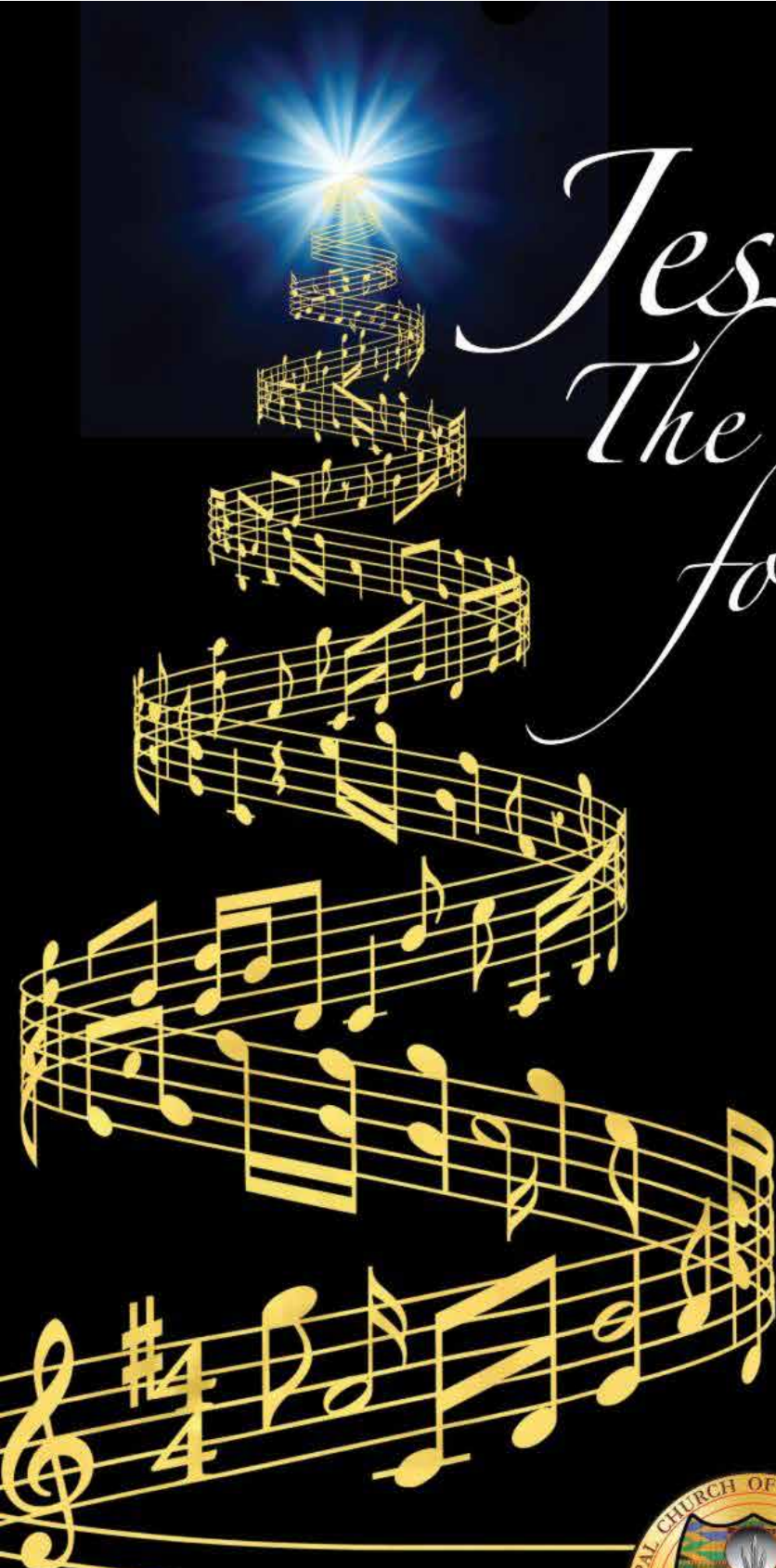


Jesus... The Reason for the Season



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 FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS
DECEMBER 28, 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



Scan the QR code or text "AECST" to 73256 to support our church and our ministries.

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

“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 First Sunday after Christmas,

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. 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 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!

Wishing you a very blessed twelve days of Christmas.

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

THE RECTOR IS AWAY ON HOLIDAY.

Fr. Shaw, Fr. Daren, and Fr. Jay would like to wish everyone a very Happy and Blessed New Year. They would also like to thank everyone who expressed holiday greetings, calls, texts, and gifts. They are deeply grateful and thankful.

