



The Steeple Bell

Information for the St. Thomas Episcopal Church Family, December, 2009

From the Vicar . . .

Dear Family of God at St. Thomas,

“I looked up, and I saw my Lord a’coming, I looked up, and I saw my Lord a’coming down the road. Alleluia, He is coming. Alleluia, He is here . . .” When I woke up this morning this beautiful song was singing in my heart. It’s a song that we sang often in a former church at which I served, but not one that I have sung or heard sung recently. **So, out of the blue as it were, the Holy Spirit sang . . .**

As the song filled my whole being with joy this morning, it occurred to me that the last two sentences that begin with “Alleluia” perfectly announce the twin themes of the coming season of Advent: That Jesus is coming, but also that He is indeed here with us in every moment of our lives. (Jesus, Emmanuel, meaning “God with us”) **What a special gift this is from our God!** To be with us, but to keep coming to us at ordinary times in our lives, in times of joy, special times, times of pain or loneliness, times of grief.

In this season of Advent we, the people of God, are called to prepare our hearts and our lives during this special and holy time when we expect the coming of our Lord. So this begs the question: **What kind of time, place and space will you or I make available for our precious Lord Jesus, to enter?** Why do so? So that among the busyness of the Advent and Christmas seasons, you and I might truly know and experience perhaps for the very first time or once again that **this Holy One, God in Jesus, has come into the world for you, for me, for US!**

Even faithful Christians can get caught up in all the secular trappings of Advent and Christmas, elevating them to first place and thus setting aside the true reason for this celebratory season which is that, **“God sent His only Son into the world so that we might not perish but have eternal life.”** (Jesus is the reason for the season!)

This Advent and Christmas season may you and I set aside time to come and worship King Jesus, to kneel or stand before the altar here at St. Thomas, or in one of God’s churches if you are out of town and receive Jesus **just as long ago in a humble stable the world received the greatest gift that ever was or ever will be.**

As important as it is to enjoy family, friends and other loved ones during the holidays, when you bring them to church to encounter Jesus and to worship Him, maybe for the very first time, **you will have given those you love or who are a part of your life an eternal gift that nothing else can top, ever.**

Finally, I wish you, your family, friends, work colleagues, neighbors and other loved ones all the joy and blessings of this holy and precious season. In the words of another song: **“Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing . . .”**

Rejoicing in the Savior’s love,
(Rev) Shirley+

The Steeple Bell

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of
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
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The Rev. Shirley McWhorter
Vicar

Nan Morrish
Secretary

Barbara Conroy
Music Director

Gerald Eory
Custodian

Bishop's Committee

<u>Term expires 2010</u>	<u>Term expires 2011</u>
Peter Boylan	Wayne Boylan (Warden)
Janet Coutts	Diane Puchalski
Jim Hussey	Ron Puchalski
Ralph Vidusic	Kathy Zook

Term expires 2012
Scott Abernathy
Fran Felty (Secretary)
Paul Gauthier (Warden)
Cindy Jenzen

Treasurer: Rob Sherry

Worship Services:

Sunday, 8:00 & 10:00am Holy Eucharist
Wednesday, 10:30am Holy Eucharist

Christian Education

Children & Youth 10:00am Sundays
Adults Seasonally as Announced

Office Hours

Monday - Friday 9:00am - 1:00pm

The Rt. Rev. Wendell N. Gibbs, Jr.,
Bishop of the Diocese of Michigan
& Rector of St. Thomas Church



Christmas Pageant Casting Call!

Sunday, December 20th is the date for this year's Christmas Pageant. Rehearsal for the Christmas Pageant is on Sunday, December 13th. We began a new pageant last year and plan on continuing with it this year.

Please come and join us. . .we need Shepherds, Kings, and Angels.

Judy Dabanian,
Director, Children's

Worship



Christmas Flowers & Greens

A gift toward the flowers and greens used to decorate the church at Christmas time is an appropriate way to remember loved ones or to express gratitude for God's many blessings. If you would like to contribute you may call Kathy Zook at 671-8479 or use one of the flower memorial envelopes which are in the pew racks. A check, in any amount, should be made payable to St. Thomas Altar Guild. Please have requests in by Monday, December 21st.



7:30pm - Family Eucharist

10:00pm - Candlelight Eucharist

Please invite your family, friends and neighbors.



