

# The St. Thomas Times and Tidings

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**November 2007**

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## **Home Field Disadvantage**

I often have written and preached about taking the church into the community. That responsibility, however, has a flip side to it, which is bringing the community into the church. Christian service not only requires us to engage worldly needs beyond the church doors, but also to bring people through those doors to minister to their spiritual needs.

This can be difficult, especially with friends and neighbors. Jesus is an example. After performing miracles and drawing large crowds throughout Galilee, he went home to Nazareth and the people who knew him. You might think they would have welcomed him with banners and a parade. Instead, they wondered who Jesus thought he was. They took offense at him and thought he was too full of himself. Jesus lamented that a prophet is without honor in his own hometown.

Most of us are not prophets, but we are called to tell others of the joys of our own Christian experiences. And for many of us it sometimes is easier to talk about our faith to strangers than to people we know.

In sports, teams want the home field advantage. They want to play in front of people who know and support them. However, when it comes to matters of religion the home field can be a disadvantage.

One of the questions in a recent survey was "what is the hardest part of talking to your friends about your faith?" A few said they did not feel called to do so, or they wanted to get their own lives in order first. However, the overwhelming majority were concerned that the other person would react negatively.

Those who feel that way are not alone. But it is not as hard as it might seem. You don't need to be a theological expert, or to have answers to complex religious questions. Simply begin by speaking to people about what God has done for you. While the hereafter certainly is important, the here and now is a good place to start when describing your faith.

As we reach out into the community, especially to our friends and neighbors, we might consider three basic ideas.

First, people are not saved by being told what's wrong with them, but rather what's right with God. Instead of telling people that their lives are incomplete without the church, it can be more effective to speak of how your life has been fulfilled with it.

Second, we cannot promise that faith is an insurance policy against difficulties in life. Being a Christian does not automatically resolve our hardships. We experience victory not because of the absence of problems, but because of the presence of faith.

Third, never underestimate the Holy Spirit. I have seen situations where people stepped out in faith and talked to someone else about Christ or the church, and it made a difference. They wanted to hear. The power of Christ can be made real through the Spirit, who always is with us. Invite people to walk in the door, and the Holy Spirit can lead them in the next steps.

*Fr. Bill*

The St. Thomas Times and Tidings is published monthly. Articles and ideas are solicited.

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### NOTES FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN



Darlene and I had the most wonderful experience a couple weeks ago. We spent a weekend at Cursillo at the Gray Center, and we agreed that it was the most fulfilling, transformational experience that we have had! Fr. Bill and Susan, as our sponsors, drove us to the Center and left us in the hands of the most caring and spiritual group of people imaginable. From Thursday night until Sunday afternoon we experienced the love of Christ while participating in very enriching activities. (Don't worry, you are not forced to do anything that makes you uncomfortable, but we chose to get fully involved.)

I was amazed to learn that many members of our congregation have experienced Cursillo in various dioceses and denominations: Fr. Bill and Susan, Mary and Tyrone, Corny and Tom, Mary Minor, Sally, James and Ella, Kay, and Rowena. Any of them can serve as sponsors, but Darlene and I are psyched to take some of you to the next workshop in April. As a bonus, Bishop Gray will be one of the spiritual leaders—it should be a truly memorable experience!

As background, Cursillo is a worldwide movement of the Episcopal Church which focuses on more deeply appropriating our Christian experiences into our lives. It also has been called a "short course on Christianity" that begins with a three-day weekend like the one we had at the Gray Center. It is a wonderful opportunity to experience Christ's love in community, and to meet fellow Christians from around Mississippi.

*Dick*

### Stewardship Notes from Paul Montjoy

The Stewardship Committee is pleased with our 2008 stewardship campaign, which calls us to build for the future through God's blessings today. This theme embraces the meaning of stewardship, which is to return to God a part of the blessings he has given us, and it also reflects the challenges we face in 2008 and beyond.

These challenges are to continue rebuilding our church community after Katrina, and to reach into the growing community of young people in the Diamondhead area to expand our Sunday School and youth programs.

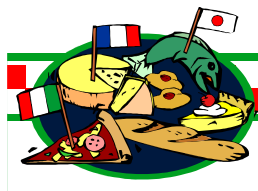
This will require additional resources for two reasons. First, during 2006 and 2007 the Diocese of Mississippi subsidized the entire compensation packages and health insurance costs of all coast clergy, including Fr. Bill's costs. The diocese has advised that it will be unable to continue this assistance in 2008. Second, because of our emphasis on youth, the Vestry has approved hiring a part-time youth director, and allocating additional resources to youth programs.

