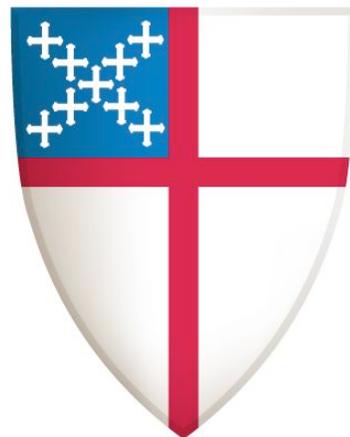


# The NewSpirit

*Being a Light to the World: Worship • Youth • Discipleship*

St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Battle Creek, Michigan

October 2020



## Important News from the Vestry *By Lori Kiess*

There's been a "fall chill" in the air these days, but the St. Thomas Vestry took advantage of a lovely, sunny evening to hold their September meeting outdoors near the church grounds. What follows is a summary of that meeting.

Each Vestry Commission was charged with reviewing the 2021 proposed budget for items under their purview and to work with the Stewardship & Fundraising Commission, suggesting any modifications or reductions. Work continues towards this important effort.

The Parish Growth & Development Commission is leading the way on an exciting program coming soon entitled "Renewal Works" that all members of the parish will be encouraged to participate in. The program will provide the opportunity for us to complete a personal Spiritual Life Inventory, the results of which will help St Thomas to chart the path for future spiritual growth over the next 3-5 years; this is especially during changing times. Please see the wonderful article in this issue of the NewSpirit with more details on this program. You'll also hear more on "Renewal Works" during the Sunday announcements in weeks to come.

As mentioned earlier, the Stewardship and Fundraising Commission continues the difficult but necessary work on the budget for 2021. A well-written article appeared in last month's NewSpirit on "Budgeting in a Pandemic". If

you missed that article, we encourage you to give it a read and prayerfully consider how you might contribute to ensure the continued success of the important work being done at St Thomas.

The Commission also advised the Vestry of the opportunity being allowed by the Diocese to reduce our apportionment to the Diocese by 25% for the rest of the calendar year. The Vestry passed a motion to accept this opportunity.

The Outreach & Facility Management Commission (O&FM) has a full plate as usual. A parish "work day" is planned for September 26<sup>th</sup> to address much needed painting at the Van Buren Street covered entrance. Weather permitting, by the time of this printing that entrance should be looking smart again.

The O&FM Commission is also taking steps to secure a pest control contract for the new rectory to make sure it stays pest-free. Tree trimming will also be done. Like any responsible home-owner, we're making sure our new rectory is being well cared for!

Focusing on the "Outreach" portion of their title, the O&FM is working on several important outreach programs. The Saturday Breakfast Program has begun and staffing needs are mostly covered; please sign up to volunteer if you are able. Ross Dingwall is representing St Thomas with his participation in the Franklin School Backpack program. Thank you Ross! Planning has begun on the Holiday Basket

program under the skillful management of Ken Surprenant and Mike Regner with much support from Bob Harberts. A plan is being developed for the safe and successful execution of this program during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please watch for more details to come.

Looking ahead to the Christmas holiday and the schedule for Christmas services at St Thomas, considerations are now taking place for the safest and most accommodating plan for scheduling services such as holding the same service over several days, starting December 21<sup>st</sup> with a reservation system to manage the number of attendees at each service. Please stay tuned as more is determined on this.

Since the beginning of the health crisis, St Thomas made a giant leap forward in using technology to allow parishioners to worship virtually. And while we've been fortunate to have been able to worship in person outside in our parking lot, the changing seasons will soon make this option no longer feasible. The new audio visual system recently purchased is up and running and we'll be able to participate indoors in limited numbers by careful distribution of worshipers in the spaces equipped to view the service via a live stream. The O&FM Commission will be making sure this vital equipment is part of the church's inventory and that the equipment is being stored securely.

*continued on page 2*

Since the lounge is now set up with the new AV equipment, it can also be used for video conferencing for meetings such as bible study, vestry and other meetings or classes, making these gatherings more engaging.

October would normally have us excitedly looking forward to the annual Chili Cook-off, but sadly like so many events, the pandemic has required we cancel this for 2020. In addition to being a hugely fun event, this has also been an important fund raiser for the church. But don't despair! Becky and Bernie Squires announced that they will be heading up an effort to keep this fund raiser going! Buttons will be sold in October that buyer can proudly wear to show their support for the Chili Cook-off and we're encouraging folks to consider what they normally would've spent at the Cook-off and donate that amount to buy their button.

