

# The NewSpirit

Being a Light to the World: Worship • Youth • Discipleship  
St. Thomas Episcopal Church Battle Creek, Michigan  
December 2019



## Bird is the Word

by the Rev. Brian Coleman

The only day of the year that I ever eat turkey is on Thanksgiving Day. Truth be told, I don't really like turkey that much. It has always seemed relatively flavorless and dry to me. There have been a few exceptions, I remember one year, my brother cold-smoked a whole turkey for Thanksgiving. That was exceptionally good.

Despite my ambivalence to this particular poultry, I am still very much a traditionalist and so I always cook a turkey to take its rightful place at the center of the Thanksgiving table. This year is no exception and I have ordered a fresh locally-pastured turkey on the recommendation of a friend. Pastured turkeys grow up, unlike their mass-produced cousins, roaming the farm fields, out in the wide open spaces, eating grass and bugs and God knows what. They are supposed to taste different, more nutty or earthy, I suppose.

I was attracted to this option for reasons of animal welfare. John and I try to limit our meat consumption to animals raised in environmentally conscientious and ethically humane methods; which is to

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say not raised in hothouses and feedlots where they are unnaturally force fed and overcrowded. Don't get me wrong, I am not naive that the reality of eating meat requires the death of another animal for my nourishment, sustenance and even enjoyment. I just feel that the life that that animal lives should be as natural and wholesome as possible before it is slaughtered. Actually my



*Mulder, a Bronze Breasted male turkey, was born in the spring of 2017 and was intended to be served the following November for Thanksgiving dinner. He has been a beloved pet the past two years on a local farm animal sanctuary.*

favorite meat is venison, and as far as I know there isn't a more sustainably-sourced meat than that which is wild and plenteous and currently "in season."

Many of us will gather around dining room tables this season with family and friends to celebrate the holidays. As we do, no doubt we will be conscious of our many

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blessings and of all that for which we may be thankful. Whether at Thanksgiving or Christmas or at other special meals many of us will partake of the flesh of another species: avian, bovine, porcine or otherwise. Before your first bite, spare a thought for the life that animal lived and the death it died. Better yet, before you purchase it find out where it comes from, how it was raised, and whether or not the methods used to farm it were sustainable.

As Christians living in the world, one of the most effective means we have to work for justice and equity is through our

pocketbooks and wallets; how we spend our hard-earned money. We can promote our values and support those who share them through conscientious and mindful spending. This applies not just to our purchases at the grocery store, but in the entire marketplace. Consider the gifts you buy, the investments you make, every purchase has the potential to either promote justice or undermine it.

This year I am actually looking forward to Thanksgiving dinner, turkey and all. I expect that I will be able to taste the love and the justice in every bite.

**Don't forget to hand in your pledge card if you haven't already.  
Duplicate cards are available in parish office.**

## Christmas Breakfast



Saturday, December 28, 2019

8:30-10:00 a.m.

St. Thomas Parish Hall

Send *NewSpirit* articles, ideas and photos to editor Karmel Addis at

[kpuzzo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kpuzzo@sbcglobal.net)

or

[karmel@bcppg.com](mailto:karmel@bcppg.com)

by January 15th.

## Christmas Worship

### CHRISTMAS EVE

Tuesday, Dec. 24th

Family Mass

5:30 p.m. Creche Mass

Midnight Mass

10:30 p.m. Musical Prelude

11:00 p.m. Midnight Mass

### CHRISTMAS DAY

Wednesday, Dec. 25th

10:00 a.m.