We must make up this deficit ourselves, and are asking for a 30% increase in stewardship this year. This is part of an ambitious two-year plan to become self-sustaining while also funding new youth programs for church growth.

A Stewardship Forum was held at the church on Saturday, October 20 to provide information and answer questions about our stewardship needs, our budget, and our priorities. The Stewardship Committee would welcome additional comments.

Pledge cards will be mailed on November 6, and we ask you to return them during the services on Stewardship Sunday, November 18. Please prayerfully consider your response at this very important time in the life of our church. We have been blessed in many ways, and have an opportunity to thank God for his grace.

**Stewardship Dinner  
on November 11**



Please mark Sunday evening, November 11 on your calendars. We will hold our annual Stewardship Dinner at the church at 6:00 pm. Invitations have been mailed to this fun-filled evening of good food and fellowship.

**ECW News**



On October 8, a number of our ECW members, along with members from Trinity in Pass Christian, went to St. Michael's School in Picayune. After an informational tour and meeting with some of the staff and students, we had a very nice lunch in Picayune.

Our next meeting will be Saturday, November 10, 10:00 a.m., at the church. We will have a guest speaker from the Women's Center for Nonviolence.

For information about ECW, please call Mary Sartin (586-9007) or Judy Gaupp (216-3528).

**TLC!**



The St. Thomas Samaritan Guild, which comforts those in our church family who are ill or infirm, is expanding its ministry to include helping family members and others who are burdened with caring for those loved ones. This ministry includes preparing and delivering meals, home visits, and help with errands. This is an important ministry that can help prevent caregivers from becoming patients themselves. Please sign up

**Men's Breakfast**



Men's Breakfast meets on the third Saturday of each month, 8:30 a.m., in Johnson Hall. The next meeting will be Saturday, November 17. For more information, call Gary Gilmore (255-4396).

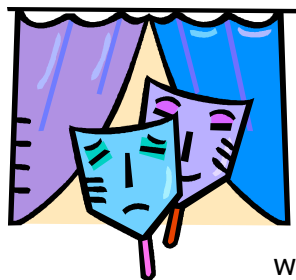
**Vestry Elections and  
Vestry Nominating Committee**

The terms of three of our Vestry members will expire this year, and their successors will be elected at the annual meeting in January. The out-going members are Joe Floyd, Bobbie Stephens, and Katherine Wilson. Those three individuals comprise our Vestry Nominating Committee, and will be soliciting candidates to fill their vacancies. Please contact one of them if you feel called to service on the Vestry.

**Our Church Family is Growing**

Last month we baptized five young people into the Body of Christ. Our new members are Allie and Reagan Edwards, Devin and Dylan Lockard, and Gary Lott. We welcome them into our family.

**St. Thomas Amazing Praisers**



The Amazing Praisers had a very good turnout for our first meeting for the year. There were several new members and we welcome them, as well as those who have returned. During the meeting we read through plays and planned dramas for the upcoming Christmas Season and the Season of Lent. Our first drama will be an Advent Play – in two parts. The first part will be during the 10:00 am service on Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> and will conclude at the 5:00 pm service on Christmas Eve. We need angels for the Christmas Eve service – please contact Susan White if your little ones, or you big ones, would care to participate. We will have both speaking and nonspeaking parts

We continue to plan for an Actor's Workshop by John Maxwell in the spring. Lots of exciting work to be done as we present the Gospel Message and Scripture based dramas during the year. Please join us. We thank those who have volunteered to put their creative talents to good use with costumes and makeup artistry to expand our dramas. We can also use carpenters/painters to make simple set designs as well as anyone who can work stage lighting.