Bishop's Committee Summary

At the November 8th meeting the treasurer's report showed these **monthly figures for October:** Income \$10,808.14, expenses \$14,798.08, for a net balance of \$ 3,989.94 in the red. The year-to-date balance as of November 6, 2009 is \$24,667.27 in the red (The last figure is skewed due to the \$10,000 unbudgeted roof expense). Pledges are being paid at 81.6% of the total pledged for the year.

Sonny's Landscaping will be doing the parking lot snow plowing/salting this winter. On weekdays the parking lot will only be plowed – so walk carefully. On weekends it will be salted and plowed, as necessary.

We have received the names (and gift ideas) for 37 children from the Flat Rock Head Start for the Angel Tree project. Wrapped gifts (two boxes per child) need to be returned to the church by 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 6th.

Diane Puchalski has resigned from the Bishop's Committee due to ongoing health issues.

A seminar about Identity Theft will take place on Sunday, December 6th at the church after the 10:00 service. Look for more information in the Sunday bulletins.

The Women of St. Thomas group is sponsoring a "Homemade Christmas Cookies and More" Sale on Sunday, December 13th at 11:15. All church members (gentlemen included) are welcome to bake and donate cookies. The proceeds will go to the Vicar's Discretionary Fund.

The next Bishop's Committee meeting will be held on Sunday, December 13th at 11:30.

Acknowledgements and Thank yous

1. Jim Hussey for the time he has spent working on the organ and sound system problems.
2. Our parishioners for their generosity in supporting the Trenton Food Pantry.
3. Jerry Eory, our custodian, for keeping our facility in great shape.

4. Ron Puchalski, Ralph Vidusic, Gary McWhorter and the Abernathy family for raking and sweeping the leaves this fall.

5. Cannon Bob Neily for conducting the Sunday services during Rev. Shirley's recovery.

6. Rob Sherry, our treasurer, for faithfully keeping our financial books in order.

Disciples Needed

The Bishop's Committee needs four people to serve three year terms beginning in January, 2010. We currently have a great, congenial group of people who work together well and also enjoy fellowship with one another. Meeting commitment is only 33 hours a year; ½ day goal setting retreat and being a BC touch base person for one ministry in the church. Please consider this wonderful ministry and the opportunity to grow spiritually and in understanding the workings of the local and larger church.

Thank you, Rev Shirley+

Harvest Thanks!

Special thanks to the Altar Guild for the harvest decorations on November 15th. Also, to the Gauthier's for providing the meat for the potluck luncheon, to Laura Krupa and our young people for doing the raffle and to anyone else who helped with set up and clean up. A great time was had by all.

Identity Theft Prevention

Each year millions of consumers have their identities stolen. Identity theft is a serious crime, and can cost people time and money. While there is no fool-proof way to avoid ID theft, there are ways to minimize the chances of becoming a victim and minimizing the damage should a theft occur. Many people just

don't have the information they need. That is why we will be holding an Identity Theft Awareness Presentation on Dec. 6, 2009 following the Sunday service.



03 Nicholas Abernathy
04 Sabrina Taylor
05 Sarah Walz
07 Joan Sonnenberg
08 Jack Morrish
09 Deanna Freeman
09 Clifton Mace
11 Mary Ellen Knaggs
11 Stephen Chapman, Jr.
14 Cathy Calhoun
15 Ron McHenry
17 Gene Simmons
19 Dan McKenzie
20 Susan Murdock
20 Keith Beverly
21 Diane Puchalski
21 Deanna Thivierge
22 Ron Puchalski
22 Kyle Jones
27 Marjorie Kienbaum
28 Jerry Eory
29 Kathy Zook

\$ Think Scrip \$

It's that time of year when you can help not only yourself, but friends, relatives and co-workers, by sharing scrip order forms with them and making holiday shopping easier. For a list of vendors not included on our order form, check the GLS web site at glscrip.com. A complete list is also posted on the bulletin board in the hall. This is such an easy fund raiser for the church. **Orders will be taken December 6th & 13th.**

Women of St. Thomas



On Tuesday, **December 8th** we will be hosting our fourteenth **Advent by Candlelight Evening** beginning at 6:30. This is a special evening for our ladies of the church and their friends to spend some time together before the rush of the holiday season. We will gather in the guild hall where we will find the six round tables decorated with seating for eight ladies each - plus two long tables of desserts. A "dessert bar" - yum! Later we will move to the fireplace room where Barb Conroy will lead us in singing Christmas carols. Look for the sign-up sheets in the church foyer. Please sign-up to decorate a table (six people needed. Simple decorations, please. Tablecloths are provided.), to bring a dessert to serve eight ladies (12 slots for bringing desserts) and/or to be a guest.

