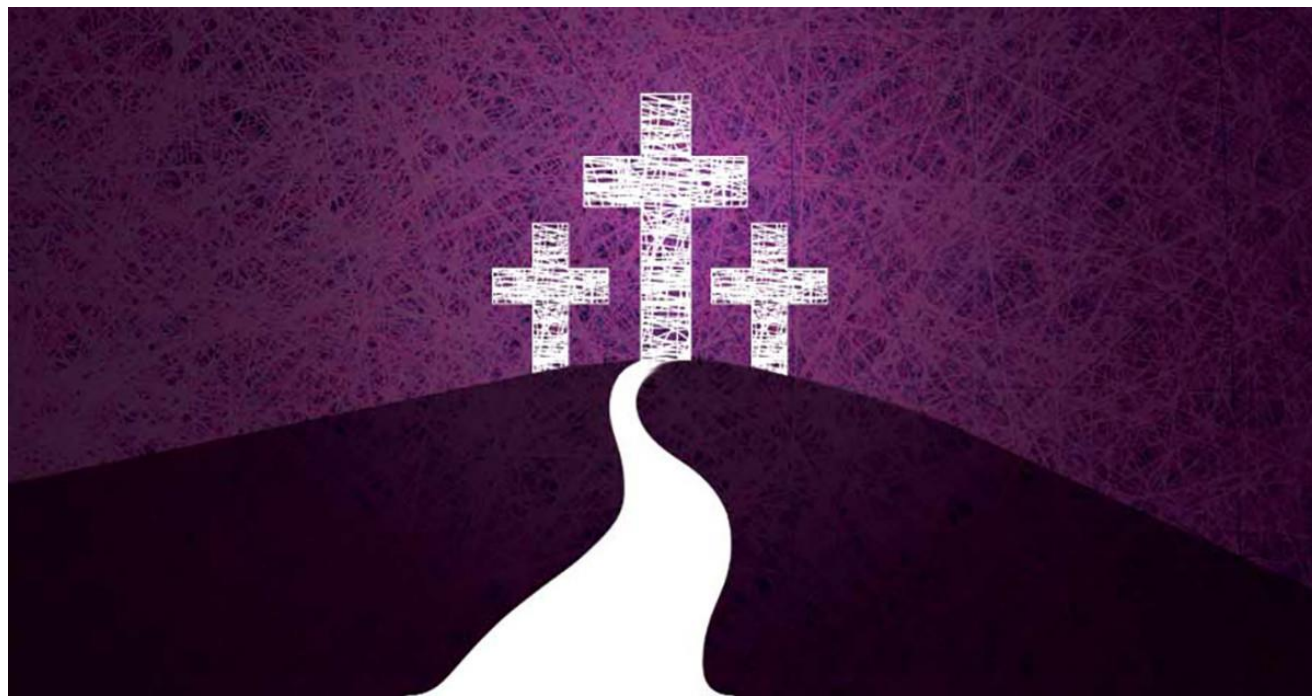




ST. THOMAS
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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.

Third Sunday in Lent



Holy Eucharist, Rite II—10:00 AM

March 3, 2023

Welcome to St. Thomas! We are so glad that you are here with us. If you are new to our community, we invite you to fill out a welcome card located in the pew rack in front of you, and either place it in the offering plate or hand it to a priest. We also invite you to stay with us for coffee hour after the service.

THE WORD OF GOD

Choral Introit

Lord Jesus, Think on Me

#641 Hymnal 1982

Welcome

The Rev. Will Drosos

Procession

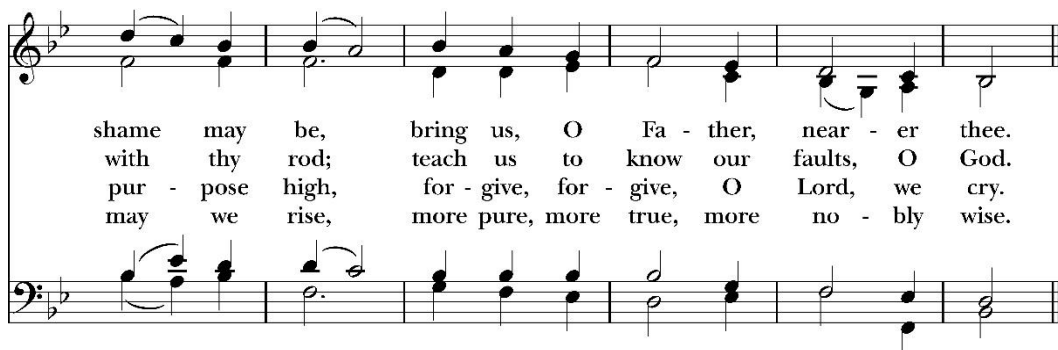
Before Thy Throne, O God, We Kneel

#574 Hymnal 1982

1 Be - fore thy throne, O God, we kneel: give us a con - science
 2 Search out our hearts and make us true; help us to give to
 3 For sins of heed - less word and deed, for pride am - bi - tious
 4 Let the fierce fires which burn and try, our in - most spi - rits

