



**ST. THOMAS KICKS OFF**  
**BLACK**  
**HISTORY**  
**MONTH**  
**CELEBRATION**

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2026**  
**AT 10:00 AM**

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](http://WWW.AECST.ORG) • [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/AECST1792](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/AECST1792)

**THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY  
NEW MEMBER SUNDAY  
BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND AMERICA250 KICK-OFF**

**February 1, 2026**

**The Historic African Episcopal Church  
of St. Thomas**  
6361 Lancaster Avenue (Absalom Jones Way)  
Philadelphia, PA, 19151  
(215) 473-3065  
[www.aecst.org](http://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.”**

**Psalms 100:4**

Grace and Peace to you from God on this **The Fourth Sunday After The Epiphany, New Member Sunday Black History Month and America250 Kick-Off.**

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.

Today, we welcome and recognize members of our church who joined in 2025.

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 Happy and Blessed New Year.

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



Please watch the video below and join us



Video: Quentin Heyward  
(St. Thomas Videography Ministry)



"Martin Luther King at St.  
Thomas church"



## **BLACK HISTORY MONTH NOTE - FEBRUARY 1, 2026**

Founders of The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas were there as events that formed the genesis for America 250 unfolded. Prominent vestryman and prosperous sailmaker, James Forten, remembered that as a nine-year-old boy he was there that hot July 8th in 1776 when the Sheriff of Philadelphia, John Nixon, read the Declaration of Independence in the State House yard publicly for the first time.

This historical event is re-enacted annually at Independence Hall. Historian and Forten biographer, Julie Winch, wrote that not only had James Forten heard the new nation's first founding document read but he believed in the principles espoused therein as set forth by Thomas Jefferson and others. Young Forten considered himself a patriot and perhaps inspired by the sight of Black and indigenous soldiers in uniform marching through Philadelphia with the New England Regiment, he enlisted to fight in the American Revolution aboard a privateer. As demonstrated by his pursuit of the elusive goal of citizenship for African Americans, and his unwavering commitment to the abolition of slavery, James Forten was an American founding father. But the place he earned in the annals of American history will only be safe and secure from erasure by revisionist theorists if we know, and can tell, his story.

History Note by Arthur Sudler, Director, St. Thomas Historical Society & Archives

## ANNOUNCEMENT!

As you are probably aware, on Friday, January 23rd, history at The President's House/Slavery Memorial (Independence National Historical Park) was dismantled by the federal government.

Sadly, this Memorial included important historical information about our esteemed leaders: Absalom Jones and St. Thomas Church; and Richard Allen and Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church.



### FROM THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PENNSYLVANIA

“You have this juxtaposition of the bell, which connotes freedom and independence, with the house where there were enslaved people. So, you had this correlation between slavery and freedom, which of course has always run through Philadelphia since its inception because we know even William Penn had enslaved people up through the Civil War...”

Art Sudler, The Historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas - AECST

The full article may be found [here](#).





**Today, we welcome new members of our church family during 2025.**

Nicole Bennett-Denson	Dr. Stephen Mack
Dane Bowrin	Velma Morris-Nembhard
Isaac Nembhard	Jacob Nembhard
Dominic Bowrin	Robert Newton Davenport
Vanessa Bowrin	Doris Ohliger
Jessica Brunt	Chinwe Omyekere
Melisse Brunt	Nzogi Onyekere
Christopher Burks	Kareem Ragin
Kayla Byrd	Cynthia Ray
Reginald Carter	Smanha Richardson-Ingram
Diane Culmer	Samaya Ingram
Chris Davis	Zacharia Ingram
Daine Decoursey	Zavier Ingram
Melissa Gray	Fatima Sultan
Elyse Harris	Maddox Sultan Robinson
Synethia Hill	Toddrick Ricks
Evelyn John	Christin Veney
Michelle Mack	Hamaas Veney
	Lorenzo Whitacker

We give thanks to individuals who joined our church family during 2025.

