

Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe." Mark 5:36

Believe in God's awesome power. To God be the Glory!

The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas • First Black Episcopal Church in the USA The Very Reverend Canon Martini Shaw, 17th Rector 6361 Lancaster Avenue • Philadelphia, PA 19151 • (215) 473-3065 www.aecst.org • www.facebook.com/aecst1792

# THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

# July 17, 2022, 10:00 AM **"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 Sixth Sunday of Pentecost.

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. Whomever 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.

Faithfully,

The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw, 17th Rector and Dean of the Schuylkill Deanery

> Please click for the <u>Order of Service</u> for this Sunday's service.

**From the Rector:** Whoever you may be and however you may find yourself experiencing life's journey, do know that St. Thomas Church welcomes you.



CHURCH AND PARISH OFFICE HOURS JULY - AUGUST, Monday - Thursday, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM CLOSED FRIDAYS

## SIX WEEK SUMMER HOMILY SERIES

Theme: "Re-Imagining the Church - Post Pandemic"

- July 3rd Introduction (Fr. Shaw)
- July 10th Re-Imagining History (Arthur Sudler)
- July 17th Re-Imagining Music (Dr. Jay Fluellen)
- July 24th Re-Imagining Resources (Albert Dandridge)
- July 31st Re- Imagining Music (Dr. Rollo Dilworth)
- August 7 Re- Imagining Worship (Quentin Heyward, Brandon Stiff, and Terri Tillman)
- August 14 Re-Imagining Music (Waltier Blocker)

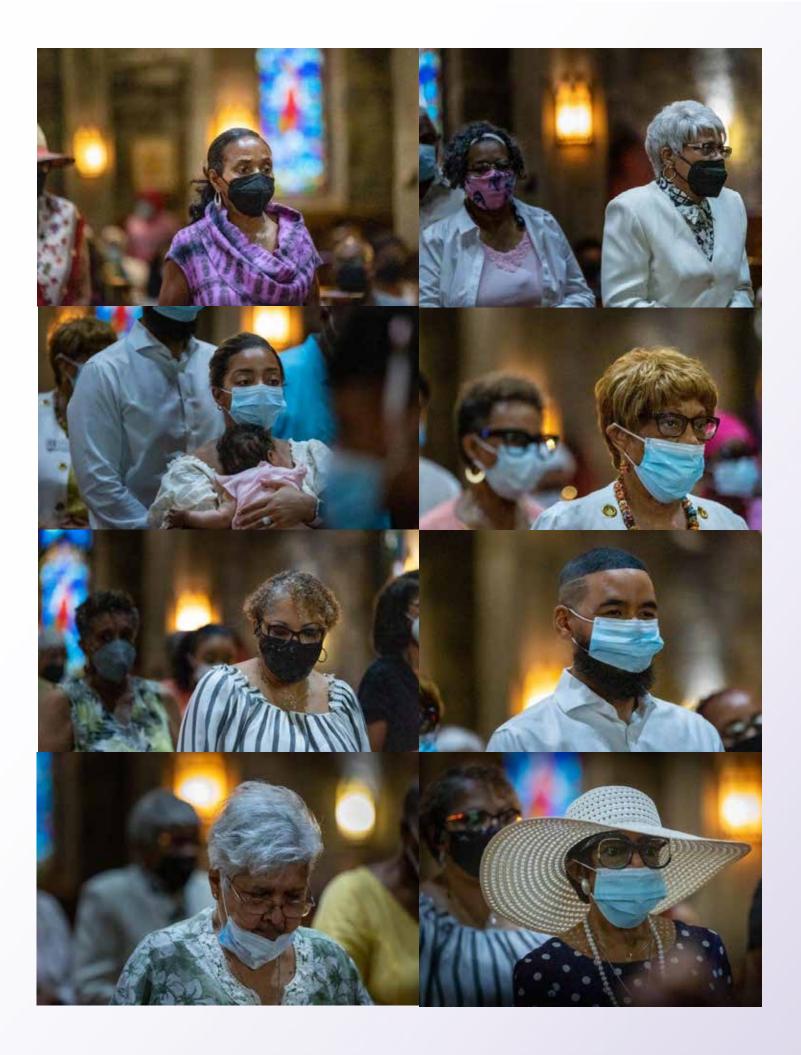
## PICTURES FROM THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST JULY 10, 2022

