

**“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 this **the Third Sunday after the Epiphany, and Welcome New Members / Returning Members.**

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. The first rector of this historic parish, The Rev. 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. Again, welcome!

Faithfully,

**Martini Shaw**<sup>+</sup>

(The Very Rev. Canon) Martini Shaw,

17<sup>th</sup> Rector and

Dean of the Schuylkill Deanery

**The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas**  
**The Third Sunday after the Epiphany**  
**New / Returning Member Sunday**

**January 21, 2024**  
**10:00 am**

**Celebrant:** The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw

**Homilist:** The Rev. Fr. Daren E. Evans

**Seminarian in residence:** Kathryn Brossa

**Music Ministry:** St. Thomas Chancel Choir

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**ORDER OF SERVICE**

**The Prelude**

St. Thomas Music Ministry

**The Opening Hymn - "When Morning Gilds the Skies**

**1982 Hymnal # 427**

- 1.) When morning gilds the skies,  
My heart awaking cries:  
May Jesus Christ be praised!  
Alike at work and prayer  
To Jesus I repair:  
May Jesus Christ be praised!
  
- 2.) To Thee, my God above,  
I cry with glowing love,  
May Jesus Christ be praised!  
The fairest graces spring  
In hearts that ever sing,  
May Jesus Christ be praised!
  
- 3.) Does sadness fill my mind?  
A solace here I find,  
May Jesus Christ be praised!  
Or fades my earthly bliss?  
My comfort still is this,  
May Jesus Christ be praised!

4.) When evil thoughts molest,  
With this I shield my breast,  
May Jesus Christ be praised!  
The powers of darkness fear,  
When this sweet chant they hear,  
May Jesus Christ be praised!

5.) When sleep her balm denies,  
My silent spirit sighs,  
May Jesus Christ be praised!  
The night becomes as day.  
When from the heart we say,  
May Jesus Christ be praised!

6.) Be this, while life is mine,  
My canticle divine,  
May Jesus Christ be praised!  
Be this th' eternal song  
Through all the ages long,  
May Jesus Christ be praised!

**A Word of Welcome**

The Celebrant

**The Opening Acclamation**

**The Celebrant:** Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**People:** And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. AMEN.

**The Collect for Purity**

**Celebrant:** Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your Holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **The Gloria in excelsis - Celebrant and People**

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen**

## **The Proclamation of the Word**

### **The Collect of the Day**

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen*

### **The First Reading**

Caryn Rivers

#### **A Reading from the Book of Jonah 3:1-5, 10**

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

**Reader:** The Word of the Lord.

**People:** Thanks be to God.

**Psalm 62:6-14**

Clare Mae Daniels

For God alone my soul in silence waits; \*  
**truly, my hope is in him.**

He alone is my rock and my salvation, \*  
**my stronghold, so that I shall not be shaken.**

In God is my safety and my honor; \*  
**God is my strong rock and my refuge.**

Put your trust in him always, O people, \*  
**pour out your hearts before him, for God is our refuge.**

Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath, \*  
**even those of low estate cannot be trusted.**

On the scales they are lighter than a breath, \*  
**all of them together.**

Put no trust in extortion;  
in robbery take no empty pride; \*  
**though wealth increase, set not your heart upon it.**

God has spoken once, twice have I heard it, \*  
**that power belongs to God.**

Steadfast love is yours, O Lord, \*  
**for you repay everyone according to his deeds.**

**The Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31**

Seth Williams

**A Reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome.**

I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

**Reader:** The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**The Gradual Hymn - "Lead Me, Guide Me"**

LEVAS # 194

1.) I am weak, and I need Thy strength and power  
To help me over my weakest hour;  
Let me through the darkness Thy face to see,  
Lead me, O Lord, lead me.

**Refrain:** Lead me, guide me along the way  
For if you lead me, I cannot stray;  
Lord, let me wake each day with thee.  
Lead me, O Lord, lead me.

2.) Help me tread in the paths of righteousness;  
Be my aid when Satan and sin oppress.  
I am putting all my trust in Thee,  
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. [Refrain]

3.) I am lost, if you take your hand from me;  
I am blind without Thy Light to see;  
Lord, just always let me Thy servant be,  
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. [Refrain]

**The Holy Gospel: Mark 1:14-20**

**Priest:** The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

**People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

After John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

**The Priest:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**People:** Praise to you Lord Christ.

## **The Homily Hymn - "Lead Me, Guide Me"**

LEVAS #194

1.) I am weak, and I need Thy strength and power  
To help me over my weakest hour;  
Let me through the darkness Thy face to see,  
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. **[Refrain]**

**Refrain:** Lead me, guide me along the way  
For if you lead me, I cannot stray;  
Lord, let me wake each day with thee.  
Lead me, O Lord, lead me.