quick to feel, a rea - dy mind to un - der - stand the
 all their due. From love of plea - sure, lust of gold, from
 to suc - ceed, for craft - y trade and sub - tle snare to
 pu - ri - fy: con - sume the ill; purge out the shame; O

mean - ing of thy chas - tening hand; what - e'er the pain and
 sins which make the heart grow cold, wean us and train us
 catch the sim - ple un - a - ware, for lives be - reft of
 God, be with us in the flame; a new - born peo - ple



shame may be, bring us, O Fa - ther, near - er thee.
 with thy rod; teach us to know our faults, O God.
 pur - pose high, for - give, for - give, O Lord, we cry.
 may we rise, more pure, more true, more no - bly wise.

Words: William Boyd Carpenter (1841-1918), alt. Music: *St. Petersburg*, Dimitri S. Bortniansky (1751-1825).

The Penitential Order

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

His mercy endures forever.

Jesus said, "The first commandment is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord your God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these."

Confession of Sin

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor. *A time of silence.* Together, let us pray,
Most merciful God,

we confess that we have sinned against you

in thought, word, and deed,

by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,

have mercy on us and forgive us;

that we may delight in your will,

and walk in your ways,

to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen.

During the singing of the Trisagion, children from Pre-K to 3rd Grade are invited to follow the crucifer to Children's Chapel.

Trisagion (sung three times)

by Dr. Lori Lind, in memory of Jim Galloway

Andantino Ho - ly - God, Ho - ly and Migh- ty, Ho - ly Im-mor -

7 tal - One - - Have mer - cy - u-pon - - - us, - Have mer-cy on - - - us.

15

The Collect of the Day

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Let us pray.

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lessons

The First Lesson

Exodus 20:1-17

A reading from the Book of Exodus.

Then God spoke all these words:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien

resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 19 (*We will pray Psalm 19 responsively by half verse*)

- 1 The heavens declare the glory of God, *
and the firmament shows his handiwork.
- 2 One day tells its tale to another, *
and one night imparts knowledge to another.
- 3 Although they have no words or language, *
and their voices are not heard,
- 4 Their sound has gone out into all lands, *
and their message to the ends of the world.
- 5 In the deep has he set a pavilion for the sun; *
it comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber;
it rejoices like a champion to run its course.
- 6 It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens
and runs about to the end of it again; *
nothing is hidden from its burning heat.
- 7 The law of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul; *
the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the innocent.
- 8 The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart; *
the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes.
- 9 The fear of the LORD is clean and endures for ever; *
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, *
sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.

11 By them also is your servant enlightened, *
and in keeping them there is great reward.

12 Who can tell how often he offends? *
cleanse me from my secret faults.

13 Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins;
let them not get dominion over me; *
then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my
heart be acceptable in your sight, *
O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.

The Second Lesson

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

A reading from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Sequence Hymn can be found on Page 7

The Gospel

John 2:13-22

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the

cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Sequence Hymn *The Lord Shall Come and Not Be Slow 1,2 / 3* **#462 Hymnal 1982**

1 The Lord will come and not be slow, his foot - steps can - not err;
 2 Truth from the earth, like to a flower, shall bud and blos - som show;
 3 Rise, God, judge thou the earth in might, this wick - ed earth re - dress;
 4 The na - tions all whom thou hast made shall come, and all shall frame
 5 For great thou art, and won - ders great by thy strong hand are done:

1 be - fore him right - eous - ness shall go, his roy - al har - bin - ger.
 2 and jus - tice, from her heaven - ly bower, look down on us be - low.
 3 for thou art he who shalt by right the na - tions all pos - sess.
 4 to bow them low be - fore thee, Lord, and glo - ri - fy thy Name.
 5 thou in thy ev - er - last - ing seat re - main - est God a - lone.

Words: John Milton (1608-1674), alt. Music: York, melody from *The CL Psalmes of David*, 1615; adapt. *The Whole Booke of Psalmes*, 1621; harm, John Milton, Sr. (1563?-1647).

