

Lent

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



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



THE VERY REVEREND CANON MARTINI SHAW, 17TH RECTOR

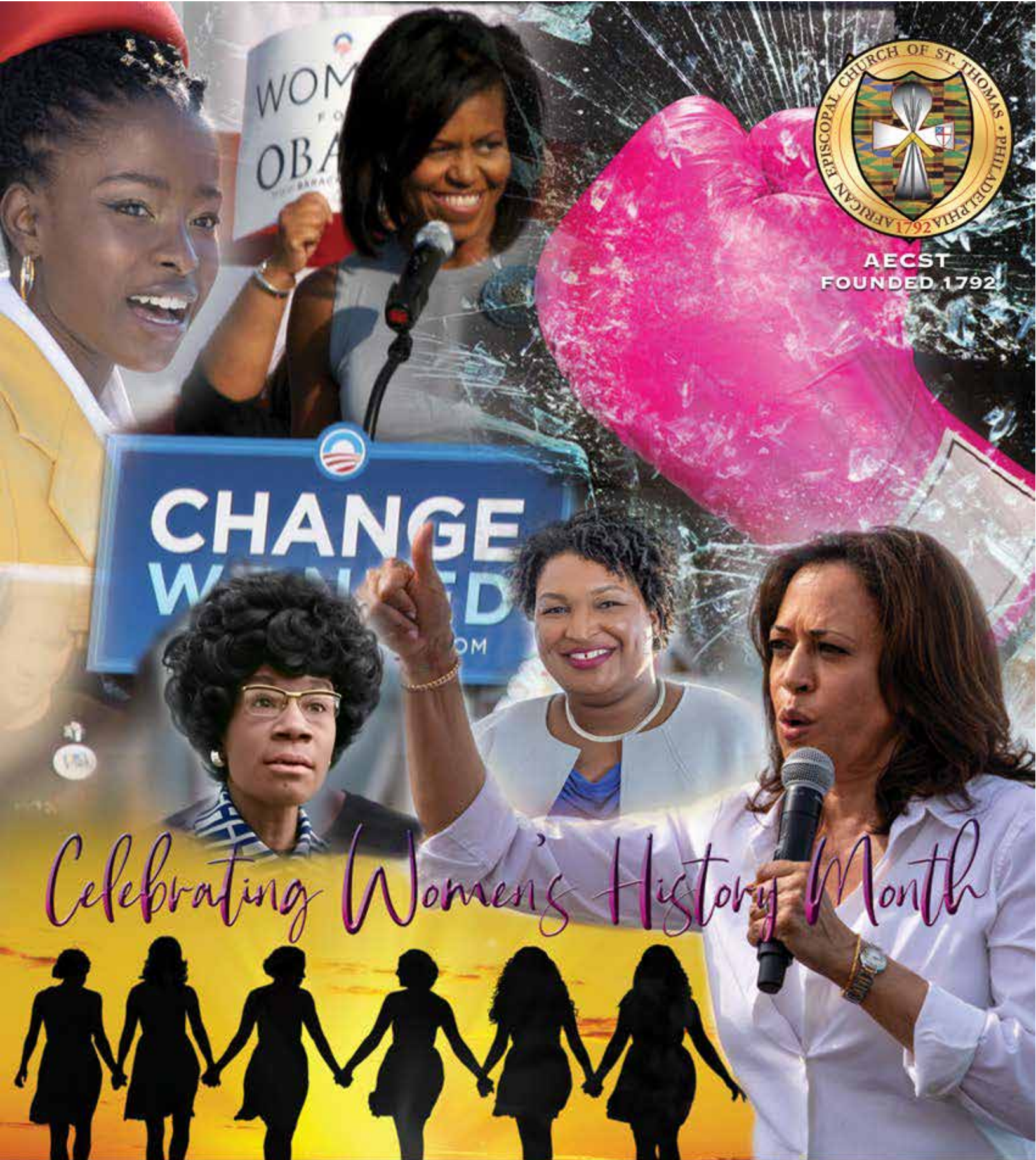
THE REVEREND FR. DAREN E. EVANS, ASSOCIATE TO THE RECTOR

6361 LANCASTER AVENUE (ABSALOM JONES WAY) • PHILADELPHIA, PA 19151 • (215) 473-3065

WWW.AECST.ORG • WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/AECST1792



AECST
FOUNDED 1792



Celebrating Women's History Month

THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS

FIRST BLACK EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE USA



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THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

March 22, 2026

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
Fifth Sunday in Lent, Youth and Young Adult Sunday
and Girls’ Friendly Society Induction.**

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 welcome 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. Whomever you may be and however you may find yourself experiencing life’s journey, do know that St. Thomas Church welcomes you. Again, welcome!