The Feast of Christmas Day

# Advent and more - Ready or Not!

by Dr. Stephen White, Music Director

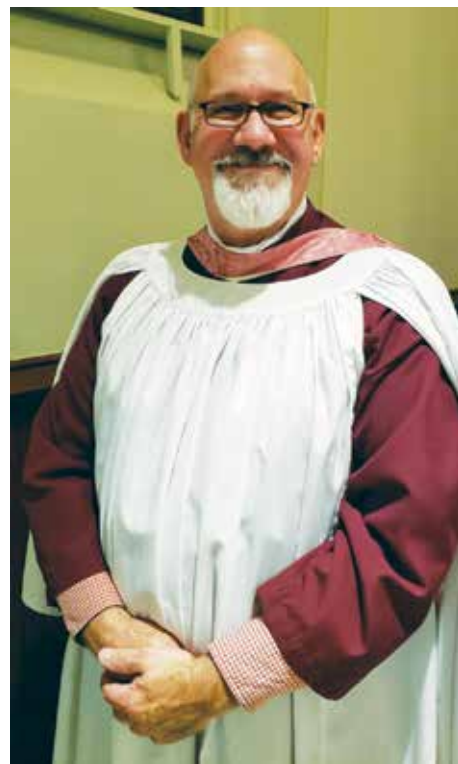
December is one of the busiest months for anyone involved in music. From school and community concerts, religious programs, and practice for the many performances, it is sometimes difficult to remember why this season exists – a season of hopeful expectation for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. As much as I might like to *check out* for a bit to experience a quieter and more hopeful side to the season, I am well aware of how the music offered during the seasons of Advent and Christmas can, in many ways, be the glue that holds us together. This music brings joy, restores hope, helps to resurface happy recollections, offers a sense of community, and often provides the narrative to the true reason for the season.

Here at St. Thomas we several opportunities for the community to come together to celebrate the season through music. While we have traditionally held our annual Festival of Lessons & Carols on the First Sunday of Advent, the calendar this year didn't work in our favor. The benefit, however, goes to the congregation and broader community. The First Sunday of Advent (Dec. 1st) will now have the regularly-scheduled service of Choral Evensong at 5:00 p.m. The pre-service recital will be played by Jodine Bandlow, director of music at First Presbyterian Church, Battle Creek at 4:30. The service will be sung by the St. Thomas Schola and include the very popular Advent anthem, *E'en*

*so Lord Jesus, quickly come* by Paul Manz. Our annual Festival of Lessons & Carols has been moved to the Third Sunday of Advent on December 15th at 5:00 p.m., and will replace the normally-scheduled Parish Evensong. This service, in the style of the very popular service at King's College Chapel, Cambridge, will be sung by the St. Thomas Choir and the Sr. Girl Choristers. It is always a favorite and includes hymns, anthems/ carols, and readings that tell the story of Advent.

Christmas Eve once again includes two services: the 5:30 Family Mass will include the St. Thomas Choristers & Schola, the procession of the Creche figures, and familiar Christmas hymns. The 11:00 p.m. Solemn High Mass (with incense) will be sung by the St. Thomas Choir and include the *Mass for Three Voices* by William Byrd and *O Magnum Mysterium* (O Great Mystery) by Tomás Luis de Victoria, along with some of the favorite Christmas hymns. Both services will include the candlelit singing of *Silent Night*. You'll want to come early for the late service to enjoy a thirty-minute prelude beginning at 10:30 p.m. that will include music by some of our choral scholars and other musicians.

I do hope you will take a moment from what is sure to be a very hectic schedule and treat yourself to the gift of these services – I firmly believe they can be sustenance to a weary soul and help to keep focus



on what is truly important about the season.

Wishing everyone a Blessed Advent and Happy Christmas!

## Festival of Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 15, 2019  
5:00 p.m.



St. Thomas Choir  
Senior Girl Choristers



# A Home By Any Other Name

## Long Term Considerations for Clergy Housing

Traditionally churches have provided housing for clergy and their families. Since 1951, St. Thomas has owned the rectory at 252 Chestnut Street as a means of providing adequate clergy housing, a space for lovely social activities and meetings with the congregation. The rectory was built in 1935, and acquired by St. Thomas in 1951. While still a charming home, it has begun to show signs of its increasing age and the past several years have seen an increase in age-related maintenance costs.

When the rectory was constructed it was not built with the need for handicapped-access in mind. There are many members, as well as clergy family members, who haven't been able to visit the rectory, or can no longer attend annual open houses or meetings held there due to the very steep walkway, or the narrowness of the doors and halls.

In July 2017 the Outreach and Facility Management Commission, (O&FM) established a goal to research the long-term consideration for the rectory. The Commission considered options for making the rectory more accessible, and the long term costs the church incurs for the expenses of maintaining the rectory. A target date of July 2020 was set for completing this research.