The Sermon

Mr. Rishabh Bajekal

The Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
 We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
 the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,**

**God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit**

he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;

he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.**

With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

Kneeling as you are able, let us pray.

From pride, vanity and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred and malice; and from all evil,
Savior deliver us.

From sloth, worldliness and love of money; from hardness of heart and contempt for your
word,
Savior deliver us.

By the mystery of your holy incarnation; by your birth, childhood and obedience; by your
baptism, fasting and temptation,
Savior deliver us.

By your ministry in word and work; by your mighty acts of power; by the preaching of your
reign,
Savior deliver us.

By your agony and trial; by your cross and passion; by your precious death and burial,
Savior deliver us.

By your mighty resurrection; by your glorious ascension; and by your sending of the Holy
Spirit,
Savior deliver us.

Hear our prayers, O Christ our God.

Hear us, O Christ.

Govern and direct your holy Church; fill it with love and truth; and grant it that unity which is your will.

Hear us, O Christ.

Enlighten all bishops, priests, deacons, and church staffs, especially the staff at St. Thomas, with knowledge and understanding, that by their teaching and their lives they may proclaim your word.

Hear us, O Christ.

Give your people grace to witness to your word and bring forth the fruit of your Spirit.

Hear us, O Christ.

Guide the leaders of the nations into the ways of peace and justice.

Hear us, O Christ.

Give your wisdom and strength to Joe Biden, the President of the United States, Glenn Youngkin, the Governor of Virginia, and the officials of Fairfax County, that in all things they may do your will, for your glory and the common good.

Hear us, O Christ.

Give us the will to use the resources of the earth to your glory and for the good of all.

Hear us, O Christ.

Heal the sick in body, mind or spirit especially Ethan, Baby Vincent, Susan, Cheryl, Nancy, Megan, Farzad, Irene, Jimmy, John, David, Lucy, Jack and Lela, Baby Vera, Steve, Kim and Larry, Emily and Dave, Lynn, Betsy, Karen, Maura, Yusuf, Mari, Connie, Bruce, Joan, Duane, Bill, Jack, Caroline, Roy, and Herb, and provide for those who are homeless, hungry or destitute.

Hear us, O Christ.

Guard and protect all children who are in danger.

Hear us, O Christ.

Show your compassion on prisoners, hostages and refugees, and all who are in trouble.

Hear us, O Christ.

Forgive our enemies, persecutors and slanderers, and turn their hearts.

Hear us, O Christ.

Hear us as we remember those who have died, especially Cleta's brother, John Hartman, and grant us with them a share in your eternal glory.

Hear us, O Christ.

Together let us pray for St Thomas Church.

Almighty God, by your Spirit the whole body of your Church is governed and sanctified, hear our prayer for St Thomas, build in us a renewed vision of your Church; shape our life according to your will; empower us with the gifts to make us one that together we may grow as a church in the spiritual strength of community and reach out to include all people in Christ's love, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Following the exchange of peace in the church, peace is exchanged with the congregation on Zoom.

The Offertory

I appeal to you, by the mercies of God, to present yourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.



It's Easy to Give Electronically to St. Thomas

Scan the QR code, or visit the GIVING page on the St. Thomas website:

<https://stthomasmcleanva.org/giving/donate>.

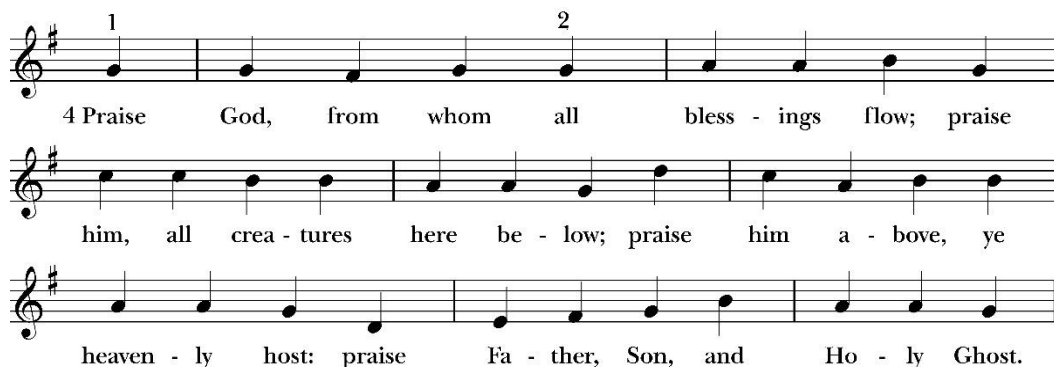
Offertory Anthem

My Song Is Love Unknown

James Kirby

The Doxology

Hymnal 1982 #43, Verse 4



1 2

4 Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise
him, all crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye
heaven - ly host: praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

This hymn may be sung unaccompanied as a four-part canon at the distance of one measure.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Gluten free wafers are available on request. As the Eucharist is distributed, all who desire prayers for healing—for themselves or for others—are invited to come to the healing minister behind the lectern on the right as you face the altar.