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



Sponsors are needed to cover the donkey rental for Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026. Donations can be made in thanksgiving for a blessing or in memory of a loved one. You may donate by sending a check to

the church office or use the envelope found in the bulletin. You may donate to the donkey by sending a check to the church office or use the envelope found in the bulletin.

**The Palm Sunday Bake Sale is Back!
AECST Women's Ministry Committee**

Presents

"Delectable Desserts"

Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026

Make your Holiday Dinner table complete!

Enjoy mouth-watering Dinner Rolls, Delectable Cake Assortments, Cheesecake, Cookies, Homemade Pies, Delicious Cinnamon Bread, Delightful Mini Pineapple Upside Down Cake, and More!

Place your pre-orders today!

Join guest artist: **Dr. Jay Fluellen** at Salem Baptist Church,
236 Easton Road, Abington, PA 19001 on
Friday, March 27th at 7:00 PM

"You Can Tell The World: Composers in Concert,"
a retrospective on spirituals and music of our
religious sacred path. Free will offering.



Join us for the LAST in the Series
(Begins with the Holy Eucharist)
Wednesday, March 25, 2026,
6:00 PM

YOU'RE INVITED
"Lenten Series/Week Five
The Cross"
(In-Person Worship)

Video: Quentin Heyward
(St.Thomas Videography Ministry)



**MAUNDY THURSDAY DINNER IN ANDERSON HALL,
THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2026**

Our annual candlelight dinner, hosted by the Vestry and Auxiliary Vestry, will be held at 6:00 PM on **Holy Thursday, April 2, 2026**. Tickets are \$20.00 each. Space is limited, so be sure to purchase your ticket as soon as possible.! Contact Judy Booth with questions at msjay424@verizon.net.

**"RESISTANCE & RESILIENCE WHILE IN THE
WILDERNESS"**

Wednesdays During Lent

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Please note that all sessions will be via Zoom except the last one. Week 5 will be In-Person and include the Holy Eucharist

Week 1: February 25th

Moses and the Exodus: Exodus 2:7-12

Week 2: March 4th

Abram and Sarai: Genesis: 12:10-20

Week 3: March 11th

Birth of Jesus and the flight to Egypt: Luke 1:42-55

Week 4: March 18th

Sermon on the Mount

Week 5: March 25th

The Cross

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.

HOLY WEEK 2026 SCHEDULE OF OBSERVANCES & CELEBRATIONS

Sunday, March 29th

Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday
Outdoor Procession begins at 9:45 AM

Joining us: St. James School community St. James
Ambassador Choir

St. Thomas Gospel Choir Palm Sunday Concert – 4:00 PM

Holy Thursday, April 2nd

Maundy Thursday, 6:00 PM

Candlelight Dinner hosted by the Vestry and
Auxiliary Vestry

Foot washing/Eucharist/Stripping of the altar/
The Vigil Watch sponsored by the DOK

Visit The Altar of Repose (Garden of Gethsemane)

available virtually throughout the all-night Vigil
via livestream found on our Facebook, Website, and YouTube.
Please take a moment during the night to view and pray.

Good Friday, April 3rd

Conclusion of the Vigil Watch 12 Noon

Special liturgy to include Stations of the Cross

Joining us: Members from Overbrook Presbyterian Church
and their pastor, The Rev. Dr. Adam Hearlson

Holy Saturday, April 4th

The Great Vigil of Easter

at the Philadelphia Cathedral 5:00 PM

19 S. 38th Street, Philadelphia, PA

Easter Sunday, April 5th

Sunday of the Resurrection - Sunrise Service – no music

6:00 AM Early Sunrise -

Celebrant: The Rector, Homilist: Fr. Evans

10:00 AM Festive Celebration with music and dance

Celebrant and Homilist: The Rector



CATTO MINISTRY CORNER - URGENT CALL TO ACTION

The SAVE America Act, also known as **The SAVE Act**, should be voted down! Why? Its true design is voter suppression. Take a look at the facts related to the proposed bill:

What the Bill does:

- **Restricts acceptable** voter ID types.
- **Requires proof of citizenship** for all voter registrations; in-person, online and mail.
- **Forces women** with surname changes to sign an attestation.
- **Mandates** frequent voter-roll purges, including for not voting.
- **Allows lawsuits against election officials** over suspected non-citizen registrations.
- **Sends state voter lists** to Department of Homeland Security (DHS), raising data-handling concerns.

