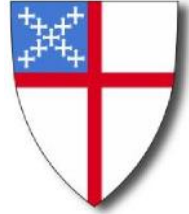


St. Thomas Episcopal Church

October 2011 Newsletter



Message from Father Reid

A few years ago, one of my daughters called me late one evening, distressed that in the last year, she had three friends whose fathers had died. She shared that, through this experience, she was even more grateful that we were alive and healthy and appreciated the privilege of sharing our lives together. Nonetheless, she was fearful of what can and will eventually happen –death does come. As hard as it was for me to hear the anguish in her voice that day, I cried tears of joy after I hung up the phone, not just because she told us how much she loved us but also because a sense of peace surrounded her as she articulated that love. In those few minutes, her love overcame her fear of death, and I learned this great lesson: you can never tell someone often enough that you love them.

Alienation, despair, confusion, and the fear of death is part of the formula of a life of faith. Our faith is rooted in a belief that God offers something better than we can manufacture or create ourselves - love. Our life of faith includes moments and even more lengthy seasons of doubt, even to the point of total disbelief. We ask, “God, I trusted you, how could you allow this to happen to me or my loved one?” And when God is silent and as God’s silence and stillness continues without resolution or observed response, our tests of faith lengthen and grow.

We often realize a sense of insignificance; we act as if we are suddenly alone in our anxious and fearful moments. We second guess our heart, wondering if our chosen path of suffering by loving was a mistake. And often in a moment of total despair, we conclude and say something like, “I should have never loved in the first place, it wasn’t worth it.” This is where we are dead wrong.

The greatest gift that God has given us as human beings is to love and be loved. A life of faith is built upon the knowledge of love, of receiving and sharing this fascinating and empowering emotion. Love is our human ability to convey an intangible gift to another being. And more significantly, when someone bestows this intangible gift upon us, translating it into tangible and measurable meaning gives us the ability to carry on, even when we find ourselves in a dark place.

We find God in the empowering moment when we receive and give love. We cannot manufacture or create it on our own; it is something that we have been given, plain and simple. We cannot express love to its fullest extent but we come closest when we realize how much God loves us, that he would give His only Son that we might live. If we adopt a theology to explain our tragedies and disappointments separate from realizing the depth of God’s love, we become distracted often to the point of blindness, no longer able to recognize the peace God solely offers. Love is the spiritual experience that theology cannot touch.

The promise of God’s love did not end with Jesus on the cross. If that were true, we would most likely not be aware of Jesus of Nazareth today; he would have been just another person who was crucified by

the Romans. The promise of hope and the gift of God's eternal love is truth because of what happened on resurrection morning; there were only three days of fear and despair. I try to imagine what it was like to have witnessed that moment that changed the world and made it whole again. Only God's love can keep us whole. I pray for your wholeness. Call someone and share God's love today, tell them that you love them and allow for God to soothe your own fears and despair; I thank God for those who have called me. TCGB Reid

Prayer List

Pray daily for the church,+ Katherine our Presiding Bishop, +Phillip, our Bishop, previous Bishop+Charles, our Priest Reid and Jackie, Our vestry, our nation and city, our president, governor, mayor and other elected leaders, our military (Dent Neilson, Alabama National Guard) , law enforcement officers and firefighters, the sick, the needy and the bereaved. Olga Morton, Paggie McSpadden,John Sewell,Ray Braden, Bonnie, Alice Farnum, Betsey Vincent, Bill, Logan, Camille Fuller, Janice Lehman, Gerald, Jim, Martha Speir, Mary Ann, Jordan, Judy, Lynn, Ann Price, Ralph, Oneida, Patty, Lee, Roberta B, Evelyn, Ernie Jones, Wayne Jones, Sarah, Morrell, Trish, Ramona Martin, Jason Gregory, The Jail Ministry, and the victims of the natural disasters throughout the world.

Stewardship Message from Dent and Lori Neilson

When Lori and I were asked to share our thoughts on stewardship, our first concern was, "What could we possibly offer to our church family that they have not heard before?" As we began to think about this, we remembered receiving our first pledge card shortly after joining the church. At the time, we only thought about what we could afford to give financially. In other words, we were totally missing the point.

We should not think of stewardship as the dollar amount we fill in on the pledge card or the updates we get from time to time letting us know if we are keeping up or falling behind. The point of stewardship should be the recognition of what the card represents. Our financial pledge is a part of how we choose to show our thanksgiving for our blessings. The challenge before us is to break free from the mentality of "church tax" and look at stewardship, not as a once a year responsibility, but as a year round re-commitment to our relationship with God, our parish, our community and beyond.