The Great Thanksgiving Eucharistic Prayer C

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

God of all power, Ruler of the Universe, you are worthy of glory and praise.

Glory to you for ever and ever.

At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.

By your will they were created and have their being.

From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill. You made us the rulers of creation. But we turned against you, and betrayed your trust; and we turned against one another.

Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight.

Again and again, you called us to return. Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous Law. And in the fullness of time you sent your only Son, born of a woman, to fulfill your Law, to open for us the way of freedom and peace.

By his blood, he reconciled us. By his wounds, we are healed.

And therefore we praise you, joining with the heavenly chorus, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with all those in every generation who have looked to you in hope, to proclaim with them your glory, in their unending hymn:

Sanctus

by Dr. Lori Lind, in memory of Jim Galloway

ho - ly ho - ly ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and-might hea-ven and earth are

6
full - of your great glo - ry! Ho-san-na in the high - est ho-san-na in the high - est!

12 comes in the name of the Lord!-- Ho-san-na!

Bless-ed is He who comes - in the name - of - the-Lord! Ho - san-na in the high - est

17 in- the - high- est!

ho - san - na in the high - est!

And so, Father, we who have been redeemed by him, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring before you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. On the night he was betrayed he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." After supper, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Remembering now his work of redemption, and offering to you this sacrifice of thanksgiving,

We celebrate his death and resurrection, as we await the day of his coming.

Lord God of our Fathers and Mothers; God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; God of Miriam, Deborah, and Esther; God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us.

Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal.

Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name.

Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the Bread.

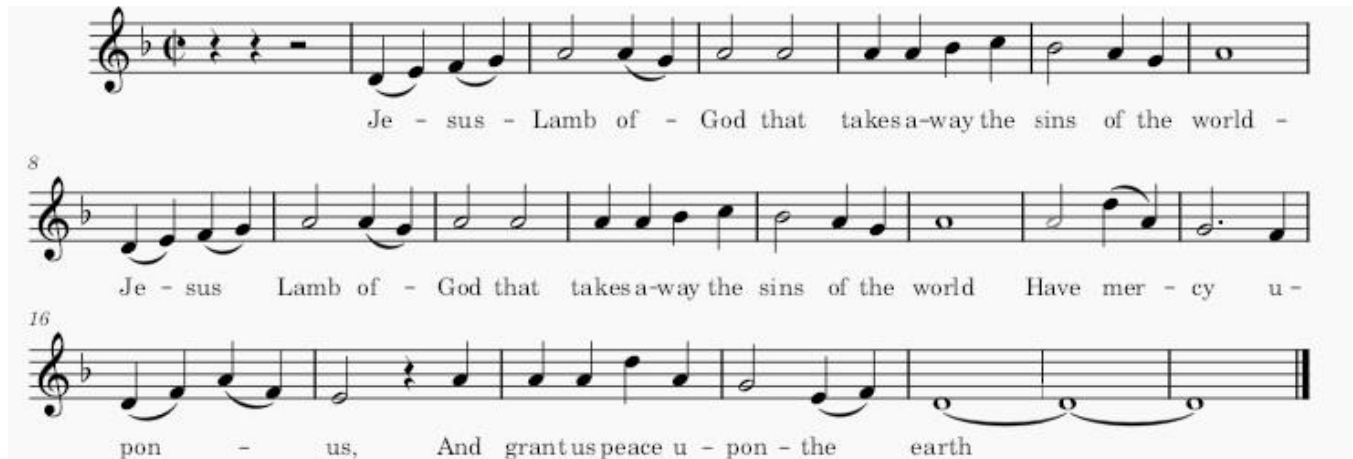
Accept these prayers and praises, Father, through Jesus Christ our great High Priest, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, your Church gives honor, glory, and worship, from generation to generation. **AMEN.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray,

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Fraction

by Dr. Lori Lind, in memory of Jim Galloway



Je - sus - Lamb of - God that takes a-way the sins of the world -

8
Je - sus Lamb of - God that takes a-way the sins of the world Have mer - cy u -

16
pon - us, And grant us peace u - pon - the earth

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

A note about the distribution of the Eucharist:

We have returned to offering the common cup, but there will continue to be a separate cup for intinction. If you would like to receive by intinction, please go the left side of the altar rail and the presiding priest will dip the bread in the cup for you. If you would like to sip from the common cup, please go to the right side of the altar rail where the bread and the cup will be offered separately. If you would like to consume only the bread, please also go to the right side and you may simply return to your seat after receiving the bread. As a reminder, we do not kneel at the altar rail one by one. When you go to the altar rail, please fill in all the way to the end. The ministers distributing communion will come around to you.

