



THE PARISH POST

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St. Thomas Episcopal Church

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A WORD FROM THE WEISS

As we enter the Season of Pentecost, I want to share the words of a “friend” I have never met... a Presbyterian minister who often helps me to put into words “the things of the spirit” ...

SPIRIT: The Latin word spiritus originally meant breath, and breath is what you have when you're alive and don't have when you're not. Thus spirit = breath = life, the aliveness and power of your life, and to speak of your spirit (or soul) is to speak of the power of life that is in you. When your spirit is unusually strong, the life in you is unusually alive, you can breathe it out into other lives, become literally in-spiring.

Spirit is highly contagious. When people are very excited, very happy, very sad, you can catch it from them as easily as measles or a yawn. You can catch it from what they say or from what they do or just from what happens in the air of a room when they enter it without saying or doing anything.

God also has a spirit—is Spirit, says the Apostle John (4:24). Thus God is the power of life itself, has breathed and continues to breathe himself into creation. In-spires it. The spirit of God, Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost, is highly contagious. When Peter and his friends were caught up in it at Jerusalem on Pentecost, everybody thought they were drunk even though the sun wasn't yet over the yardarm (Acts 2). They were.

--Frederich Buechner, *Wishful Thinking*

May we all give, and receive, in-spiration this Pentecost season.

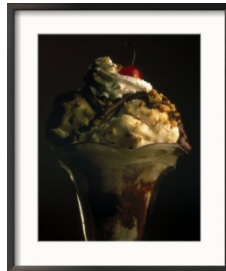
Prayers for Growing in Faith and Growing in Numbers

During our worship last Sunday, we blessed and distributed prayer cards to remind us to hold the parish in prayer as we discern God's will for us. On the cards are the following, drawn from our own *Book of Common Prayer*. (If you did not receive one, there are cards in the back of the church.)

A Prayer for Guidance: *O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light riseth up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what thou wouldst have us do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in thy light we may see light, and in thy straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (BCP, p. 832)

A Prayer for St. Thomas: *Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (BCP, p. 817)

The "Sundae Sunday" Challenge!



Speaking of growing in numbers...it occurred to me on the way home from church one Sunday that, if all of St. Thomas' members arrived on the same day, we'd have over 50 people in the pews! That's exciting! So, to encourage that great event (other than on Easter or Christmas), I offer the following challenge: If **40** people show up on any given Sunday, I will provide ice cream and sundae toppings for the whole congregation. Come on—FREE ice cream sundaes? What could be better? So, get on the phone and remind your church friends (and anybody else) about the Sundae Sunday Challenge!

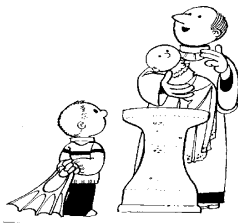
MAY EVENTS

May 11

Pentecost Sunday

This is the day we celebrate "the birthday of the Church"! Because the day of Pentecost involves the story about "tongues of fire", people are encouraged to WEAR RED to church.

Also, on this day, the Church will become two people larger!



We will celebrate the BAPTISMS of Kitera and Jeremy Yerkey!

(Please stick around for Coffee Hour, where we'll share a cake celebrating their joining our parish family.)

And did I mention that it's Mother's Day?



Apparently there is an ancient (?) tradition at St. Thomas in which women wear BIG HATS that day....

May 12

Vestry Meeting

This month your Vestry's focus will be to discuss our first committee meetings and consider next steps. (See the Sr. Warden's report for more information.)

May 26

The church office will be closed



in observance of Memorial Day.

May 28

Worship at Canon House!

We'll return for our monthly gathering with our neighbors down the road.



Join us for informal worship, sermon conversation, and fellowship.

This is a wonderful way for us to reach out beyond the walls of St. Thomas, and to be blessed by the wisdom and gentle hearts of the people of Canon House.

May 30

Youth Bowling Party!



What: A Bowling Party (but you guessed that).

Where: Meet at West Pike Bowling Lanes (605 West Pike Street)

When: 5:30 pm. We'll head to St. Thomas around 7:30 for games and a special treat!

Miscellaneous Info: Cost is \$8/person. We might need some help with driving (parents?).

**All young people should have a YOUTH GROUP PERMISSION FORM
signed by a parent or guardian**

(they're available in the Parish Hall, or you can contact the parish office).