During the spring through the fall of 2018, the O&FM developed list

of research items including:

- Pros and cons for providing clergy housing vs. providing clergy housing allowance
- Research housing practices of other area churches
- Estimate costs for making the current rectory handicapped accessible
- Assess current repair needs and potential, future age-related maintenance costs
- Explore process and requirements for replacement of current rectory

In a survey of other local churches, we found that some provide a housing allowance, while others provide church-owned housing. Father Brian confirmed with the Church Pension Fund, if St. Thomas were to provide a housing allowance the annual cost would be \$21,810.00 per year. The annual budget confirms that current income will not support a housing allowance making this option not feasible.

A inspection of the rectory was completed with favorable findings; no critical maintenance is needed immediately, although repairs are needed to fix damage due to chronic water leaks. The costs to make the current rectory accessible were researched and could range from \$17,000-\$40,000. Since the rectory is located within the Merritt Woods Historic District, any exterior changes may require approval from the housing

association.

Ideally, the rectory should provide a comfortable home which is accessible and affordable. A newer residence is the best way to achieve these goals. There is much critical restoration work already needed at St. Thomas Church: completion of the chapel restoration, preservation of our stained glass windows; both would be negatively impacted by channeling funds away from these projects towards structural changes or major repairs at the rectory.

The Vestry has advised the Bishop and the Standing Committee of our plans and we have approval to proceed. When considering a replacement residence, requirements are that it be of a comparable value to the current rectory; be located near St. Thomas and local hospitals; have a minimum three bedrooms and two bathrooms; be accessible; be more energy efficient and have relatively low maintenance needs.

In September, 2019 the Vestry hired Talia Champlin of RE/MAX Perrett Associates. The assistance of an experienced realtor will be valuable in determining financing terms and options, providing up-to-date information regarding property values, and guiding next steps. In October, 2019, a task force was formed (Hans Prechtel, Mike Regner and Father Brian) to begin working with Talia to determine next steps. At the Annual Parish Meeting in January, 2020, the

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# Rectory Open House



**Friday, December 13, 2019**

**3:00-7:00 p.m.**

**252 Chestnut St.**

**Battle Creek, MI**

**Join Fr. Brian and John for some holiday cheer at their home.  
All are welcome to this annual event.**

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parish will be asked to approve the replacement of the rectory.

The Vestry is responsible for the fiscal well-being of parish assets and property. We understand the sentimental connection to the property which requires care and respect throughout the decision making process. The congregation may have questions and the members of the Vestry, the Outreach & Facility Management Commission and the transition task force are happy to address these questions.

## Pledge Update

Budget:	\$224,468
Actual:	\$194,011
Deficit	\$30,457

## FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2019



**ORGAN RECITAL**

**4:30 p.m**

*Jodine Bandlow, Director of  
Music, First Presbyterian Church,  
Battle Creek*

**CHORAL EVENSONG**

**5:00 p.m**

*The St. Thomas Schola*





## Letter from Dale Bennett to Karen Keese

Dear Karen,

I miss you, Father Brian and everyone at St. Thomas, but I am where I need to be and am grateful for the care and consideration with which everyone treats me.

I am one of the higher-functioning people here. I have a memory loss, which will increase with time, but I am still functioning well, physically and mentally.

I don't miss driving. The meals and other services are good here.

My diaconal background has been useful and has given me a ministry of listening, sympathizing and advocating for people who are too frustrated or confused for a busy staff on a schedule to listen when they just want to ramble, gripe or solve problems in the form of a long narrative that pops up everytime they talk to someone.

There are also many like me who have an idea of deficits and liabilities which complicate, but do not ruin, our lives.

I have a loving family that visits often and deals with things I couldn't. I have found an Episcopal church, which doesn't have the focus or spiritual intensity of St. Thomas, but where I am welcomed and respected.

Love and miss you all, but I am happy.

– Deacon Dale

**Deacon Dale Bennett**  
120 Creekside Drive, Apt. 10  
Painted Post, NY, 14870



*The congregation on the Feast of All Saints Renewal of Baptismal Vows, November 3rd. Photo by Dr. Stephen White.*



**Christmas Basket Assembly and Delivery**  
December 12-14

# Your Altar Guild Needs You

by Bob Harberts

The St. Thomas Altar Guild is requesting that members of St. Thomas give consideration to joining the Altar Guild. Membership in the Altar Guild is an opportunity to engage with church members who are serving St. Thomas and our Lord by dedicating a few hours each month to the preparation of the altar and the church for worship services and Episcopal Church seasons.