**SAVE THE DATE / MARK YOUR CALENDARS -  
A BIG CELEBRATION!!**

**“Celebrating the Feast of Absalom Jones” -  
Celebrant: The Right Reverend Daniel G.P. Gutierrez,  
Bishop of the Diocese of PA;**

**Guest Preacher: The Most Reverend Michael Bruce Curry,**  
former Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church.

**Sunday, February 15, 2026, at 4:00 PM  
(This is the ONLY Service this day)**

Guest participants: Christ Church, Philadelphia, PA;  
St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia, PA; and Mother Bethel African  
Methodist Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, PA; St. James  
School, Philadelphia and Bishop John T. Walker School for  
Boys, Washington, DC; VocalEssence Singers of This Age,  
Minneapolis, MN

**SPREAD THE WORD NOW!**



In prayerful support of the people of Minnesota and all our  
immigrant siblings, we invite you to keep vigil with us at 10:00 AM  
on Saturday, January 31st, at The Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral.

Public prayers are offered at intervals throughout the day

At 4:00 PM, Bishop Gutierrez will lead a service for peace, justice,  
humanity, and courage.

All are welcome. Always.



## THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY 25 January 2026

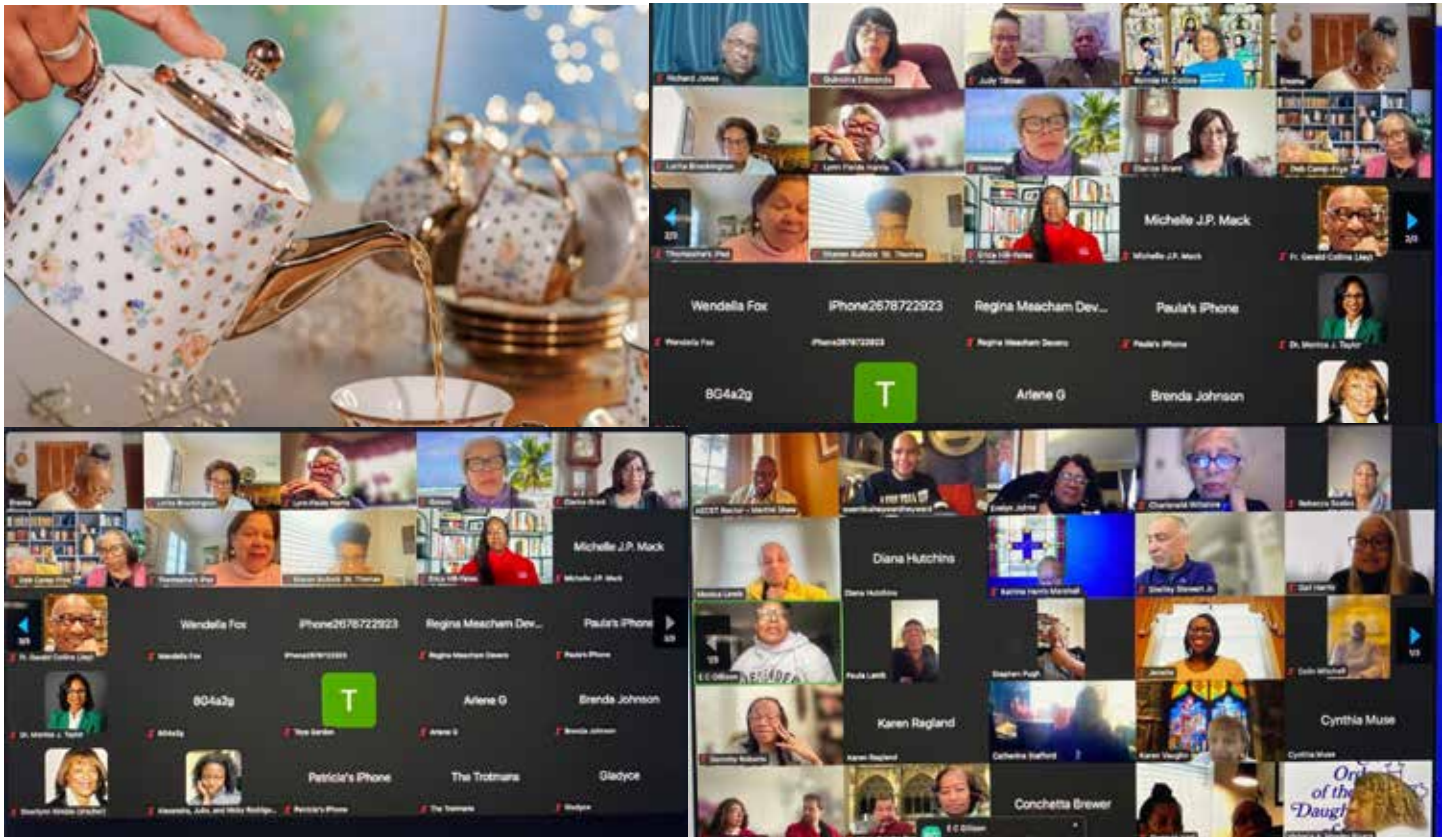
Due to inclement weather, Sunday service was a morning of Virtual Meditation and Prayers. Please see the video below.