FROM THE RECTOR:

Please help us end the year without a deficit by completing your 2025 financial pledge by December 31, 2025. If you are unsure about your balance, please contact Jeannette in the fiscal office at 215-471-3065 or fiscal@aecst.org as soon as possible. Enormous thanks for your continued support and gracious contributions.



FAITHFUL GRATITUDE

Please use this link to express and pledge your **Faithful Gratitude** to God for 2026.

<https://forms.gle/yj3eujEaSZ58VMgK9>

**STEWARDSHIP THEME:
FAITHFUL GRATITUDE DURING 2026
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	\$1,200.00	\$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

2026 FAITHFUL GIVING CARDS

We have kicked off our Annual Stewardship Season at St. Thomas.
Enormous thanks to ALL who have submitted their Faithful Giving
Cards. Please add your name to the list this week by submitting
your card today.

**Thank you to the following persons who have submitted
their 2026 Faithful Giving Cards.**

CLERGY

The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw
The Rev. Fr. Daren E. Evans
The Rev. Dr. Paul Bach
The Rev. Fr. Gerald Collins
The Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney

VESTRY

Dr. Tim Barksdale
Deadra Cannon
Albert Dandridge, III
Clare Mae Daniels
Deborah Camp Frye
Eugene Golson & Marie Golson
Kelvin & Pam Johnson
Monica Lewis Jones
Richard Jones
Patricia Lynch
Deborah Matthews
Judith Simkins-Booth

AUXILIARY VESTRY

Conchetta Brewer
Sharon Bullock
Ronnie Collins
Elaine Gillison
Dr. Monica Johnson Taylor
Cynthia Muse
Bobby & Judith Tillman

MEMBERS

Patricia Akins	William & Quincina Edmonds
Carmen Alexander	Erika Etlen
Constance Anderson	Rashid & Christie Faisal
Dorothy Archey	Larry & Diedre Farmbry
Jeanne Arnold	Loretta Ferguson
Natasha Bagwell	Marceline Fitzwilliam
Brenda Battle	Jay Fluellen
Jennifer Bell	Marcia Forde
Susan Ben	Stephen & Donna Foster
Deborah Billups	Wendella Fox & Herb Wetzel
Waltier Blocker	Norman & Nikki Franke
Dr. Naomi Booker	Barry Frye
Guy Booth	Irenda Gates
Ricardo Bostic	Edward & Kathryn Geiger
Alice Bowman-Cropper	Barbara Glenn
I. Page Bowser	Swanie Goldsmith
Michelanne Bradwell	Josephine Graham
Theresa Bramwell	Clarice Grant
Lorita Brockington	Arlene Gray
J.R. & Alfreda Brockman	Linda Greaves
Marilyn Brown	Michele Green
Julia Bryant	Presko (PJ) Grier
Kenneth Bundy	Dr. Derek Griffith
Cornelia Camp	Richard & Gwenda Hart
Charlotte Card	Thomasina Hack
Phyllis Cater	Joan Hall
Eleanor Chestnut	Lisa Harper
Suzanne Closson	Sharon Harper
Lynada Coleburn-Bryant	Katrina Harris
Terry Corson	Walter & Nicole Harris
Gwendolyn Cottman	Roosevelt, Sr. & Gail Harris
Zenobia Dancy	Thomas & Lynn Harris
Karen Davis	Deborah Harison
Johanna Daye	Gregory Hayes
Carl Dean	Maurice Hayes
Andrew & Lisa Renee Dumas	