What can YOU do?

Call your Senators on 202-224-3121 TODAY! This number accepts calls 24/7. **We have work to do!**

SAVE THE DATE

Friday, April 10, 2026, 5:30 PM -7:30 PM

The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas-Anderson Hall.

**Uncork the Conversation: A Congressional
Candidate Forum**

Your Candidates. Your Community. Your Future.

Join us for light refreshments and a Friday evening
of real civic dialogue.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Please visit The Altar of Repose (Garden of Gethsemane) available virtually throughout the all-night Vigil via livestream on our Facebook, Website and YouTube. Please take a moment during the night to view and pray.

MAUNDY THURSDAY SILENT NIGHT VIGIL

Then He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping. Simon, He said to Peter, are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour?

Mark 14:37

The St. Thomas Chapter of the Daughters of the King invites you to pray with us on this year's Maundy Thursday Night Watch Vigil on **April 2, 2026, from 8:00 PM to 12:00 noon**
April 3, 2026, Good Friday.

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

When you sign up we will forward to you suggested sources of prayer Tuesday, March 31, 2026. You may sign up by using the signup sheet which will be on the table at the rear of the church.

Brenda Johnson Best, Vice President,
Daughters of The King

LENTEN GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ST. THOMAS HEALTH MINISTRY NEWS
MindSpring Mental Health Education Seminars:

March 23 | Understanding Depression in Young People

Depression in children and teenagers is often undiagnosed and untreated because symptoms are mistaken for normal emotional changes. Learn what factors contribute to youth depression, common signs and symptoms to watch for, and practical ways caregivers, educators, and professionals can support young people and promote mental well-being.

March 24 | Discrimination, Fear, and Mental Health in LGBTQIA+ Communities

LGBTQIA+ adults are three times more likely to experience a mental health disorder than people who identify as straight. Discuss what factors impact this statistic, how to find supportive professionals, ways of coping, and how to be a true ally.

March 26 | Understanding Agoraphobia

Often believed to be a fear of leaving the house, agoraphobia is an anxiety disorder that runs much deeper. Join us to develop a more thorough understanding of what agoraphobia is, what causes it, and how it is treated. Learn tips to manage symptoms and support loved ones with a licensed therapist.

March 25 | Understanding Personality Disorders

Personality describes everything about you, and personality disorders can be challenging to manage. In addition to dealing with the illness itself, people often struggle with the myths and stigma surrounding personality disorders. Explore the categories of personality disorders, their symptoms, causes, and risk factors with a licensed therapist. Discuss evidence-based treatment and learn practical tips for managing symptoms and supporting others. Register here https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/1917661028554/WN_1kdiEMOuSMaqKxPQIfunjg

March 25 | Understanding ADHD

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is more than hyperactive people and short attention spans.

Explore the causation, symptoms, and treatment options for ADHD and learn practical tips to manage symptoms and support loved ones who are struggling.

Register here https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/1917661028554/WN_1AZjmqxITLKIPGWysvf6UQ

March 26 | Understanding Agoraphobia

Often believed to be a fear of leaving the house, agoraphobia is an anxiety disorder that runs much deeper.

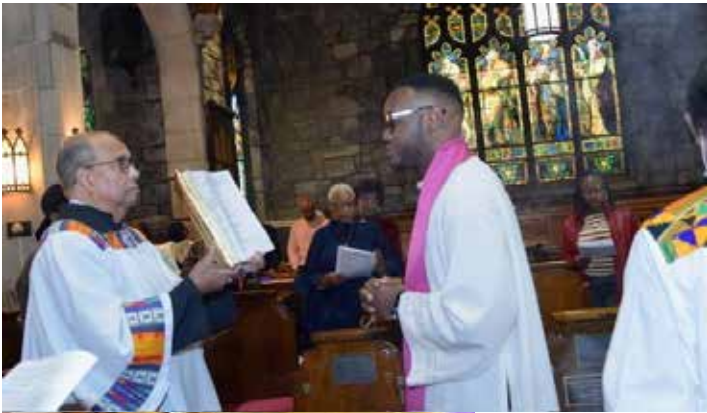
Join us to develop a more thorough understanding of what agoraphobia is, what causes it, and how it is treated. Learn tips to manage symptoms and support loved ones with a licensed therapist.