Prayer for Spiritual Communion on Zoom

While some members of our congregation are receiving communion at church, those members gathered to worship on Zoom will say the following prayer:

In union, O Lord, with the faithful at every altar of your Church where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, I desire to offer you praise and thanksgiving. I present to you my soul and body with the earnest wish that I may always be united to you. Since I cannot receive you sacramentally today, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself with you, and embrace you with all the love of my soul. Let nothing ever separate you from me. May I live in you, and may you live in me, both in this life and in the life to come. Amen.

Communion Hymn

Here, O My Lord, I See Thee Face to Face

#318 Hymnal 1982



1 Here, O my Lord, I see thee face to face;
2 Here would I feed up - on the Bread of God;
3 I have no help but thine; nor do I need
4 Mine is the sin, but thine the right - eous - ness;



here would I touch and han - dle things un - seen;
here drink with thee the roy - al Wine of heaven;
an - oth - er arm save thine to lean up - on;
mine is the guilt, but thine the cleans - ing Blood.



here grasp with firm - er hand e - ter - nal grace,
here would I lay a - side each earth - ly load,
it is e - nough, my Lord, e - nough in - deed;
Here is my robe, my re - fuge, and my peace;



and all my wea - ri - ness up - on thee lean.
here taste a - fresh the calm of sin for - given.
my strength is in thy might, thy might a - lone.
thy Blood, thy right - eous - ness, O Lord, my God.

Words: Horatius Bonar (1808-1889). Music: *Nyack*, Warren Swenson (b. 1937). Copyright © 1970, Warren Swanson.

Post-communion Prayer for a Multi-located Congregation

Let us pray. **God of abundance, we gather as your faithful people near and far. We believe you are present with us as we are united with Christ and one another in prayer and sacrament. We thank you for feeding all of us with your love and for making us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your love to the world and continue for ever in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.** *Written by the Rev. Dorota Wright-Pruski, adapted by the Rev. Will Drosos*

The Blessing

Look mercifully on this your family, Almighty God, that by your great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore; through Christ our Lord. And may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Announcements

Recessional Hymn

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

#685 Hymnal 1982

1 Rock of a - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee;
2 Should my tears for ev - er flow, should my zeal no lan - guor know,
3 While I draw this fleet - ing breath, when mine eye - lids close in death,

let the wa - ter and the blood from thy wound - ed side that flowed,
all for sin could not a - tone: thou must save, and thou a - lone;
when I rise to worlds un - known and be - hold thee on thy throne,

be of sin the dou - ble cure, cleanse me from its guilt and power.
in my hand no price I bring, sim - ply to thy cross I cling.
Rock of a - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me'. It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The lyrics are printed below the vocal line. The first system contains three verses of the hymn. The second system contains the second part of the lyrics. The third system contains the final part of the lyrics and ends with a double bar line.

Words: Augustus Montague Toplady (1740-1778), alt. Music: *Toplady*, Thomas Hastings (1784-1872).

The Dismissal

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Lenten Pastiche

You can find the current list of Most Needed Items for SHARE on our website:



Worship Participants

Presiders	Rev. Will Drosos & Rev. Fran Gardner-Smith
Preacher	Rishabh Bajekal
Altar Guild	Louise Armitage
Digital Usher	Mary Lee Montfort
Digital Verger	Walter Lazear
Staff Person on Zoom	Mary Cushing
Children's Chapel	Lael Lyons & Caroline Mitchell
Eucharistic Ministers	Steve Wickman & Caroline Mitchell
Healing Minister	Br. Joshua Waits
Lector & Intercessor	Louise Armitage
Usher	Becky Vantorini
Fellowship Hour Hosts	Susan Gardiner & Caroline Mitchell
Counters	Jim Vantorini & Ed Rhodes

Lenten Soup Supper and Program 2024 – A Time for Reflection with the Psalms

Lenten Soup Suppers and our Lenten program happen on Tuesday nights during Lent. We'll gather in Hudson Hall from 6-7 for our soup supper. Then, from 7-8:15, there will be a hybrid gathering (in Hudson Hall and on Zoom) where I will lead us in simple worship. I'll do some teaching. We'll talk together, and then have a time for reflection. There will also be a spiritual practice that you can take home with you each week to use between our sessions.

