we don't exactly know the answer to the above question, we do know that he would not be silent (Proverbs 21:13) and he would seek justice (Proverbs 21:15). The time is now to engage your friends, neighbors, and family in civic activities. Rallies and protests help to raise awareness of a cause or inequity but it's not for everyone. Julio Rodriquez (St. Thomas) and Jordan Ford, his colleague, need volunteers. At least three times a week, approximately 500 permanent residents become naturalized citizens! They deserve to vote, and you can register them.

Please see [Elaine Gillison](#), or [Wendella Fox](#) if you are willing to assist in this meaningful and sustainable work.

UPDATE on REAL ID

The PennDOT will open select Driver License Centers on Mondays so Pennsylvanians can apply for REAL ID. Go to www.pa.gov/realid to find a location near you.

Did you know that you can Pre-Verify Online! If you received your FIRST Pennsylvania driver's license, learner's permit or photo ID card AFTER September 1, 2003, PennDOT may already have your REAL ID documentation on file. Go to www.PennDOT.gov/REALID to find out if your required documents are on file with PennDOT.

ALTAR FLOWERS



EASTER FLOWERS AND LILIES

Your gift of an Easter Lily will help beautify the church and will be a beautiful tribute to your loved ones, or a token of Thanksgiving for a blessing received. To order flowers, go to the church website, or use this [link](#) to order and pay for flowers.

High Altar - \$125

Absalom Jones Altar - \$90

the Columbarium - \$60

Easter Lily - \$25 each (5 names per plant)

Deadline: Monday, April 14, 2025



PILGRIMS ON A JOURNEY ADULT BIBLE STUDY

with Fr. Jay meet on Tuesdays

7:00 PM via Zoom.

Please contact [Fr. Jay](#) with questions/requests.

DAILY RECOMMENDED BIBLE READINGS

Readings for the Fifth Sunday In Lent

April 6, 2025

The First Lesson - [Isaiah 43:16-21](#)

[Psalm 126](#)

The Second Lesson - [Philippians 3:4b-14](#)

The Holy Gospel - [John 12:1-8](#)

The Holy Gospel Readings for the week of April 7, 2025

Monday - [Susanna \(Book of Daniel\)](#)

[\[1-9, 15-29, 34-40\], 41-62](#)

Tuesday - [John 8:21-30](#)

Wednesday - [John 8:31-42](#)

Thursday - [John 8:51-59](#)

Friday - [John 10:31-42](#)

Saturday - [John 11:42-53](#)

WEDNESDAYS IN-PERSON BIBLE STUDY
with Fr. Daren will resume in the AJ House on
April 30th at 6:00 PM.

Our Spring study will be a
“Journey through the Book of Revelation.”

TINY TIKES TOT AREA

Basic items for the Tiny Tykes Tot area have been identified and ordered! Basic items that were ordered are arriving. Soon our little Saints will have an area where they can take their parents. Keep your ear to the ground for a special announcement and your eyes out for a sneak preview. Please contact [Fr. Daren](#) if you have questions.

ATTENTION: ALL COLLEGE STUDENTS OF ST. THOMAS

Please know that your church family is here to support you during your years of academic studies. Please [email](#) Fr. Daren your contact information as soon as possible (including cellphone). Our prayers remain with you.



A REMINDER TO ALL GUILDS, ORGANIZATIONS, MINISTRIES, AND INDIVIDUALS:

ANY and **ALL** Activities using the church facilities (ie; Anderson Hall, the Undercroft, the church) or the Absalom Jones House **MUST** be scheduled and approved by the Parish Administrator: [Gladyce DuBrey](#) (215-473-3065) and **NOT the SEXTON** beforehand. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that all activities are listed on the calendar of the Parish Office.



CALLING ALL DANCERS!!!!

Opportunity awaits if you want to praise the Lord in dance and worship. The “Angels in Motion” dance ministry, a multi-generational ministry welcomes all ages, and skill levels in ballet, modern, jazz, and African dance to join! Interested? Please contact, Director, [Pamela Johnson](#).



VERGERS NEEDED!

Are you being called to this exciting ministry?
Want to know more about what a Verger does?

The Verger Guide may be found [here](#)

Please speak with Karen Ragland or
the Rector for more details.

CHAT AND CHEW

Have you ever considered hosting a Chat and Chew following Service in thanksgiving for a blessing received or in memory of a departed loved one? Please contact [Gladyce](#) in the church office for further details.

GFS Holiday House is in Jeopardy!

In the early morning hours, on January 26, 2025, notification arrived that the frigid cold weather caused a pipe to burst in our beloved summer retreat center, Holiday House. The water damage is beyond extensive and travels from the third floor down to the first floor. Built in 1870's, this is the last of 30 Holiday Houses in existence. It has offered shelter and housing to immigrant women, a retreat center for girls and women, and a place where summer memories were made and friendship cured.