2.) Help me tread in the paths of righteousness;  
Be my aid when Satan and sin oppress.  
I am putting all my trust in Thee,  
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. **[Refrain]**

3.) I am lost, if you take your hand from me;  
I am blind without Thy Light to see;  
Lord, just always let me Thy servant be,  
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. **[Refrain]**

## **The Homily The Call to Christian Discipleship**

Fr. Daren

### **The Prayers of the People**

Let us pray for the Church and for the world, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world. Lord, in your mercy; **Hear our prayer.**

For Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Daniel, our Bishop; Martini, our Rector, Daren, our Associate Rector; Gerald, our Associate Priest; Kathryn, our Seminarian; Paul and Thomas, our Associate Ministers; and for all Bishops and other Ministers; Lord in your mercy. **Guide and bless them, O Lord.**

Guide the people of this land, and all of the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good. Lord, in your mercy; **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world, for the leaders of the nations, and for all in authority. Lord, in your mercy. **Come Lord and save us.**

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory. Lord, in your mercy; **Hear our prayer.**

Give us the grace to do your will, Lord, everything in your name and for your honor and glory. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Have compassion on those who suffer from any illness, anxiety, depression or unemployment. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those who have entered into the joy of the heavenly Jerusalem, especially those who have died; Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those incarcerated: Guide them Lord in all they do with your Grace and Love and grant them your continual help. In all their problems, your guidance; in all their dangers, your protection and in all their sorrows, your peace. And we remember and pray for those who may have been affected by their actions. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those who may be experiencing loneliness or sadness during this Season following the death of a loved one, grant them your presence and comfort. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those seeking a deeper spiritual meaning and purpose for their life, grant them your guidance and protection. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

In thanksgiving for the blessings of 2023 and blessings to come in 2024. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Prince of Peace help us.

**God of Grace save us.**

In the communion of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Thomas, Absalom, and all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life to Christ our God; **To thee, Lord our God.**

## **The Confession**

**Celebrant:** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Let us kneel and confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Silence is kept)

**Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and what we have left undone, We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. AMEN.**

## **The Absolution**

**Celebrant:** Almighty God, have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

## **The Peace**

**Celebrant:** The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**People:** And also, with you.

## **The Holy Eucharist**

**The Offertory Sentence and Offering**

**The Offertory Musical Selection**

St. Thomas Chancel Choir

## **The Great Thanksgiving**

**Celebrant:** The Lord be with you.

**People: And also, with you.**

**Celebrant:** Lift up your hearts.

**People: We lift them to the Lord.**

**Celebrant:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

**Celebrant and People (Sung)**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

**The Celebrant**

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world. On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Celebrant and People (Sung)**

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

But chiefly are we bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us, and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has won for us everlasting life.

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. AMEN.

### **The Lord's Prayer (Sung)**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

#### **People and Celebrant**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

### **The Breaking of the Bread**

**Celebrant:** Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

**People:** Therefore, let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

### **The Agnus Dei**

**Celebrant:** Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world

**People:** Have mercy upon us.

**Celebrant:** Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world

**People:** Have mercy upon us.

**Celebrant:** Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world

**People:** Grant us thy peace.

### **The Prayer of Humble Access - Celebrant and People**

**Let us pray: We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table; but thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy; Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood and that we may evermore dwell in him, and hi in us. AMEN.**

**The Celebrant:** The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

### **The Distribution of Communion**

#### **The Post Communion Prayer**

**Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

#### **Sending Forth of the Lay Eucharistic Visitors**

**Celebrant:** In the healing name of Jesus and with the compassionate embrace of this parish family, I send you forth bearing these Holy Gifts to those to whom you go today, so that they may share with us in the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood.

**People:** We who are many are one body, and we all share one bread and one cup.

#### **The Announcements**

Rector's Warden, Richard Jones

#### **Welcome New / Returning Members of 2023**

#### **The Recognition of Visitors and Guests**

#### **The Blessing of Birthdays, Anniversaries and Travel**

#### **The Final Blessing**

The Celebrant

#### **The Closing Hymn - "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"**

1.) I have decided to follow Jesus;

I have decided to follow Jesus;

I have decided to follow Jesus;

no turning back, no turning back.

2.) Though none go with me, still I will follow;

Though none go with me, still I will follow;

Though none go with me, still I will follow;

no turning back, no turning back.

3.) The world behind me, the cross before me;

The world behind me, the cross before me;

The world behind me, the cross before me;  
No turning back, no turning back.

**The Dismissal**  
**The Postlude**

St. Thomas Music Ministry