The remaining dates are:

March 5

March 12

March 19

I hope you will join us for this time of reflection and spiritual renewal.

Fran

Second Story and a Youth Service Project on March 10th

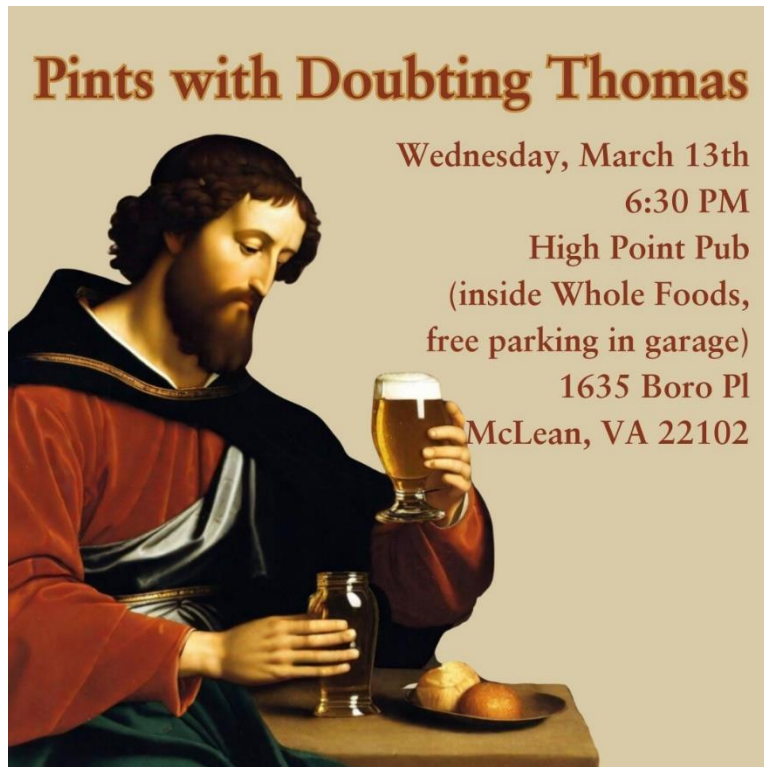
All are invited to Welcome Table on Sunday, March 10 at 4 pm for a combination presentation and youth service project for Second Story. First, a Community Outreach Liaison from Second Story will speak about the myriad programs that Second Story offers at-risk youth in Fairfax County. St. Thomas has been a stalwart supporter of this well-regarded non-profit agency, including through our backpack and Thanksgiving bag collections. We've asked the liaison representative to speak about other avenues for volunteerism that we might pursue with them.

After the presentation, parish youth will be stuffing plastic Easter eggs with candy for an Easter egg hunt for the children served by Second Story. It's a wonderful opportunity to provide children living in compromised circumstances with some joy and fun.

To help make this a success, **we invite donations of candy up through March 10th**. Candies should be nut-free and individually wrapped. We'll be grateful for any contributions and will have a basket in the narthex to accept them.

Pints with Doubting Thomas Continues on March 13th

We had a lively discussion at Pints with Doubting Thomas this past Wednesday! Please join us on March 13th for part 2 of our discussion on how God can allow suffering. And if you're interested, you can check out the next two pages of the bulletin for a recap of what we covered in Part 1. All are welcome, please join us!



Pints with Doubting Thomas: How Can God Allow Suffering?

Pints with Doubting Thomas Prayer

This is a space for people with all levels of doubt and faith; this is the only prayer we will say together, and if you don't feel comfortable saying it, feel free to abstain.

My Lord God,

I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me.

And the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

Whatever I do, I know that you are ever with me,

and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen.

Introduction to the Problem of Evil

The God we know and experience is a God of supreme love and goodness, but the world doesn't always reflect that. We know this may be a deeply personal issue for you because you have experienced some terrible suffering in your life. We are so sorry about that, and we do not in any way want to minimize that suffering. We do want to explore the problem of evil so that we can all come to an answer in our own hearts about how we deal with terrible suffering when it arises.

If there is a God who is...

1. All Good, (Omnibenevolent)
2. All Powerful (Omnipotent)
3. All Knowing, (Omniscient)

Why is there still suffering in the world?

Theodicy

Theodicy is a fancy word for providing a reason for how God can exist in a world that experiences suffering.

