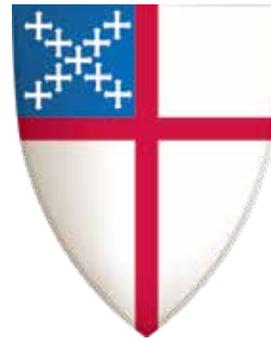


The NewSpirit

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

December 2021 



'Tis the Season

The sounds of Advent and Christmas will ring at St. Thomas once again

by Dr. Stephen White

'Tis the Season . . . to begin a new year in the Life of the Church! And with this new year comes the return of much-beloved congregational hymns in the liturgy. This means that in addition to the service music found in the bulletin, you'll also need to reacquaint yourselves with the hymnals in the pew racks.

For some, the excitement level may rival that of earlier years on Christmas morning – for others, it may seem too much too soon. We ask that you use your comfort level as a metric for determining your full-voiced participation, stay masked, and physically distanced (side-to-side AND front-to-back).

Another change in this new year is the date of our annual Festival of Lessons & Carols. Normally held on the first Sunday in December, the decision was to move it later in the month – just before Christmas.

The choral service schedule for December is as follows:

Sunday, December 5 (Advent II)

Organ Recital by
Dr. Stephen White,
featuring music for
Advent. 4:30 p.m.

Choral Evensong sung
by the Choral Scholars.
5:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 19 (Advent IV)

Festival of Lessons &
Carols, sung by the Choristers
and the St. Thomas Choir. 5:00
p.m.

These services are our gift to you, St. Thomas, and the broader community. We hope you will mark your calendars, invite friends, and plan to join us!

Returning to our pre-pandemic tradition of two Christmas Eve services, the choirs are excited to help lead in this worship celebrating the Birth of Christ.

The 5:30 p.m. service, which is geared toward families with



children, will feature the Choristers and Choral Scholars. Anthems will include the familiar carol *The Holly and the Ivy*, as well as a new lullaby, *Holy Child, Blessed Child* by Thomas Pavlechko.

The 11:00 p.m. service – Midnight Mass – will feature the St. Thomas Choir. Music for the service will include *Mass of the Nativity* by Richard Shephard and *The Manger Throne* by Eleanor Daley.

The Christmas Day Eucharist at 10:00 a.m. will be a said mass with hymns. Plan to come and sing some of your favorite Christmas Hymns!



We'll miss you, George.

Our longtime, steadfast friend George E. Mckay, Jr. was laid to rest in the St. Thomas Garth on All Saints Sunday. Our brother George died suddenly on October 26th. A requiem mass was held November 4th.

George was 80. He had been a member of St. Thomas since he was 16 years old.

This is where George rests; the roses were left by his sister & daughter... A coda to the blessing George continues to be among us.

- Keith Phillips



2021 Pledge Update

Pledge income received YTD: \$201, 716.76
 Total Pledged for 2021: \$234,857.52
 Balance: \$33,140.76

If you haven't, please return your pledge card for 2022, as soon as possible.

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH A FUTURE WITH HOPE 2022 PLEDGE

We invite you to join us by making a pledge of financial support to the ministry of St. Thomas Church for the coming year.

Thank you.

Name: _____

Check any that apply:

- Please advise how to simplify giving through on-line payments.
- Please order giving envelopes.
- Please advise how to include St. Thomas in legacy or estate planning.
- I/we are giving proportionally and striving to exceed 10% of our income.
- I/we do not wish to make a pledge.

In gratitude for God's many blessings,
 I/we pledge \$_____ (total pledge for 2022).

I/we plan to fulfill this pledge weekly, monthly, semiannually, annually.

St. Thomas Members Play in CCCB Concert

The Cereal City Concert Band's first concert since 2019

The St. Thomas community is well-represented in the all-volunteer Cereal City Concert Band, made up of musicians from Battle Creek and surrounding areas.

Barb Hibiske has been with the Cereal City Concert Band for over 30 years and is on the Board of Directors. She currently plays in five different bands (not all at once!) and plays many different instruments including clarinet, bass clarinet, alto and tenor saxophone, drums, and keyboard. She started playing clarinet in 5th grade at Pennfield under the direction of Nancy Steely and Royden Swaffield.

Heather Lane-Fowler is an original member of the band, beginning in 1987, which is 34 years. She is the treasurer on the Board of Directors and also handles the publicity and

marketing for the band. She started playing the flute in 5th grade at Pennfield and added piccolo in high school under the direction of Royden Swaffield.



Stephen White has been the conductor of the band since 2017.