Register here https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/1917661028554/WN_I9gvW3EORyWkBNKf8qe8vw

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT MARCH 15, 2026

Photos: Brenda Johnson Best and Stephen Pugh
(St.Thomas Ed Muse Memorial Photography Ministry)











The esteemed ladies of the St. Thomas Sisterhood Guild gather for a very productive meeting and rich fellowship.



More photos may be found on [Facebook](#)



About Our Homilist Peyton Miller

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

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

When Peyton was 10 years old, she wrote a book for a school assignment and at the age of 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 was elected GFS Junior Delegate representing GFS/USA and St. Thomas members in Sri Lanka this summer as a voting member of the GFS/USA board.

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 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 getting started. She sets an amazing example for all young girls around.

More photos may be found on [Facebook](#)

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](#).



Join Dr. Jay Fluellen for Jazz Vespers at St. Thomas, 6361 Lancaster Avenue, on Friday, April 24th at 7:00 PM.

More information to come.

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.

ATTENTION MEN OF ST. THOMAS:

The Men's Ministry & Fellowship Presents ST. Thomas Men Are Cooking



Highlights

- Music
- Multiple Servings
- Indoor & Outdoor Seating
- Service by Men of St. Thomas
- Table Service for those in Need
- 50/50 Raffle
- Rector Serving His Special Dish

\$20.00 for ages 12 and up
\$10 for ages 4 to 11 -Free if younger

Date: SUNDAY April 26th, 2026

Time: Immediately After Service

THE AFRICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS
6361 Lancaster Ave. Phila. PA 19151
The Very Reverend Canon Martini Shaw, Rector

Sample Menu Items:

Meat Lovers

Jerk Chicken
Baked Ham
Lamb Meat Stew
Baked Chicken Fried
Chicken Chicken
Wings Curried Stew
Breakfast Casserole
Chicken Parmesan
Chicken Pasta Salad
Jerk Chicken Pasta
Turkey & Beef
Beef Lasagna

Non Meat Dishes

Pancakes
Home Fries
Green Salad
Cole Slaw
Caesar Salad
Baked Snapper fish
Vegetarian Enchiladas
Shrimp & Rice
Roasted Salmon
Vegetable Lasagna
String Rice & Beans
Baked Beans



ALL MEN INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING / FOR COOKING/FOR TICKETS

Tim Barksdale @215-868-6766 (Please text -)

Ed Geiger @ 716-207-0405

We need volunteers to cook or volunteer for ST. Men Are Cooking, Sunday April 26, 2026, following Service. To register, please click on this link and enter your Name Telephone number and either the dish you are making or scroll down to indicate how you wish to volunteer. Donations are also accepted. Due to inflation, we are offering the old school rates of \$20.00 per person regardless of age.

Use the [link](#) as soon as possible

THIS WEEK AT AECST

Tuesday, March 24th

~OPC Advocacy Outreach Group Meeting~
6:00-9:00 PM in the Undercroft

~Pilgrims on a Journey Adult Bible Study~
with Fr. Jay via Zoom-7:00 PM

Wednesday, March 25th

~In-person Lenten Series and Holy Eucharist~
6:00 PM-7:00 PM in the church

~Angels in Motion~ 6:30 PM

~St. Thomas Gospel Choir Rehearsal~
7:30 PM in Anderson Hall

Friday, March 27th

~Retired Persons Ministry~
In Anderson Hall 11:30 AM-1:00 PM

Saturday, March 28th

~St. Thomas Order of the Daughters of the King
Meeting~ 9:30 AM -12:30 PM in Anderson Hall

UPCOMING SUNDAYS

March 22nd

~Fifth Sunday in Lent~

~Girls' Friendly Induction Sunday~

~Youth and Adult Sunday~

~Chat and Chew~

March 29th

~Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday~

~Outdoor Procession~ begins at 9:45 AM

Joining us: St. James School community with St. James
Ambassador Choir

April 5th

~Sunday of the Resurrection~

6:00 AM Sunrise Service– No music

10:00 AM Festive Celebration with music and dance

The St. Thomas Gospel Choir
will present a Palm Sunday concert
Sunday, March 29th 4:00 PM at St. Thomas,
6361 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia, PA
Enjoy Songs, Spirituals, and Hymns.