Guest soloist: The Rev. Cassius L. Rudolph - a musical tribute in memory of musical artist Richard Smallwood.


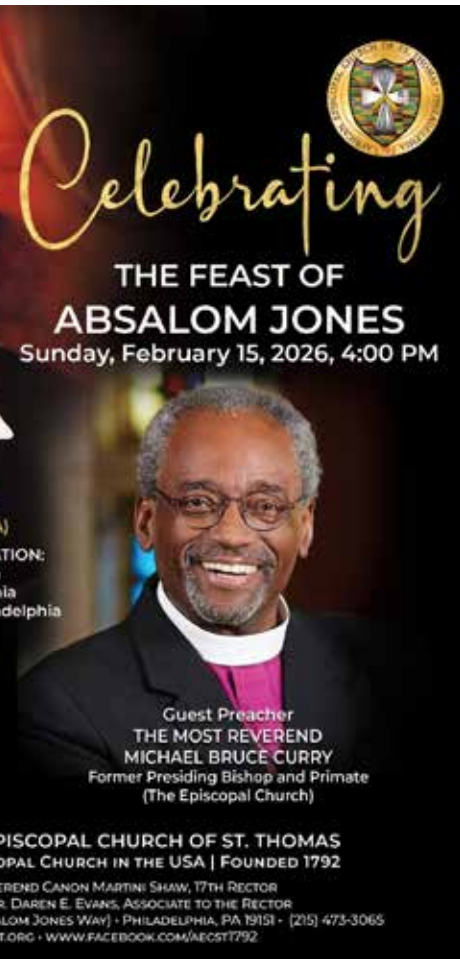


Video by Quentin Heyward: (St. Thomas Videography Ministry)

We give thanks to the approximately 100 parishioners who joined the Rector for a "Virtual Coffee Hour" on a snowy Sunday morning.





# Celebrating

## THE FEAST OF ABSALOM JONES

Sunday, February 15, 2026, 4:00 PM

**Celebrant**  
THE RIGHT REVEREND  
DANIEL G. P. GUTIERREZ  
(Bishop of the Diocese of PA)

**PARTICIPATING IN THE CELEBRATION:**  
Christ Church, Philadelphia  
St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia  
Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church, Philadelphia

**Guest Preacher**  
THE MOST 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  
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**The Jesse F. Anderson, Sr (JFA) Scholarship Committee**

invites you to Mardi Gras Lunch, Sunday,  
February 15, 2026, from 1:00 - 3:30 PM in Anderson Hall. Join us for an afternoon of  
celebration, good food, music, silent auction, prizes and fun! Adults \$25.00,  
Youth \$10.00, Children under 6 are free. Contact Thomasina Hack  
(215) 901-2773, Paula Lamb (215) 620-7250 or any  
JFA Member for tickets. Come enjoy a delicious meal and fellowship before  
attending the BIG CELEBRATION AT 4:00 PM.