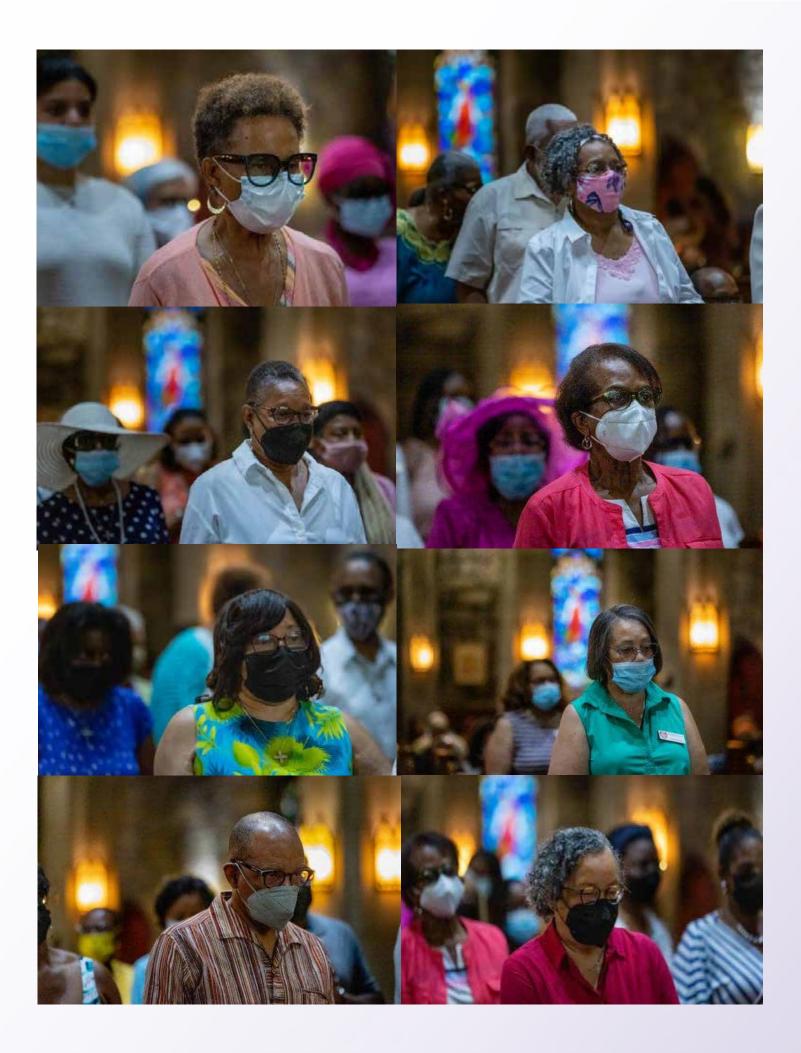
















FORT LAUDERDALE, FL

ONLINE REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN UMACONLINE.COM



The Philadelphia Union Soccer Team would like to invite you to their Faith and Family Night on Saturday, July 30th at 7:30 PM.

Join friends and family for an evening of fellowship and fun as the Union host Houston on Saturday, July 30th.

The match kicks off at **7:30** P.M., but be sure to join us early for a pre-game panel that starts at 5 pm in-stadium featuring Philadelphia Union players, team Chaplain, and team staff. The players will speak about faith and the role it has played in their journey to becoming professional athletes. This intimate opportunity to engage directly with multiple Union players is a can't miss event!

If you are interested in attending this event, please contact **Gladyce** in the church office.