After over 16 months of not being able to perform together, the Cereal City Concert Band is back

in business! Under the direction of Dr. Stephen White and Ms. Amanda Burdette, they will be performing their Christmas Concert "CHRISTMAS JOY!" on Sunday, December 12, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. at the Pennfield Performing Arts Center, 8587 Pennfield Rd, Battle Creek.

Attendees will enjoy an entire concert of Christmas music such as *A Christmas Festival*, *Fantasia on a 13th Century Carol*, *March of the Toys*, *Star of Bethlehem*, and much more! It will be joyful music that will leave those in attendance full of the Christmas spirit.

For more information see details about tickets and pricing in the parish lesson sheet.

December Food Baskets

An expected 300 families will receive holiday food baskets in

partnership with the Santa's Helper organization. An announcement



Some of the members of the Thanksgiving basket team

will be sent from the team with a new online form for sign up.

See the following dates:

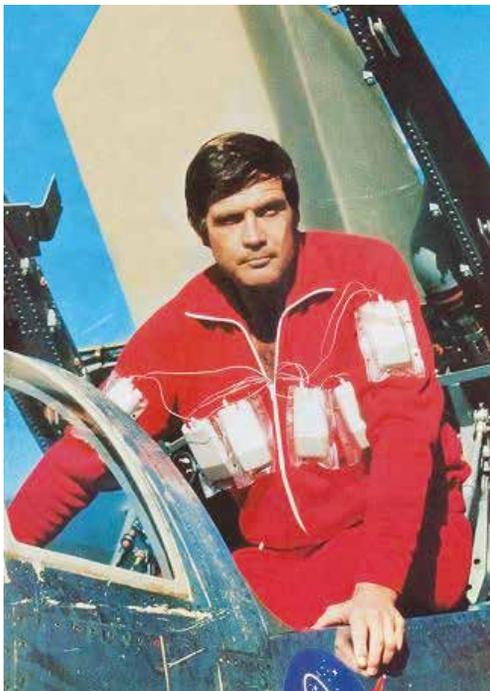
- Tues. or Wed., Dec 14/15 (TBD): Organize food for assembling
- Thurs., Dec 16th, 8:00-10:15 a.m.: Table set-up, box assembly, load food into boxes and position for pickup with Santa's Helper. Note: Santa's Helper will have Vo-Ed students also performing this task in the morning as well as from Noon-2:00 p.m.
- Sat, Dec: 18th: Basket pick-up and delivery. Shifts: 8:30-9:30 a.m. and 10:00 - 2:00 p.m. for delivery, loading, being at St. Thomas for families who opt to pick up their baskets, directing traffic & more.

Do you remember The Six Million Dollar Man?

Father Brian announces disability leave

by Father Brian Coleman

Do you remember The Six Million Dollar Man? I used to love that television program. I watched it religiously. My friends and I would pretend that we had the same powers exhibited by the character



Colonel Steve Austin played by actor Lee Majors. We had super human strength, zoom lens vision, and we could run as fast as a car. Oh, and no need to worry about anything ever being broken or going wrong, we could just go back to the laboratory and get a tune-up, lickity split. If only that were possible in real life.

In real life, I have been struggling mightily with a paralyzed vocal cord for almost eight years now, and there doesn't seem to be any bionic technology to remedy the problem. Some of you may recall that in January 2014, I had surgery to remove a recurrence of thyroid cancer from the base of my neck. It

was that surgery which resulted in the total paralysis of my left vocal cord.

At first it was difficult to talk, but over time, and with lots of hard work in speech therapy I learned how to make the most of the equipment I had left. I had hoped that the paralysis would be temporary, but after two years, when it became evident that there was not going to be any natural regeneration, I had vocal cord augmentation surgery which involved injecting a substance into the paralyzed vocal cord to hopefully aid my efforts to talk. The result was not what I had hoped for, though for a while I did find it a bit easier to clear my throat.

Since then I have managed as best I could, sometimes more successfully than others. Nevertheless, I almost always experience pain as a result of using my voice, and in the recent months this has become more severe. I have also struggled with the fatigue that accompanies such pain and exertion. Almost every day I come home from church completely spent and exhausted. My vocal load (the amount of talking that is required of me on a daily basis) is more than I am able to manage.

In a recent consultation with my otolaryngologist (ear, nose, and throat doctor) he suggested that it may be the case that the constant overuse of my voice constitutes a perpetual re-injuring of the initial trauma caused by the surgeries in 2014 and 2016, and that I could benefit from a period of total vocal

rest. This would allow my muscles and vocal cords a chance to recover and potentially heal. Such healing might make it possible for me to resume the use of my voice with less pain and fatigue than I am currently experiencing.