This historic retreat center holds a special place in the hearts of St. Thomas GFS members. There is a room dedicated to Julia Porter, our first Branch Advisor. We need your help. Are you good at researching grants? Can you write a proposal? Do you have the acumen for gross fundraising? Can you provide a monetary donation? Please contact Nikkol Simms, Branch Advisor, if you can assist.

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

RE-IMAGINING OUR MINISTRIES

Persons are needed:

- to lift their voices on the **Comfort Choir** during funeral services at St. Thomas. Please contact [D. Lynn Joell](#) if interested.
- to serve with the **Sound Ministry** for Sunday morning service and weekday funeral services. If interested, please contact [Gladyce](#) in the Parish Office.
- to serve on the **Altar Guild**. This amazing group of individuals prepares our altar each week for the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Interested people should contact [Alfreda Brockman](#).
- to serve as **Readers and Intercessors** to read the Holy Scripture during our weekly services. Interested persons should contact [Gladyce](#) in the Parish Office to sign up.
- to join the **Transportation Ministry**. The main mission of the ministry is to provide transportation to parishioners who attend Sunday Service. Please contact [Gladyce](#) in the office if you are interested.
- as **Acolytes** to serve on the altar. Please contact [Fr. Daren](#) if you are interested.
- **Photography Ministry** is in need of additional photographers. You do not need to be a professional photographer but do enjoy taking pictures. Anyone interested can contact [Bill Edmonds](#) or [Dale Williams](#).
- **The Shepherds Ministry** is still in need of many more volunteers to be able to shepherd all households of our congregation. Shepherds set their own schedules to be in regular touch with their households of sheep by phone, email, text or various social media platforms. Each is assigned no more than 4 households. All Ministry meetings are held via Zoom. Please note that the Vestry will continue to shepherd, for one year, all new members joining the congregation. For more information, or to volunteer, please contact [Charlene M. Wiltshire](#).



ST. THOMAS PODCAST

Stay tuned! Our podcast will soon return. In the meantime, please enjoy the three previous episodes. If you would like to be a guest on any of the podcasts, please speak with Fr. Daren or [email](#) him for more information.



ATTENTION ALL ACOLYTES

Rehearsals are EACH SUNDAY immediately following service. For more information, please speak with [Fr. Daren](#).

On **Sunday, April 27**, immediately after service at their regular meeting, the young adults will discuss the topic: **Christian Dating as a Young Adult**. This conversation will be facilitated by our own Dr. Tim Barksdale.

CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHERS NEEDED

Are you willing to serve, at least one Sunday per month, as a church school teacher? Please prayerfully consider this call. We are especially looking for young adults, men, and anyone who loves children. Please use this [link](#) to register to become a church school teacher.



IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE RECTOR

St. Thomas celebrates children and youth not only as the church of TOMORROW but also as the church of TODAY!!! We embrace and celebrate our youth. If you have children in your family or neighborhood, please invite or bring them to be a part of our amazing Church School program. When was the last time you invited someone to church?

YOUTH COUNCIL

Do you feel called to work with Youth? Do you have great ideas that will help the church to connect with the youth of today (and vice versa)? You are invited to be a part of our parish Youth Council. Please contact [Fr. Daren](#) for more details.

YOUNG ADULT GATHERING

All young adults (those in their 20's and 30's) are invited to a time of fellowship on the 4th Sunday of every month in Anderson Hall immediately following worship.

GIRLS' FRIENDLY SOCIETY

All young ladies are invited to join us on Saturdays in the Undercroft at 11:00 AM.

The Girls' Friendly Society does not meet every Saturday.

Please contact [Nikkol Simms](#) for more information and the schedule.

DO YOU PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT?

Have you ever thought about using that talent to glorify God in worship? Please prayerfully consider joining our St. Thomas Jazz Ensemble, St. Thomas Chancel Choir or St. Thomas Gospel Choir. If interested, please contact [Gladyce](#) in the Parish Office ASAP to get details on upcoming scheduled rehearsals.

CALLING FOR YOUTH ACOLYTES!