As stewards, it is our responsibility to be managers and caretakers of God's gifts. It is up to us to recognize our talents and those of others and inspire and encourage one another to put our faith into action. The church is a reflection of its members and what we do. St. Thomas is, and will be, what we make of it. St. Thomas will grow when we invite others to worship and when together we seek a greater understanding of God.

As we consider our pledge this year, we will remember what the last 10 years at St. Thomas have meant to us. It has been a wonderful time of joy, shared struggles, and an almost endless source of opportunities to serve. But what I hope we will remember more than anything is the words of a simple prayer..."For these and all thy many blessings, may we be truly thankful." Dent Neilson

Announcements

The Worm Hole is alive and well on Sunday Mornings!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

We have had some fund days at the Worm Hole! Our young people in grades 1 through 6 are learning about Joseph and his relationship with God and his family. Thanks to Jennie Hamilton has coordinated and planned the curriculum and thanks to all who are volunteering to make this vital ministry possible. We have room to grow. Please invite your friends and neighbors who have children in this age group to join us on Sunday morning. And, when Jennie or one of her committee calls upon you to serve in some capacity, be prepared to reply with an enthusiastic **YES** Thank you.

Youth and Young Adult Ministry

We have merged our middle and high school youth groups with the First United Methodist Youth Group! All middle school and high school age students are invited to participate in the program held on Sunday nights from 5:30PM until 7:00 PM. The youth will share a snack, participate in a weekly Bible study and will work together in planning a ski trip and a mission trip. Parents of participating youth will be called upon to provide snacks as well as chaperone upcoming events. Please look at the calendar to learn about the scheduled events. If you have any questions, please contact Nedra Crosby.

Why and who are we as Episcopalians? Why do we do what we do? Find out on Sunday mornings!

These may seem like odd questions; maybe you have all the answers, and if you do, you can contribute even more as a participant in the Adult Education program led by Father Reid this fall. During our time together, we will explore the Bible, relive some history, learn how our worship shapes us, laugh a lot and hopefully come to a greater understanding of our relationship with our Lord. So please join us at 9:30 AM on the scheduled Sundays for this opportunity to gain perspective on the foundations of our faith.

FIRST SUNDAY

First Sunday luncheon will be held, Sunday October 2, following the Holy Eucharist. Fried chicken and beverages will be provided. Please bring either a dessert, vegetable or salad.

STEWARDSHIP BEGINS

We are kicking off Stewardship at St. Thomas in October with the Pony Express. As you pray about your pledge think about how God and His church impact your life. Your pledge is a financial expression and reflection of that relationship. As you pray about your pledge please pray for the entire stewardship program at St. Thomas.

[Announcements \(Continued\)](#)

SOUP SUNDAY

Please join us on Sunday October 16 immediately following the Eucharist to make healthy and delicious soup for shut ins and the needy in our community. A signup sheet will be available in the back of the church for volunteers and donations. Because of the abundance of food collected in the post office food drive, we will not need as much donated this year. Judy Messina is the chairman , Norma Hartman , assistant. Everyone is welcome to join in this worthwhile project

CURSILLO

Cursillo #146 will be held at Camp Beckwith November 3-6. Judy Gettys, Bill and Magoo Hamilton will be serving on staff. Please remember all the staff and attendees (pilgrims) in your prayers as they prepare for this "short course in Christianity". If you are interested in attending a Cursillo, please contact Fr. Reid McCormick or anyone who has attended a Cursillo weekend. The web site for our Diocesan Cursillo is www.coastalpilgrims.com.

Men's Group Breakfasts on Thursday Mornings @7AM - BACON!

Yes, we will enjoy some bacon, eggs benedict, pancakes, strada, waffles, and other culinary delights, thanks to the great cooking team that has become famous throughout the southeast. Besides that, we will enjoy fellowship and learn about faith life from a man's perspective. Please join us when you can.

Pictures please!!!!!!!!!!!!!! We are upgrading our website and need your pictures. If you have digital photos of good quality of gatherings and St. Thomas events, please copy them to a flash drive and drop them off at the church office.

[Vestry Notes](#)

Annual Meeting **December 4-** Our annual meeting will convene immediately following worship. This is an important meeting. In addition to the normal business of electing new vestry members and adopting the budget, we will adopt a set of by-laws for the first time in the history of St. Thomas. The First Sunday Luncheon will immediately follow the close of the annual meeting.

