

Prayers, Progress, and Snakes... Oh My!

The late Robin Williams, a comedian and Episcopalian, had some interesting things to say about life in his church. By “interesting,” I mean funny. The following are a few of his reasons for being an Episcopalian:

The Church year is color-coded.
We have pew aerobics,
Free wine on Sunday,
And no snake-handling.

I liked Robin Williams. I thought he was very funny, but I now take issue with his observation that we do not handle snakes in church. Yes ,we do!

Our Parish Annual Meeting on December 2nd began with prayer, just as do most of our meetings. Then a few of us presented “the state of the union” (i.e., the state of our beloved St. Thomas’ Church) and described some of the things that have been accomplished in the past year which included financial progress, physical plant repairs and upgrades, and the spiritual side of growth and parishioner involvement.

Everything was going along just fine, when one of the men in our congregation interrupted, “Fr. Bruce, we have a snake in here!” Of course that got my immediate attention, but I thought, “Why tell me? I’m no snake handler!”

At the time, I doubt any of us knew that we do, in fact, have a snake handler in our congregation. With a certain amount of curiosity and confidence evident in his eager gait, James Jessup walked over, took a look, ascertained that the snake needed to find a new home, picked it up, cuddled it in the palm of his hand and let it go outside, free to seek a new residence in the wilds of Sanford.

Goodness! I thought I had seen it all through many parish annual meetings attended, but I guess not. Upon reflection I remembered, “The Lord provides,” --and with timeliness too, I should add! That is the beauty and wonder of living in God’s faithful, gathered community. Surprising joys come along the way in the midst of hard work.

May you have a wonderful new year, complete with the eager anticipation of what new things God has in store for the people of St. Thomas’ in 2019!
Happy New Year.

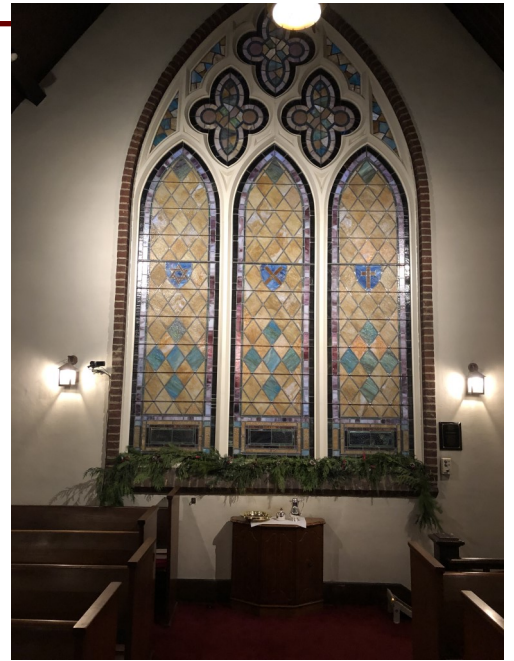
Fr. Bruce+

Upcoming Events

January 7	Women of the Church Meeting	11:00 am
January 19	Sanctuary Cleaning	8:30 am
January 22	Men’s Group Meeting	6:00 pm
January 27	Children’s Clangy Collection	
January 27	Mutual Ministry Review	11:30 am



St. Thomas' on Christmas Eve



Ice Causes Lessons & Carols Cancellation

Dear Parishioners,

On behalf of the Choir, Organist June Burbage, and me, I want to tell you we all appreciate and share your disappointment that it was necessary to cancel the annual Festival of Lessons and Carols. But, we believe safety of parishioners is of prime importance. At my home azalea bushes bowed down toward the ground, covered with ice and snow. Going outside truly would have been foolhardy.

Rescheduling the Festival is impossible because instruments scheduled to be at St. Thomas' on the 9th were committed to other churches for the remaining Sundays in December. And, of course, scheduling in January would be inappropriate as we enter the season of Epiphany.

Never fear, we will be sharing some of the anthems in coming weeks. And we will reschedule the entire Festival for December 8, 2019.

Many thanks, too, to our wonderful cooks for preparing the delicious food in anticipation of the Lessons and Carols presentation and serving us on Sunday, the 16th.

With love and blessings,
Jo Ann C. Bowman
Director of Music

The St. Thomas' Prayer List

For those who are ill:

Beth; Bill; John; Holly Chester Baker; Jack Beyer; Carol Bradford; Kelly Burke; June Burbage; Gladys Cashman; Jean Cooke; Claudia Cox; Frances Floyd; Trudy Forrest; Charlotte Hohenstein; Pat Kirkman; Dick Klancher; Ashley Laton; Pat Lewandowski; Emmett Lewis; Christine Marsden-Smedley; Mary Louise Matthews; Jane Miller; Ann Osmolak; Rebecca Pascoe; Phyllis Pollock; Layne Wright; Dave Zeph.

For strength and guidance: Kelly Hamm; Sarah and Justin; the Vestry.

For all military deployed and at home.