Rene' Hayes	Kimberly Lloyd
Denise Henderson	Gregory Lyles
Julie Hergenrather	Thomas Lynch, IV
Quentin Heyward	Constance Lyons
Erica Hill-Yates	Stephen & Michelle Mack
Synethia Hill	Stacey McCoy-Ndiaye
Merle Hopson	Sheila Sawyer McCullough
Fleta Howell	Denise McKinney-Gibson
Diana Hutchins	Michael McIntosh
Robert Hugh	Laura McNeil
Donald & Patricia Hunt	Elsie Moto
Kim Hyde	Velma Morris-Nembhard
Yvonne Hyde-Carter	Mueni Beatrice Mwanzia
Diann Jacox	Vincent & Lisa Napoleon
Simone Jeffers	Mercy Natt
Evelyn Johns	Ingrid Nembhard
Bobby Johnson	Chinwe Onyekere
Dr. Frank Johnson	Debbie Otey
Vernetta Johnston	Carolyn Paige
Bettie Jones	Samuel & Deidre Patterson
Clarence Jones	Zennetta Peters
Donna Jones	Eugene & Karina Phillips
Eric Jones	Kim Phillips
Dr. Sheila Jones-Smith	Mary Ann Phillips
Tyrone Keller	Stephen Pugh
Jurdina Koilor	Wendy Puryear
Paula Lamb	Karem Ragin
Nancy Lee	Karen Ragland
Steven & Jamella Lewis	Cynthia Ray
Karen Leys	Dolores Redmond
Michele Lofton	Clarence Rice
Adrienne Logan	Caryn Rivers
Alonda Lord	Victoria Rivers
C. Adjoa Love-Dorsey	Cassandra Ruffin
James Lowe	Yvonne Ruiz
Winston Lowe	Sandra Rushin

Barbara Savage	Louise Trotman
Georgia Sawyer	Howard Tucker
Richard & Rebecca Scales	Joe Tucker & Alycia Horn
Leah Sheppard	Robin Vann-Lynch
Kayma Sherman-Knuckles	Karen Vaughn
Arlene Singletary	Barbara Wiley
Anita Smith	Michele Wilkinson
Catherine Stafford	R. Seth Williams
H. Lynn Starr	Scott & Ashley Williams
Daryn Stewart	Gillian Wilson
Shelly & Ann Stewart	Jenelle Wilson Johnson
Arthur & Michele Sudler	Laura Wilson
Carolyn Summers	Lorna Wilson
Lynda Tapper Smith	Carole Williams Green
Kellen & Sarah Shaw-Thomas	Charlene Wiltshire
Calvin Thompson	Diane Winkfield
Jillian Theorgood	Edgar Wise
Gloria Thomas	Daphnie Wright-Gilstrap
Teri Tillman	Khalita Wright
Harold Townsend	Paula Wright
Carole Townsend Harrell	Wanda Wood
Arnott Trotman	Alice Young
Justin & Lee Anne Trotman	M. Elaine Young

PREPARING FOR THE CHRIST-MASS

December 24, 2025

Altar Guild preparing the altar for the Holy Eucharist;
Angels in Motion Dance Ministry, preparing to minister; Clergy and
acolytes preparing to serve; Pentecost Committee preparing for
apple cider distribution following Mass.



NOTE TO ALL GUILDS/ORGANIZATIONS/MINISTRIES:

The 2026 Parish Meeting is on

Saturday, February 21, 2026, at 10:00 AM.

Your one-page year end report, sent in Word format,
is due to Gladyce in the church office by

Friday, February 6, 2026.



We offer our condolences to the family of Elaine Curry,
who passed away on December 15th. Her memorial service

will be held at **St. Mark's Lutheran Church,**

6344 N. Broad Street, on December 30th at 10:00 AM.

May the soul of Elaine rest in peace and rise in glory.

Please pray for the family.

Are you receiving the weekly electronic Spearhead? If not,
please email Gladyce DuBrey at 1792@aecst.org with your
mobile number and email address.

CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2025





More pictures may be found on [Facebook](#).
Photo credit: William Edmonds and Stephen Pugh
(St. Thomas Ed Muse Memorial Photography Ministry)



THANK YOU!!! St. Thomas and the Absalom Jones House have been festively decorated by the following: Cathy Stafford and the Pentecost Committee for decorating the beautiful Christmas Tree in the Absalom Jones House and the hot apple cider after Christmas Eve Service; Suzanne Closson and her helpers for decorating the Christmas Trees in the church; the Gardeners for the beautiful flowers outside the church and wreaths on the doors; the Altar Guild, and the Young Adults for decorating the church. We would also like to thank Vincent Tulli for donating the Christmas Trees for the church.

THANK YOU!!! The Church School Superintendent, staff and children would like to say “Thank You” to everyone who contributed to the Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 21, 2025.

For parents and guardians who rehearsed at home and brought students to rehearsals, to those who participated in the play and dance, and those who helped behind the scenes, you are APPRECIATED!!

COMING SOON!

Our new Parish Pictorial Directory.

Did you take your photo?

Enormous thanks to the hardworking committee.



A REQUEST FROM THE RECTOR

Our amazing **Livestream Ministry** continues to be an enormous blessing to many of us who are not able to physically be present for worship on any given Sunday, but able to tune in. We are very grateful to those who serve as operators in this ministry each week.

