



AECST
FOUNDED 1792

May the light
sent from God
shine in the darkness
to show us
the way of salvation.



HOPE

*Christ...
is our Hope*

THE HISTORIC 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

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

NOVEMBER 30, 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



Give Now

onrealm.org



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

First Sunday of Advent and Health Ministry Sunday.

As we prepare for the birth of Jesus Christ during this holy
season, may your hearts be filled with

Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

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!

Faithfully,

Martini Shaw+

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



THE HISTORY OF THE ADVENT WREATH AND CANDLES

The word “Advent” is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning “coming,” which is a translation of the Greek word *Parousia*. Most know Advent today as a time of anticipation and expectation of the birth of Christ.

Advent lasts for four Sundays leading up to Christmas. The Advent season not only symbolizes the waiting for Christ’s birth but also for his final return.

The Advent wreath was created out of evergreens, symbolizing everlasting life in the midst of winter and death as the evergreen is continuously green. The circle reminds us of God’s unending love and the eternal life He makes possible.

The Advent wreath is a symbol of the season, with a candle lit each of the four Sundays leading up to, and on Christmas Day. The light of the flickering candle flames reminds us who Jesus is: “In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:4-5).

Additional decorations, like holly and berries, are sometimes added. Their red color points ahead to Jesus’ sacrifice and death on the cross, shedding his blood for our sins.

The most common Advent candle tradition, however, involves four candles around the wreath. A new candle is lit on each of the four Sundays before Christmas. Each candle represents something different, although traditions vary. Often, the first, second, and fourth candles are purple; the third candle is rose-colored. A fifth white candle is placed in the middle of the wreath and is lit on Christmas Day to celebrate Jesus' birth.

The first candle symbolizes hope and is called the "Prophet's Candle." The prophets of the Old Testament, especially Isaiah, waited in hope for the Messiah's arrival. The purple color symbolizes royalty, repentance, and fasting.

The second candle represents faith and is called "Bethlehem's Candle." Micah had foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, which is also the birthplace of King David. The second candle is also purple to symbolize preparation for the coming king.

The third candle symbolizes joy and is called the "Shepherd's Candle." To the shepherd's great joy, the angels announced that Jesus came for humble, unimportant people like them, too. In liturgy, the color rose signifies joy. This candle is colored pink to represent joyfulness and rejoicing.

The fourth candle represents peace and is called the "Angel's Candle." The angels announced that Jesus came to bring peace--He came to bring people close to God and to each other again. This color is also purple to represent the culmination of love through the Messiah.

AN INVITATION TO YOU BELOW:



Video: Quentin Heyward
(St. Thomas Videography Ministry)

OUR OWN - DR. JAY FLUELLEN

is one of the leaders for a Diocesan Musical Event!

Saturday, November 22, 2025 at 2:00 PM

Singing the African American Spirituals with integrity

A workshop for clergy, musicians, and congregants

Clinicians: Ruth Naomi Floyd, Dr. Jay Fluellen, Carrie Lessene,
Dr. Thomas Lloyd

Guest Choir: Intermezzo Choir Ministry, Carrie Lessene, director



FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK:

Please do not respond to any email or text message requests from me for monetary donations or gift cards. Please ignore these scam solicitations. Blessings to you.

**ATTENTION: ALL GROUPS/MINISTRIES/
ORGANIZATIONS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

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

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 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.

Ladies of the Saint Thomas Altar Guild preparing the altar
with cornucopia and Thanksgiving offerings.





Congratulations to The Rev. Dr. Paul Bach and Dr. Julie Hergerather on the birth of their granddaughter, Evelyn Marie. Julie and Paul, your St. Thomas family joins you in celebration.

Some members of the St. Thomas Tree of Life Prison Ministry (TOLPM) gathered to reorganize their storage and working space.





FAITHFUL GRATITUDE

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

<https://forms.gle/yj3eujEaSZ58VMgK9>

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.

**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. Please prayerfully consider an increase in your 2026 Faithful Giving Pledge towards the vibrant ministries of St. Thomas. Remember that our individual goal should be to become a biblical tither (10% of one's earnings). Are you working toward that spiritual goal? Please use the Giving Chart to assist you with your Faithful Giving Pledge for 2026. Please place your completed Faithful Giving card on the altar of God during offertory.

