



THE EPISTLE OF ST. THOMAS

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
The Rev. Jeff Douglas

Diocese of East Carolina
The Rt. Rev. Robert Skirving

December 2021

Walking in the Dark - Looking for the Light!

This is not my favorite time of year. I dislike rising and coming home in the dark every day. I have not been diagnosed with seasonal affective disorder (SAD) but I feel like I have some of its symptoms: fatigue and depression. I also have a craving for comfort foods like pot roasts, soups, and stews. Anything that warms the body. I also have a slight feeling of disorientation and delight when I get home, to stay home.

Advent is a season when we all might experience that desire for being home and perhaps not knowing how to get there. With the holiday season now coming into full swing outside the church, our preparation inside the church can be disorienting. Yes, we may be planning our holiday trip home or preparing our home for relatives and holiday guests who look at our homes as “home” but the “home” we seek in the church has little to do with a building or geography. It has everything to do with whatever we hold dear in our hearts and whether in this season where joy, happiness and busyness are the only socially acceptable traits, we who struggle in our hearts can find a sense of home, peace & contentment?

So if you find yourself anxious and edgy about this time, know we have a God who came in the most anxious of times to be with us always, as a comfort and to bolster our courage. If you find yourself in grief this holiday season with a heavy heart mourning a great loss of one loved deeply, know that God is with you and feels your loss as God’s own. If you find yourself overwhelmed with the busyness of the season, know that God waits in the quiet, little spaces to give you rest, peace and refreshment.

May this Advent be a homecoming, where all you hold dear abide in your heart. And if you find your path home dark and unsure, let the love that shines in your heart, light your way and show you a new way “home”. Let your light, however small, join with others and together may we push back the night and celebrate the dawn of a new Way home, sharing the love of Christ.

Happy Advent!



St. Thomas' Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting
November 16, 2021

Present: John Davis, Carolyn Cockerham Wiggins, Sue Liverman (by telephone), Bill Blanchard (by telephone), Barbara Outland, Becky Johnson (Senior Warden), Colin Jones (Junior Warden), Cecelia Jones (Clerk), Jeff Douglas (Rector), Ernie Carter (Treasurer).

Absent: Linda Blackburn.

Meeting held in person in the Parish Hall. The Rector called the meeting to order at 6:02pm with a prayer.

Colin Jones moved, and Barbara Outland seconded, that the October minutes be approved. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Prior to the meeting, Becky Johnson forwarded the quote for the gutter installation from BM Roofing to Vestry via email. The total quote was \$6,825.75. Colin Jones moved, and Barbara Outland seconded, to move forward with the gutter installation project as outlined in the quote from BM Roofing. The decision to move forward with the gutter installation was approved unanimously.

Remodeling the sacristy has been delayed until the after the first of the year due to the contractor's schedule.

The Rector has procured Advent Calendars for children. The Rector contacted the parents of children in our church about distributing those Advent Calendars to the children of St. Thomas' prior to the start of Advent.

The Treasurer presented the Treasurer's Report, a copy of which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference. The Treasurer will effectuate a withdrawal in the amount of \$20,000.00 from the Raymond James Account as was unanimously approved in the October Vestry meeting. The Treasurer's Report was approved unanimously.

The 2021 Lobster Feast raised \$5,424.22 (net). Cecelia Jones moved, and Becky Johnson seconded, to distribute the proceeds from the 2021 Lobster Feast as follows: ½ to the Ahoskie Food Pantry; ¼ to Episcopal Relief and Development; and ¼ to the Rector's Discretionary Fund. The distribution of 2021 Lobster Feast net proceeds as outlined hereinabove were approved unanimously.

The Diocese has requested that parishes pledge 11% of a parish's 2020 Operating Income. Colin Jones moved, and Carolyn Wiggins seconded, that St. Thomas' 2022 Diocesan Pledge equal 11% of our 2020 Operating Income, which equals \$18,979.00. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Safe Church requirements were discussed, a copy of which was emailed to Vestry by the Rector prior to the meeting. Per the General Convention and the Diocese, all parishes must implement these policies. Colin Jones agreed to head the committee to implement these policies and trainings as outlined therein.