Our live stream equipment is in desperate need of upgrading. We are establishing a fund to support this need.

Please prayerfully [donate](#) to this initiative.

Please indicate the purpose of your contribution.

Enormous thanks in advance.

OUR LIVESTREAM MINISTRY NEEDS YOU!

Each week, many people who are away are able to worship with us via our amazing Livestream. Please prayerfully consider serving in this ministry. If interested, please communicate with the rector.

ATTENTION: ALL GROUPS/MINISTRIES/ ORGANIZATIONS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Announcements and flyers for the Sunday Bulletin and digital Spearhead **should be received on Monday, by 12:00 Noon**. If you have any questions, please contact Gladyce in the church office, 215-473-3065.

A FRIENDLY REMINDER FROM THE STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE COMMITTEES:

If you want credit for the year, your contributions should be received by **December 31, 2025**. If you are unsure about your balance, please contact Jeannette in the fiscal office at 215-471-3065 or fiscal@aecst.org as soon as possible.

Enormous thanks for your continued support
and gracious contributions.

ALL GROUPS, MINISTRIES AND FELLOWSHIPS

Please submit a “Request for Meeting Space” form to the office for all meetings in the Church, Anderson Hall, Absalom Jones House, parking lot and/or the Great Lawn two weeks prior to the event. Please refrain from approaching the sextons. The church office maintains the calendar for all events. If you have any questions or need a form, please contact the church office at 215-473-3065 or email 1792@aecst.org.



A CALL TO LEADERSHIP

Share your leadership ability.

Nominations for Vestry, Auxiliary Vestry Positions, Delegates to the Schuylkill Deanery, Delegates, and an alternate delegate to the 2025 Diocesan Convention will be accepted from December 7, 2025, through January 11, 2026. Election information can be found at the links below, in the bulletin, and on the table at the rear of the church.

[**A Call to Lead**](#) [**Candidate Profile**](#)



AECST LIVE STREAM

Please join us for worship on the St. Thomas [**website**](#), [**the Live Stream Service**](#), on our [**Facebook**](#) page or [**Youtube**](#) every Sunday morning at 10:00 AM.

You can also watch [**Past Services**](#).

UPCOMING SUNDAYS

January 4th

THE OBSERVANCE OF THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

First Sunday of the new year - Congregational Toast - 2026

“America 250” Kick-Off

January 11th

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY / THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

Congregation blessed with Holy Water from the Jordan River

January 18th

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Observance and Celebration of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.

Guest Speaker: The Rev. Dr. Dawrell Rich, Chaplain,

Church Farm School

Guest Choir: Church Farm School

January 25th

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

GFS Induction Sunday

Welcome / Fellowship - new members of 2025

Youth and Young Adults

THIS WEEK AT AECST

Tuesday, December 30th

OPC Advocacy Outreach Group Meeting

6:00 - 9:00 PM in the Undercroft

Wednesday, December 31st

Administrative Offices closed at Noon

Thursday, January 1st

New Year's Day

Church and Administrative Offices Closed

Friday, January 2nd

Church and Administrative Offices Closed

Saturday, January 3rd

Church open 9:00 AM - Noon



THE LOCKE ALLIANCE
WHERE THE ARTS, EDUCATION, AND ENRICHMENT CONVERGE



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
BOYS' LATIN OF PHILADELPHIA HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

PRESENTS:

VOCAL MASTERCLASS

FEATURING CLASSICAL AND MUSICAL THEATRE PERFORMANCES
FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

JANUARY 14 & 15, 2026

1-3PM

AECST

ANDERSON HALL VISITING CLINICIAN

6361 LANCASTER AVE

PHILADELPHIA, PA 19151

Q&A SESSION TO FOLLOW

FREE ADMISSION



SCAN CODE TO RSVP



DR. KIMBERLEY DAVIS

CONFIRMATION / REAFFIRMATION / RECEPTION CLASSES

have started.

