

September 2011

A WORD FROM THE WEISS

Growth and Change

A little over four years ago, before I was your Rector, I sat down with the Vestry and asked what St. Thomas needed. To a person, they said: *To grow!* I heard the same thing from pretty much every other member of the parish.

The good news is...we're growing! By the grace of God and the hard work of many dedicated folks, we are indeed living out our mission to "grow in faith and numbers". The bad news...if it is indeed bad...is that *with growth comes change*. While we are all excited to see growth at St. Thomas, the change that comes along with it can be difficult. Growth can mean adjusting to changes in worship, such as more and more unfamiliar faces; new music; a chaotic "Passing of the Peace"; folks in "our" pew (!); and so on. Growth can also mean adapting to the changes that come outside worship, with new ministries unfolding. In general, growth implies new leadership, which means different decisions from those in the past. Let me assure you that dealing with change is nothing new for the Church; take a look at the friendly argument which takes place among Christian leaders in Chapter 15 of *The Acts of the Apostles*.

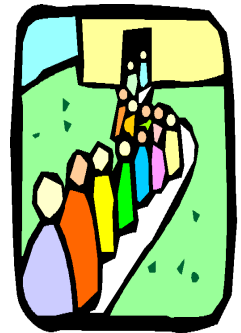
Having said all this, let me give you a heads-up about some changes that are coming, alongside the growth with which God has blessed us:

- A new worship pattern, designed to help us even more "welcome all" and "worship God with dignity and joy" (see page 2)
- A new Episcopal Sunday School curriculum, *Weaving God's Promises*
- A new Coffee Chat series, *Living the Questions*, beginning in October
- A new Men's Group, starting with a Poker Night in October.

Of course, we will continue the good ministries to which we believe God has already called us. I invite your questions and comments to me or other parish leaders as we continue seeking to "grow in faith and numbers". I also encourage you to ask in your own prayers that we would follow what we pray for each Sunday: "God's special call for us, the St. Thomas family".

Along with you on the journey of faith,

Fr. Chuck Weiss



***"With
God's help,
we seek
to grow
in faith
and
numbers,
reflecting
the
love of God
to all..."***

***—from the
St. Thomas
Mission
Statement***

KICKOFF SUNDAY September 11



On Sunday, September 11, we will begin our “program year”, marking this day in a number of ways:

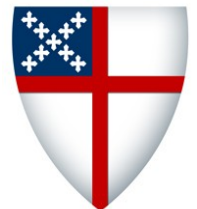
- A worship service with “blended” music
- Hymns and prayers recognizing Patriot Day and the 10th Anniversary of 9-11
- The introduction of our new Sunday School curriculum, *Weaving God’s Promises*
- The return of our Coffee Chats, with a Sermon Discussion.

Please join as we “kick off” the year at St. Thomas!

Vestry Highlights

At the August meeting, your Vestry:

- Met with our roofer, Dan Greene. He estimates that **our roof replacement will begin in mid-September.** (As mentioned in last month’s *Post*, the Diocese has provided 80% of this cost; a Fundraising Committee will explore ways to address the difference.)
- Elected Pam Gardner and Michelle Lucarelli as **Diocesan Convention Deputies.** Marie DeRiso was elected as an Alternate Deputy. This is a significant time to fill these roles, as Deputies will serve not only at Diocesan Convention this November, but also at the Special Convention this April to call our next bishop.
- Reviewed **Committee Goals and Objectives** and tentatively planned our **Calendar** through December.



NEW WORSHIP PATTERN AT ST. THOMAS

In an effort to “welcome all” and “worship God with dignity and joy” (portions of our Mission Statement), the Worship Committee has designed a new pattern for Sundays, beginning Sept. 11:

First Sunday
Traditional Service
(organ music)

Second Sunday
Blended Service
(organ, guitar, piano)

Third Sunday
Traditional Service
(organ)

Fourth Sunday
Acoustic Service
(guitar, piano)

Fifth Sunday
Exploratory Service
(e.g., sung Eucharist)

We will be using this pattern over the next few months.

