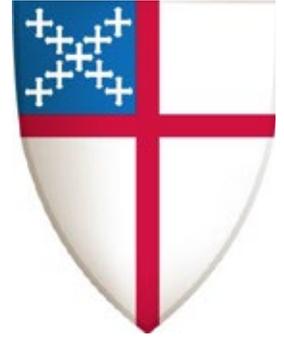


# The NewSpirit

Being a Light to the World: Worship • Youth • Discipleship  
St. Thomas Episcopal Church Battle Creek, Michigan  
September 2020



## Rose Window to be Restored

by Hans Prechtel



*The Rose Window from the balcony*

Good news for St. Thomas Episcopal Church! The Rose Window above the balcony seats in the sanctuary is scheduled to be restored starting this coming November. This window is the oldest original window in the church, dating from circa 1878, and was constructed in Exeter, Great Britain, assumedly by J. Wippell & Company Ltd., which constructed and installed several other windows in St. Thomas.

According to a 2007 survey conducted by Full Spectrum Stained Glass, the window is described as follows: [It is composed of] four circular, four triangular and one central square tracery (120" diameter overall). [It

is of] ornamental symbolic design with rich decorative borders (ruby) and floral leaf design. [It contains] symbol medallions of the four Evangelists, St. Matthew (angel, top), St. Mark (lion, right), St. Luke (bull, left), and St. John (eagle, base). [It is of] all hand-blown antique glass painted and fired in medium blues and rubies. At the time of the survey, the following problems were reported: the support system was inadequate; the fins were loose, breaking away or missing; the saddle bars had been removed; the lead came were very badly deteriorated and there were some cracked solder joints; some glass breakage was evident, and some glass paint may have been unstable; the sash and frame was in questionable condition; poor previous repairs were evident; some pieces were missing; and the exterior was covered with unvented protective

glazing. Since no work has been done on the window since the 2007 survey, the window has continued to deteriorate since then.

Complete restoration of the Rose Window is scheduled to start sometime in November (exact date is yet to be determined). We have contracted with Willett Hauser out of Winona, MN to do the restoration work, which will involve disassembling the window piece-by-piece and transporting it to its studio, completely restoring each individual piece to pristine condition, then reinstalling it. In the meantime an appropriate acrylic panel will be installed in



*The Rose Window from Capital Avenue.*

*continued on p. 2*

*Rose Window, cont. from p. 1*

place of the disassembled window.

Cost of the restoration will be approximately \$36,000, which will be fully paid for by existing funds designated for window restoration.

This is the first and most urgent of the windows that need complete restoration; practically all the windows in the church have deteriorated to the point of instability, and all need extensive repair. If anyone would like to donate to the Window Restoration Fund, please contact me or Father Brian.

## New address and good wishes for John and Amy

John Tracy and Amy Okumura have moved.

John started a new job in Lititz, Pennsylvania in August.

We will miss their presence with us at St. Thomas, but they report finding another St. Thomas Church nearby to their new home. Their new address is:

489 Resolution Dr  
Lititz, PA 17543-7322



## An Update on Music-Making

by Dr. Stephen White, Director of Music

*O God, who alone hearkens to the songs of our souls: tune our hearts to sing your praise that we, singing your songs in a strange land, may continue to magnify and praise your name forever and ever; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*

I am sure I was not alone in thinking/hoping/praying that, by this point, we would all be planning for a rather “normal” start to our program year. The current state of this health pandemic, however, is causing a revised plan to be developed, both for worship and for the musical life of the parish.

For this fall, the plan will be for the choirs to operate in a hybrid mode of both virtual and limited in-person rehearsals. Virtual check-ins will take place via Zoom and any in-person rehearsals will be limited in size and held outdoors with masks and physical distancing

in place. And while there will not be live choral music at our Sunday morning liturgies, the choirs will work to provide virtual offerings of anthems and Psalms, as well as look for ways to offer Choral Evensong in a pre-recorded or virtual format.

The choristers will operate in a similar manner; however, their virtual Zoom sessions will focus on the Royal School of Church Music training materials and anthem recording preparations. While we all acknowledge this hybrid format is not ideal, it will provide an opportunity for us to continue making music during this period.