## **Update on Parents' Meetings**

The St. Thomas parents, and anyone else interested in Sunday School and Youth Group activities, have been meeting at the church at 6:00 pm on the third Thursday of each month to discuss ways to strengthen those programs. The next meeting is Thursday, November 15. As a result of these meetings the following activities are underway:

1. A Youth Bell Choir, organized by Denise Austin, that will perform again when Bishop Gray visits on December 16, and possibly before that time
2. A "Popcorn Theology" movie night at the church every second Friday of the month beginning on July 13 at 6:00. The movie is followed by a brief discussion of some aspect of faith, or ethical, or moral, or Christian issues. Kids (age five to twelve, more or less) from St. Thomas are asked to invite their friends.
3. Development of a program led by people at the church to go to Hancock Middle School to provide mentoring and instruction for at-risk youth. The initial focus is on reading instruction. This is a complicated program in its beginning stages, but we have a core group committed to the idea. Additional help is needed to make it grow.
4. A revitalized commitment to the acolyte program as a meaningful activity to serve the church and to provide insights into the faith and liturgy.
5. Development of a job description for a part-time Youth Minister.
6. A Youth fall Fest scheduled to inaugurate our new pavilion on November 18.
7. A Youth Christmas Party on December 23.

### **Sunday School**



Sunday School is at 10:00 a.m. for pre-school kindergarten, and elementary aged children (grades 1-5). Please contact Georgia Saucier (255-4127) if you would like to be a part of this important ministry.

### **"Popcorn Theology" Movie Night**



Every second Friday of the month, a movie night is enjoyed at the church for kids ages five through twelve, more or less. The movies lend themselves to discussions of some aspect of faith, or ethical, or moral, or Christian issues. Father Bill and parents are facilitating the discussions after the movies. Next movie night will be Friday, November 9. Showtime is 6:00 p.m. *St. Thomas kids are urged to invite their friends!*

## **EYC NEWS**

The month of October has been outstanding. Our community is growing, and with steady attendance, our programming is taking off! We have been treated to a concert by the nationally-renowned Episcopal musician, Fran McKendree. Other activities this month included a scavenger hunt, an Instructional Eucharist, and a fantastic round of "Quidditch" (if only we had flying brooms). The Sr. High went to their Fall D.O.Y. at Camp Bratton Green in early October and went canoeing on the Okatoma River at the end of the month. Jr. High is looking forward to a trip of their own (more information on that to come), and will be heading up to Camp for their Fall D.O.Y. Nov. 2-4.

Here is an upcoming list of events. Please note that this schedule is subject to change!

- Nov. 2-4** —Jr. High DOY @ Camp Bratton Green (call Andrew for a ride).
- Nov. 4** —EYC meeting at St. Thomas in Diamondhead, 5-7 pm.
- Nov. 9-11**—"Happening" (a spiritual retreat for 10-12th grade).
- Nov. 11** —EYC meets at Christ Church in Bay St. Louis, 5-7 pm.
- Nov. 18** —EYC meets at St. Thomas in Diamondhead, 5-7 pm.
- Nov. 25** —EYC meets at St. Thomas in Diamondhead, 5-7 pm.
- Nov. 30– Dec 1** —EYC Lock-n at Christ Church in Bay St. Louis.

## LOBSTER FEST IS A BIG SUCCESS!



On October 13, St. Thomas ECW hosted the Lobster Fest benefiting Wilmer Hall, a children's home in Mobile, Alabama, serving abused and neglected children over the entire Gulf Coast area, and affiliated with the Episcopal Church. The sale of lobsters is the primary fundraiser for Wilmer Hall.

Mary Sartin, ECW President, reports the following:

*"Through the efforts of many of our parishioners, we were able to raise \$3,218 for Wilmer Hall this year. We sold 142 lobsters, 7 t-shirts, and had donations of \$273. By offering wine for donation-by-the-glass and auctioning three extra lobsters, we were able to cover the cost of putting on the dinner as well as donate \$137.30 to ECW. A good time was had by all, and we did well for two worthy causes! "*



## Mission Team from St. Cross Arrives

As this newsletter goes to press, a mission team from St. Cross by-the-Sea Episcopal Church in Hermosa Beach, California, is constructing our storage facility and pavilion on the slab west of the church. We thank them for their generosity in providing the funds for the building and for doing most of the work. The storage facility will result in additional space in the main building, and the pavilion will be used for outside events. We are grateful to St. Thomas members who helped with this project, including providing meals for our California friends.

The building and pavilion will be dedicated during the 10:00 am service on Sunday November 11. The inaugural event for the pavilion will be a Youth Fall Fest after the 10:00 am service on November 18.