**Don't forget your Mardi Gras beads!**

**THE JESSE F. ANDERSON SR. (JFA)  
SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE  
PRESENTS A**



**Mardi Gras  
JAZZ  
LUNCH**

**SUNDAY  
February 15, 2026  
1:00 - 3:30 PM  
ANDERSON HALL**

**CONTEMPORARY MUSIC  
SILENT AUCTION & SPORTS MEMORABILIA**

**ADULTS \$25.00, YOUTH \$10.00,  
CHILDREN UNDER 6 ARE FREE.  
CONTACT THOMASINA HACK (215) 901-2773  
PAULA LAMB (215) 620-7250  
OR ANY JFA MEMBER FOR TICKETS.**



**ENJOY A DELICIOUS MEAL  
AND FELLOWSHIP  
BEFORE ATTENDING  
THE BIG CELEBRATION  
AT 4:00 PM.**

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## **DEANERY SUPPORT FOR JAMAICA!!!**

The Schuylkill Deanery of the Diocese of Pennsylvania raised and presented a check in the amount of \$6,000.00 to the Bishop of Jamaica and Cayman Islands (The Right Rev. Leon Golding) and Dean of the Kingston Deanery (The Rev. Fr. Sean Major Campbell) following their recent Hurricane Melissa. The check was presented by our own Fr. Daren Evans and Karen Leys.



We remember and celebrate the life of **Alex Pretti**,  
37 years old, ICU nurse, killed today in Minneapolis,  
MN by an ICE agent.

We pray for his family who mourns his death.  
May the soul of Alex rest in peace and rise in eternal glory.  
Amen.



Our prayers and condolences to the family of  
**Denise Rae Scott Jones**, following her recent death. May  
the soul of Rae rest in peace and rise in glory. Please pray  
for the family. More information to follow.

**SISTERS OF ST. THOMAS JOIN US**  
**MONDAY, February 9, 2026 – 7:00 PM**

You are warmly invited to join the Women's Ministry; a space for connection, encouragement, and spiritual growth as we begin planning for this year's Women's Ministry celebration. The Women's Ministry draws breath from bringing women together across generations to serve and use our gifts in service to God. Together we will work to strengthen one another, uplift our church in faith, and walk boldly in the purpose God has called us to do. To receive meeting information, contact: Monica Lewis Jones, [mblj03@gmail.com](mailto:mblj03@gmail.com)

In Peace and Anticipation

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**NOTE TO ALL GUILDS/ORGANIZATIONS/MINISTRIES:**

The 2026 Parish Meeting is on

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

Please submit a one-page, year-end report (formatted in Word) to the church office, on or before

**Friday, February 6, 2026.**

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

During the Annual Parish Meeting, votes will be cast for candidates for Vestry, Auxiliary Vestry, Delegates to the Diocesan Convention, and a Representative to the Diocesan Convention.

Candidate Profiles can be found [here](#).

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**PLEASE SUPPORT ME!**

Acolyte Sarah is a Daisy in Girl Scout Troop 71487. She will be selling Girl Scout cookies in Anderson Hall after service. Cookies are \$6 per box. Please stop by and show support by purchasing a box or two. Thank you!





THE HISTORIC  
AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
OF ST. THOMAS  
**2026 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

*Please  
Join Us*

SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY 21, 2026 - 10:00 AM

*"Celebrating 234 Years  
of Active Ministry & Service"*

HIGHLIGHTING AND CELEBRATING  
OUR 2025 MINISTRY ACCOMPLISHMENTS  
AND EXCITING PLANS FOR 2026



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**CHOSEN 300 “HAVE A HEART” -**  
For the homeless, sheltered,  
and underserved.