#### **SAVE THE DATE NOW!** Lancaster Avenue Re-naming Saturday, September 17, 2022, at 11:00 AM

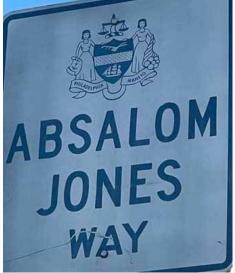
A portion of Lancaster Avenue will be renamed Absalom Jones Way.

#### **Homecoming Weekend:**

Come join us for part of this Homecoming Weekend. In Celebration of our 230th Year Anniversary and renaming of a portion of Lancaster Avenue in Memory of Blessed Absalom Jones.

#### Homecoming Sunday September 18, 2022

Co-Chairs - Albert Dandridge, Esg., Monica Lewis Jones, Catherine Stafford



The street is now being newly paved.





#### SAVE THE DATE!

You are invited to attend the Celebration of Marriage of *Nathan Wallace, Jr.* 

Carlia Miller

on Saturday, August 13, 2022 at 1:00 PM.

The African Episcopal Churchof St. Thomas 6361 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19139

#### SPEARHEAD NEWSLETTER EMAILS

If you are not receiving the Spearhead emails, please use the <u>Newsletter</u> sign up link. Your information will NEVER be shared or sold and you can **UNsubscribe** at anytime by following the instructions provided at the bottom of every email message.

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#### **ATTENTION ALL MEN**

Every Sunday, ALL men are invited to briefly stop and greet other men of the parish outside under the carport after service each week.

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ATTENTION RISING COLLEGE FRESHMEN: FENCE (Families of Episcopalians Nurturing within the College Environment) is a ministry created for the AECST's college students who will be living away from home. An Episcopal parish closest to your campus and a family or individual that is a member of that parish will help to facilitate your assimilation into your new community.

If interested, for more information, please send an email to Ms. Charlene M. Wiltshire at <u>cwiltshi@comcast.net</u> providing your name, telephone number, college name & address. You may also speak with her before or after Sunday services.



#### YOUTH FUN DAY

Calling All Children, Teens, and Families to St. Thomas for fun and fellowship on our **Youth Fun Day, September 24, 2022. 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM.** There will be activities and games for all ages.

Come and learn about the Acolytes, Angels in Motion, Church School, The Girls' Friendly Society, and the Scouts. Bring a friend. All are Welcome! For more information, please contact **Nikki Simms** or **Wendella Fox.** 



#### GHOST GUNS FACT SHEET What is a Ghost Gun? Ghost guns — untraceable firearms without serial numbers, assembled from components bought online are increasingly becoming the lethal weapon of easy access

for those legally barred from buying or owning guns around the country. The criminal underground has long relied on stolen weapons with filed-off serial numbers, but ghost guns represent a digital-age upgrade.

**Ghost guns** have flourished because of a loophole in federal regulation: The parts used to build "privately made firearms" are classified as components, not actual guns, which means that online buyers are not required to undergo background checks or register the weapons.that makes them a powerful magnet for those banned from gun ownership, including convicted felons, domestic abusers subject to orders of protection, the mentally ill and children.

**The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (**ATF)'s current interpretation of federal law allows people who can't legally own a firearm to easily buy the parts for a ghost gun. In less than one hour, these self-made weapons become fully functioning, untraceable firearms. A person can buy the parts and assemble a ghost gun from a kit on the Internet.

#### The Scope of the Problem

In 2021 NBC News in Philadelphia reported that 1 out of every 10 of all firearms confiscated at crime scenes in Philadelphia were ghost guns. That number is rapidly expanding year by year. Ghost guns are the fastest-growing gun safety problem facing our country. "The number of "ghost guns" recovered by Philadelphia police during criminal investigations has skyrocketed to 436 through Oct. 4 of this year, more than all the homemade guns seized in the city in 2019 and 2020 combined."

This epidemic is hitting young people hard. "People aren't buying regular guns anymore," said Antoine Towers [quoted in the New York Times], who works for an anti-violence program in Oakland. "Almost all the youngsters are using ghosts."