Hugh Davis presented his findings from the 2021 Mutual Ministry Review Survey. Prior to this meeting, Hugh forwarded Notes/Observations from the Mutual Ministry Review Survey, 2021, which summarized, in a narrative format, the findings from the 2021 Mutual Ministry Review. Hugh Davis will send a copy of the Notes/Observations from the Mutual Ministry Review Survey, 2021 to Julie for her to include in the next newsletter.

As our Rector has recently announced his upcoming retirement as of March 1, 2022, transitional logistics were discussed. The Rector noted that Bishop Skirving and/or Canon Roberts have indicated a willingness to meet with Vestry for consulting purposes as we navigate this process. In light of news of the Rector's retirement, it was commented that the topics of discussion in the small-group dinners Vestry is planning to host with the church's members in early 2022 will include conversation about the transition and will seek the input of our members as to the direction in which they would like to navigate the church. The Clerk will create a Google Document to circulate among Vestry for talking points during these dinners. Further announcements will be made to members at the Annual Meeting and Vestry will reach out directly to their dinner invitees to plan a convenient night for dinner. The goal is to have these dinners take place during January 2022.

As the Rector did all the coding for the church's website, he will provide information pertaining to website access to Vestry. It was noted that it is time for a website update.

There will be no Soup Kitchen in November.

The December Vestry meeting is on December 14.

Lessons and Carols is on December 19.

Christmas Eve service is 5PM on December 24.

The Rector will be away December 26 and January 2.

The Annual Meeting is on January 9. We will plan on it being a covered dish luncheon; however, this is subject to change depending on the pandemic.

Cecelia Jones moved, and Barbara Outland seconded, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:09pm with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Cecelia D. M. Jones, Clerk



When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. – Matthew 2:10-11

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Martie Tayloe
- 5 John Davis
- 8 Jack Tayloe
- 10 Sheila Liverman Forbes
- 18 Ray Bradshaw
- 18 Norfleet Hoggard
- 22 Bill Blanchard
- 22 Michael Douglas
- 31 Anna Bradshaw



*"O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor; we pray, on your servants, **Martie, John, Jack, Sheila, Ray, Norfleet, Bill, Michael, Anna,** as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."*

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 7 Fred and Sue Liverman
- 11 Jack and Lindsay Vaughan
- 27 Mike and Cheryl Steczak
- 29 Kenny and Amy Braswell

*"O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church: Send therefore your blessing upon, **Fred and Sue, Jack and Lindsay, Mike and Cheryl, Kenny and Amy,** that they may so love, honor, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**"*



"Hurry! Our New Year's resolutions start in ten minutes."

St. Thomas Episcopal Church – Schedules for December 2021

Acolytes

- 5 Charles Sawyer
- 12 Jerrie Taylor and Cecelia Jones
- 19 Bill Blanchard
- 26 Hugh Davis

Altar Flowers

- 5 Hon. and Mrs. Tom Newbern
- 12 Mr. and Mrs. David Shields
- 19 Dr. and Mrs. Julian Taylor
- 26 Flower Guild

Altar Guild

Patsy Jones and Carolyn Peele

Food Pantry (Note-Wednesdays)

- 1 George Owens
- 8 Jeff Douglas
- 15 Peggy Vann
- 22 Bubba Peele
- 29 Patsy Jones

Lay Readers

- | | | | |
|----|----------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 6:00 PM | Evening Prayer | Sarah Davis |
| 5 | 10:30 AM | Holy Eucharist | Hugh Davis |
| 8 | 6:00 PM | Evening Prayer | Hugh Davis |
| 12 | 8:00 AM | Morning Prayer | OPEN |
| | 10:30 AM | Holy Eucharist | Martie Tayloe |
| 15 | 6:00 PM | Evening Prayer | Martie Tayloe |
| 19 | 10:30 AM | Holy Eucharist | Claudia Griffin |
| 22 | 6:00 PM | NO EVENING PRAYER | |
| 24 | 5:00 PM | Christmas Eve HE | Colin Jones |
| 26 | 10:30 AM | Morning Prayer | Colin Jones |
| 29 | 6:00 PM | NO EVENING PRAYER | |