The 2026 fundraising campaign for Chosen 300 will begin **TODAY, February 1st**, “Heart Month.” The funds will provide meals that are served at Chosen 300’s west Philadelphia location.

Checks should be made payable to: **AECST Chosen 300**. Please include Chosen 300 and your envelope number on the memo line.

Mail checks to: St. Thomas Church  
6361 Lancaster Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19151  
Attention: Chosen 300

You may also place your check in the collection plate or donate online: [www.aecst.org](http://www.aecst.org)

Click on “donations,” and then select “Chosen 300.”  
If you have any questions, please email: [scmci@aol.com](mailto:scmci@aol.com)

## **NEWS FROM THE CHURCH PICTORIAL DIRECTORY COMMITTEE**

In addition to our member and family photographs, the new pictorial St. Thomas Church Directory will include:

- our bountiful history
- a special in memorial page  
(listing members who have transitioned since 2017)
- greetings from the rector
- group photographs of AECST ministries

**A new category has been created entitled:  
“With Love and Blessings.”**

You can add your name to this section with patron, business or ministry ads. It would be wonderful to have your support and expressions of gratitude included in the directory.

**Patron ads** - \$5.00 per name

**Business or Ministry ads:**

- Full page \$150.00 - 8x10” portrait
- 1/2 page \$75.00 - 8x5” landscape
- 1/4 page \$50.00 - 4x5” portrait
- 1/8 page \$35.00 - 4x 2 1/2” landscape

Email: Camera ready ads to: [churchdirectory@aecst.org](mailto:churchdirectory@aecst.org)

Checks may be mailed and payable to:  
The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas  
6361 Lancaster Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19151

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## **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.
- 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](mailto:1792@aecst.org).
- **Presidents of Guilds/Ministries and Organizations:** Please submit the names of the people in your guild or organization, to the Directory Committee, in alphabetical order in a horizontal format, using Word, document to: Patricia Hunt, [dhunt37261@aol.com](mailto:dhunt37261@aol.com) by February 1, 2026

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

## **UPCOMING SUNDAYS**

**February 1st**  
**Black History Month Kick-Off**

~AMERICA250~  
~Welcome New Members of 2025~

**February 8th**  
**Love Sunday**  
(Observance of Valentine's Day)  
wear something red

**February 15th**  
**Celebration of the Feast of Absalom Jones**

4:00 PM service  
(You are invited to wear your Mardi Gras beads  
for this celebration)

~Jesse F. Anderson, Sr. Annual Scholarship Fund  
Mardi Gras Lunch~  
1:00 - 3:00 PM in Anderson Hall

**February 22nd**  
**Youth and Young Adult Sunday/Scout Sunday**  
~Lunch at Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church 12:00 PM~  
~Philly250/AMERICA250 special Interfaith Program~  
at 1:00 PM, Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church

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## **THIS WEEK AT AECST**

### **Monday, February 2nd**

Church and Administrative Office closed for Groundhog Day

### **Tuesday, February 3rd**

~Reach Out and Touch Ministry~

9:45 AM in the Absalom Jones House

~OPC Advocacy Outreach Group Meeting~

6:00 - 9:00 PM in the Undercroft

~Community meeting about Illegal Dumping~

6:15 PM

~Pilgrims on a Journey Adult Bible Study~

with Fr. Jay via Zoom - 7:00 PM

### **Wednesday, February 4th**

~Bible Study with Fr. Daren~

6:00 PM in the Absalom Jones House

~Angels in Motion~ 6:30 PM in the church

~St. Thomas Gospel Choir Rehearsal~

7:30 PM in Anderson Hall

### **Saturday, February 7th**

~Chancel Choir Rehearsal~

10:00 AM in Anderson Hall

~Girls' Friendly Society~

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM in the Undercroft

~Absalom Jones Choir~ 12:00 PM in Anderson Hall

~Scouts~ 1:00 – 4:00 PM in Anderson Hall



## **“Resistance & Resilience While in the Wilderness”**



### **ASH WEDNESDAY**

**February 18, 2026**

Imposition of Ashes and

Holy Eucharist:

7:00 AM, 12 Noon and 6:00 PM

### **Wednesdays During Lent**

6:00 - Holy Eucharist

6:30 - 7:15 - Presentation/  
Discussion followed by  
soup and fellowship

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### **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.