## **Needed Legislation**

Closing the ghost gun loophole is vital for Pennsylvania. What we need is a law that would treat ghost guns as traditional firearms - requiring core components to be engraved with serial numbers, - imposing background checks, and

-requiring online purchasers to pick up their orders at federally licensed gun shops.

# A Deadly Loophole – Specs on a Ghost

Gun Ghost guns pose an elemental question: What makes a gun a gun?

Every semiautomatic weapon consists of two main parts: the movable upper "slide," which sits on the barrel of a pistol, and the "receiver" or "frame" — the lower part to which almost everything else, including the trigger and magazine, can be attached and made functional after drilling a few holes and filing a groove into an unfinished, factory-produced frame.

Under federal law, any frame or receiver considered 80 percent finished is a functional firearm subject to the same regulations as a fully assembled gun. If it is less than 80 percent finished, it is not subject to the same federal safeguards. Even so, an amateur can make the minor modifications needed to turn it into a working firearm in less than an hour.

### CALL TO ACTION - THE SCHUYLKILL DEANERY'S LETTERS TO STOP GUN VIOLENCE - TAKE UP YOUR PENS!

St Thomas, you are reminded to take a copy of the letter home today. YOU are asked to address the letter with your state legislature's name and address. Mail your letter this week! (Don't forget your return address). There will be additional mailings in July, August, and September. The Schuylkill Deanery will provide us with copies of letters each month as we attempt to be a consistent and constant voice addressing gun violence in Philadelphia. Here are links to the Letter and Script.

If you have any specifics you would like to see added to future letters, please contact <u>Mary Dean</u> or <u>Phyllis Cater</u>. Your voices need to be heard!

How to Find Your Representative: Need to find your local, state, or federal elected representatives so that you can mail our letter? <u>https://myreps.datamade.us/</u>

#### A FEW QUOTES AND PARAPHRASES ON "VIRTUAL WORSHIP"

"Virtual and live stream worship have been, and will continue to be, a blessing to the church. However, by no means can it substitute coming and physically receiving the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist (Communion)." (From Fr. Martini Shaw's Homily on Jan. 16, 2022).

"Online Masses and Spiritual Communion do not represent the church. The faithful not gathered to receive the Sacraments is not the church. Jesus' disciples always lived their relationship with the Lord in Community. They gathered, around the sacrament, at the same table, as a sign of community". (Pope Francis' message)

"If you are unable to receive the Sacrament, by reasons of extreme sickness or physical disability; or when being present at a celebration is absolutely impossible, it is possible to open yourself to God's grace and blessing". (Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer).



## **IMPORTANT NOTICE:**

The wearing of masks will remain MANDATORY while at St. Thomas until further notice. St. Thomas will follow the recommended guidelines of the CDC, the City of Philadelphia, and the Diocese of PA. Let us love our neighbor and worship safely!

Masks are available for all in attendance if needed. Hand sanitizer is also available. The ventilation system has been changed to let in outside air. We request that all in attendance be VACCINATED. Unvaccinated individuals are requested to watch the Service via <u>Live Stream</u>.

#### **POSITION OPENING - ST. THOMAS ASSISTANT SEXTON**

Part-time position is open for an Assistant Sexton. Hours are typically some weekday evenings, Saturdays, and Sundays. Presently, reduced hours due to pandemic restrictions. Hours will increase as in-person activities increase. For more information, interested persons should contact: Deborah Harrison.

## **ATTENTION:**

We are so blessed to be stewards of a beautiful property that God has entrusted to our care. Persons are needed to serve on our Property Committee. If interested, please speak with <u>Deborah Harrison</u> or call the Parish Office to express your interest.

### 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.

If interested, please contact Gladyce in the Parish Office ASAP to get details on upcoming scheduled rehearsals.

#### **VESTRY MEETING**

If you are a member of St. Thomas and wish to participate in a monthly Vestry Meeting via Zoom, you must notify the Vestry Clerk. Send an email to <u>vestryclerk@aecst.org</u> at least two days prior to the meeting. You will then receive the link needed to join the meeting. Vestry meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m.