Today we will look at four traditional answers to this question:

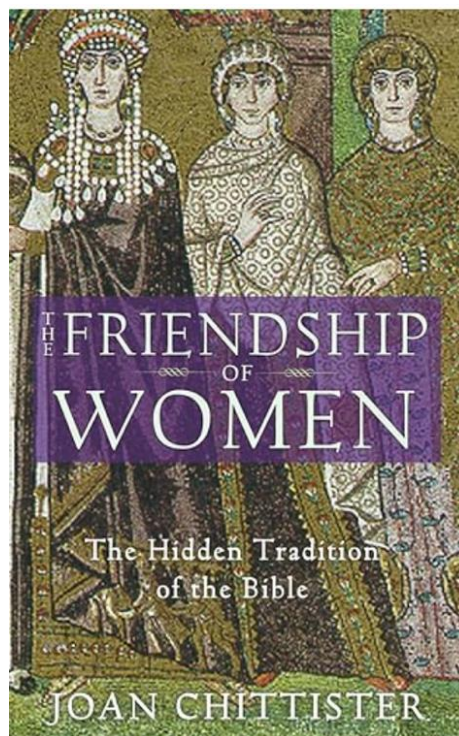
1. Perfect Plan Theodicy
2. Free Will Defense
3. Spiritual Warfare Theodicy
4. Soul Making Theodicy

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Perfect Plan</u></p> <p>Summary: Suffering is a part of God’s perfect plan for us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The world is under God’s control and everything happens according to God’s plan so in some way all suffering must be a part of God’s plan • This theodicy appeals to God’s sovereignty or God’s supreme power • The question of how human free will interacts with God’s sovereignty is debated by adherents of perfect plan, but all would agree that in everything that happens, God achieves God’s purposes <p>Scriptural Support: Isaiah 46:9-11; Romans 8:28</p> <p>Tradition: Protestant Reformation, John Calvin</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Free Will Defense</u></p> <p>Summary: Because of God’s love for humanity, God gives people the ability to choose their actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A world of free choice, with all it’s problems, is better than a world containing no free creatures • If people are truly free, they have the capacity to make good or bad choices • The bad choices lead to suffering • Bad choices and suffering cause a ripple effect leading to more suffering • God is still present fostering goodness in us, but God will not override our free will <p>Scriptural Support: Genesis 2, 3</p> <p>Tradition: Augustine, Dominant view in non-reformed traditions</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Spiritual Warfare</u></p> <p>Summary: We are in a cosmic war zone between forces of good and evil (between God and Satan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this view, Satan is the cause of all evil and suffering, not God • Satan and his demonic forces both act directly in this world and also influence humans to commit evil acts • God will win in the end, but for now we are caught in the crossfire • We are recruited to play a part in this war <p>Scriptural Support: Matthew 4:1-11, 1 Peter 5:8, Revelation (literal interpretation)</p> <p>Tradition: Origen (and other Early Church Fathers)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Soul Making</u></p> <p>Summary: God desires that creatures grow and become loyal to God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God knew free will would lead to suffering • But, God intends that we grow from suffering so that we become better and more complete people • Suffering is purposeful because it instructs us <p>Scriptural Support: Romans 8:17, 2 Cor. 6</p> <p>Tradition: Irenaeus, Origen</p>

Next time: We will consider less traditional theodicies, including anti-theodicy (the idea that we should not attempt to defend God in the face of evil).

Join us on March 13th from 6:30 – 8:00 at High Point Pub!

WOMEN GATHERING ZOOM MEETUP



Ladies, please join us on Zoom on the second Thursday of the month, **March 14th, at 4:30.** We'll read the chapters on Phoebe, Esther, and Martha of Bethany (about 20 pages total). The discussion will consider how each subject brings out a different quality of friendship: support (Phoebe), leadership (Esther), and truth (Martha). Mary, our Deacon in training, will lead the discussion. *The Friendship of Women* is available on [Amazon](#).

For inquiries, you can email Betsy at eheilman2003@yahoo.com or the Zoom link, email Audrey at audreyjadair@gmail.com



Game Night Saturday, March 16 at 7 PM

The last Game Night was a lot of fun. You don't want to miss it!

Strategy games. Games that make you laugh. Word Games. (Even games for people who don't like board games.) Telestrations. SpaceTeam. Who knows what else? Bring Your Favorite Games!

Bring Friends and snacks to share!

SAVE THE DATES for Shakespeare Opera Theatre at St. Thomas!