Father Brian shared the news that the Standing Committee has voted to call a part time, visiting Bishop and hopes to have a person in place before the Diocesan Convention in October.

Deacon News! Trish Harris continues her path for the diaconate and is a postulant spending time at St Martin of Tours in Kalamazoo while Michele Reid as just started the parish discernment process for the diaconate.

Lastly, Father Brian implores everyone to *GET YOUR FLU SHOT!* The CDC advises this is more important now than ever before and the flu shot is available at local pharmacies and doctors' offices, several places offering walk-in service. Please take steps to get your shot before the end of October!

So the good work continues! If you want to learn more about any of these items or if you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to any Vestry member.

## Chili Cook-off is Off!

As most of you know each October St. Thomas holds its annual Chili Cook-off. And then came 2020 – the year of COVID-19!

Obviously, we are unable to hold the cook-off, but the committee didn't want to just let it go. It is a fund raiser for the church and a way to continue to make ourselves known in the community.

This year we are asking everyone to think about how much you usually spend on the cook-off. Do you make chili? Do you make bake goods? Do you come and buy your dinner? Do you buy tickets to vote for your favorite chili? Once you have calculated your usual spending, we are

asking you to donate that amount as if the event were going on. Or if you can, dig a little deeper as this is the only fund raiser we are holding this year! You will receive a button that you should wear proudly to church and in the community!

If during the month of October, you choose to make chili at home, please submit a picture to [beckys141@live.com](mailto:beckys141@live.com) and in November we will post pictures along with a winner judged by how scrumptious your chili looks!

The buttons will be available at church every Sunday in October. Please see Becky Squires or Ross Dingwall to make your donation and get your button. You may also donate through REALM and specify Chili Cook-off in your remarks. We thank you for continuing to support St. Thomas and our Chili Cook-off!



**BLANKET ROUND - UP**

**GIVE THE GIFT OF WARMTH**

Please donate clean used or new Twin- or Full-Size Blankets to help the growing population of Homeless in Calhoun County!

September 15 to October 15, 2020

Blankets will be collected at:  
 SHARE Center, 209 E. Michigan. BC  
 Haven of Rest, 11 Green Street. BC  
 DayOne Family Healthcare, 363 Fremont Street. BC  
 Contact: Lora Stevens 269-969-6123 X155

(Place donated blankets in plastic bags, Thank You!)



*In an effort to keep everyone safe and avoid unnecessary health risks, we will not be able to hold our annual Trunk or Treat Event this year due to the pandemic. We look forward to hosting this important community outreach when it is safe to do so.*

# RenewalWorks

*a time for renewal and transformation*

We are in the planning now for RenewalWorks and need your help in being on the planning and organizing team. As a parish we will all be asked to participate in completing a Spiritual Life Inventory. We are planning for the future of St. Thomas. We want this to be transformative personally and as a parish. *The power of renewal and transformation.* RenewalWorks is designed to help churches focus on spiritual vitality. It challenges congregations to get back to basics, making spiritual growth a priority in their life and mission. We are given the chance to ask and begin to answer these questions:

- How can we move forward in changing times? •
- What are we called to do, and be?

The process begins with an **anonymous, confidential**, and thought-provoking online survey (called the Spiritual Life Inventory, or SLI), which congregants are invited and encouraged to complete. The SLI explores the individuals' spiritual life and the church's role in supporting it. We will do this in January. When the congregation's responses are viewed as a group and benchmarked against data gathered from more than 1,800 churches for over a decade, the SLI provides a snapshot of the spiritual vitality of the congregation. A workshop team of nine to twenty participants is formed to explore spiritual growth and work with the SLI findings. Using self-reflection, sharing, and discussion, the group meets in four workshop sessions that begin and end with prayer.

RenewalWorks staff members offer online videos and weekly phone check-ins with our church's workshop facilitator and administrator. For those unable to complete the Spiritual Life Inventory online it will be provided in a written form. The workshop sessions are being adjusted if in person gatherings are not optimal. We are planning

Zoom workshops at this time. Discussions will help St. Thomas as it develops a new three to five year plan.

