



ST. THOMAS
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Messenger

July 2018

Between February and June of this year, about 50 people gathered in seven “Hope and Horizons” meetings to talk about what is essential to St. Thomas’, to share dreams for the future, and to name concerns. Last weekend, June 29-30, the Vestry gathered for its annual retreat. We used all the data from those Hope and Horizons meetings to discern, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, future priorities for St. Thomas’. Thanks to each of you who participated in these Hope and Horizons conversations, your input was essential to our retreat. Let me summarize the weekend for you and share next steps.

On Friday night, we met in Hudson Hall over dinner. We prayed together, and then we talked through the St. Thomas’ mission statement. As near as anyone can remember, our current mission statement was written during the time John Morris was rector at St. Thomas, perhaps in the late 1980s. (If you were part of writing that mission statement, please let me know!) We closed our evening with prayer.

To refresh your memory our mission statement (always on the front of the bulletin) reads, “We, the baptized ministers, declare Christ’s Mission for us: to grow as a Church in the spiritual strength of community, and to care, reach out, and include all people in Christ’s love.” Some of us felt uncomfortable with the phrase “baptized ministers,” feeling that it was too exclusive. Others appreciated that it names each of us as a minister with shared responsibility for the work we do at St. Thomas’ in Jesus’ name. While not everyone loved every word of the rest of the statement, we came to agreement that being (and/or growing into being) a spiritually strong Christian community and caring, reaching out, and including all people in Christ’s love continue to be strong components of who we are as a church.

On Saturday, we moved the retreat to Church of the Epiphany in Herndon. They graciously gave us their space to use – and it was wonderful. We had space to work, to pray, and to refresh over meals.

After opening with prayer, we began to move through a process that would allow us to discern the Spirit’s call through the data we gathered in the Hope and Horizon conversations. Vestry members have been reading and praying with that data for more than a week. We used Post-Its to write down the topics (which we heard from you in Hope and Horizons) that spoke most strongly to each of us – and then we placed them next to one of these statements: “Growing as a spiritual strong church” or “Caring, reaching out and including all people in

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8991 Brook Rd, McLean, VA 22102

703.442.0330

WWW.STTHOMASMCLEAN.ORG

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Lord make me an instrument of
your peace
Where there is hatred let me sow
love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope
Where there is darkness, light
And where there is sadness, joy
O divine master grant that I may
not so much seek to be consoled
as to console
to be understood as to
understand
To be loved as to love
For it is in giving that we receive
it is in pardoning that we are
pardoned
And it's in dying that we are born
to eternal life
Amen

~St. Francis of Assisi



Christ's love" or "It doesn't fit in either category and I think it's important." Each person had an opportunity to share why we put up what we did – and how we saw each topic furthering our mission as a church. Like ideas were grouped together.

Next, we prayed for the Spirit's guidance and then we voted! Each of us had five sticky dots that we could use to choose the broad categories we thought were most important in the immediate future for St. Thomas'. The results were exciting and a bit surprising. The priorities that the Vestry has chosen to work on in the next year to 18 months include:

- Improving Communication through the Website and Use of Technology, which helps us both to grow as a spiritually strong community and to include others in Christ's love.
- Our Ministry to Children, Youth and Families, which also covers both mission statement areas.
- Thinking more about evangelism. At this time, we didn't set a numbers goal (such as, we want to have 150 people in church every weekend). But we did set a number of mini goals that will help us to improve our processes for incorporating new members, making sure our administrative processes are in order, and talking as a congregation about growth.

We also identified three areas, that are interrelated in some ways:

- The first is financial. The Vestry recognized through its own experiences and the Hope and Horizons feedback, that we need to tighten up some financial procedures and improve financial communications. We will establish an Administration and Finance Committee to work on those goals.
- The second is our building use and the McLean Preschool. We want to increase how our building is used and explore deepening our relationship with the preschool. Should the Preschool eventually decide to close or move, we'd like to have a plan in place to use that space well.
- Finally, and this may be news to many parishioners, as it was to some Vestry members, St. Thomas owns nearly an acre of undeveloped property, behind the rectory, known on our landscape plans as "Lot B." We set some goals around Lot B. We'll form a committee to explore these questions: How might it be used to further our mission? Could we partner with a developer to build something on Lot B? Would it be better sold, with the proceeds used to eliminate our debt and build our endowment? What other options are there? No decisions on Lot B will be made in the near future and without ample input from the congregation. A team will explore multiple options and present them to the Vestry for consideration by December 2019.