May 5th from 5-7:30 PM "An Evening to Remember" picnic and concert to benefit the Jim Galloway Memorial Fund. Jim was a beloved member of St. Thomas and a gift to our community. As some know, he was also a wonderful housing patron for Shakespeare Opera Theatre's emerging artists. Three of the four singers he hosted last year will be singing along with some friends old and new. SOT at St. Thomas is blessed to be able to host performers from all over the US and the world. Last season's *Much Ado About Nothing* featured artists from Canada, Texas, South Africa and New York. July 2024's *MacBeth* has drawn performing artists from Texas, Arkansas, New York and *Sweden!*
Help us support the new memorial fund and enjoy some casual picnic fun with beautiful music. As a bonus, we can all tell some hilarious "Jim stories" at our open mic!

Macbeth July 12, 13 & 14

Enter the dark world of the Scottish play, where witches, warriors and even the woods themselves are emboldened by prophecies foretelling expected greatness leading to unexpected and untimely ends.

Verdi's operatic masterpiece and Shakespeare's legendary antiheroes entwine in this spellbinding tale of lust for power steeped in blood.

Tickets to *Macbeth* can be found at shakespeareoperatheatre.com

An Evening to Remember tickets will be available soon.

Both events are in Hudson Hall and the Memorial Garden.

See you there!

McLean Area Clergy Association

February of 2024

Dear Fellow Members of the McLean Area Faith Communities,

As a group of religious leaders, we feel moved at this time to communicate a message of our shared humanity and common values, encompassing our response to events happening in our world as well as our relationships at home.

We are dismayed by the violence occurring all over the world, including the Middle East, Ukraine, Sudan, and more. We stand with so many members of our congregations who grieve for lost loved ones in Gaza, Israel and Lebanon, in addition to those struggling to help Palestinians and Israelis displaced and threatened by war, held as hostages in captivity, and Palestinians in Gaza facing lack of housing, food and medicine. We mourn these horrific and tragic events.

We are diverse communities whose individuals hold different views on the causes and solutions for these conflicts. We come together as religious leaders to affirm the sacred value of each life and the rights of all people to safety and well-being.

We are also shocked and deeply concerned by the ways these conflicts have contributed to divisions at home in our local community. We are aware that in our community, people's safety and security have been threatened. People have felt targeted or judged simply for being who they are. We affirm our commitment to live out our highest human values in our interactions with each other, to treat every person with dignity and respect, to love God and love our neighbor. These values can be challenging to live up to in the face of deep division, which only makes them more essential.

Each of us who has signed this letter recommits to working for a world we can all share. And, when that goal feels unreachable because of events happening around the world, we redouble our dedication to pursuing it where we live, uniting our community around caring for each other, supporting one another and striving for increased empathy and understanding.

**With Prayers for Peace and Goodwill,
William T. Chaney Jr, Pastor at Chesterbrook United Methodist Church
Robert F. Cheeks, Jr., Pastor at Shiloh Baptist Church
William Drosos, Assistant Rector at St. Thomas Episcopal Church**

Aaron Fulp-Eickstaedt, Pastor at Immanuel Presbyterian Church
Fran Gardner-Smith, Rector at St. Thomas Episcopal Church
James Gibson, Pastor at First Baptist Church Chesterbrook
Trish Hall, Minister at Center for Spiritual Living, Metro
Sandra J. Kessinger, Senior Pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church
Allen Leider, Cantor at Temple Rodef Shalom
Sydney Michael, Cantor at Temple Rodef Shalom
Chris Miller, Priest-Locum-Tenes at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church
Andrew Y. Moore, Assistant Rector at St. John's Episcopal Church
Scott Ramsey, Pastor at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church
Jeffrey Saxe, Rabbi at Temple Rodef Shalom
Anna Scherer, Assistant Rector at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church
Amy Schwartzman, Senior Rabbi at Temple Rodef Shalom
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Barbara Sipe, Executive Board Chair at First Church of Christ, Scientist
Jim Stansel, McLean Stake President, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Alexandra Stein, Rabbi at Temple Rodef Shalom
Robert E. Wallace, Senior Pastor at McLean Baptist Church
Joshua D. Walters, Rector at St. John's Episcopal Church
Joshua A. Wullenweber, Associate Pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church

PRAYER FOR ST. THOMAS CHURCH

Almighty God, by your Spirit the whole body of your Church is governed and sanctified. Hear our prayer for St. Thomas: build in us a renewed vision of your Church; shape our life according to your will; empower us with the gifts to make us one, that together we may grow as a church in the spiritual strength of community, and reach out to include all people in Christ's love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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