Please call Maggie O'Lear (724/356-7356) if you're coming. Hope to see you there!

NOTES FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN

TOGETHER WE CAN GROW IN NUMBERS AND GROW IN FAITH

St. Thomas is embarking on a journey of faith to build our church and build up our parishioners. Based on your input, the Vestry has chosen 8 specific areas of focus. Committees are already starting to work on these – they are: Parish Growth, Church Maintenance, Newcomers, Stewardship, Youth, Outreach, Worship and Pastoral Care.

As I was thinking about all of these things, I read an article in a women's magazine that I thought really touched on what it is going to take to accomplish our goals. So, for the next few newsletters, I will be paraphrasing from that article.

Have you read the book "FISH!" by Stephen Lundin, Harry Paul and John Christensen?

It's a small, motivational book, a parable, written to help people find a deep source of energy, creativity and passion that exists within us all by learning to love what we do.

Several years ago I saw a program on PBS about a Seattle Pike Street Market and watched as the fabled fish salesmen captivated a crowd gathered around this cold, wet place most people would only want to visit, not to work. Surprisingly, in this most undesirable place to work, the fishmongers were having the time of their lives selling fish and interacting with the crowd.

During the show I watched as whole salmon went flying overhead to a man behind the counter who would package the fish for shipping. "Fish flying away to California" was the call from one and then repeated by the other salesmen. Then six crabs went sailing over. Surprised, intrigued? What was happening?

Here briefly, is one of the three lessons (the others you will read in later editions – stay tuned) from "FISH" market – lessons that will help strengthen our parish.

Lesson One:

ATTITUDE

*“There is always a choice about the way you do your work, even if there is not a choice about the work itself.” We can **choose our attitude**.*

The employees at the fish market created a fun, exciting atmosphere which drew in scores of people not only to watch the show of fish hurtling over heads, but to engage in the energy and attitude of these enthusiastic people. It was a winning combination. They chose the attitude they took to work. As I see St. Thomas growing, it will not only take engaging programs, it will also take engaging people to draw new members to our parish.

Is this something we can do? Can we choose the attitude we bring to St. Thomas?

*Our membership has remained constant for the last several years – gaining some and losing some – but I am convinced that our attitude can push us forward if we talk in positive terms about St. Thomas, build enthusiasm about belonging, and have an optimistic view for the future of our church. We’re in charge of our attitude, even when things don’t go as we think they should. We can control it. We can choose what we will accomplish by becoming the most enthusiastic person and the strongest supporter of St. Thomas and of each other. That’s **ATTITUDE**.*

*St. Thomas – the church with **ATTITUDE** – I like the ring of that!*

Pam Gardner, Senior Warden

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Cole Waszil—May 1

Mike Lucarelli—May 8

Robert Senay—May 10

Chuck Weiss—May 16

Katie Edler—May 19

George Erbrecht—May

Stephanie Erbrecht—May 23

James Ramoth—May 23

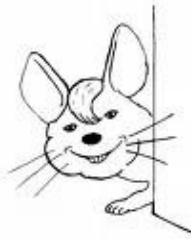
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!



The Spallas—May 26

NOTES FROM THE CHURCH MOUSE!

Hi everyone! It's me again. First things first. What is "Pentecost"? I heard Fr. Chuck talk about that on Sunday, and I was a little scared...He said something about "tongues of fire", and I don't like fire! I'll have to listen on Sunday in my usual corner. There is always so, so much to learn about The Bible and Jesus.....Boy, you folks never stop having fun. I heard a lot of the kids and older members went to Canon House for a service for the folks who live there. Laughter, singing, and wonderful fellowship. I heard a number of them ask, "When are you coming back?" (It's too far for me to travel at night.).....Last Sunday I peeked and everyone was outside, and Fr. Chuck was blessing a dogwood tree in Mary's Garden. They even made him shovel all the dirt back in while they stood around! Now I've heard someone talk about everyone buying t-shirts ("team uniforms"?) and wearing them to Wild Things games. (What's a Wild Thing? That sounds scary, too!) Gee, I have to listen more closely...but I'm always afraid someone will step on my tail. On Sunday, someone said they had such a good time attending the Ladies' Luncheon, and that there were ten people there. Wow...they're planning on doing this every month now. This is such a wonderful place to live, and I want to stay here forever.



Your Friend,

Tom, the Church Mouse