Calling all youth! You are needed to serve in the AECST Acolyte Ministry. No prior experience is needed as training will be provided. This is an excellent way for our children and youth to be involved in the life of the church. For more information please speak with [Fr. Daren.](#)

Scout Troop #133 - Our Cub Scout Program is open to children grades 1-5. The Cub program meets at **2:00 PM on Saturdays.**

Our Scout Program is open to children aged 11-17 years old. The Scout Program meets at **3:00 PM on Saturdays.**

Please contact Scout [Master Howard Chapman](#) for more information.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR PARISHIONERS WHO ARE:

IN THE HOSPITAL: Mary Ann Phillips, Virginia DuBrey - Lankenau

IN LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENCES:

Helena Allen - Simpson House; Linda Holmes and Leotta Griffith - Saunders House; Gwendolyn Langford - Arden Courts of Cherry Hill; Inez Turner - The Residence at Bala Cynwyd; Ola Bass - The Pinnacle at Plymouth Meeting; Ridart "Butch" Farmer- Centennial Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center

AT HOME:

Robert Brown, Thelma Silvers, Lemont Johnson, Patricia Ellison, Barbara Douglas, Mary Ann Jones, Shirley Caldwell, Wendell Whitlock, Quincina Edmonds, Solomon Cropper, Sharon Harper, Donald Hunt, Sr., Verger Stephen Hannum, Marie Golson

KEEP IN PRAYER:

Justin Trotman, Cathy Stafford, Terri Taylor, Lisa Woodley, Adinah Edwards, Ann Stewart, Waltier Blocker, Arlene Gray, Donald Hunt, Jr., Daryn Stewart, Santee Ruffin, Angela Holloway, Sharon Harper

WE PRAY FOR

those who are Incarcerated and their families, as well as those affected by their actions.

HOW CAN I BE FAITHFUL TO GOD AND THE CHURCH THROUGH STEWARDSHIP?

“To whom much is given, much is required.” -Luke 12:48

The Stewardship Committee of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas recognizes that stewardship may take form in several ways, your time, your talent or your treasures. The one commonality is that each of us must prayerfully ask God to guide us in making the right choices and have faith that He will guide us to the right decision.

Our church has a tremendous congregation that is thriving and growing. The ministries that we have serve all of God’s children near and far. These endeavors require all three forms of stewardship: but especially your sharing of treasures. Prayerfully consider donating to one or all of the special requests below.

FAITHFUL GIVING CARD (PLEDGE)

Please pray for your Faithful Giving for 2025.

You’ll be able to complete your [Faithful Giving Card](#) on the [church website](#), or by using the paper Faithful Giving Card. Strong support is needed to meet the budget, our many endeavors and outreach projects at St. Thomas. Your Faithful Giving Card can also be placed in the Alms Basin or mailed to the church office.

THE BUILDING FUND ENVELOPES have been placed in Anderson Hall beside the Offering Envelopes. Please pick them up with your offering envelopes. If you’ve already picked your offering envelopes up, please pick up your Building Fund envelopes. You can also do your Building Fund offering [online](#). Each box of Building Fund envelopes will include twelve envelopes, one for each month.

Thank you.

CAPITAL BUILDING IMPROVEMENT FUND

If you are actively contributing, thank you! Your gifts are truly appreciated. Everyone is asked to make a minimum sacrificial gift of \$40 per month. The Building Fund Envelopes are located in Anderson Hall beside the Offering envelopes. When using electronic payments select "Building Fund." If using checks write "Building Fund" on the memo line of your check.

STEWARDSHIP NEWS

The church has received many "undeliverable" mailings. If you have moved, please update your mailing address with the church office by [email](#) or phone 215-473-3065.

Can you help deliver offertory envelopes to our sick and shut-in parishioners? If you live near a parishioner who is unable to come to church, it would be much appreciated if you would bring their envelopes to them. A list of our sick and shut-in parishioners is located next to the offertory envelopes in Anderson Hall.

IMPORTANT: Make sure your name, envelope #, and amount are included on the front of your offering envelope. This is critical for bookkeeping accuracy. Help is just an email away. Contact [Patricia Lynch](#).

RECTOR'S PRAYERFUL WISH LIST

\$100,000.00. Our air conditioning units have provided over 30 years of comfort. They are now in need of being replaced. Please prayerfully consider donating toward the replacement and use the [link](#) provided. Thank you to those who have already given toward the new air-conditioning units.

There are several ways to submit your offering and tithes: church service offertory, use the QR code, website donations, download the Givi app, U.S. Mail or hand deliver it to the fiscal office.



**The African Episcopal
Church of St. Thomas |
Abou...**

www.aecst.org

WAYS TO CONTINUE TO BE FAITHFUL TO GOD AND THE CHURCH THROUGH STEWARDSHIP

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver”. II Corinthians 9:7

1) **Sunday Offering Plate**

2) **Mail in** your check or money order to the church.

Please use the following address:

The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas
c/o Fiscal Administrator, 6361 Lancaster Avenue,
(Absalom Jones Way) Philadelphia, PA 19151

3) **Use the Givi app.** If you don't already use the app and nor an account, it's easy to obtain. Please download the Givi app, (**givi IOS App**) for your Apple (iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch) or (**givi Android App**) for your Android device. If you have any questions, please speak with **Deadra Cannon**, 215-844-6115.