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#### **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 who may be parked in a nearby remote parking lot. Please contact **Gladyce** in the office if you are interested.

as Acolytes to serve on the altar. Please contact **Gladyce** in the office if you are interested.

**Calling All Future Shepherds of the AECST:** Plans are in the works for resurrecting and re-imagining the **SHEEP & SHEPHERDS MINISTRY** created many years ago by parishioner Mrs. Vernette Dow. As a telephone ministry, the goal is that every **AECST** family of parishioners (sheep) will have a shepherd that keeps in touch with them on a regular basis. We are now calling for parishioners to volunteer as shepherds. Before this ministry can be rolled-out, a sufficient number of volunteers is needed in order to minimize the number of families that each will shepherd. Please note that the Vestry will continue to shepherd new members. For more information and to volunteer, please either see **Charlene M. Wiltshire** before or after Sunday church services or send an email. Thank you!

# DAILY RECOMMENDED BIBLE READINGS READINGS FOR

The Sixth Sunday of Pentecost July 17, 2022 \_The First Reading: <u>Genesis 18:1-10a</u> <u>Psalm 15</u> \_The Second Reading: <u>Colossians 1:15-28</u> \_The Holy Gospel: <u>Luke 10:38-42</u>

#### The Holy Gospel Readings for

The Week of July 18, 2022 \_Monday - Mark 4:1-20 Tuesday- Mark 4:21-34 \_Wednesday - Mark 4:35-41 Thursday- Mark 5:1-20 \_Friday - Mark 5:21-43 Saturday - Mark 6:1-13

The Seventh Sunday of Pentecost July 24, 2022 The First Reading: <u>Genesis 18:20-32</u> <u>Psalm 138</u> The Second Reading: <u>Colossians 2:6-15</u> The Holy Gospel: <u>Luke 11:1-13</u>

## The Holy Gospel Readings for

the Week of July 25, 2022 Monday- <u>Mark 6:14-29</u> Tuesday- <u>Mark 6:30-46</u> Wednesday - <u>Mark 6:47-56</u> Thursday- <u>Mark 7:1-23</u> Friday - <u>Mark 7:24-37</u> Saturday - <u>Mark 8:1-10</u>

# The Eighth Sunday of Pentecost

July 31, 2022

The First Reading: Ecclesiastes 1:2,12-14 Psalm 49:1-11

The Second Reading: <u>Colossians 3:1-11</u> the Holy Gospel: <u>Luke 12:13-21</u>

#### The Holy Gospel Readings for

the Week of August 7, 2022 Monday- <u>Mark 8:11-21</u> Tuesday- <u>Mark 8:22-33</u> Wednesday - <u>Mark 8:34-9:1</u> Thursday- <u>Mark 9:2-13</u> Friday - <u>Mark 9:14-29</u> Saturday - <u>Mark 9:30-41</u>



AECST BIBLE STUDY WITH FR. JAY Bible Study with Fr. Jay will resume on Tuesday, September 13th at 7:00 PM.

## ALTAR FLOWERS

Flowers on the High Altar are in Loving Memory of my sister, Marie Hopper, given by Carolyn D. Hopper.

Flowers on the Columbarium are In Loving Memory of my wife **Phyllis B. Johnson**, given with love by your husband Bobby.

To order flowers for the Sunday, please return the form with payment to:

Clare Mae Daniels or Alfreda Brockman.

Please do not place in the collection plate or give to the church office) Thank you.

\_\_ flowers on the High Altar - \$60.00

- \_\_ flowers on the Absalom Jones Altar \$50.00
- \_\_ flowers on the Columbarium- \$40.00

\_\_\_An Easter Lily @\$25.00 each (5 names per plant)

Please PRINT In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_, In Thanksgiving for\_\_\_\_\_,

Name \_\_\_\_\_, Envelope#\_\_\_\_, Amount\_\_\_\_\_.

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## ASSOCIATE RECTOR SEARCH

The Rector has restarted an official Search Process for the Calling of an Associate to the Rector for Youth Ministries and Parish Life.