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

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

Walter & Nicole Harris	John Kortue, Sr.
Roosevelt, Sr. & Gail Harris	Paula Lamb
Thomas & Lynn Harris	Nancy Lee
Gregory Hayes	Joyce Levin
Maurice Hayes	Steven & Jamella Lewis
Rene' Hayes	Karen Leys
Denise Henderson	Michele Lofton
Julie Hergenrather	Alonda Lord
Quentin Heyward	C. Adjoa Love-Dorsey
Erica Hill-Yates	James Lowe
Synethia Hill	Winston Lowe
Merle Hopson	Gregory Lyles
Fleta Howell	Thomas Lynch, IV
Diana Hutchins	Constance Lyons
Robert Hugh	Stephen & Michelle Mack
Donald & Patricia Hunt	Stacye McCoy-Ndiaye
Kim Hyde	Sheila Sawyer McCullough
Yvonne Hyde-Carter	Denise McKinney-Gibson
Diann Jacox	Michael McIntosh
Simone Jeffers	Laura McNeil
Evelyn Johns	Donald Moore & Dorothy E.
Bobby Johnson	Roberts
Dr. Frank Johnson	Velma Morris-Nembhard
Vernetta Johnston	Mueni Beatrice Mwanzia
Bettie Jones	Vincent & Lisa Napoleon
Claremce Jones	Mercy Natt
Donna Jones	Ingrid Nembhard
Eric Jones	Chinwe Onyekere
Joyce & Robert Jones	Debbie Otey
Dr. Sheila Jones-Smith	Carolyn Paige
Tyrone Keller	Samuel & Deidre Patterson
Reggie & Sherilynn Kimble	Zennetta Peters
Jurdina Koilor	Eugene & Karina Phillips

Kim Phillips	Kellen & Sarah Shaw-Thomas
Mary Ann Phillips	Jillian Theorgood
Stephen Pugh	Gloria Thomas
Wendy Puryear	Teri Tillman
Karem Ragin	Harold Townsend
Karen Ragland	Arnott Trotman
Cynthia Ray	Justin & Lee Anne Trotman
Dolores Redmond	Louise Trottman
Clarence Rice	Howard Tucker
Caryn Rivers	Joe Tucker & Alycia Horn
Victoria Rivers	Robin Vann-Lynch
Cassandra Ruffin	Karen Vaughn
Yvonne Ruiz	Barbara Wiley
Barbara Savage	R. Seth Williams
Georgia Sawyer	Gillian Wilson
Richard & Rebecca Scales	Jenelle Wilson Johnson
Leah Sheppard	Laura Wilson
Kayma Sherman-Knuckles	Lorna Wilson
Arlene Singletary	Carole Williams Green
Anita Smith	Charlene Wiltshire
Catherine Stafford	Diane Winkfield
H. Lynn Starr	Khalita Wright
Daryn Stewart	Paula Wright
Shelly & Ann Stewart	Wanda Wood
Arthur & Michele Sudler	Alice Young
Carolyn Summers	M. Elaine Young
Lynda Tapper Smith	

**THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT SUNDAY
FRIENDS AND FAMILY SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 23, 2025**









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

Photos: Bill Edmonds, and Stephen Pugh
(St. Thomas Ed Muse Memorial Photography Ministry)

FROM THE DESK OF RECTOR:

Our exciting ministry plans and activities for the remaining three months of the year are in place. I am urging each parishioner to please ensure that their financial pledge for 2025 is current and up to date.

We are hopeful that all pledges will be fulfilled by December 31, 2025.

If you are unsure about your balance, please contact Jeannette in the fiscal office at 215-471-3065 as soon as possible. Enormous thanks for your continued support and gracious contributions.