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You might be feeling surprised by what isn't on the list. There's no outreach! What about pastoral care? How about our Interfaith relationships? Each of these areas was spoken to passionately in our Hope and Horizons conversations. The Vestry was a bit surprised, as well. But what we realized is that each of these areas is already strong at St. Thomas. The Outreach Committee is doing great work, encouraging us all to "care, reach out, and include all people in Christ's love." We are already having conversations about expanding pastoral care, training new eucharistic visitors, and more. I've just been named as the Secretary of Tysons Interfaith; Steve Wickman and I attend monthly meetings faithfully. The areas the Vestry chose to focus on are areas that most need improvement.

Each of the selected areas has a pair of Vestry members working together to develop goals and timelines and to encourage the work of that area. If you have questions, or would like to join in the work of one of these goals, please check in with one of folks working on that area, with the Vestry person of the day, or with me.

- ◇ Communication – Jenn Lamanna, Chuck Grimes, and Judi Alexander
- ◇ Children, Youth and Families – Lynne Montgomery and Mary Knight
- ◇ Evangelism – Louise Armitage and Fran Gardner-Smith
- ◇ Building Use and Preschool – Scott Johnston and Clela Raymond
- ◇ Lot B – Rick Montfort and Pat Smith
- ◇ Financial Procedures and Communication – will be handled by a soon to be formed Finance and Administration Committee

We concluded our Vestry Retreat with a simple Eucharist. Thanks to all of you who have been praying for the Spirit's guidance as we set a course for the future of St. Thomas. Please join me in thanking the Vestry, for spending a beautiful (though hot) summer Friday night and Saturday praying and working diligently setting some direction for the future of St. Thomas. I know that these goals will improve our structures and processes, enabling us to live more fully into the call that God has for us.

With every blessing,
Rev. Fran

Pray for our Mission Trip to Haiti

On Friday July 13, Judi and Mike Alexander, Steve Wickman, and Rev. Fran Gardner-Smith will leave for our annual mission trip to Haiti. They will join our mission partners from Mediator Episcopal Church in Meridian, Mississippi and All Saints in Granada, Mississippi. Together, they will offer Vacation Bible School for nearly 100 students from Ascension School in Beraud, Haiti. Please pray for all of the missionaries, for their safety and well-being. Pray also for the children who will be touched by this Vacation Bible School. A helpful prayer, from the *Book of Common Prayer* (page 816-817) is this Prayer for Mission:

Everliving God, whose will it is that all should come to you through your Son Jesus Christ: Inspire our witness to him, that all may know the power of his forgiveness and the hope of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Youth & Family

As many of you know even better than I, for many summers (I don't know when this tradition began), St. Thomas' offered "Children's Church" during the summer months. Children left the Nave during the singing of "Gaudeamus Hodie" and returned at the peace. Volunteers led the children through a simple liturgy with singing lead by our Minister of Music, Walter.

In a few weeks, Rev. Jaime's departs for Montana. After multiple requests, volunteers have not stepped forward, so we are unable to offer Children's Church. I see this as a great opportunity. Let me explain.

I've seen a trend play out since my days of serving as a Director of Christian Formation back in the mid 1990s. When we remove kids from a portion of regular Sunday worship, we risk teaching them that what happens there is not for them. We may inadvertently give the message that church is too boring to hold their interest. Sadly, following confirmation, many teens continue the habit we've taught them. They don't come to worship.

So, all of us have the opportunity this summer to help kids of all ages feel more at home in worship. Here's the plan.

This summer at the 10:00 service, we'll be hearing just two lessons each week – the Old Testament lesson and the Gospel. With the time saved by eliminating the Psalm and the Epistle, we'll have time for a brief children's message and (a shortened) adult sermon. I'll invite the children to come forward for the children's message and have them stay with me and give them something to listen for in the adult message. I shared our plan with Bishop Ihloff last Sunday and he gave enthusiastic endorsement to it, for those who are concerned that we might be breaking a diocesan rule.