The schedule for in-person and Zoom
classes is as follows:

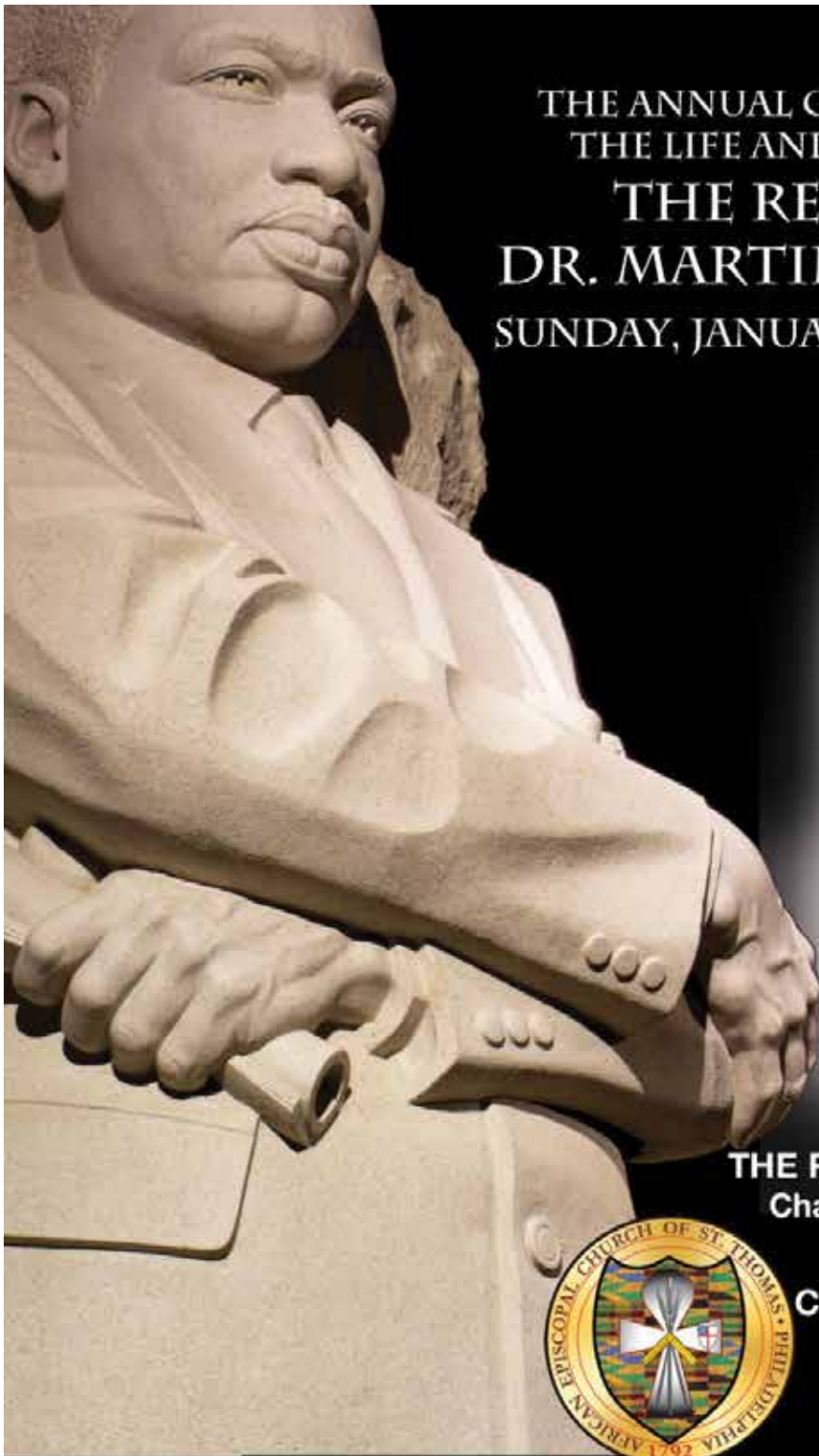
In Person	By Zoom
Sunday, 11/02/2025	Monday, 11/17/2025
Sunday, 12/07/2025	Monday, 12/02/2025
Sunday, 01/04/2026	Monday, 01/19/2026
Sunday, 02/01/2026	Monday, 02/16/2026
Sunday, 03/01/2026	Monday, 03/16/2026
Sunday, 04/05/2026	Monday, 04/20/2026
Sunday, 05/03/2026	Monday, 05/18/2026

Sunday 6/7/2026 – Confirmation Day!

Please connect with Fr. Daren, 215-473-3065 or email,
associaterector@aecst.org if you have not received any
information or have questions, ASAP.

SAVE THE DATE

THE ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF
THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF
**THE REVEREND
DR. MARTIN L. KING, JR**
SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 2026 10AM



Guest Speaker:
THE REV. DAWRELL RICH, PH.D.
Chaplain, Church Farm School

Guest Choir:
CHURCH FARM SCHOOL

Reception sponsored by
Rho Chapter of
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity,
Incorporated.