THIS WEEK AT AECST

Monday, December 1st

Meeting of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

6:00 - 9:00 PM in Anderson Hall

Tuesday, December 2nd

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, December 3rd

Bible Study with Fr. Daren

6:00 PM in the Absalom Jones House

St. Thomas Gospel Choir Rehearsal

7:30 PM in Anderson Hall

Saturday, December 6th

Chancel Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM in Anderson Hall

GFS Meeting – 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM in the Undercroft

CPR Training – 12:00n– 3:00 PM in Anderson Hall

UPCOMING SUNDAYS

November 30th

- **First Sunday of Advent/ Health Ministry Sunday**

December 7th

- **Annual Men's Day Celebration**

Guest speaker is the Honorable Vincent J. Hughes, PA State Senator of the 7th District.

December 14th

- **Third Sunday of Advent (Rose/Gaudete Sunday)**
- **Retired Persons Ministry/Senior Partners** - brief informational meeting - for all who are interested in learning more about this exciting ministry, which engages in SAFE [service, adventure, fellowship & education]

December 21st

- **Fourth Sunday of Advent**
- **Church School Christmas Presentation**

ROBO CALLS

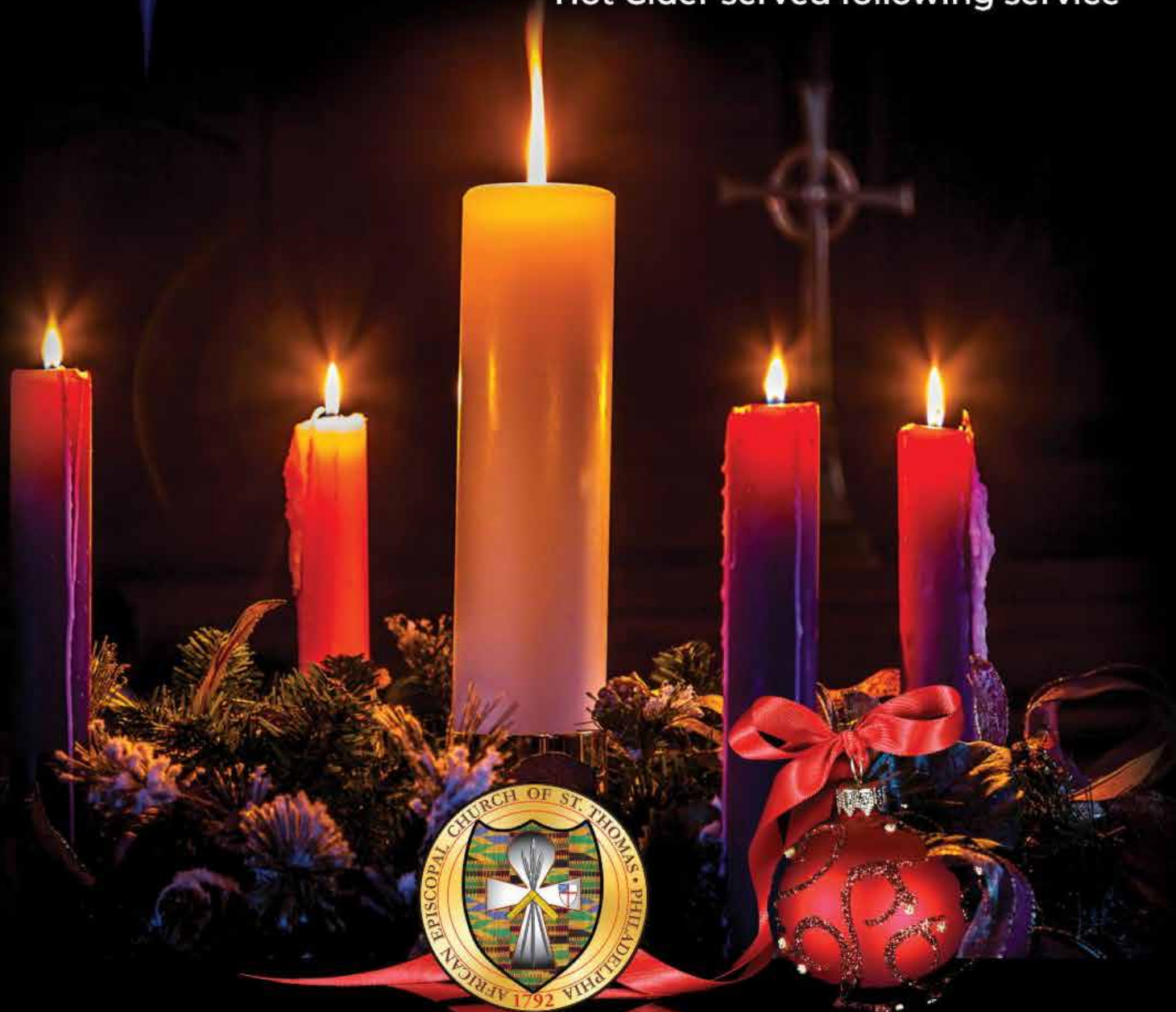
Are you receiving robocalls from the Rector? If not, please email [Gladyce DuBrey](mailto:Gladyce.DuBrey) with you mobil number and email address..