# November 2007

Sun      Mon      Tue      Wed      Thu      Fri      Sat

				1 10am—Samaritan Guild 5pm—Stewardship Committee	2 12:10pm—AA	3
4 8am—HE Rite I 9am—Confirmation Class 10am—Sunday School 10am—HE Rite II 5-7 pm—EYC	5 12:10pm—AA 1:30pm—Shawl Ministry 3:00pm—Bible Study Group	6 6:30pm—Choir 7:30pm—AI-Anon	7 12:10pm—AA 6pm—HE and Heal- ing Service	8 10am—Samaritan Guild 5pm—Stewardship Committee	9 12:10pm—AA 6pm—Popcorn The- ology Movie Night	10 10am—ECW
11 8am—HE Rite I 9am—Confirmation Class 10am—Sunday School 10am—HE Rite II <b>Pavilion Dedication</b>	12 12:10pm—AA 1:30pm—Shawl Ministry 3:00pm—Bible Study Group 6:30pm—Girl Scouts	13 6:30pm—Choir 7:30pm—AI-Anon	14 12:10pm—AA 6pm—HE and Heal- ing Service	15 10am—Samaritan Guild 5pm—Stewardship Committee 6pm—Parents Meet- ing	16 12:10pm—AA	17 8:30am—Mens Breakfast Group
18 <b>Stewardship Sunday</b> 8am—HE Rite I 9am—Confirmation Class 10am—Sunday School 10am—HE Rite II 11:30am—Youth Fall Fest 5-7 pm—EYC	19 12:10pm—AA 1:30pm—Shawl Ministry 3:00pm—Bible Study Group	20 6:30pm—Choir 7:30pm—Vestry 7:30pm—AI-Anon	21 12:10pm—AA 6pm—HE and Heal- ing Service	22  <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	23 <b>Office Closed</b> 12:10pm—AA	24
25 8am—HE Rite I 9am—Confirmation Class 10am—Sunday School 10am—HE Rite II 5-7 pm—EYC	26 12:10pm—AA 1:30pm—Shawl Ministry 3:00pm—Bible Study Group 6:30pm—Girl Scouts	27 6:30pm—Choir 7:30pm—AI-Anon	28 12:10pm—AA 6pm—HE and Heal- ing Service	29 10am—Samaritan Guild	30 12:10pm—AA	

# November 2007

	<b>November 4</b> <b>8:00 HE: Rite I</b> <b>10:00—HE: Rite II</b>	<b>November 11</b> <b>8:00 Service</b> <b>10:00—HE: Rite II</b>	<b>November 18</b> <b>8:00—HE: Rite I</b> <b>10:00—HE: Rite II</b>	<b>November 25</b> <b>8:00—HE: Rite I</b> <b>10:00—HE:Rite II</b>
<b>Altar Guild</b>	<u>Team 2</u> Bryan, Casano, Park	<u>Team 3</u> Boos, Crowe, Pickens, Swayze	<u>Team 4</u> Allen, Floyd, Giffin, Gilmore	<u>Team 1</u> Ball, Breen, Hourin
<b>Flower Guild</b>	Sue Stewart	Arva Kyger	Rusty Cobb	Bobbie Stephens
<b>Lector—MP</b> <b>Chalicers—HE</b>	Ed Weidlich-Chalice	James DeDeaux—Chalice Jackie Calvert—Reader	Ed Weidlich-Chalice	James DeDeaux-Chalice Jackie Calvert—Reader
<b>Usher—8</b>	Don Young	Bruce Frallic	Don Young	Bruce Frallic
<b>Acolytes—10</b>	Matthew Saucier Sydney Ruzicka Ciara Ford	Evan Ruzicka Heather Haines Alan Bruce Devin Lockard	Matthew Saucier Sydney Ruzicka Ciara Ford	Alan Bruce Heather Haines Devin Lockard
<b>Lector(s)</b>	Paul Montjoy	Bob Eddy	Patty Hourin	Jim Williams
<b>Chalicers</b>	Sally Kappus Katherine Wilson	Susan White Frank Gaupp	Bobbie Stephens Bill Frisbie	Darlene Park Skip Giffin
<b>Usher—10</b>	Darlene & Dick Park	Bob Eddy and Lou Crowe	Bob Eddy and Paul Montjoy	Lynda and Gary Gilmore
<b>Greeter</b>	Paul Montjoy	Marge Edwards	John and Barbara Boos	Barbara Ford
<b>Hospitality</b>	Judy and Frank Gaupp	Georgia Pickens Helen Davis	Corny Swayze	Travella& Edward Dabler Mary & Tyrone Sartin
<b>Bulletin</b> <b>Helpers</b>	November 2 Mary Minor Fargason Genie LeBlanc Barbara Ford	November 9 Mary Sartin	November 16 Mary Sartin	November 23 Travella Dabler <hr/> November 30 Helen Davis