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





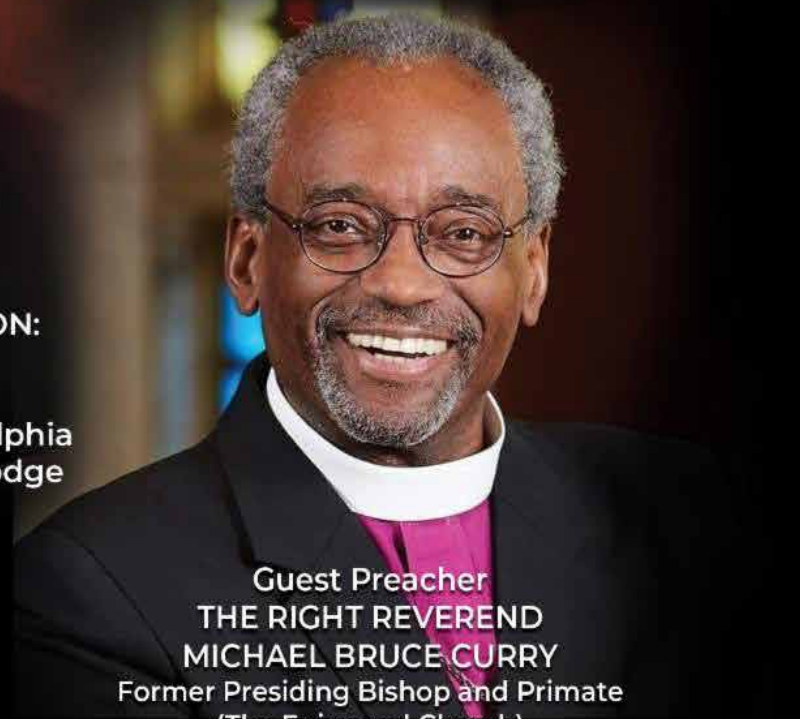
Celebrating

THE FEAST OF ABSALOM JONES

Sunday, February 15, 2026, 4:00 PM

PARTICIPATING IN THE CELEBRATION:

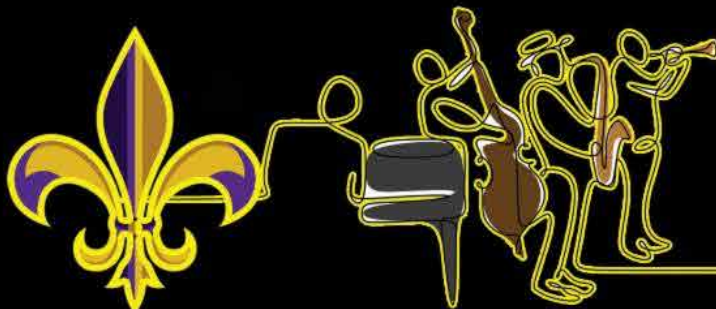
Christ Church, Philadelphia
St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia
Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church, Philadelphia
Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge



Guest Preacher
THE RIGHT REVEREND
MICHAEL BRUCE CURRY
Former Presiding Bishop and Primate
(The Episcopal Church)



Mardi Gras
**JAZZ
MASS**



THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS
FIRST BLACK EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE USA | FOUNDED 1792



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

REALM CONVERSION COMPLETE

As a reminder St Thomas went through a system conversion this year. REALM is an updated solution for the management of our ministries, stewardship, media, communications, and church events calendar. Our staff will use REALM to perform administrative and accounting tasks.

REALM will help us reach you to keep you informed. Ministry and group leaders will be able to communicate with their members outside of their meeting times and stay in touch.

Online Giving

The previous system GIVI is no longer available for online giving. REALM Connect has taken its place. REALM is not just a tool for electronic giving; it affords one the opportunity to access their giving records and offer congregants the ability to interact and communicate directly with each other. If you give directly via the church website, or by using the QR code, you will see a new webpage link on the website and a corresponding QR code that will take you to that new webpage.

Please note that we offer online electronic giving which provides an easy, secure method to contribute weekly, monthly, yearly or simply whenever you desire. Donations can be made at <https://onrealm.org/AfricanEpiscopal/give/now> or through the Realm App. (If you don't already use the Realm app and don't have an account, it's safe and easy to obtain. Download the Realm app (which is named REALM CONNECT) in the app store.