THE CHRIST-MASS

Wednesday, December 24, 2025, 7:00 PM

**Festive Music and Dance;
Inspiring preaching;
Distribution of Holy Communion.**

Hot Cider served following service



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HEALTH MINISTRY NEWS

The Health Ministry, in conjunction with the Lankenau Community Health and Outreach Center, will once again be holding zoom presentations.

Below are the dates for upcoming programs for the remainder of this year:

In-Person Program

Saturday, December 6th

“Hands Only” CPR/Stop the Bleed Class
(Pre-registration required) Limited to 15 Participants
Click this link to register. (First-come, First-served)

<https://forms.gle/492968JtgcBnZJyj6>

Zoom Presentation

3rd Thursday of the month – 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

December 18th - Eating Healthy for the Holidays

Join Zoom Meeting - <https://temple.zoom.us/j/99800374775> Meeting ID: 998 0037 4775

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](#).

GREAT NEWS TO REPORT ABOUT OUR CHURCH!!!

A Report from the Rector's Wish List and the Capital Improvement Fund:

RECTOR'S WISH LIST

Enormous thanks for your continued generous contributions to date.

a) New air conditioning units in Anderson Hall

- **Completed**

b) Restoration of walls (altar and choir areas)

- **Work has begun**

(An anonymous parishioner donor has made this possible.)

c) New air conditioning units needed for the church nave.

- **Donors are needed.**

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND

Enormous thanks for your continued generous contributions to date.

- **Donors still needed.**

a) Ceiling structural work - **Completed**

b) Roofing work - **In the final stages of completion**

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!!

Please contact Bill Burke, Property Chair, at property@aecst.org if you have any questions.

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.

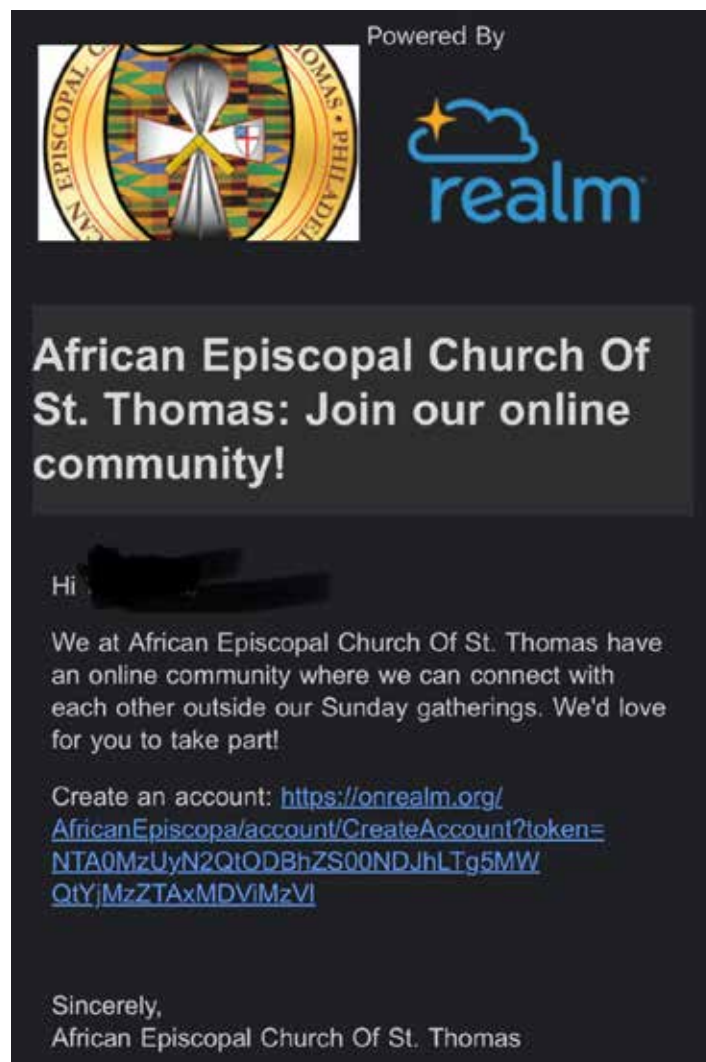
Please note that we offer online electronic giving which provides an easy, secure method to contribute weekly, monthly, yearly or simply whenever you desire. Donations can be made at <https://onrealm.org/AfricanEpiscopa/give/now> or through the Realm App. (If you don't already use the Realm app and don't 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:

For enrollment in REALM Connect to be successful, all personal information must be correct. Please see **Patricia Lynch**, after service to fill out a member information form. Thank you for your continued support of St. Thomas.



THE CHURCH DIRECTORY

“Our directory will not be complete without you!”

If you have not taken your pictures for the directory, please sign up in the Undercroft following service today for December 12th and 13th.

Attention: All guilds, ministries and groups are invited to a group photo for the church directory. Pictures will be taken by Bill Edmonds on Sundays, immediately after service.

Please contact Church Directory committee members, **Lynda Tapper Smith** 215-880-2998 or **Thomasina Hack** 215-901-2773 to schedule a photo appointment.
Thank you.

**The following groups are taking their group pictures on
Sunday December 7th:**

The Memorial Tribute Committee
Angels in Motion
Vestry
Men's Ministry and Fellowship
Adult Christian Formation
Church School

DO YOU PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT?

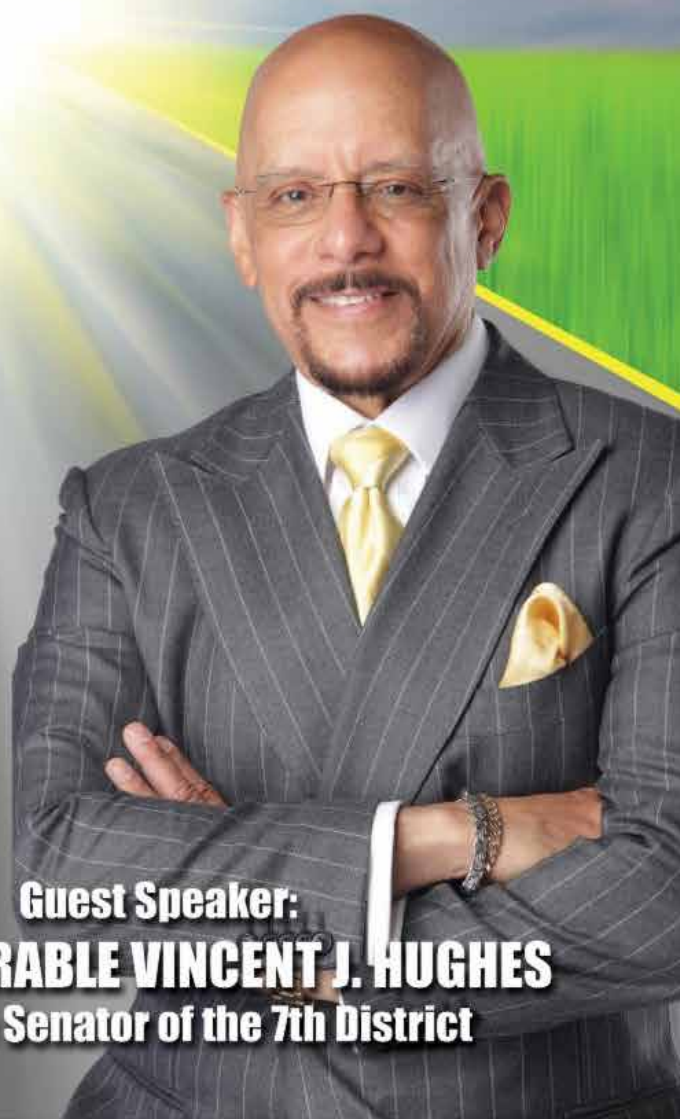
Have you ever thought about using that talent to glorify God in worship? Please prayerfully consider joining our St. Thomas Jazz Ensemble, St. Thomas Chancel Choir or St. Thomas Gospel Choir. If interested, please contact [Gladyce](#) in the Parish Office ASAP to get details on upcoming scheduled rehearsals.