We are just at the starting point, organizing and planning. Would you be willing to serve on the Workshop Team? Please contact one of us below with questions and to express your interest. You will be hearing more in the coming weeks. Please give this thought and prayer as we begin this journey. Thank you.

Judy Gray  
gray.judy57@yahoo.com  
765-425-9760

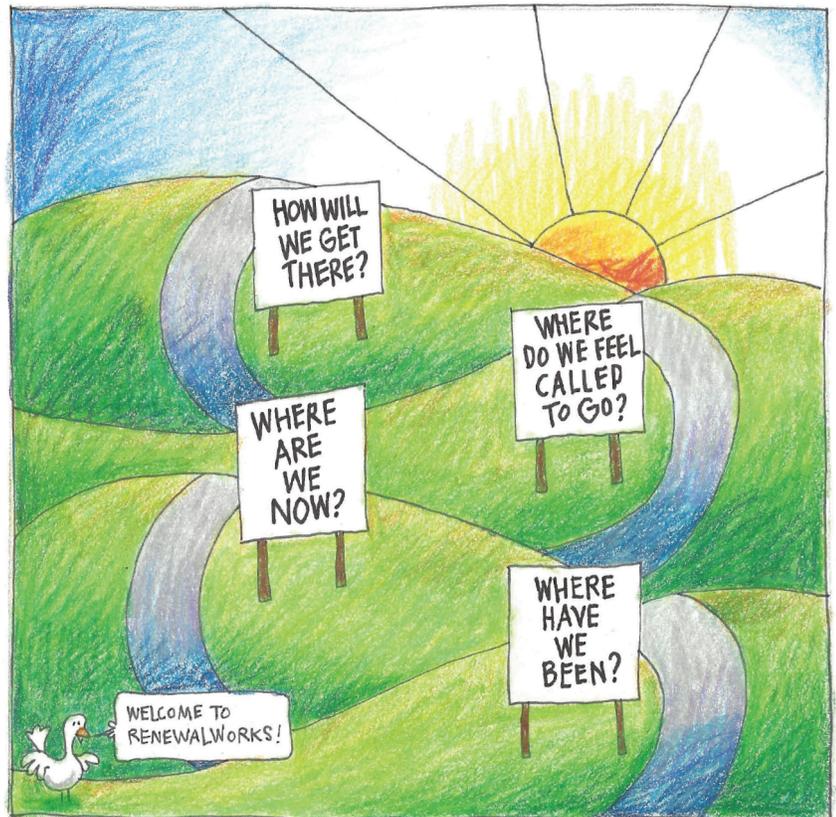
Ginny Baldwin  
ginnybaldwin@gmail.com  
269-282-0199

Michele Reid  
michelepmreid@gmail.com  
269-275-8193

Noreen Sidman  
tnnsidnam@comcast.net  
269-965-4952

Sue Shafe  
sueashafe@att.net  
269-789-0590

**Stop the presses!** Just before publication we learned that Brenda Hillman, Bev Henry and Lori Kiess have also joined the team. Welcome aboard!





*Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another  
with whatever gift each of you has received. – 1 PETER 4:10*

October 2020

Dear Parishioners,

When we set “Faith-Filled Generosity” as the theme for this year’s stewardship campaign, none of us could have known what this year would be like. I need not remind you of the disruptions, losses, and anxieties that this year has brought to our communities, for we are all still living with the impacts. I can say, however, that although the coronavirus pandemic has tested our resolve, it has not tested our faith. We are stronger, more resilient, and more connected than we have ever been as a Church and as a community of neighbors. Thank you. Thanks to each one of you for doing your part in your homes, workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, families, and here in our church.

Our stewardship and our mission this year have been focused on service. As we experienced some weeks of not being able to gather in person, the usual focus on weekly worship was spread throughout the week as we found ways to gather virtually, taking more time to pray for each other’s needs and serve our communities. You used this time to discover, hone, and put to use the gifts you have received from our Creator God and to serve one another.

I have witnessed the countless ways that you have used your resources for the mission of the Church and to help each other. I have found it inspiring and hopeful as we plan our work together in 2021. This coming year, we will explore the way that our generosity is inspired by our faith, how we are formed and led into relationship with each other as we share our gifts with the world. This is what we mean by “Faith-Filled Generosity.”