Online and text contributions are linked to your profile based on the **email address and cell phone number** you have provided. Your **envelope number** serves as an additional layer of security, especially in cases where members may have similar names (in the near future those persons without an envelope number will be issued one). We want to make sure contributions are properly credited to your account.

AECST members have begun and will continue to receive email invitations from the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas (notifications@onrealmmail.org) titled, "African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas: Join our online community!", which will enable you to register on the site and view many of the available functions. Please request a **Membership Information Form** from the Stewardship Ministry (Stewardship@aecst.org) and one will be sent to you. Please complete and return the form so that your profile can be updated accordingly. Once the form is returned corrections can be made and you will be sent a Realm invite.

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS:

In order for your contributions in REALM Connect to be successful, YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS AND CELL PHONE NUMBER MUST MATCH EXACTLY WITH REALM RECORDS. Envelope numbers serve as an additional layer of security, especially in cases where members may have similar names (soon those people without an envelope number will be issued one).

We want to make sure contributions are properly credited to your account.

Thank you for your continued support of St. Thomas.



OUR DEDICATED OUT-OF-TOWN 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 - Florida

The Rev. Dr. Paul Bach & Dr. Julie Hergerather - Bloomsburg, PA

Christopher Burks - Rhode Island/New York

Deadra Cannon - Georgia

Nora Corbin - Illinois

Dr. Ted Corbin - Illinois

Paula Cropper - North Carolina

Lee Daniels - New York

Stacey Davis - New York

Andrew and Lisa Renee Dumas - Portugal

Rashid, Christie, and Gabrielle Faisal - Michigan

The Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney - Texas

Bradley Hammond - Mississippi

Richard & Gwenda Hart - South Carolina

Yvonne Hyde-Carter - New York

Dr. Calvin Johnson - Florida

Bettie Jones - North Carolina

Rae Scott Jones - Florida

Richard Jones, Jr. - Virginia

Dr. Sheila Jones-Smith - South Carolina

Steven & Jameela Lewis - Colorado

Gregory Lyles - Switzerland

Nohjay Nimpson - Texas

Zennetta Peters - North Carolina

Dr. John Rich - Illinois

Richard & Rebecca Scales - Florida

Shelly and Ann Stewart - Florida

Howard Tucker - Brazil/Philadelphia

Allison Young - Maryland

DAILY RECOMMENDED BIBLE READINGS
The Readings for the First Sunday of Christmas
December 28, 2025

The First Lesson - [Isaiah 61:10-62:3](#)
[Psalm 147](#)

The Second Lesson - [Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7](#)
The Holy Gospel - [John 1:1-18](#)

The Holy Gospel Readings for the
week of December 29, 2025

Monday - [John 7:37-52](#)
Tuesday - [John 7:53-8:11](#)
New Year's Eve-Wednesday - [John 8:12-19](#)
New Year's Day-Thursday - [John 1:1-14](#)
Friday - [John 16:23-30](#)
Saturday - [John 6:41-47](#)



PILGRIMS ON A JOURNEY
BIBLE STUDY will be on Christmas
Break, Tuesday, **December 23rd**
and 30, 2025. We resume class on
Tuesday, **January 6th** (The Feast of
the Epiphany) at 7:00 PM via Zoom.
If you are interested in joining
the ministry, please contact Fr. Jay
at associatepriest@aecst.org.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Flowers on the High Altar - \$80.00 each
Flowers on the Absalom Jones Altar - \$70.00 each
Flowers on the Columbarium - \$60.00

Please use the QR Code to order flowers or
contribute to our church ministries.



WEDNESDAY IN-PERSON BIBLE STUDY

with Fr. Daren will be on break for the Christmas/New Year season. We will resume on Wednesday, **January 14**, at 6:00 PM. See you then!



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.

AECST PODCAST



Our **AECST Podcast Series** returns with an important new episode! Fr. Daren is joined by Licensed Clinical Social Worker **Mrs. Lasheena Riley Duval** for a conversation on **supporting children through medical care**. Tune in!



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR HEALING GARDEN!

Get your hands dirty for a great cause! The CLEAR Project (Children, Liturgy, Ecology, and Renewal) is creating a healing garden right here on our church campus.

This is a hands-on way to live out our Christian calling to care for God's creation.

We need volunteers at all skill levels from expert gardeners to those who just want to help.