It's also a good time to remind ourselves that music-making in the Christian tradition is something we do not for our own pleasure, but in the service of God and God's church, and for the benefit

of the people of this parish and community in whatever mode circumstances dictate. To that end, we will be working toward the day we are all able to be together again by maintaining and building upon the musical foundation that has been established, by focusing on what we are able to do, and by believing that our work continues to praise God and nourish our faith community.

I wholeheartedly believe we are equipped during these uncertain times to continue our commitment to enlivening the Church's worship, nurturing community, and forming musicians for service in the Church, all while striving for artistic excellence. And with your prayers, help, creativity, and flexibility, we will persevere and prevail.

Soli Deo Gloria!

# Vestry Notes

by Noreen Sidnam

How many times have you heard us say at announcements, the Vestry wants to be transparent and as helpful as we can? Since we have been unable to make that announcement in the last few months, please allow this as a means of keeping you up to date. In addition, if you have questions, we are all available to talk, call, text or email.

We were saddened by the loss of our Junior Warden, Karen Suggs. She will be missed. The Vestry elected Mike Regner to complete Karen's term which expires in January 2021. We also asked Lori Kiess to complete Karen's Vestry term.

You may have noticed that we experienced some shingle damage to the steeple during one of the wind storms. The contractor came last Tuesday and replaced the damaged shingles.

After receiving notice of Bishop Hougland's suspension, the Vestry voted to write to the Standing Committee and ask that they consider appointing a Bishop Provisional during this time. We received a reply indicating that the Standing Committee cannot simply make such an appointment. That decision can only be made by an act of Covention for each diocese.

The Stewardship and Fundraising Commission has been busy gearing up to prepare a budget for 2021. This is a difficult task particularly since our revenue this year is

down about \$21,000 as compared to last year. We are pretty sure this is because of the pandemic and the feeling of unrest we are all experiencing. The important message is if we are unable to meet our budget requirements for 2021, some serious actions may be necessary, not the least of which may be salaries. You'll be hearing more from S&FC in the near future. Thank you to all the commission members for tackling this thankless job.

The air conditioner for the offices has bitten the dust, almost. We could get it fixed for about \$2,000 but the technician feels it might not even last out the season. The Vestry is considering purchasing a replacement system, which would be just for the offices, the cost of which is a little over \$11,000. We decided not to do that right now. Father Brian has written a grant for assistance with this project, which, if approved, will provide matching funds. If we get the grant, we will proceed with the purchase.

We need help to assist in picking up cases of food for the holiday baskets. To help with holiday baskets, contact Ken Surprenant, who is taking over the management of this ministry.

We also need three more people to take the kitchen manager class and test for the breakfast program. Contact Father Brian if interested.

Hans Prechtel updated us on the repair of the Rose Window. We are

on the list for November with the repair company. If the weather does not permit, we will have to wait until spring.

Three years ago the Vestry established a growth and development plan. We are reviewing that plan to see if the goals were met and to establish new ones.

The Vestry has developed a contingency plan in case Father Brian or Steve White should contract covid-19 or become otherwise disabled.

We are embarking on a program called Renewal Works, a Forward Movement program. You will be hearing much more about it and how we can grow our spiritual lives through a growing love of God and neighbor. It will take some work. We are just starting to organize the workshop teams. We plan to launch in January. Stay tuned for more information about this exciting new program.

Thanks for plowing through all this. As you can see, the Vestry has been and will continue to be busy making and keeping St. Thomas our treasured church home.

## Pledge Update

<b>Budget:</b>	<b>\$152,470</b>
<b>Actual:</b>	<b>\$137,344</b>
<b>Deficit:</b>	<b>\$15,126</b>

# Worship under the Sun, Online or Inside



Worshippers gather on a Sunday morning in the St. Thomas parking lot. Photo by Sharon Engle.

Our ability to gather as a congregation for worship and connection has been upended by the coronavirus pandemic. Since July, Sunday worship has been taking place at the elevator entrance at St. Thomas. When we worship outside, we are not limited in attendance, as long as worshippers wear a mask and practice social distancing.

As the weather changes, worship services will have to be held indoors. Indoor worship is limited to ten persons per room, i.e. ten people in the sanctuary,

the chapel or the parish hall. St. Thomas has purchased a new audio video system that allows worship services to be streamed to these rooms from the sanctuary via a projector system.

We continue to provide worship online via YouTube. St. Thomas has a new YouTube channel, which we will use instead of Fr. Brian's channel. We will provide the link to the channel on our website, or e-mail Karmel for more information at [karmel@bcppg.com](mailto:karmel@bcppg.com).