How will you discover and use the gifts you have been given to help our church this year? How will you hear the Gospel call to seek and serve Christ in all people, and respond with generosity? As I look at each family, each individual in our community, I realize that we are the stewards of God’s manifold grace because we give to the world from what we have received.

This year, your Stewardship and Fundraising Commission will be sending you a packet with your pledge card and an appeal. I invite you to receive this with grace and prayer as you consider how you will share with God and God’s Church from what you have received.

In the spirit of generosity and love,

Fr. Brian Coleman  
Rector

# Giving in the Era of COVID 19

by Liz Neumeyer

Stewardship and fundraising in this era of COVID 19 is problematic because we can't do the usual gatherings to raise funds. And like many of you, the church is facing economic shortages. I was curious about why the number 19 was attached to the coronavirus, and I learned that it was 2019 when they could actually describe the disease. So they labelled it COVID 19. Because Bible authors often refer to numbers like seven, ten, and forty, I looked to see if 19 had any significance.

There are some indirect references but very esoteric. The one that came up that spoke to me was Psalm 19 which opens with ***"The Heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."*** What a reminder that stewardship is always ongoing and that God made us stewards of all creation, all the time, not just during pledging.

The last verse of Psalm 19 is one of my favorite verses we memorized in Lutheran grade school: ***"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength and my redeemer."*** It says and, not or. Our words and our heart need to match.

With all this focus on 19, our Stewardship and Fundraising Commission is asking you to consider the number 19 when pledging as a way to counteract the economic effects of COVID 19. If you are able, could you add \$19 a month to your pledge? Perhaps some can do it per week. Or a \$19 or \$190 donation at any time. This will allow us as a church community to continue our work.

Another way to think of it is looking at your total yearly pledge. If you are working your

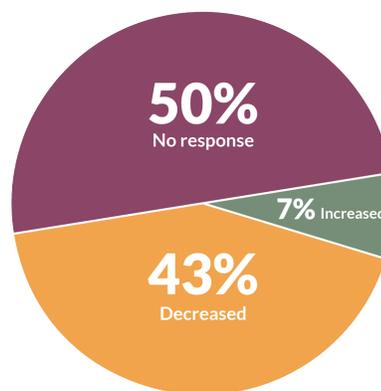
way up to the average pledge at St. Thomas: \$2750 per year, are you able increase your yearly pledge to \$1900 or \$2019 next year?

If there's one good thing to say about COVID 19, it is that it has made me realize how important our St. Thomas community is. I am an introvert who can go quite a while doing my own thing but this has shown me how crucial it is to keep relationships and work going in our church. So we can consider all this when planning our pledges and letting the words of our mouths and meditations of our hearts match. We can keep **bringing light to the world since 1842** and into the future.

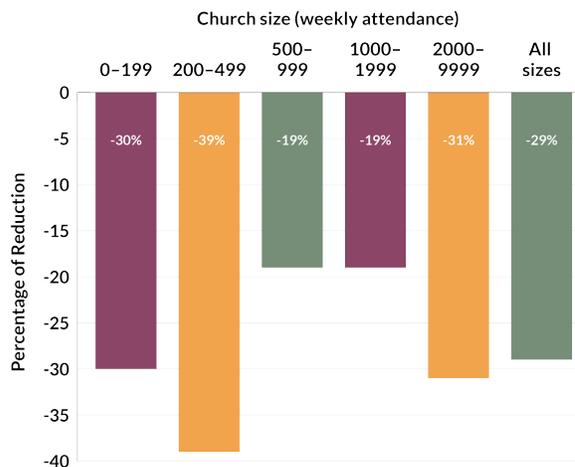
---

*The Pandemic has affected almost every aspect of our lives, and the church has certainly not been immune from its impact. In the context of decreased giving, we anticipate greater need for the outreach ministries of the church.*