PREPARE A WAY: SOMETHING GREAT IS COMING!

MATTHEW 3: 1-12

Sunday, December 7, 2025, 10:00 AM

**Please join us for
THE ANNUAL MEN'S DAY CELEBRATION**



Guest Speaker:

THE HONORABLE VINCENT J. HUGHES
PA State Senator of the 7th District



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CONFIRMATION / REAFFIRMATION / RECEPTION CLASSES

have started. The schedule for in-person and Zoom
and in-person 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.

The New Members Manual has arrived.
Please use the [link](#) to access it.

CHAT AND CHEW

Have you ever considered hosting a Chat and Chew
following Service in thanksgiving for a blessing received or
in memory of a departed loved one?
Please contact [Gladyce](#) in the church office
for further details.

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

CHRISTMAS ALTAR FLOWERS

During the Season of Advent, flowers are placed on the High Altar only for **Rose/Gaudete Sunday, December 14th.**

Flowers on the High Altar for Rose/Gaudete Sunday are \$70.00 each

Flowers on the High Altar for Christmas are \$125.00 each

Flowers on the Absalom Jones Altar for Christmas are \$85.00 each

Flowers on the Columbarium for Christmas are \$60.00

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS AND ALTAR GREENERY

Your gift of Christmas Poinsettias, Christmas Tree adoptions, and a donation to the purchase of altar greenery will help beautify the church for the holidays 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 Gladyce in the church office. Please print all names. Go to the church website or scan the QR Code below

to order and pay for flowers. **DEADLINE: MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2025**

Poinsettias are \$25.00 each (5 names per plant)

Christmas Tree for \$ 35.00 per tree

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



DAILY RECOMMENDED BIBLE READINGS

The Readings for the
November 30, 2025

The First Lesson – [Isaiah 2:1-5](#)
[Psalm 122](#)

The Second Lesson – [Romans 13:11-14](#)

The Holy Gospel – [Matthew 24:36-44](#)

**The Holy Gospel Readings for the
week of December 1, 2025**

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

Tuesday - [Luke 20:9-18](#)

Wednesday - [Luke 20:19-26](#)

Thursday - [Luke 20:27-40](#)

Friday - [Luke 20:41-21:4](#)

Saturday - [Luke 21:5-19](#)



PILGRIMS ON A JOURNEY BIBLE STUDY

meet on Tuesdays at 7:00 PM via
Zoom. If you are interested in joining
the ministry, please contact Fr. Jay
at associatepriest@aecst.org

WEDNESDAYS IN-PERSON BIBLE STUDY

with [Fr. Daren](#) meet at 6:00 PM
in Absalom Jones House.



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 of 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 HOSPITAL:

Regina Meacham Devero - Phoenixville Hospital

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, Teena Watson-Matthews, Alice Young, Alletta Parris-Olday, Deborah Harrison, Regina Meacham Devero, Alexandra McFadden Rodriguez, Albert Dandridge III, Gloria Moses

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, Alexandra McFadden Rodriguez, Sharon Harper, Alice-Bowman Cropper, Quincina Edmonds, Dr. Jay Fluellen, D. Lynn Joell, Edita Gauthney

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 represent 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 give 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) Cell Phone: 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