The Worship Committee—

*Bob Senay, Marie DeRiso, Ann Celento, Sue Rodgers—
would welcome your feedback.*

OKTOBERFEST! September 16-18

Once again St. Thomas will sponsor a booth at the Canonsburg Oktoberfest. As always, we need volunteers to greet passersby and tell them about our parish.

This year, however, we will use this event to raise funds toward the diocesan "Race to End Hunger" program.

We'll be selling bubble guns and holding a 50/50 raffle; all money will go to Episcopal Relief and Development to help our brothers and sisters in Somalia who are in great need. *Please remember that the "Race to End Hunger" goes through October 31; anything that St. Thomas members do to address hunger should be reported to Pam Gardner, Outreach Committee Chair. See Sunday bulletin inserts or go to episcopalpgh.org for more information. (Our Outreach Committee will continue to address the issue of hunger throughout the year, however.)*

Please contact Pam Gardner to sign up to assist at our Oktoberfest booth!

Special Bonus: Oktoberfest Volunteer Thank-You Dinner!

Marie DeRiso has graciously offered to provide a meal for all Oktoberfest volunteers. The dinner will take place on Saturday, September 24, at 4:00 PM.

All you have to do is RSVP to Marie and show up!

WOMEN'S LUNCH



The Ladies of St. Thomas will once again begin meeting for a monthly lunch and generally being up to no good.

On September 10, at 11:30 AM, they'll gather at Atria's,

4059 Washington Road, McMurray,

RSVP to Michelle Lucarelli at 724-942-0719.

Games Night at Canon House



On Thursday, September 29, at 6:30 PM, we'll join our Canon House friends for another wonderful Games Night!

Food and Drink will be provided. Feel free to bring your favorite board games.

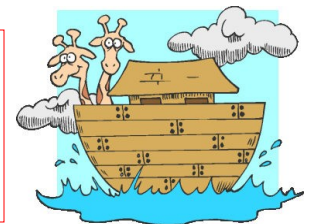
Contact Amy Jennings (304-830-0531) for more info.



NOMINATIONS NOW BEING TAKEN THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30 FOR OUR NEXT BISHOP

See Fr. Chuck or go to episcopalpgh.org to learn more.

FR. CHUCK'S CHURCHY CHALLENGE



For valuable prizes and/or bragging rights, answer this question:
How many animals did Moses take onto the Ark?

See Fr. Chuck with your answer before September 30. Being under 18 just may help your chances of winning. So can asking your parents for help, if necessary.

BIRTHDAYS

CINDI LOWDEN—SEPT 7
ED DENSLOW—SEPT 7
RICK BANNER—SEPT 9

ANNIVERSARIES

THE HILLS—SEPT 2
THE YERKEYS—SEPT 7

COFFEE HOUR

SEPT 4—HILL
SEPT 11—MEACCI
SEPT 18—HUNT/STEBLER
SEPT 25—LUCARELLI
OCT 2—NAESER/RODRIGUEZ
OCT 9—POTLUCK
OCT 16—RODGERS/BING/VAYANSKY
OCT 23—O'LEAR
OCT 30—SENAY

*ARE WE MISSING
YOUR BIRTHDAY OR ANNIVERSARY?
PLEASE CALL THE CHURCH
AND LET US KNOW!*

Notes from the Church Mouse!

Boy, I love the **Parish Picnic!** It's nice to spend time with our St. Paul's Lutheran Church friends now and then. It's also nice to share all the wonderful food! Fr. Chuck's games were fun, although a bit confusing. I enjoyed Sue's Mystery Jar, but I guessed there were a million pieces of candy, so I lost. Can't wait to see what comes of those Genius Kits she passed out.....I always enjoy it when **Fr. John Thomas** visits us. He's such a warm person—and has a great name, to boot..... Hey, did you hear that **Ben and Mary Hill's daughter, Patty, got married?** Yep—August 13th, at St. Alphonsus Church in McDonald. She's now the happy wife of Taras John ("TJ") Hovanec. Congratulations, Patty and TJ! (And Ben and Mary!)

Well, see you around (but you won't see me!),

TOM



ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
139 NORTH JEFFERSON AVENUE
CANONSBURG, PA 15317