Praises: For the continuing growth of St. Thomas'



Chrismons: Signs for All Time

Women of the Church Learn About Religious Symbols

Twenty-two participants attended the December 3rd meeting of Women of the Church. Past President Cornelia Olive presided in the absence of President Joan Griswold. The devotion of the day was presented by Jane Escher. The much-loved John 3:16 preceded a story told about Gold Stars that appeared in windows of WWII mothers. They signified sacrifices of lives lost in the war. A young boy, familiar with the meaning of the Gold Star, wondered aloud at the meaning of a star brightly shining in the sky and remarked that “God must have lost a son, too.” Jesus Christ was identified as “the Perfect Sacrifice.”

The program of the day, *Chrismons: Signs for All Time*, was presented by Deb Heyvaert. Chrismon ornaments, meaning Monograms of Christ, were created in 1957 by Mrs. Frances Kipps Spencer for Lutheran Church of the Ascension in Danville, VA. Mrs. Spencer wanted to decorate the Church with meaningful Christian symbols. Using the color scheme of white for Jesus’ purity and gold for His Majesty, Chrismons are hand crafted by congregations worldwide today. Deb displayed a small tree using beaded and embroidered Christian symbols for St. Thomas’ first Chrismon tree. Members decided to have a Chrismon ornament workshop for our Church in 2019.

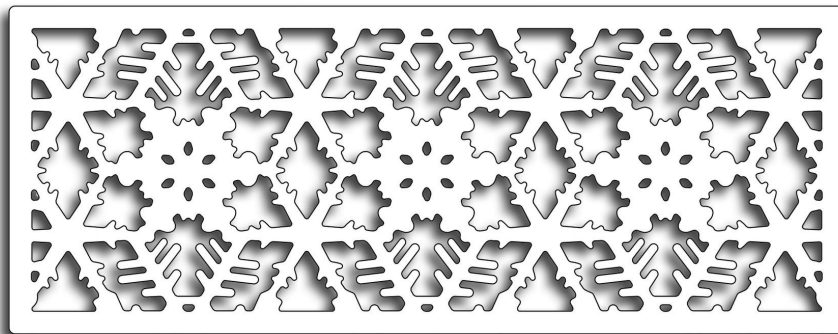


A magnificent poinsettia, the raffle gift of the day, was donated by Lynda Turbeville, and was won by Pat Clark. Following a blessing by the rector, a delicious lunch of soup accompanied by sandwich choices of ham, beef, or turkey and assorted desserts was served by hostesses Pat Clark and Barbara Duffy.

The January program, *A Cut Above: Scherenschnitte* will be presented by Jeanine Reese.

WoC Meet on January 7, 2019 at 11:00 a.m.

A Cut Above: Scherenschnitte



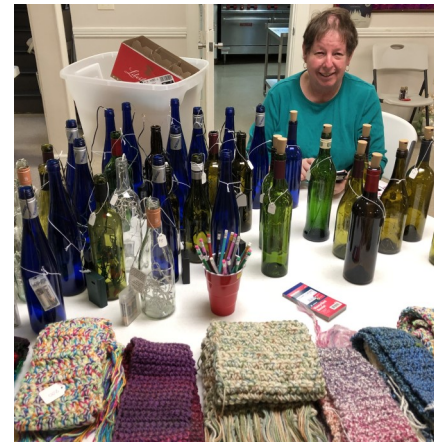
Speaker: Jeanine Reese

Devotion: Elizabeth Zeph

Lunch: Drusy Schaeffer

Raffle Gift: Mary Thacker

St. Thomas' Festival Pictures



Directions for St. Thomas' Text Message System

Sign up for a text message to notify you of important notices, such as service cancellations.

1. On mobile phone, open a new text message screen.
2. TO: 81010
3. MESSAGE: @cbkcagf

St. Thomas' Festival Raises Money for Outreach

On December 1, St. Thomas' members filled the Parish Hall with gifts, jewelry, crafts, and edible goodies for sale to raise money for the Women of the Church, Literacy Outreach Project, Family Promise, Helping Hands Clinic, and The Bread Basket. Many thanks to everyone who participated in this event, especially:

Barbara Massengill for making the beautiful quilt;
Pat Clark and Mary Lee Dutton, co-chairs and tireless planners;
Anne Bolger for purchasing twenty red aprons for the Parish Kitchen, donating the wine basket, and big bears;
Deb Heyvaert for embroidering the apron pockets;
Bob Carlson for the hand-carved Carolina Wren,

...and the many members who cooked and collected and crafted and painted and canned throughout the entire fall to prepare for this sale.

Who knew we all needed lighted wine bottles, Santa gourds, and tater bags to make our holiday complete! St. Thomas' members have many talents and a commitment to serve those in need. We are grateful to all who so willingly contributed to help make Sanford a better community.



The quilt was won by Holly Floyd, granddaughter of Frances Floyd.

St. Thomas' Kids Participate in Outreach Projects



Each Christmas, St. Thomas' Episcopal Church participates in providing angel wish gifts for the assisted living residents of Oak Haven Home in Sanford. This year, fifteen residents received packages of clothing and toiletries from our members.