4) **Bring your check** directly to the Fiscal Office during regular business hours (Monday - Thursday 10:00 AM-2:00 PM) **After business hours**, drop your envelope in the door mail slot located on the front patio of the Absalom Jones House.

5) **Church Website - [Online Giving](#)**

Simply select the button/s on the page that represents where you'd like your payment to be applied, i.e. your pledge, the AJ House, Easter, etc. **NOTE:** Please remember to enter your envelope number in the Customer ID field, if you are a member of St.Thomas when filling out your online giving information.

6) **Faithful Giving Cards (Pledge)** - Please send them via the US mail to the church or fill out the form **[electronically](#)** through the **www.aecst.org** website or send an email to our **[Fiscal Administrator](#)**. Thank you so much to all who have return them.

MINISTRY STAFF

Bishop	The Rt. Rev. Daniel G P Gutierrez	
Rector	The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw	rector@aecst.org
Associate to the Rector	The Rev. Fr. Daren E. Evans	associaterector@aecst.org
Associate Priest	The Rev. Fr. Gerald Collins	associatepriest@aecst.org
Associate Priest	The Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney	wilgafney@gmail.com
Associate Minister	The Rev. Dr. Paul Bach	pauljaybach@gmail.com
Executive Asst to the Rector	Gladyce DuBrey	1792@aecst.org
Fiscal Administrator	Jeannette Jeffrey	fiscal@aecst.org
Sexton	LaDon Elliott	1792@aecst.org
Asst Sexton	David McGillberry	1792@aecst.org
Chancel Choirmaster	Jay Fluellen, D.M.A.	chancelchoir@aecst.org
Gospel Choirmaster	Waltier Blocker	gospelchoir@aecst.org
Rector's General Counsel	Joe Tucker, Esq.	jtucker@tlgattorneys.com
Altar Guild	Alfreda Brockman	fredabee@verizon.net
Baptism Co-Chairs	Gail Hinton Harris	thegail@hotmail.com
	Patricia Walker-Ellison	p.walker.ellison@gmail.com
Church School Superintendent	Tynecia Wilson	churchschool@aecst.org
Ed Muse Photography Ministry	William Edmonds	edmon57@comcast.net
Fiscal Advisor to the Rector	Deadra Cannon	assistantfiscal@aecst.org
Girls Friendly Society	Nikkol Simms	njsimms@verizon.net
Jazz Ensemble Director	Jay Fluellen, D.M.A.	chancelchoir@aecst1792.org
Live Stream Ministry	Yaseen Farooq Teri Tillman	livevideo@aecst.org
Memorial Flowers	Alfreda Brockman	fredabee@verizon.net
	Clare Mae Daniels	happycmd05@aol.com
Monarch Greeters Ministry	Ashley Hines	1792@aecst.org
Parish Vergers	Stephen Hannum	1792@aecst.org
	Karen Ragland	Kdrags415@gmail.com
Parish Webmaster	Gail Hinton Harris	webmanager@aecst.org
Property Chair	William Burke	property@aecst.org
Scout Pack 133	Howard Chapman	howchapman@gmail.com
	Arlene Gray	bsapack0133@gmail.com
Stewardship Chair	Patricia Lynch	stewardship@aecst.org
Transportation Ministry		
Videography Ministry	Quentin Heyward	recordedvideo@aecst.org
Visitor's Ministry	Edita Gauthney Michele Green	visitorsministry@aecst.org
Voices of Comfort	Robert Davenport	1792@aecst.org
William Burke Ushers Ministry	Arlene Singletary	leaniepo302@gmail.com

THE VESTRY

Rector's Warden - Richard Jones | Accounting Warden - Deborah Camp-Frye
Clerk of the Vestry - Pamela Johnson | Treasurer - Albert S. Dandridge, III Esq.
Stewardship Chair - Patricia Lynch | Property Chair - William Burke

Dr. Tim Barksdale	Clare Mae Daniels	Kelvin Johnson
Judith Simkins Booth	Eugene Golson	Monica Lewis Jones
Deadra Cannon	Marie B. Golson	Deborah Matthews

THE AUXILIARY VESTRY

Brenda Best	Mary Sandra Dean	Dr. Monica Johnson Taylor
Conchetta Brewer	Elaine Gillison	Darryle (Bobby) Tillman
Sharon Bullock	D. Lynn Joell	Judy Tillman
Ronnie Collins	Cynthia Muse	

DELEGATES TO THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION

Albert S. Dandridge, III Esq. | Dr. Cassandra Ruffin | Alternate: Tyrone Keller

DELEGATES TO THE SCHUYLKILL DEANERY

Phyllis Cater | Mary Dean | Alternate: Tyrone Keller