New members are partnered with experienced Altar Guild members for as long as the new members desire. The Altar Guild provides an excellent pathway to

understanding the traditions of the Episcopal Church while enjoying the companionship of dedicated St. Thomas parishioners.

A video of the Altar Guild activities can be found on the St. Thomas Episcopal Church website under Ministries, St. Thomas Altar Guild. Please contact any Altar Guild member to express your interest.

You may also contact the **Altar Guild Hotline (269) 275-1523** between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Central Time, for additional information.



*Ione Dixon and Julie McDonald are members of the Altar Guild.*

## Join an international community in prayer to explore the mystery and wonder of Advent!

### #AdventWord

AdventWord provides visual and written meditations during the liturgical season of Advent. In 2019, Advent begins on Sunday, December 1. The written meditations will be provided in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and in American Sign Language on YouTube. Each morning during Advent, the meditations are distributed via AdventWord.org, Email, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

Around the world, prayers ascend in response to the meditations. People post their reflections on their respective social media

pages, tagging AdventWord on the platform. From there, AdventWord shares and reposts on each site – amplifying the prayers during this holy season. Find the social feed on our website, or on your favorite social media platform.

Explore the different ways that people respond to the daily words, whether written meditations, drawings, photographs, or poems.

Whether simply reading and praying over the daily emailed



#AdventWord a global advent calendar			
1	UNEXPECTED	13	WATER
2	VISIT	14	GATHER
3	TIME	15	TURN
4	HUMBLE	16	LEARN
5	RAISE	17	PRAY
6	HOUSE	18	WORSHIP
7	UNITY	19	BLESS
8	WORTHY	20	GO
9	ROOT	21	REST
10	GRACE	22	RESTORE
11	CONFESS	23	MESSAGE
12	HARMONY	24	BELOVED

meditation, viewing others' postings on Instagram, Twitter or Facebook, or even sharing your own personal visual meditation – all are options to participate and in the prayer-filled Advent community.

ST. THOMAS  
*Episcopal*  
CHURCH



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**The Rev. Brian Coleman**  
Rector

**Dr. Stephen White**  
Director of Music

**Denise Genise**  
Bookkeeper

**Karmel Addis**  
Communications

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Battle Creek, MI  
Permit No. 734

*Return Service Requested*

## Parish Schedule

### Sundays

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

*Childcare available for infants and toddlers  
from 9:30 a.m., upstairs in the nursery.*

*Coffee reception following both services.*

5:00 p.m. Choral Evensong (First Sunday)  
Parish Evensong (Third Sunday)

### 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.

## December



Sun/1st	<b>Organ Recital</b> 4:30 p.m. <b>Choral Evensong</b> , 5:00 p.m.
Wed/4th	<b>iBelieve Class</b> , 6:30 p.m.: "The End is Nigh!" Apocalypticism in the Christian Tradition
Fri/6th	<b>Venture Crew Overnight</b>
Sun/8th	<b>Vestry</b> , 11:30 a.m..
Wed/11th	<b>Preaching Circle</b> , 6:30 p.m.
12th-14th	<b>Christmas Holiday Basket Packing &amp; Delivery</b>
Fri/13th	<b>Rectory Open House</b> , 3-7 p.m.
Sat/14th	<b>St. Thomas volunteers at Saturday Breakfast Program</b>
Sun/15th	<b>Lessons &amp; Carols</b> , 5 p.m.
Mon/16th	<b>Ladies' Night Out</b>
Sat/21st	<b>The Feast of St. Thomas</b> , 10 a.m.  <b>Christmas Worship Schedule, see p. 2</b> <b>Dec/26th-Jan 1st Offices Closed</b>
Sat/28th	<b>Christmas Breakfast</b>
Sun/29th	<b>Fifth Sunday, "Behind the Scenes"</b> Ushers, Greeters and Welcome
Fri/1st	<b>Feast of the Holy Name</b> , 6 p.m.