So, beginning January 1st, I will be going on disability for a period of at least three months, during which time I will have a period of total vocal rest followed by intensive speech therapy to try to retrain my voice to work more efficiently and with less strain and effort.

The Vestry is currently working to ensure appropriate cover for the time I will be on disability, including clergy to be here on Sundays and to provide for the sacramental needs of the parish. During the time I will be on disability, I will still have access to email and texts, and I will help in anyway I can.

John and I would very much appreciate your prayers in the months ahead for healing, patience and grace. You will continue in my prayers, and I hope you will feel free to keep me up to date with how you are doing.

While there may not be a bionic solution to the challenges I face, I sincerely hope that it will be possible to rebuild my voice and to make it stronger so that I will be able to continue as your priest and rector for years to come. This is what I will be working toward and praying for in the coming months.

Watching Live Worship on YouTube

Most of the TVs sold in recent years are Smart TVs. In other words, they have built-in software that enables users to download apps for streaming TV like Netflix, Hulu and YouTube. It is a way to



“stream” programming through the internet. Some people get the same type of programming from a detached box, like a Roku, Amazon Fire Stick or Apple TV box. Either way, it’s how most people are watching TV these days.

St. Thomas worship services are live-streamed on YouTube. Make sure your TV has downloaded the YouTube App.

YouTube is a Google product. If you have a Gmail account, sign into YouTube using the same username and password. Once you are signed in, YouTube will allow you to subscribe to the St. Thomas YouTube channel, and St. Thomas videos and live-streams will be the first thing you see when you open up the YouTube app on your smart TV. It’s a little better way to experience remote worship than watching on your phone or tablet. Join us remotely for Christmas services if you are not able to be physically present in the church.



Advent Decorating



Members of St. Thomas are needed to help decorate the Church for the season of Advent on Saturday, November 27, from 9:30 a.m. to noon. The first Sunday of Advent is November 28, 2021.

Volunteers will hang wreaths and garland, place candles on windowsills, change banners, make blue bows, prepare the Advent wreath, hang wreaths on the outside doors and many other tasks in preparation for Advent.

Your help is needed. Please volunteer to assist with preparing St. Thomas for Advent. Contact Bob Harberts to let him know that you will join in preparing the Church for Advent.

Bob can be reached at 269-275-1523 or robertharberts@mac.com.

(Left): St. Thomas Night Out on Monday, October 18th at Clara's on the River. Contact Emilie Cummins at 979-9775 to reserve a spot on the next St. Thomas Night Out!

News from the Joint Diocesan Convention

by Karen Keese, Convention Delegate

The Second Joint Convention of the Episcopal Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan was October 29th and 30th. The delegates from St. Thomas were Trish Harris and Karen Keese who attended with Fr. Brian.

It took place in Lansing at the Lansing Center and the theme was “Gathered in the Field.” It was the first in-person diocesan meeting since the shut down due to COVID-19. It took place with all precautions, masks, social distancing, and proof-of-vaccination or negative testing on check-in. It led to some interesting moments as we realized we really did know friends from other parishes under those masks!

The first day was break-out workshops and the president’s address and Compline at the end of a long day.

The first workshop I went to was “The Labyrinth as a Path to Prayer.” It was a welcome time for experiencing the meditation involved while either walking the labyrinth they had on the floor or making your own finger labyrinth which I did with the materials provided. The Midland Episcopal Church has their own labyrinth outdoors in good weather and provided the workshop.

The second workshop I attended was “My Slinky and Me: The Church & Aging.” I thought it sounded interesting as all our

parishes are experiencing this. Basically, it was about resilience and the ability to stretch to the breaking point and then bounce back and the importance in the aging process. I was pleasantly surprised to see a group of teens come to this workshop with us! They participated, talking about it from their viewpoint.

The presidents’ addresses were given by Janet Huff-Worvie from St. John’s, Otter Lake in the Eastern Diocese and the Rev. Randall Warren, Rector of St. Luke’s, Kalamazoo; they are the presidents of the Standing Committees of the Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan, respectively. I felt that the overall atmosphere of the convention was hopeful exploration as we continue with the exploration of our togetherness.

The second day opened with the Convention Eucharist. It was a great experience! Fr. Brian had been on the committee to plan it. His idea was to have a Mariachi band do the music for the whole Eucharist. I really liked it! It was spiritual but also peppy and I was in a good mood from the experience!