Next, I am going to train all children (who are willing) to be worship leaders. Historically, St. Thomas' hasn't started kids as acolytes until they are 11. I've always trained kids who are much younger. By 7 or 8, there are acolyte jobs kids can do, and do well. We saw on Youth Sunday that some of our children are strong readers. I'll be inviting them (and teaching them) to share reading and prayers with us this summer. Young people can help the adult ushers, bring forward the bread and wine for communion, and pass the offering plates. Participating in worship will help our kids to feel like what happens in "big church" is meaningful and that they are a significant part of it.

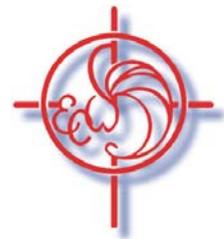
Finally, Walter and I are working together to choose music we can add to our worship which will be interesting to all of us, easy to sing, and that invites participation. Many of our kids are singers (I can regularly hear them singing along with the fraction anthem!) and music is another way we can help them to see that our worship is for them, too!

I have used this approach in other churches. Over time, I have seen a transformation in children and youth when they participate fully in the life and worship of the congregation. They stay actively engaged through their teenage years (and beyond). They see themselves as stakeholders in the life of the church. Thank you for helping us be a welcoming place for our kids this summer.

NOTE: This Sunday at 9am, I'll be working with our first batch of kids to teach them how to acolyte. **Any child, age 7 and older, who wants to learn how to serve as an acolyte is invited and welcome to join us in the Nave at 9AM on July 8th.** If you can't make it this Sunday, and there are young people in your family who'd like to learn more about participating in worship, drop me an email and we'll find a time to get them trained and oriented.

Peace,
Rev. Fran

The ECW Corner



Congratulations to our St. Thomas' Book Group. So far this year, through the generous donations of monthly attendees, \$483.00 was raised for Ascension Church in Beraud, Haiti. Many thanks to Berta Smith for reconciling the donation box each month and for everyone for filling it up. The funds will be delivered to Pere Kesner Ajax when the St. Thomas group visits Haiti in a couple weeks to teach vacation bible school. The Book Group will take the summer off from its formal gatherings and will begin again in September.

Please mark your calendar for Sunday, September 9 for the next ECW general meeting which will be held at 8:50 am in Hudson Hall. ECW is a wonderful way to experience being in a community together with gladness of heart and a lightness of spirit. The creative activities we work on bring a level of joy to us all and the parish at large, while importunately we raise money for Inreach and Outreach projects in the process. All women of the congregation are members of the ECW and are encouraged to participate in the numerous offerings and activities that have become such a rich legacy of the St. Thomas community. If you are relatively new to this parish and have not gotten on our distribution list to receive specific emails about ECW meetings and activities, please send us your email address so we can include you.

With kindest regards, joy and blessings for a peaceful and relaxing summer,

Becky Ventorini

ECW President

"I am not lucky, I am blessed."

Anonymous

COME to GRILL NITE and CELEBRATE THE MINISTRY WE SHARE

On Thursday evening, July 26 at 7:15, The Rt. Rev. Shannon Johnston will be at St. Thomas' to preside at our Celebration of New Ministry. The Rev. Ruthanna Hooke, my seminary homiletics professor and friend, will preach. This service does two things. It marks the moment when I officially become the Rector at St. Thomas'. (Technically, I'm still the Rector-elect!) And, it names and celebrates the ministry we share together in this place.

Our Celebration of New Ministry will be preceded by the first Grill Nite of 2018 at 6:00. Men Eating Breakfast will do the hot dogs and hamburgers, lemonade, and iced tea. Bring a side dish to share. (Or dessert to share following the service). We may have a number of visitors for Grill Nite, as clergy from other churches, as well as other guests may attend. Please plan for a crowd when prepping your side. Also, because it is a Grill Nite, casual attire is welcome and encouraged.

I am looking forward to celebrating with you!