There will be a reception following the concert.
Free will offering.

Wall Blocker Presents
The St. Thomas Gospel Choir

Palm Sunday Concert

SONGS, SPIRITUALS & HYMNS

**MAR
29**
4:00PM
Reception Following
Concert

The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas
6361 Lancaster Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19151
The Reverend Canon Fr. Martin Shaw, Rector
The Reverend Fr. Darren Evans, Assistant to the Rector
For More Information | 215-473-3065



Free Will Offering

Join Dr. Jay Fluellen for Jazz Vespers at St. Thomas,
6361 Lancaster Avenue, on Friday,
April 24th at 7:00 PM.
More information to come

MARCH 27, 2026
7PM

SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH - EASTON RD CAMPUS
1250 EASTON RD, ABINGTON, PA 19001

YOU CAN TELL THE WORLD: *BLACK COMPOSERS IN CONCERT*

A retrospective on spirituals
and music of our religious
sacred path.

FREE WILL OFFERING



**GUEST ARTIST
DR. JAY FLUELLEN, PIANO**



JAMES EARLY, PIANO



**CHANTAL FREEMAN,
SOPRANO**

Proceeds from the performance will go to the artists in performance and the Salem Music Series fund to develop programming that extends and expands our congregation's cultural and spiritual experience of all genres of music.



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

Email: Camera ready ads to: churchdirectory@aecst.org

Checks may be mailed and payable to:

The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas
6361 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19151

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

**CONFIRMATION / REAFFIRMATION /
RECEPTION CLASSES**

have started for in-person and Zoom
classes are as follows:

In Person (8:45 AM)

Sunday, 03/01/2026

Sunday, 04/05/2026

Sunday, 05/03/2026

Zoom (6:00 PM)

Monday, 03/16/2026

Monday, 04/20/2026

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.

GFS Women's History Month Friendly Fact



Ruth E. Carter (born April 10, 1960)

- African American costume designer
- Celebrated for her work across over 70 films; most popular are "Black Panther" and "Malcolm X".
- First Black person to win an Academy Award for best costume design.
- First African American to win two and be nominated for an Academy Award for Best Costume Design
- In 2021, she became the first Black female costume designer to receive a star in the Hollywood Walk of Fame.
- Applauded for her hard work in the film industry and how she has shaped the Black narrative in films.



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 <https://onrealm.org/AfricanEpiscopa/-/form/give/now> 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) 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 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]

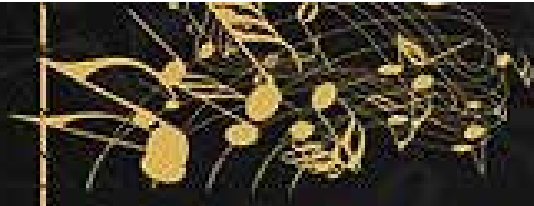
We at African Episcopal Church Of St. Thomas have an online community where we can connect with each other outside our Sunday gatherings. We'd love for you to take part!

Create an account: <https://onrealm.org/AfricanEpiscopalChurchOfStThomas/account/CreateAccount?token=NTA0MzUyN2QtODZhZS00NDJhLTg5MWQyYjMzZTAxMDViMzVI>

Sincerely,
African Episcopal Church Of St. Thomas

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)

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
THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT
March 22, 2026**

The First Lesson - [Ezekiel 37:1-14](#)
[Psalm 130](#)

The Second Lesson - [Romans 8:6-11](#)

The Holy Gospel - [John 11:1-45](#)

**The Holy Gospel Readings for the
week of March 23, 2026**

Monday - [John 8:1-20](#)

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

Wednesday - [Luke 1:26-38](#)

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

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

Saturday - [John 11:45-53](#)



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.

WEDNESDAY IN-PERSON BIBLE STUDY

with Fr. Daren will be on break beginning Wednesday,
February 11, and throughout the season of Lent. All are
encouraged to attend the Lenten series held each
Wednesday during Lent.



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!