Both Western and Eastern Michigan dioceses had their own business sessions apart as well as



The Rt. Rev. Prince Singh was elected provisional bishop of the Dioceses of Eastern & Western Michigan for the next 3-5 years, a resolution that passed almost unanimously. Bishop Singh will officially begin in February.

the joint one at the end of the two days.

Western Michigan had elections to the Standing Committee, and minor changes to the language of the Canons. There were resolutions.

Sadly, there were two closings of parishes in our diocese: St. Stephen’s, Plainwell, and St. Paul’s, Dowagiac.

Another resolution was interesting. Part of the focus of Western Michigan parishes is feeding the hungry. The displays around the perimeter of the large room we met in were quite interesting. For instance, Plainsong Farm grows food and has an intern program for young people to come to stay and learn. Fr. Brian is on their board.

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The one that caught my eye was the Order of Naucratus. There are two churches in the Northern Region on Lake Michigan where the Order was co-founded by the Revs. Christian and Jodi Baron. They conceived the idea to help with people experiencing food insecurity with donations from the harvests of hunters and fishermen. The Resolution affirmed the Order of Naucratus as a Cooperating Ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan. There are 15 teams of fishermen that are doing this regularly. If anyone wants more information, I picked up some pamphlets.

The climax of the convention was the ending joint session. We voted to approve the Standing Committee's choice of Bishop Provisional for our diocese. Our new bishop will arrive in February. He is Bishop Prince Singh. Trish and I had both gone on a Zoom meeting to see and talk with him ahead of time. We agreed it looked hopeful for the future of our two dioceses. He is currently the Bishop of Rochester, New York. He has been a bishop for 14 years. He was born in India and worked with the "untouchables caste" in India and migrant workers in New Jersey.

After the vote, he connected with the convention by Zoom and thanked us and led us in a closing prayer.

Morning/Evening Prayer are
Live-streamed on the
St. Thomas Facebook page.

December Calendar

Saturday, November 27th

Advent Decoration, 9:30 a.m. - noon



Sunday, November 28th

Children and Youth Service, 5:00 p.m.
Making Advent Wreaths for Home



Tuesday, November 30th

St. Andrew's Day Mass in the Chapel, 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 1st

iBelieve Class "Understanding Jesus," 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 4th

Diocesan Confirmation - Grace, Holland, 11:00 a.m.
Barb Hibiske to be confirmed

Sunday, December 5th

Choral Evensong, 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 8th

Preaching Circle, 7:00 p.m.



Sunday, December 12th

Parish Evensong, 5:00 p.m.



Wednesday, December 15th

The Good Book Club, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 19th

Festival of Lessons and Carols, 5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 21st ~ St. Thomas Day

Parish Potluck, 5:30 p.m.

Holy Eucharist in church, 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 22nd

Reading the Spiritual Classics, 7:00 p.m.

Friday, December 24th

Christmas Eve

Family Mass 5:30 p.m.

Musical Prelude, 10:30 p.m.

Midnight Mass, 11:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 25th

Christmas Day

Christmas Breakfast, 8:30 a.m.

Holy Eucharist, 10:00 a.m.



December 26th - January 2nd: Parish offices closed

ST. THOMAS
Episcopal
CHURCH



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

Phone (269) 965-2244

www.StThomasBC.org

Office Hours: Monday-Friday
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

The Rev. Brian Coleman

Rector

Dr. Stephen White

Director of Music

Denise Genise

Bookkeeper

Karmel Addis

Communications

Keith Phillips

Parish Contemplative

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

Return Service Requested

Parish Schedule

Sundays

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
5:00 p.m. Evening Worship

Weekdays Live-Streamed

Monday – Saturday
9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

Wednesdays

Chorister Rehearsal, 4:30 p.m.
Adult Choir Rehearsal, 7 p.m.
Adult Formation classes, 7:00 p.m.

Fridays

11:00 a.m. Bible Study in the Lounge
12:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Saturdays

8:30-10:00 a.m. Breakfast Program

Office Hours

Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
closed December 26th to January 2nd



Sunday, December 19th

Festival of
Lessons and Carols, 5:00 p.m.

Friday, December 24th

Christmas Eve
Family Mass 5:30 p.m.
Musical Prelude, 10:30 p.m.
Midnight Mass, 11:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 25th

Christmas Day
Christmas Breakfast, 8:30 a.m.
Holy Eucharist, 10:00 a.m.

St. Thomas Sunday worship services are broadcast on AccessVision, Channel 16, at 5 p.m. on Sundays, and re-broadcast at 7 p.m. on Fridays. Evensong is broadcast on Wednesdays at 5 p.m.