Rev. Fran

Here's the schedule, all in one place:

THURSDAY, JULY 26, 2018

FIRST GRILL NITE OF 2018 AT 6:00

Bring side dishes (or desserts) to share and plan for guests at Grill Nite

CELEBRATION OF NEW MINISTRY AT 7:15

THE RT. REV. SHANNON JOHNSTON, BISHOP OF VIRGINIA, CELEBRANT

THE REV. DR. RUTHANNA HOOKE, PREACHER

Dessert reception following the service

Flowers? Prayer List? Help! I can't find the sheet?!

With all the construction/demolition and chaos going around with the burst pipe—
you may be confused where the signups went!

We have you covered!

Signups for flowers and prayer lists are now on the website!

www.stthomasmcleanva.org and you can always call the office.

Senior Warden's Report

Building Reconstruction Update

I know it looks like progress on our reconstruction has been slow, but much has been going on behind the scenes. Fran, Rick, and I have talked with Altar Guild and Flower Committee members to reimagine our space, given the opportunity to actually redo our space on account of January's burst pipe. At June's meeting, the Vestry approved a budget to reconfigure our space as follows:

- Move the sacristy into the vesting room
- Move the flower room into the old sacristy
- Move the sexton closet from the kitchen to the old flower room

Now that these decisions have been made, construction can begin. I don't expect it will take long once it starts, and my goal is to have the work complete before the end of the summer.

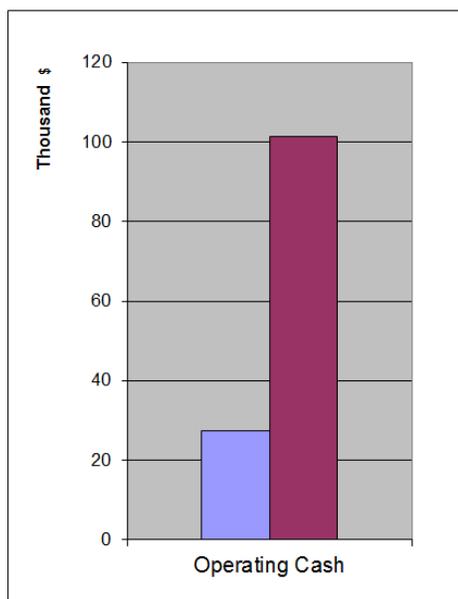
Thank you for your patience with the missing drywall and flooring as we thought this through. Soon we will have our beautiful space back!