These gifts were delivered by special St. Thomas' elves—our children. The children also made room decorations for the residents. Activities such as these further reinforce the mission of our Outreach efforts and provide positive giving experiences for the children.

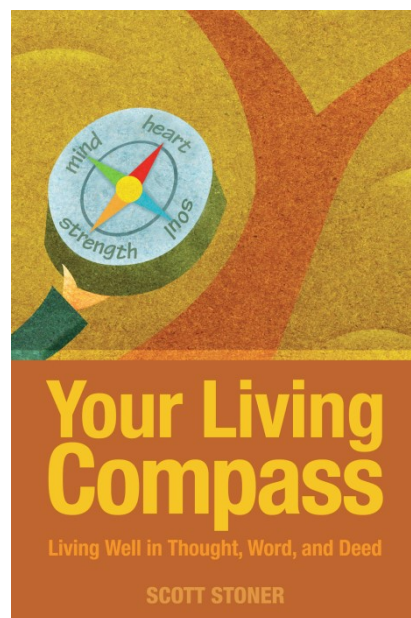
Liam, Violet, and Finn O'Hara deliver Christmas gifts and big smiles to Oak Haven.

2019 Lent Formation Classes Announced

This Lent I'd like to offer a formative experience for the members of St. Thomas' congregation via Scott Stoner's *Your Living Compass: Living Well in Thought, Word and Deed*. It is a five-week program that ideally involves daily reflection, not as self-recrimination, but as an honest assessment, of our individual standing in areas of spirituality, relationships, emotions, rest and play, and more.

It's a wonderful program to help you achieve balance in your life. The book is not a speedread, but requires some honest reflection and assessment, all the while understanding that "In Christ we are whole." Watch for further details soon and sign up in the lower parish hall for the class beginning March 13th, offered twice each Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. and at 7:00 p.m.

Fr. Bruce+



New Vestry Members Elected

Congratulations to our new Vestry members serving a three-year term:

Karen Huey
Katie Hyer
Randy Seymore

They join Cornelia Olive (Senior Warden), Micki Van Orden (Clerk), Bill Bradford, Barbara Duffy, Joann Thaxton (Junior Warden), and Kay Heflin. Outgoing members are Ray Hyer, Bob Carlson, and Elizabeth Zeph.

Our Vestry is tasked with care for the parish finances and buildings, yearly goal setting, and securing various leadership and parish representation on St. Thomas' committees and Diocese events.

Thank you, Vestry members, for your willingness to serve St. Thomas'.

St. Thomas' Musicians Make a Joyful Sound

We hope you enjoyed the Sunday service on January 6, 2019, featuring an anthem performed by the St. Thomas' Musical Ensemble.

A special arrangement of "We Three Kings of Orient Are," orchestrated by Karen Huey, was performed by musicians:

Karen Huey—Viola and Musical Arrangement
June Burbage—Organ
Connor Callahan—Trombone
Ren Cashman—Clarinet
Deb Heyvaert—Piano
The Rev. Bruce Heyvaert—Saxophone
Bob Lewandowski—Accordion
Patrick O'Hara—Guitar
Debbie White—Violin
Dr. Jo Ann Bowman—Conductor

This showcase of talented musicians helped celebrate the appearance of the Magi at Epiphany.



St. Thomas' Episcopal Church

**312 N. Steele Street
Sanford, NC 27330
Phone: (919) 774-8644
Email:
stthomasnc@icloud.com**

**Sunday Eucharist—10 am
Godly Play—10 am**

We're on the Web!

<http://stthomassanford.dionc.org/>

Facebook: St. Thomas Episcopal
Church—Sanford

The Parish Staff

The Rev. Bruce Heyvaert, Rector

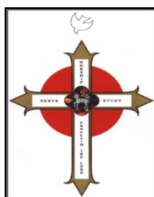
*Dr. Jo Ann Bowman,
Director of Music*

June Burbage, Organist

*Beth Wood,
Administrative Secretary*

*Katie Yuskevich,
Nursery Caretaker*

*Tasha Barrett,
Assistant Nursery Caretaker*



The Vestry

*Cornelia Olive, Sr. Warden
Joann Thaxton, Jr. Warden
Micki Van Orden, Clerk*

Serving through 2019

*Bill Bradford
Cornelia Olive
Micki Van Orden*

Serving through 2020

*Barbara Duffy
Kay Heflin
Joann Thaxton*

Serving through 2021

*Karen Huey
Katie Hyer
Randy Seymore*

Our Mission:

“To grow in the knowledge and love of God through our worship of Him, our service to Him, and our study of His Word; and to bring others to know Jesus Christ as Savior within the fellowship of the Church”



We extend a warm welcome from our church community.

We at St. Thomas' believe that:

- ◆ **Whatever your religious background**
- ◆ **Whatever your history**
- ◆ **However you have come to be drawn to the Lord**

You are welcome to walk your journey of life with us at St. Thomas' Episcopal Church.