There is no charge to attend the Advent by Candlelight Evening but we do ask that guests bring items for the ChristNet Daytime Warming Center - men's socks or underwear (new), canned food (e.g. soups, crackers, pasta, tomato products), paper goods, etc.

The **Homemade Christmas Cookies (and more) Sale** is taking place on December 13th right after the late service. What is your specialty? Shortbread? Brownies? Fudge? Nut bread? Cranberry muffins? Spritz cookies? Homemade jelly? Whatever it is, it's time to begin baking/cooking. Please package your cookies in baggies (6 to a bag) and put a price on the baggies, loaves of bread, plates of fudge, etc. Bring your goodies to the guild hall by 9:30 on Sunday, Dec. 7th.

Craft items made by the Ladies' Handcrafts group will also be available. This is a fund-raiser for the vicar's discretionary fund. p.s. Gentlemen are also welcome to make baked goods for the bake sale.

If you have questions about either of these events, please call Fran Felty.

*The 175th Convention
of the Diocese of Michigan:
Repentance, Renewal and
Revitalization*

My preparation for the Convention really began when I received the Call to Convention booklet in the mail in September. This booklet reported on the Nominations for Elections, an Exhibit/Display reservation sheet; the 2009 Resolutions and forms for submitting a resolution; and finally the Proposed Budget for 2010 and information on hotel reservations.

Then I attended the Down River Area Council meeting at Trinity Church in Belleville on Tuesday September 29th. There we reviewed all the proposed Resolutions as well as heard from a member of the Revitalization and Strategic Visioning Project.

Janet Coutts and I arrived at the Causeway Bay Hotel, in Lansing about 5 P.M. on Friday, October 23rd. As we did not sign up for the Banquet, we had time to study the election proposals and tour the exhibit area.

Our experience of the full convention body, therefore, began with The Holy Eucharist at 8 A.M. Saturday Morning. We were welcomed into the Grand Ballroom with some rousing music that had all of us up and clapping. The sermon was given by The Reverend Stephen G. Marsh, Bishop of the Southeast Michigan Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.

The official meeting began after 9 A.M. As expected most Resolutions passed. The subject of Resolution #5 was to Affirm the Tithe as the minimum Standard of Giving. It passed without the extra requirements of penalizing parishes who do not fulfill their tithing requirements.

The day passed quickly, and we adjourned at 4:30 P.M.

Judith Dabanian
Convention Delegate

**"We Wish You A
Merry Christmas"**



Once the Angel Tree angels have been adopted there will be space available for colorful Christmas cards from members and friends of St. Thomas wishing each other a joyous Christmas. Why not join in the creation of this festive display by putting up a card from your family. Think of all the cards and postage you will save. (Perhaps you would like to take the money you have saved and include it in your Christmas offering at St. Thomas.)

Pictorial Directory Update

We had a very gratifying response to the new directory. The last directory was done in 2003. We then had 140 families listed, and 70 families/individuals were photographed. This year we have 98 families listed and 64 families or individuals were photographed. I feel the percentage of participation has been wonderful.

I have also had a wonderful crew working on the directory: I have served as coordinator, Bob Walz took pictures of the various groups, Kimberly Abernathy telephoned all those who had not signed up for appointments, Barbara Hewison and Ruth Davis made appointment reminder calls, Kathy Zook, Marcia Gauthier, Jean Pendell, Susan Weston, and I served as hostesses the days of photography, Fran Felty and Jean Pendell worked on the layout.

The directory was sent to the publisher this past week. They will then send us back a proofing copy. After the proofing okay, our directories will be delivered in about 30 days, so we should have them by mid or late January.

Nan Morrish

The Steeple Bell

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TO:



DECEMBER

Coming Up:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Tuesday, 12/1 | Serving dinner at Christnet |
| Sunday, 12/6 | Angel Tree gifts due

11:30- Identity Theft
Prevention Presentation |
| Tuesday, 12/8 | 6:30pm-
Ladies' Advent Evening |
| Sunday, 12/13 | Christmas Cookies &
More Sale |
| Saturday, 12/19 | 9:30am-
Altar Guild decorating |
| Sunday, 12/20 | 10am- Christmas Pageant |
| Thursday, 12/24 | 7:30 & 10pm- H.E. |
| Sunday, 12/27 | 10am- Lessons & Carols |