If you're interested, please contact

Fr. Daren (associaterector@aecst.org) or
Tynecia Wilson (churchschool@aecst.org).

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](#).

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR PARISHIONERS WHO ARE:

IN REHAB:

Francina Norris and Lisa Woodley - St. Francis Nursing Home

IN LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENCES:

Helena Allen - Simpson House; Linda Holmes - Saunders House; Gwendolyn Langford - Arden Courts of Cherry Hill; Ola Bass - Atria Lafayette Hill; Ridart "Butch" Farmer - Centennial Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center

AT HOME:

Robert Brown, Thelma Silvers, Patricia Ellison, Mary Ann Jones, Shirley Caldwell, Wendell Whitlock, Verger Stephen Hannum, Joyce Stewart, Virginia DuBrey, Alice Young, Alletta Parris-Olday, Deborah Harrison, D. Lynn Joell, Regina Meacham Devero, Elaine Young, Alice Bowman - Cropper, Katrina Harris, Erica Hill Yates

KEEP IN PRAYER:

Justin Trotman, Cathy Stafford, Daryn Stewart, Arlene Gray, Adinah Edwards, Waltier Blocker, Santee Ruffin, Angela Holloway, Mary Ann Phillips, Yvonne Syndor, Adrian Gray, Sharon Harper, Quincina Edmonds, D. Lynn Joell, Edita Gauthney, Carmen Brown

WE PRAY FOR:

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

CALLING ALL YOUTH



What's an Acolyte? Am I old enough? Why do I want to be one? These and other questions can be answered by Father Daren! No prior experience is necessary to serve in the **Acolyte Ministry**. Rehearsals are on Sundays, immediately after service. This is an excellent opportunity for children and youth to become involved in the life of the church. Contact [Fr.Daren](#) for details.

YOUTH ACHIEVEMENTS

We want to highlight the achievements of our youth and young adults! If your child has excelled in academics, sports, the arts, or community service—or you are a young adult working on a significant personal or professional project—we would love to hear about it. Please contact [Fr. Daren](#) so we can share your story with the congregation!



IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE RECTOR

St. Thomas celebrates children and youth not only as the church of TOMORROW, but also the church of TODAY! We welcome and encourage their full presence and participation in our Sunday worship.

Church School begins at **10:00 AM in the Undercroft.**

You **must** register your child for church school for the 2025-2026 school year. Please use this [link](#) to register your child/children.

Call for Church School Teachers - If you feel the calling by God to volunteer your time in church school, please fill out the registration [link](#). If you were a teacher last year, please fill out this year's registration.



Tiny Tykes Temple is now located in the beautiful library of the Absalom Jones House for infants, children (under 3 years old) and parents. Parents who may find it necessary to step away from mass for a moment are encouraged to take advantage of this wonderful space.

STEWARDSHIP NEWS

HOW CAN I 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”. 2 Corinthians 9:7. NIV

The **Stewardship Committee** of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas recognizes that stewardship may take form in several ways: your time, talent, or 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 treasure.

Prayerfully consider donating by using the QR Code below:



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

1) Sunday Offering Plate

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

Please use the following address:

The Historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas
c/o Fiscal Administrator
6361 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19151

3) Bring your check directly to the Fiscal Office during regular business hours, Monday - Friday, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM. After business hours, drop your envelope in the door mail slot located on the front patio of the Absalom Jones House.

4) Church Website - <http://www.aecst.org/donations.htm> 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.

5) REALM CONNECT - Our members and visitors who use GIVI to donate online will be switching away from GIVI to REALM Connect. If you give via the church website, either directly or by using the QR code, you will soon see a new

[webpage link](#) on our website and a corresponding QR code that will take you to that new page

6) Cellphone: Text "AECST" to 73256 to donate,

IMPORTANT: Please make sure your name, number, and amount is placed on your offering envelope. This is very important to keep bookkeeping accurate. If you're unsure of your number, please don't hesitate to contact Pat Lynch at stewardship@aecst.org. We appreciate your assistance.

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](#) and select the Building Fund button on our Capital Improvement Donation button on our [website](#).

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 McGilberry	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	baptism@aecst.org
	Patricia Walker-Ellison	p.walker.ellison@gmail.com
O. V. Catto Voter Education Ministry	Wendella Fox Elaine Gillison	cattoministry@aecst.org
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
Roy Ellison Monarch Greeters	Ashley Hines	1792@aecst.org
Parish Vergers	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
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