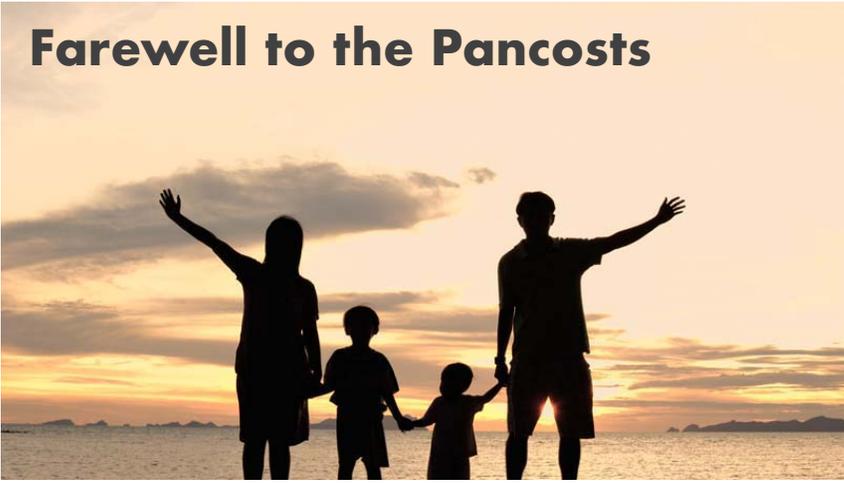
## Changes in Church Giving



## Decrease in Giving by Church Size



## Farewell to the Pancosts



Jason and Sherry Pancost have moved with their three children Braeden, Bryce and Brooklyn to Louisville, Kentucky. Sherry has begun a PhD Program there.

We are thankful for their ministry among us, and wish them every blessing in their future.

New Address: 11610 Deham Dr  
Louisville, KY 40241-1443

## Deacon Dale says hello!

Deacon Dale sends her love and warmest regards to all at St. Thomas. She continues to adjust to her new life in New York, where she moved last year. Dale has been able to reconnect with old friends she'd lost touch with, says her friend Charles. She loves to talk on the phone about everything under the sun, and would be glad to talk to her friends at St. Thomas.

Her phone number: (607) 973-2703

Her address: Brookdale, Apt. 10  
120 Creekside Dr.  
Painted Post, NY 14807

She doesn't use a mobile phone or email anymore.



## Bishop's Suspension

It was announced back in June to the parish that our bishop had been suspended by the Presiding Bishop for an extra-marital affair. Since the suspension went into effect the Standing Committee of the diocese (made up of clergy and lay leaders elected at the diocesan convention) has taken on all the responsibilities of the bishop. The suspension is for one year, and at the end of the suspension the Standing Committee has to decide whether or not to readmit the bishop, hopefully having received input from the wider diocesan community.

The latest development is that the Standing Committee has decided to call an Assistant Bishop to serve the needs of the diocese during the suspension. It is hoped that the Assistant Bishop will be in place before the end of October.



St. Thomas worship services are live-streamed on the St. Thomas YouTube Channel. These services include Holy Eucharist on Sundays at 9 a.m., Evening Prayer on Tuesday through Friday at 5:00 p.m., and Chapel Eucharists on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. and Fridays at 12:00 p.m.

To subscribe to the channel and get notifications about live-streamed services follow these simple instructions:

1. Go to our church's website: [StThomasBC.org](http://StThomasBC.org)
2. Click the red YouTube symbol  at the bottom of the homepage.
3. Click the red "Subscribe" symbol in the top right corner of the window.
4. If you do not already have a YouTube or Google account, you will need to create one.
5. Click the bell symbol  to turn on notifications.

# October Happenings

## 4 - Choral Evensong, 5 pm

*This service will be live-streamed to the St. Thomas YouTube Channel. No in-person attendance permitted.*

## 7 - iBelieve Class, 6:30 p.m.

*Continuing our study of Peter L. Berger's exploration of the Apostle's Creed. This month: "I believe in God the Father almighty"*

## 10 - Saturday Breakfast Program 7 - 10 a.m.

*St. Thomas volunteers on the Second Saturday of each month to serve breakfast to the needy. Sign-up sheet located on the bulletin board across from the parish office.*

## 14 - Preaching Circle, 6:30 p.m.

*meets in the Lounge and virtually on Zoom.*

## 15 - St. Thomas Vestry

*6 p.m. in the Lounge*

## Pre-Convention Meeting, 7 p.m.

*Delegates to diocesan convention meet to discuss the agenda and budget.*

## 19 - The Feast of St. Luke, 9 a.m.

*A special service honoring those who serve in the healing arts, especially during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.*