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

EASTER FLOWERS AND LILIES

Your gift of an Easter Lily will help beautify the church and will be a beautiful tribute to your loved ones, or a token of Thanksgiving for a blessing received. To order flowers, please return the form with payment to Alfreda Brockman or Gladyce in the Church office. (Please print all names) Go to the church website or scan the QR Code to order and pay for flowers.

Deadline: **Monday, March 23, 2026**

Flowers on the High Altar-\$125.00.
Flowers on the Absalom Jones Altar-\$90.00.
Flowers on the Columbarium-\$70.00.
Easter lilies are \$25.00 each (5 names per plant)

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





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.

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 THE HOSPITAL:**

Anita Reid - Chestnut Hill Hospital

IN REHAB:

Francine Norris and Lisa Woodley - St. Francis Nursing Home
Patricia Ellison-Rydal Place, Jenkintown, PA

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, Mary Ann Jones,
Shirley Caldwell, Wendell Whitlock, Verger Stephen Hannum,
Joyce Stewart, Virginia DuBrey, Regina Meacham Devero,
Alice Bowman-Cropper, Katrina Harris, Karen Ragland,
Guy Booth, Alletta Parris Olday, Linda Tapper Smith

KEEP IN PRAYER:

Justin Trotman, Cathy Stafford, Daryn Stewart,
Adinah Edwards, Teena Watson-Matthews, Waltier Blocker,
Santee Ruffin, Angela Holloway, Mary Ann Phillips,
Yvonne Syndor, Carl Dean, Arlene Gray, Adrian Gray,
Sharon Harper, Quincina Edmonds, D. Lynn Joell,
Edita Gauthney, Carmen Brown, Stephen Pugh, Lisa Woodley

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!

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 need to 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. 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. 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](#).

Bishop
Rector
Associate to the Rector
Associate Priest
Associate Priest
Associate Minister
Executive Asst. to the Rector
Sexton
Asst. Sexton
Chancel Choirmaster
Gospel Choirmaster
Rector's General Counsel
Altar Guild
Baptism Co-Chairs

O. V. Catto Voter Education Ministry
Church School Superintendent
Ed Muse Photography Ministry
Fiscal Advisor to the Rector
Girls' Friendly Society
Jazz Ensemble Director
Live Stream Ministry
Memorial Flowers

Roy Ellison Monarch Greeters
Parish Vergers
Parish Webmaster
Property Chair
Scout Pack 133

St. Thomas Daughters of the King
Stewardship Chair
Videography Ministry
Visitor's Ministry
Voices of Comfort
William Burke Ushers Ministry

MINISTRY STAFF

The Rt. Rev. Daniel G P Gutierrez
The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw rector@aecst.org
The Rev. Fr. Daren E. Evans associaterector@aecst.org
The Rev. Fr. Gerald (Jay) Collins associatepriest@aecst.org
The Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney wilgafney@gmail.com
The Rev. Dr. Paul Bach pauljaybach@gmail.com
Gladyce DuBrey 1792@aecst.org
LaDon Elliott 1792@aecst.org
David McGilberry 1792@aecst.org
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Waltier Blocker gospelchoir@aecst.org
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William Edmonds edmon57@comcast.net
Deadra Cannon assistantfiscal@aecst.org
Nikkol Simms njsimms@verizon.net
Jay Fluellen, DMA chancelchoir@aecst.org
Yaseen Farooq | Teri Tillman 1792@aecst.org
Alfreda Brockman livevideo@aecst.org
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Judy Tillman scmci@aol.com
Quentin Heyward stewardship@aecst.org
Edita Gauthney | Michele Green recordedvideo@aecst.org
Robert Davenport visitorsministry@aecst.org
Arlene Singletary 1792@aecst.org
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 - Judy Tillman | Property Chair - William J. Burke

Dr. Tim Barksdale
Judith Simkins Booth
Deadra Cannon

Clare Mae Daniels
Mary Sandra Dean
Elaine Gillison

Eugene Golson
Monica Lewis Jones
Deborah Matthews

THE AUXILIARY VESTRY

Brenda Johnson Best
Sharon Bullock
Ronnie Collins

Gwenda Hart
D. Lynn Joell
Kelvin Johnson

Cynthia Muse
Dr. Monica Johnson Taylor
Darryle (Bobby) Tillman

DELEGATES TO THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION

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

DELEGATES TO THE SCHUYLKILL DEANERY

Phyllis Cater | Mary Sandra Dean | Alternate: Tyrone Keller