By-Laws

The vestry is working to finalize by-laws for the St. Thomas. This has been a daunting task and we hope to have a finalized set approved at our October 17 meeting. The by-laws will be presented for congregation approval at the annual meeting, along with the 2012 budget, vestry member election and diocesan convention

Vestry Election

Gantt Hartley, Morgan Mann, and Mack Russell represent the nominating committee for the election of the upcoming vestry members. If you feel called to serve, please notify Gantt,

Morgan or Mack of your interest and desire to serve. If you are interested in nominating someone from our membership, please speak with that person first to make sure that they are willing to serve before submitting their name for nomination. All nominees will need to meet with Father Reid in advance of the election to be held during the annual meeting.

Thoughts and Announcements from Father Reid

Confirmation 2012

Bishop Duncan has tentatively scheduled his visitation for June 3, 2012. This may seem like a long way away but it is not if you plan to be confirmed or received as a member into the Episcopal Church. Please contact me if you would like to be confirmed and/or received into the Episcopal Church.

Pastoral Care

Please call me if you are aware of anyone in our church family (including yourself) who is experiencing a concerning illness, bereavement, hospitalization and/or possible surgery. Please do not assume that we are aware of every instance that occurs in this community.

United Thank Offering Ingathering

“Practicing gratitude, acknowledging the blessings of our lives, and making a point to recognize the good things can change us positively.” This thought comes from a book by Deborah Norville

called Thank You Power. Putting aside the benefits we derive from making a conscious habit of being grateful, we also know that doing so is pleasing to our God. It is a form of worship, one of the ways to give praise. For over a hundred years, the Women of the Church have had a wonderful way to focus our hearts and minds on being thankful: the United Thank Offering. The annual ingathering of UTO at St. Thomas will be the Sunday before Thanksgiving, Nov. 20th. We will take our pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters and dollars out of our blue boxes and write a check made out to UTO to place in the special offering basket.

Count your blessings to the glory of God!

October 2011 Worship Assistants

SUNDAY October 2, 2011

Greeter: Jan Ackerman

Acolytes: Team 1

Lay Readers: Steve and Dent

Altar Guild: Ceil, Fleta, Jill and Marion

Ushers: Bob and Harry

Flower Guild: Mary Richardson

SUNDAY October 9, 2011

Greeter: Marion Norman

Acolytes: Team 2

Lay Readers: Morgan and Bill

Altar Guild: Ceil, Fleta, Jill and Marion

Ushers: Dent and Garry

Flower Guild: Mary Richardson

SUNDAY October 16, 2011

Greeter: Rosa McGowin

Acolytes: Team 3

Lay Readers: Jim and Julian

Altar Guild: Janis, Paggie and Lori

Ushers: Everett and Mike

Flower Guild: Joanne and Rosa

SUNDAY October 23, 2011

Greeter: Mary Richardson

Acolytes: Team 1

Lay Readers: Dent and Mack

Altar Guild: Janis, Paggie and Lori

Ushers: Herbert and Don

Flower Guild: Joanne and Rosa

SUNDAY October 30, 2011

Greeter: Mary Stabler

Acolytes: Team 2

Lay Readers: Cleve and Steve

Altar Guild: Lucy, Faye and Cissi

Ushers: Sumpter and Mints

Flower Guild: Joanne and Rosa



October BirthdaysOctober Anniversaries

Bettie Miler-----2
Alexa Wise-----3
Clay Powell-----5
Jackie McCormick-----10
Jeffrey Fuller-----6
Norman McGowin IV-----20
Mints McGowin-----22
PaydonSpeir-----22
Mary Stabler-----22
Philip Conway-----24
Joanne McGowin-----24
Tripp Neilson-----27
Susie McIntyre-----27
Stirling Hamilton III-----29
Marion Hartley-----31
Cissi Jones-----31

Mr. &Mrs. Dent Neilson-----5
Mr.&Mrs.Sumpter McGoin-24
Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Fuller-----26

OCTOBER

Sun **Mon** **Tue** **Wed** **Thu** **Fri** **Sat**

Sunday School, Wormhole and Adult Education begin at 9:30.
Worship begins at 10:30

Youth Group meets Sundays at 5:30 at First Methodist Church. A snack supper will be served. Youth are also invited to meet on Wednesdays. Dinner (cost of \$4.00) begins at 5:30 and Bible Study is from 6:00 to 7:00. Call 1st Methodist (382-5872) to add your youth to the meal list.

1

2
16TH
Sunday
after
Pentecost

3

4

5
Choir 6:15

6

7

8

9
17th Sunday
after
Pentecost

10

11

12
Choir 6:15

13

14

15

16
18th Sunday
after
Pentecost

17

18

19
Choir 6:15

20

21

22

23
19th Sunday
after
Pentecost

24

25

26
Choir 6:15

27

28

29

30
20th Sunday
after
Pentecost

31