*Servers if you are unable to serve when scheduled, obtain your replacement and if possible, let Debbye know by Wednesday the changes.*

### Confirmation Classes, All Invited

Confirmation classes are continuing in anticipation of Bishop Gray's annual visit on December 16. We are studying the catechism of the Church beginning at page 845 of the Book of Common Prayer, and are using materials designed by the church for confirmation classes. The catechism also is called the Outline of our Faith, and the course could be of interest to many of us even though we already have been confirmed. Please consider attending if you would like to review some of the principles of our faith.

### Wednesday Healing and Eucharist Service at 6:00 pm

We celebrate a service of Holy Eucharist and Healing at 6:00 p.m. each Wednesday. The service is designed so that you can come to either or both parts of the service. Eucharist is celebrated first, and there is a dismissal for those who leave at that time. You may remain for healing prayer and anointing, which can be offered for yourself or for others about whom you might be concerned.



### Women's Bible Study

Women's Bible Study meets Mondays at 3:00 pm in the large Sunday school room. Everyone is welcome! For information, please Contact Maren Casano (255-4117).



### Brown Bag Sunday

The first Sunday of each month continues to be Brown Bag Sunday when we all are asked to bring nonperishable food items to the church for delivery to the Hancock Food Pantry. Please place your items in the designated area in Johnson Hall.



### Bulletin Bloopers

Potluck supper Sunday—prayer and medication to follow.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment, and gracious hostility.

### 25th Anniversary Celebration, One Service Only at 10:00 am

In August we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the initial documentation through which St. Thomas was formed. On December 16, when Bishop Gray is with us, we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of our first worship service with a brunch at the Country Club after the 10:00 am service. As usual for Bishop Gray's visits, we will not have a service at 8:00 am, and we invite all of the 8:00 people to join us at 10:00 am as we host Bishop Gray.



### Dates To Remember

- Nov. 5 - Pledge Cards mailed
- Nov. 11 - Veteran's Day Service (10 am)  
Pavilion Dedication Service
- Nov. 11 - Stewardship Dinner (6 pm-church)
- Nov. 18 - Stewardship Sunday  
Fall Festival
- Nov. 22 - Thanksgiving Day (office closed)
- Nov. 23 - Office Closed
- Dec. 2 - First Sunday in Advent
- Dec. 9 - Advent Festival of Lessons & Carols
- Dec. 16 - Bishop Gray's Visit /  
Second 25th Anniversary  
Celebration
- Dec. 24— Christmas Eve Services  
(5 and 10pm)
- Dec. 25— Christmas Day (10 am)

### November Birthdays!

- 02— Edward Dabler
- 04— Jim Williams
- 06— Gary Lott
- 07— Charlotte Crowe
- 16— Genie LeBlanc
- 19— Stephanie Austin
- 27— Betty Pennington





## Prayer Ministry

The St. Thomas prayer ministry emphasizes intercessory prayer on behalf of members of the church, their families and loved ones, and the church as a whole.

A *24 hour Prayer Line* for emergency or immediate needs is available and staffed by people in the church committed to offer prayer for these needs. Please call Susan White at 255-2568 (home) or (228) 229-4881 (cell) to alert the prayer ministry team.

A *Prayer Corner* is available in the choir loft during Eucharist and in the back of the sanctuary after the 10:00 a.m. service for those who prefer not to climb the stairs. Two prayer team members are available for anyone wanting personal prayer.

An *Intercessory Prayer Request* for anticipated or long-term needs is available for you to write a prayer request on a form available on the table in the foyer outside the sanctuary in the box on that table, and each Sunday after the 10:00 a.m. service a group of prayer warriors will pray for these needs during the week.

All requests will be treated with confidentiality. If you would like to become a part of *any* of these prayer ministries, please call Susan White at 255-2568. For example, you may choose to be a part of the telephone chain, *or* to pray during the week in response to written prayer requests, *or* to serve the prayer corner, *or* some combination of these. Plans are to have a prayer ministry workshop. Be watching for more information to come!

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