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ACOLYTES NEEDED

We are in need of Acolytes (Youth and Adults). Please consider serving God in this rewarding ministry. If interested, please contact the Rector ASAP.

## PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR PARISHIONERS WHO ARE:

**IN THE HOSPITAL:** Charles Fleming - Presbyterian; Leatrice Snowden - Lankenau

## **RECOVERING AT HOME**

Alice Bowman-Cropper, Grace Wetzel, Gwenda Hart, Rosalind Rodriquez, Charles Flemming.

### PLEASE KEEP IN PRAYER

Louise Lewis, Terri Barber, Adinah Edwards, Joan Hall, Robert Brown, Georgia Sawyer, Isedora "Gwen" Francis, Shirley Winkfield, Dr. Thomas Snowden, Shirley Caldwell, Lisa Woodley, Stephanie Williamson, Francina Norris, Ridart "Butch" Farmer, Leotta Griffith, Karen Ragland, Winston Lowe, Kenneth Dow, Linda Holmes, Edita Gauthney, Justin Trotman, Teena Watson Matthews, Gail and Roosevelt Harris, Sr..

#### WE PRAY FOR

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

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## ST. THOMAS COLUMBARIUM INURNMENT

If you have a loved one who has passed away in the last year and would like to schedule a St. Thomas columbarium inurnment, please contact the church office at 215-473-3065.

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## **OUR CONDOLENCES**

to Bettie Jones and her family on the death of her nephew, Joseph Gause, Jr. Please pray for the family.

# CAPITAL BUILDING IMPROVEMENT CAMPAIGN

Thank you to all who have contributed to the fund. Everyone is asked to please make a minimum sacrificial gift of \$40 per month. Please use the envelope from your packet or place Building Fund in the Memo section of your check or click the Donation Button or Capital Improvement **Donation Button** on our **website**.

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## THE 2022 OFFERING ENVELOPES

are now ready for you to pick up in Anderson Hall. If you're unable to pick them up on Sundays after church you may do so Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM. If you have a parishioner who lives near you who can't get to church, perhaps you can pick theirs up as well.

You can now complete your pledge card by mail or on our website.

If you have decided to use the Givi App or Online Giving Donations, please email me at <a href="mailto:stewardship@aecst.org">stewardship@aecst.org</a> with your name and envelope number.

If you have moved and have not sent your new address to the church office at 215-473-3065 or email, please do so ASAP. The church has received many returned mailings because of bad addresses. We would appreciate your new address, phone number and email address. Thanks so much for your help with this.

Thank you very much.

Judy Tillman, Stewardship Committee

#### A CHART TO ASSIST US WITH OUR FAITHFUL GIVING

Holy Scripture commends a minimum tithe of (10% of our earnings)

# Where are you on your spiritual journey? Annual Faithful Giving

Yearly Income	2%	5%	10%
\$10,000.00	\$200.00	\$500.00	\$1,000.00
\$15,000.00	\$300.00	\$750.00	\$1,500.00
\$20,000.00	\$400.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
\$25,000.00	\$500.00	\$1,250.00	\$2,500.00
\$30,000.00	\$600.00	\$1,500.00	\$3,000.00
\$40,000.00	\$800.00	\$2,000.00	\$4,000.00
\$50,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$5,000.00
\$60,000.00	\$1,200.00	\$3,000.00	\$6,000.00
\$70,000.00	\$1,400.00	\$3,500.00	\$7,000.00
\$80,000.00	\$1,600.00	\$4,000.00	\$8,000.00
\$90,000.00	\$1,800.00	\$4,500.00	\$9,000.00
\$100,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$10,000.00
\$110,000.00	\$2,200.00	\$5,500.00	\$11,000.00
\$120,000.00	\$2,400.00	\$6,000.00	\$12,000.00
\$150,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$15,000.00
\$175,000.00	\$3,500.00	\$8,750.00	\$17,500.00
\$200,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$20,000.00

"To whom much is given, much is required." Luke 12:48

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

"To whom much is given, much is required." Luke 12:48

- 1) Sunday Offering Plate.
- 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, Philadelphia, PA 19151
- 3) Use the Givi app. If you don't already use the app and don't have an account, it's easy to obtain. Please click the links below for the type of device you own to 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 Parish Office during regular business hours. 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.
- 6) Pledge Cards: Pledge cards can still be sent for 2022. Please send them via the US mail to the church or electronically through the <u>www.aecst.org</u> website or send an email to our <u>Fiscal Administrator</u>. Thank you so much and thank you to all who have sent them in.