## Women of the Bible

For 3 months several St. Thomas parishioners met via Zoom weekly to learn more about the women of the Bible. This led to our current study of The Old Testament. The pandemic offered us the opportunity to connect deeper with the Bible & one another. It has been an intimate & beautiful experience.

Check Realm for updates on ongoing Bible studies or e-mail Trish Harris at [tholcomb2011@hotmail.com](mailto:tholcomb2011@hotmail.com).

## StThomasBC.org

See all worship videos

Sign up for e-news

Indepth reading on Sunday

Scripture

Give online



# iBelieve Class: The Apostles Creed

This year we will focus on the Apostles' Creed as the basis of our study in the iBelieve Classes. These classes meet for about an hour on the first Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the Lounge,

immediately following Mass in the chapel.

The Apostles' Creed is a statement of faith dating back to about the 4th Century AD, and is widely

understood to be a common denominator of faith among Christians. It is used in the liturgy of the church as part of the Baptismal Covenant and daily at Morning and Evening Prayer.

October 7, 2020: **"I believe in God"**

November 4, 2020: **"The Father Almighty"**

December 2, 2020: **"Creator of Heaven and Earth"**

January 6, 2021: **"I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord"**

February 3, 2021: **"He was conceived/ born/was crucified and died"**

March 3, 2021: **"He descended to the dead"**

April 7, 2021: **"He rose again"**

May 5, 2021: **"I believe in the Holy Spirit/Holy Catholic Church"**

June 2, 2021: **"The forgiveness of sins/ resurrection of the body"**

Over the course of the year we will read *Questions of Faith: A Skeptical Affirmation of Christianity* by well-known sociologist and lay theologian Peter L. Berger.

iBelieve Classes are designed to help parishioners explore their faith and learn about the history and traditions of the Church. It is an opportunity for newly arrived

and long-standing parishioners to deepen their knowledge and relationships.

## Spiritual Classic: *The Seven Storey Mountain*

On March 7, 1965, armed police attacked peaceful civil rights demonstrators attempting to march to the state capital of Montgomery, Alabama in an incident that became known as Bloody Sunday.

In his backpack, worn over a trenchcoat as he marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, John Lewis carried the autobiography of Thomas Merton.

*The Seven Storey Mountain* tells of the growing restlessness of a brilliant and passionate young man, who at the age of twenty-six, takes vows in one of the most demanding Catholic orders—the Trappist monks.

At the Abbey of Gethsemani, "the four walls of my new freedom," Thomas Merton struggles to withdraw from the world, but only after he has fully immersed himself in it.

At the abbey, he wrote this extraordinary testament, a unique spiritual autobiography that has been recognized as one of the most influential religious works of our time. Translated into more than twenty languages, it has touched millions of lives.

Join Fr. Brian in reading this spiritual classic. Book discussions will take place on Zoom

Biblical Studies class on Zoom once a month on the fourth Wednesday of the month beginning Wednesday, September 23 at 6:30 p.m.



# CARES Act Charitable Giving Incentives

by Carsten Sierck

Most Episcopal organizations rely on generous donors to support their mission and ministry. Stewardship can be deeply spiritual, rooted in a desire to reorient our lives towards God, but it also has a practical side. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, signed into law on March 27, 2020, includes several provisions that may affect charitable giving this year.

**New charitable deduction for taxpayers who do not itemize.** Beginning in 2020, individuals can deduct \$300 in charitable contributions from their gross income even if they do not itemize their deductions. Donations must be made in cash to a charity. Gifts of appreciated securities, and gifts to a donor advised fund or supporting organization, do not qualify. Although the permissible amount is modest, it is a new benefit available. This is intended to encourage contributions at a time of great need. St. Thomas is

responding directly to the needs of those effected by the economic crisis caused by the pandemic by providing emergency food aid through our breakfast program, and to individuals in need through the Rector's Discretionary Fund.

**No cap on charitable deductions for taxpayers who do itemize.** Donors who itemize their deductions can usually deduct cash contributions up to 60% of their adjusted gross income. For 2020, that cap is lifted, and donors contributing cash to charity may deduct up to 100% of their income, a significant tax savings for anyone able to contribute larger amounts. Again, this is only for gifts of cash, and only for gifts made directly to charity (not to donor-advised funds or supporting organizations). Donors may be able to offset significant amounts of income if they are able to make cash gifts this year. This may be useful for donors with unusual income in 2020.