Peace,

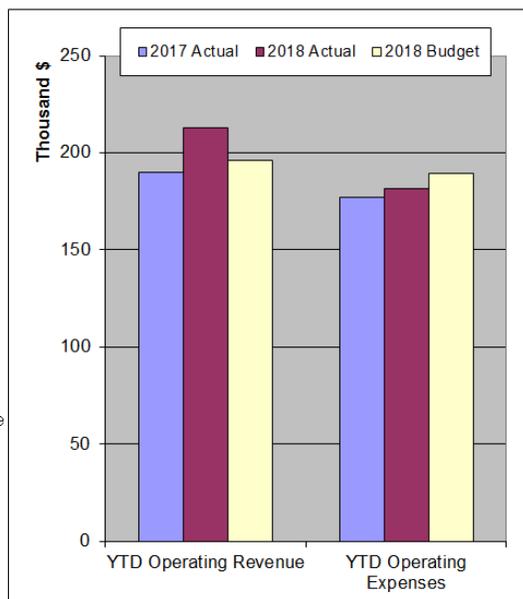
Chuck Grimes

Parish Financial Report

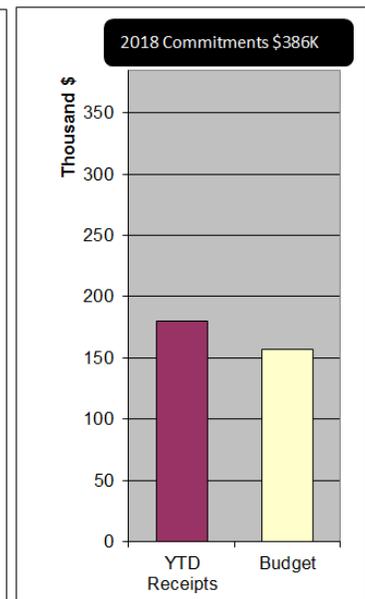
May 2018



2018 Year to Date



2018 YTD Pledges

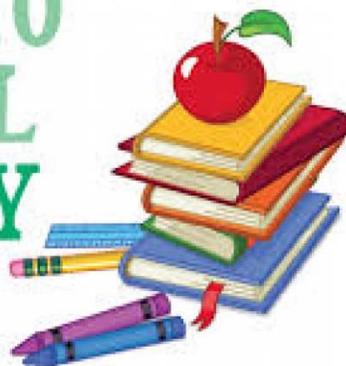


SHARE BACK TO SCHOOL PROGRAM WISH LIST

- Regular Size Glue Sticks
- Sharpened Pencils in bunches of 12
- Loose Leaf Paper (wide or college rule)
- Spiral Notebooks, single subject (wide or college rule)
- Composition Notebooks (wide or college rule)
- Ballpoint and Stick Pens
- Yellow Highlighters
- Scissors, blunt tip
- 3" x 3" Sticky notes, yellow

Please bring donations to St. Thomas no later than July 23rd
Questions? Contact Betsy Reddaway pbreddaway@verizon.net

BACK TO
SCHOOL
SUPPLY
DRIVE





Life
@
St. Thomas

(Top four photos: Vestry Retreat, Bottom: Bishop Illhoff at St. Thomas)

WISHING REV. JAIME AND KAT WELL

On Wednesday Night, July 11th at 6:00 in Hudson Hall, we'll gather for a Mexican Fiesta to celebrate and give thanks for the ministries of our Associate for Children, Youth, and Families – The Rev. Jaime Leonard AND our Parish Administrator Kat Sarfati.

Rev. Jaime will be leaving St. Thomas on July 20th to serve as Rector in two Episcopal churches in Montana. Kat Sarfati will be leaving us on July 26th to work in the office of the Roman Catholic student ministry at the University of Mary Washington. Both Jaime and Kat have been wonderful and supportive partners in ministry as I began as Rector at St. Thomas. I will miss them.

Here's the Party Plan!

MEXICAN FIESTA TO CELEBRATE REV. JAIME and KAT

WEDNESDAY JULY 11TH AT 6:00 PM IN HUDSON HALL

TACO BAR FROM DISTRICT TACO*

ICED TEA AND LEMONADE PROVIDED

PLEASE BRING A FIESTA-THEMED SIDE DISH TO SHARE

**IF YOU'D LIKE TO BRING ANOTHER BEVERAGE, YOU'RE WELCOME
TO DO SO**

We will be presenting purses to both Rev. Jaime and Kat, so please send donations to the office (memo line either PURSE-REV. JAIME or PURSE-KAT). We won't present the purses until each one's last day of work so you have time to give generously.

***Suggested Taco Bar donation - \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids, more or less depending on your circumstances! Please don't let an ability to pay keep you from attending. ALL ARE WELCOME.**

July 2018

1	2	3	4 Independence Day Office Closed	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 6:00 PM Jaime & Kat's Going away Party	12	13 Haiti Missioners Leave	14
15	16	17	18	19 Haiti Missioners Return	20 Jaime's Last Day	21
22	23	24	25 Messenger Deadline	26 Kat's Last Day in Office 6:PM Grill Night 7:15PM Celebration of New Ministry	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

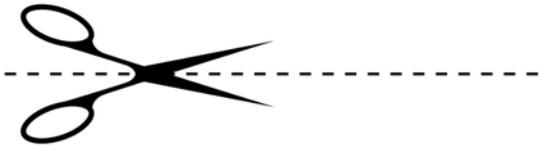


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Going Shopping?



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SHARE of McLean could use a few things for their pantry too...

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking Oil | <input type="checkbox"/> Canned Veggies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ground Coffee | <input type="checkbox"/> Mac & Cheese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ketchup | <input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast Cereal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Granola Bars/Crackers | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% Juice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jam/Jelly | <input type="checkbox"/> Diapers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flour | <input type="checkbox"/> Wipes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet Paper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pasta | <input type="checkbox"/> Laundry Detergent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pasta Sauce | <input type="checkbox"/> Feminine Hygiene |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beans | <input type="checkbox"/> Shampoo/Conditioner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rice | <input type="checkbox"/> Soap/Body Wash |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canned Fruit | <input type="checkbox"/> Deodorant |