Ushers

Bubba Peele and Volunteer Needed

Yard Work

- 5 Tom Newbern and Charles Pierce
- 12 Tom Newbern and Charles Pierce
- 19 Charles Sawyer and Beth Douglas
- 26 Charles Sawyer and Beth Douglas



Hospitality Committee

Jeff and Beth Douglas
Bea Vaughan, Linda Blackburn
& Overton Suiter



*A Festival of Nine Lessons
& Carols*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021

5:00 PM

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

424 West Church Street, Ahoskie

Admission is free.

The public is cordially invited to attend.

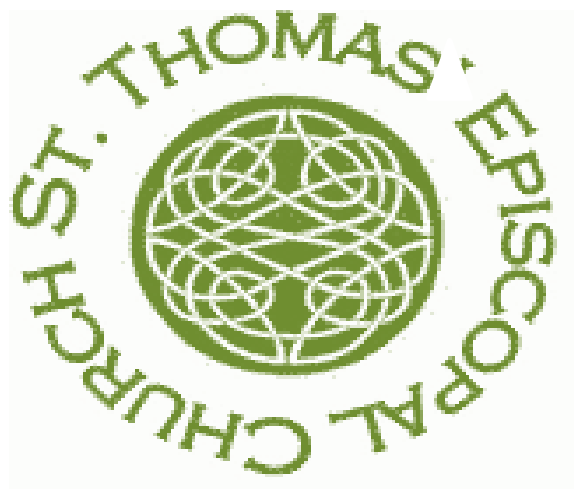
December 2021

Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																										
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <caption>Nov 2021</caption> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td></tr> <tr><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <caption>Jan 2022</caption> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td></tr> <tr><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30					S	M	T	W	T	F	S							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						1 Blood Drive Evening Prayer 6pm	2 Choir Practice 6pm AA Meeting 8pm	3 Sr. Breakfast Group 8:30-10:00am	4 Martie Tayloe
S	M	T	W	T	F	S																																																																																										
1	2	3	4	5	6																																																																																											
7	8	9	10	11	12	13																																																																																										
14	15	16	17	18	19	20																																																																																										
21	22	23	24	25	26	27																																																																																										
28	29	30																																																																																														
S	M	T	W	T	F	S																																																																																										
						1																																																																																										
2	3	4	5	6	7	8																																																																																										
9	10	11	12	13	14	15																																																																																										
16	17	18	19	20	21	22																																																																																										
23	24	25	26	27	28	29																																																																																										
30	31																																																																																															
5 Adult SS 9:15am Advent II Holy Eucharist 8am & 10:30am John Davis	6	7 Fred and Sue Liverman	8 Evening Prayer 6pm Jack Tayloe	9 Choir Practice 6pm AA Meeting 8pm	10 Sheila Liverman Forbes	11 Jack and Lindsay Vaughan																																																																																										
12 Adult SS 9:15am Advent III Holy Eucharist 10:30am Morning Prayer 8am	13	14 Vestry Meeting 6pm	15 Evening Prayer 6pm	16 Choir Practice 6pm AA Meeting 8pm	17	18 Norfleet Hoggard Ray Bradshaw																																																																																										
19 Adult SS 9:15am Advent IV Holy Eucharist 8am & 10:30am Lessons & Carols 5pm	20	21	22 Bill Blanchard Michael Douglas	23 AA Meeting 8pm	24 Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist 5pm Office Closed	25 Christmas Day																																																																																										
26 Morning Prayer 8am & 10:30am	27 Mike and Cheryl Steczak	28	29 Kenny & Amy Braswell	30 AA Meeting 8pm	31 Anna Bradshaw New Year's Eve																																																																																											
Office Closed																																																																																																



St. Thomas Episcopal Church
P. O. Box 263
Ahoskie, NC 27910



A Place to Belong ... A Place to Believe