**No required minimum distributions, but qualified charitable distributions still possible.** The CARES Act eliminates required minimum distributions (RMDs) from many retirement plans in 2020. Some donors have been using their RMDs for tax-advantaged charitable gifts by making a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) directly to charity. Under the CARES Act it is still possible for donors who are 70½ or over to contribute up to \$100,000 directly to a charity without paying tax on the distribution. This remains a beneficial way for donors to make gifts to your church. Those over 70½ may still make a tax-advantaged qualified charitable distribution from an IRA this year. This might be useful for donors who have cash set aside in an IRA for an RMD that is no longer required.

## Pictures of an unusual summer



*Left: Alexis Stark and Joerg Himmelreich during their hike of the Old Baldy Trail in Petoskey State Park last month. They had a nice, socially-distanced weekend getaway.*



*Above and right: The Kiess family took a camping trip this summer to Cheboygan State Park in Northern MI, just southeast of the Mackinaw Bridge, in their new camping trailer. They hiked at Ocqueoc Falls, ventured across the bridge to the U.P and had delicious whitefish in St Ignace, saw the bears at Oswalds Bear Ranch, then up to Sault Ste Marie to see the ships go through the locks. But the best part is always making the perfect s'more around the campfire!*

# Budgeting in a Pandemic

## Signposts for parish financial planning in the year to come from the Stewardship and Fundraising Commission (S&FC)

In our draft 2021 budget we anticipate revenues of \$305,000. This is a ~\$22,000 reduction from the 2020 budget, reflecting anticipated reductions in both offerings (currently down almost \$7,000) and other revenue like rentals (currently down by over \$14,000), largely all driven by COVID-19.

Note that this is still an ambitious projection as the church has not actually realized this level of income since 2017.

To address this anticipated reduction, some combination of increased revenue and spending cuts is required. The S&FC suggests that we look for ways

to inspire increased giving. This would rely in part on greater transparency about the budget, such as through easy-to-read charts illustrating relative proportions of church expenses (i.e. salaries, maintenance, etc.), monthly offering receipts relative to budget, etc.

Furthermore, the S&FC suggests making a special appeal, potentially in conjunction with the stewardship campaign this Fall. The appeal would be clearly tied to the pandemic; there is increased need throughout the Battle Creek community and the church should have resources to rise to meet those needs. To tie the appeal to the pandemic, we suggest using

the number 19, such as by asking people to give an additional \$19 per week/month/year, depending on their circumstances.

The S&FC further suggests producing a narrative budget in addition to the usual accounting budget. This would emphasize that expenses like salaries and maintenance play an essential role in the delivery of church ministries. In the absence of increased revenue, spending cuts would be necessary. Our current draft 2021 budget is balanced through 10% reduction in salaries for the Rector and the Director of Music, several reductions in music program spending, and other miscellaneous reductions.

## ... more summer pics



*Yvette Petti, a nurse practitioner for the Veterans Administration in Ann Arbor, took a selfie with her personal protective equipment during a typical workday.*



*Kathy Dingwall is pictured collecting beach stones along the Lake Superior shore at Point Iroquois Lighthouse in July.*

ST. THOMAS  
*Episcopal*  
CHURCH



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

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

**The Rev. Brian Coleman**

Rector

**Dr. Stephen White**

Director of Music

**Denise Genise**

Bookkeeper

**Karmel Addis**

Communications

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## *Parish Schedule*

### **Sundays**

9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

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

*E-mail [rector@stthomasbc.org](mailto:rector@stthomasbc.org)  
to receive an invitation.*

### **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

### **Fridays**

11:00 a.m. Bible Study in the Lounge

12:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist

### **Office Hours**

Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

## *Resuming in September*



### **iBelieve Classes**

1st Wednesdays at 6:30 in the Lounge and on Zoom

### **Preaching Circle**

Second Wednesdays in the Lounge and on Zoom

### **Bible Studies**

Fridays at 11 a.m. in the Lounge and Zoom, we study the upcoming Gospel lesson.

Third Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m., there is a thematic Bible Study

### **Reading the Spiritual Classics**

Fourth Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. in the Lounge and on Zoom  
(see p. )

### **Midweek Masses in the Chapel**

**Wednesdays at 6 p.m.**

**Fridays at Noon**