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### **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](#).



## **GIRLS' FRIENDLY SOCIETY FRIENDLY FACT:**

### **GFS Senior Peyton Miller**

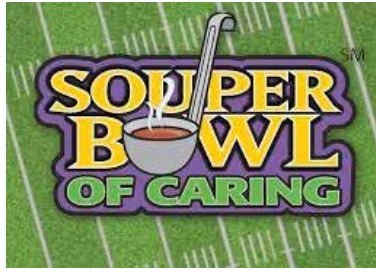
Peyton Miller is an 18-year-old lifetime member of the Girls' Friendly Society and of St. Thomas Church.

She's a high school senior at The Christian Academy and student body president. She enjoys reading lots of books and drinking good coffee.

At the age of 10 years old, Peyton wrote a book for a school assignment and at age 16, her book, "The Easter Tree," was published and released. It is a book about faith and what living for Christ can mean for youth.

Peyton Miller is also GFS junior delegate and will represent USA/St. Thomas members in Sri Lanka this summer.

Peyton was invited by Bishop Sean W. Rowe and his senior leadership team to participate as a delegate of the Episcopal Church to the 70th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. They have welcomed her perspective as a young adult delegate connected to the Girls' Friendly Society. She's achieved a lot at a young age and is only just getting started. She sets an amazing example for all young girls around the world.



**A MESSAGE FROM DAKOTA MOSLEY - GIRLS' FRIENDLY  
ST. THOMAS MEMBER**

The Girls' Friendly Society (GFS) is proud to support the work of Tackle Hunger and their annual Souper Bowl of Caring event.

If 213 million people watch "*the big game*," think about how much money we could give if each person donated one dollar to a food bank.

The Media Food Bank is helping tons of people who can't afford food. GFS has extended collecting donations until  
**February 8th.**

The collection bin is located in the Undercroft.  
Tackle hunger to tackle game!

The Girls' Friendly will be selling homemade soup NEXT  
**Sunday, February 8th**, \$10 a quart.  
Proceeds will go to the Media Food Bank.

**Media Food Bank's  
Most Needed Items**

Newborn diapers  
Size 5 Diapers  
4T/5T Pull Ups

**Community Choice Room**

Bottles juices  
Corned beef  
Honey  
Vegetable cooking oil  
White sugar  
Canned beets  
Sardines  
Shelf-stable dairy milk

## 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.



# VOCALISTS & MUSICIANS *Wanted*

**To Join  
A Professional Recording Gospel Choir**

The St Thomas Gospel Choir  
Directed By, Walt Blocker  
of the  
African Episcopal Church of St Thomas  
Philadelphia, PA

**WWW.STTHOMASGC.ORG**

(484) 816-STGC (7842)



## **CONFIRMATION / REAFFIRMATION / RECEPTION CLASSES**

have started for in-person and Zoom  
classes are 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](mailto:associaterector@aecst.org) if you have not received any  
information or have questions, ASAP.

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### **HEALTH MINISTRY NEWS:**

Here is the link for Mainline Health's Community Health  
and Outreach quarterly newsletter - Winter 2026.

Lots of good information.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pv9CmKgmFTDRkMQ0EcacH8dPuV6JM3p9/view?usp=drivesdk>

Urgent Care vs Emergency Room... Where should I go?

Here are some helpful guidelines to help you decide.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mz4uWq60DULYL1OWGpUpeUr8s1LDXUd6/view?usp=drivesdk>

## REALM CONNECT CONVERSION COMPLETE


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

### Church Online Giving


GIVI is no longer available for online contributions. Realm Connect has taken its place. Realm Connect is not just a tool for electronic giving; it affords one the opportunity to access their giving records and offers 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/AfricanEpiscopa/give/now> or through the Realm Connect App. (If you don't already use the app and don't have an account, it's safe and easy to obtain. Download the app Realm Connect from the app store.