Bishop Rector Assistant to the Rector Associate Priest Associate Minister Associate Minister Executive Asst to the Rector Fiscal Administrator Sexton Asst Sexton Chancel Choirmaster Gospel Choirmaster Rector's General Counsel Baptism Co-Chairs

Church School Superintendent Ed Muse Photography Ministry Fiscal Assistant to the Rector Girls Friendly Society Jazz Ensemble Director Live Stream Ministry

**Memorial Flowers** 

**Parish Vergers** 

Parish Webmaster Property Chair Special Advisor to the Rector Scout Pack 133

Transportation Ministry Videography Ministry William Burke Ushers Ministry

#### **MINISTRY STAFF**

The Rt. Rev. Daniel G P Gutierrez The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw

The Rev. Fr. Gerald Collins The Rev. Dr. Thomas G Snowden The Rev. Dr. Paul Bach Gladyce DuBrey Jeannette Jeffrey LaDon Elliott **Ronald Jones** Jay Fluellen, D.M.A. Waltier Blocker Joe Tucker, Esq Gail H Harris Patricia Walker-Ellison **Dottie Archev** William Edmonds Deborah Camp - Frve Nikkol Simms Joe Stevenson Yaseen Faroog Terri Tillman Alfreda Brockman Clare Mae Daniels **Stephen Hannum** Karen Ragland Lisa Steward-New Gail H Harris Deborah Harrison **Richard Jones** Howard Chapman Arlene Grav J. Reggie Kimble Que ntin Heyward Arlene Singletary

#### rector@aecst.org

associatepriest@aecst.org dravidian@comcast.net pauljaybach@gmail.com 1792@aecst.org fiscal@aecst.org 1792@aecst.org 1792@aecstorg chancelchoir@aecst.org gospelchoir@aecst.org jtucker@tlgattorneys.com thegail@hotmail.com p.walker.ellison@gmail.com churchschool@aecst.org edmon57@comcast.net 1792@aecst.org njsimms@verizon.net jobopss@aol.com livevideo@aecst.org

fredabee@verizon.net happycmd05@aol.com 1792@aecst.org Kdrags415@gmail.com ljs210@msn.com webmanager@aecst.org dneharrison04@gmail.com r724jones1@gmail.com howchapman@gmail.com bsapack0133@gmail.com tkglimo@aol.com recordedvideo@aecst.org leaniepo@verizon.net

#### THE VESTRY

Rector's Warden - Deadra Cannon Accounting Warden - Kelvin Johnson Clerk of the Vestry - Clare Mae Daniels Treasurer - Albert S. Dandridge, III Esq.

> Patricia Bantom Brenda Johnson Best Judith Simkins Booth Ronnie Collins Wendella Fox, Esq. Deborah Harrison D. Lynn Joell Jonathan Muse Darryl (Bobby) Tillman Judith Tillman

#### THE AUXILIARY VESTRY

Patricia Akins Conchetta Brewer Sharon Bullock Frank Johmson Gregory Lyles Patricia Lynch

#### THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF SAINT THOMAS is a

Christ-centered community that welcomes all people. This community embraces and executes the core values of our founder, the Reverend Absalom Jones: leadership, morality, spirituality, equal rights, education, liberty, charity, justice, humanitarianism, self-determination, self-respect, and freedom.

St. Thomas is an open, Christ-centered community of faith in which the Gospel is re-imaged, taught, lived and spread.