## 21 - The Good Book Club, 6:30 p.m.

*Thematic Bible study meets in the Lounge and virtually on Zoom*

## 23 - Feast of St. James of Jerusalem, 12 p.m.

*Service of Holy Eucharist in the chapel*

## 28 - Feast of Ss. Simon and Jude, 6 p.m.

*Holy Eucharist in the chapel.*

## Reading the Spiritual Classics, 6:30 p.m.

*The Seven Story Mountain by Thomas Merton is our text for the month. Meets in the Lounge and virtually on Zoom.*

## 30-31 Diocesan Convention

*THE 146TH DIOCESAN CONVENTION  
The Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan gathers each year for our convention – a time set aside for community building and governance. This year's convention is held jointly with our partner diocese, Eastern Michigan.*

## Looking ahead:

### Sunday, November 1 - All Saints' Day

*Opportunity for baptism, renewal of baptismal vows, please speak to Fr. Brian as soon as possible if you would like to schedule a baptism.*

*For a complete list of events visit our up-to-date, online calendar at [www.StThomasBC.org](http://www.StThomasBC.org)*

**Sign up for Realm email and in-app notifications.**

## Trish Harris begins Field-Study Placement

Hello! As I embark on my second year at The Academy for Vocational Leadership in preparation for diaconal ordination I also begin my first fieldwork placement at St. Martin of Tours in Kalamazoo. Mother Mary Perrin and Deacon Pat Vinge will be working with me closely, guiding me to connect deeper with God and challenging me to utilize my gifts and nurture growth opportunities. They are both very wise and kind leaders and I'm grateful to be paired with them. As I have learned from the St. Thomas community, parishioners have an abundance of gifts and I anticipate learning from the entire St. Martin's community.

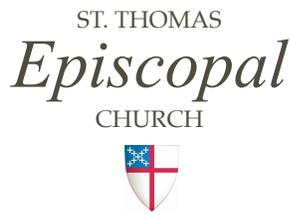
I will be focusing my time and energy at St. Martin's through June 2021 and will be relinquishing my spiritual responsibilities at St. Thomas at least until that time. I'll stay connected to St. Thomas peripherally and will certainly keep you all in my prayers each day. I'm beyond excited to begin my fieldwork placement and also saddened about the loss I will experience from my beloved St. Thomas. It is the way of life.....

The spiritual growth, challenges, love and joy that St. Thomas has brought into my life will accompany me to St. Martin's. You have individually and collectively had a role in bringing me closer to God, and I will use that strength and comfort during my time away from you.

Thank You for your continued prayers for me and my incredible cohorts at the academy. We are working hard and also having so much fun.

I look forward to seeing you again and learning about how you are deepening your connection to Christ.





16 E. Van Buren Street  
Battle Creek, MI  
49017-3916

Phone (269) 965-2244  
[www.StThomasBC.org](http://www.StThomasBC.org)

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Battle Creek, MI  
Permit No. 734

**The Rev. Brian Coleman**  
*Rector*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Dr. Stephen White**  
*Director of Music*

**Denise Genise**  
*Bookkeeper*

**Karmel Addis**  
*Communications*

## Parish Schedule

### Sundays

9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

11:00 a.m. *Coffee hour on Zoom*

5:00 p.m. Live-Stream Evensong (First Sundays)

### Weekdays in the Chapel

*Monday – Saturday*

8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer

5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

*Wednesdays*

6:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist

*Followed by "A Quick Class after Mass"*

*Fridays*

11:00 a.m. Bible Study (Lounge & Zoom)

12:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist

### Office Hours

Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

## A Quick class after Mass

On Wednesdays, after the 6:00 p.m. Mass in the chapel, Father Brian hosts a series of adult formation and education classes in the lounge and on Zoom. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Links to Zoom meetings are on Realm.

### First Wednesday: iBelieve Class

*Currently exploring the Apostles' Creed using Peter L. Berger's book Questions of Faith, a skeptical affirmation of Christianity.*

### Second Wednesday: Preaching Circle

*We look at the lessons for upcoming Sundays, helping preachers develop their sermons and ideas for sermons. No experience necessary.*

### Third Wednesday: The Good Book Club

*From Genesis to Revelation, participants learn that the hope God offered to the faithful in ages past is the very same hope to which God is calling us today.*

### Fourth Wednesday: Reading The Spiritual Classics

*Modern and Ancient classics that have shaped our faith and formed us as disciples. Current text: The Seven Story Mountain by Thomas Merton*