AECST members have begun and will continue to receive email invitations from the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas ([notifications@onrealmmail.org](mailto: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](mailto: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 Connect invite.

**IMPORTANT**, for your contributions in Realm Connect to be successful, YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS AND CELL PHONE NUMBER MUST MATCH EXACTLY WITH REALM CONNECT 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.



Powered By



## African Episcopal Church Of St. Thomas: Join our online community!

Hi [REDACTED]

We at African Episcopal Church Of St. Thomas have an online community where we can connect with each other outside our Sunday gatherings. We'd love for you to take part!

Create an account: <https://onrealm.org/AfricanEpiscopa/account/CreateAccount?token=NTA0MzUyN2QtODZhZS00NDJhLTg5MWQtYjMzZTAxMDViMzVI>

Sincerely,  
African Episcopal Church 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 & Lisa Renee Dumas** - Portugal

**Rashid, Christie, & 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

**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 & Ann Stewart** - Florida

**Howard Tucker** - Brazil/Philadelphia

**Allison Young** - Maryland

**The Bible Readings For The  
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY**

**February 1, 2026**

The First Lesson– [Micah 6:1-8](#)

[Psalm 15](#)

The Second Lesson - [1 Corinthians 1:18-31](#)

The Holy Gospel - [Matthew 5:1-12](#)

**The Holy Gospel Readings for the  
week of February 2, 2026**

Monday - [John 6:27-40](#)

Tuesday - [John 6:41-51](#)

Wednesday - [John 6:52-59](#)

Thursday - [John 6:60-71](#)

Friday - [John 7:1-13](#)

Saturday - [John 7:14-36](#)



**PILGRIMS ON A JOURNEY**

**BIBLE STUDY** is held on Tuesdays  
7:00 PM via Zoom.

If you are interested in joining  
the ministry, please contact Fr. Jay  
at [associatepriest@aecst.org](mailto:associatepriest@aecst.org).

**WEDNESDAY IN-PERSON BIBLE STUDY**

with Fr. Daren is held on Wednesdays - 6:00 PM.

See you then!

## ALTAR FLOWERS

To order flowers, please return the form with payment to Alfreda Brockman or Gladyce in the church office.

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 below to order flowers or contribute to our church ministries.



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## 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!





## **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.](#)

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## **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.

## 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:**

Francine Norris and Lisa Woodley - St. Francis Nursing Home  
Alletta Parris Olday - Saunders House

### **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, Deborah Harrison, D. Lynn Joell, Regina Meacham Devero, Elaine Young, Erica Hill Yates, Alice Bowman - Cropper, Katrina Harris, Gloria Moses, Carolyn Summers, Karen Ragland

### **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, Stephen Pugh

### **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.

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## 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!

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**THE YOUNG ADULTS** (ages 20's and 30's) meet immediately after service every 4th Sunday of the Month in the Absalom Jones House.



## **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** - Members and visitors who use GIVI must use **Realm Connect**. If donate via the church website, either directly or by using the QR code, you will soon see a new webpage and corresponding QR code.

**6) Cellphone:** Text "AECST" to 73256 to donate.

**IMPORTANT:** Please make sure your name, envelop number and amount is placed on the offering envelope. This is particularly important for bookkeeping accurate. If you are unsure of your number, please email [stewardship@aecst.org](mailto:stewardship@aecst.org). We appreciate your assistance.



**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 email [stewardship@aecst.org](mailto:stewardship@aecst.org). We appreciate your assistance.

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## **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](#).

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## 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
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	Eugene Golson   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
St. Thomas Daughters of the King	Sharon Bullock	scmci@aol.com
Stewardship Chair	Judy Tillman	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

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## 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 - Judy Tillman | Property Chair - William Burke

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

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## THE AUXILIARY VESTRY

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

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## 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