



# The St. Thomas Times and Tidings

December 2008

Volume 3, Issue 3

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## Advent and a Time of Preparation

We begin the new church year with the season of Advent, and after four short and hectic weeks we will be into Christmas. The time probably will pass quickly, and if we want to prepare ourselves for the meaning of Christmas now is the time to start. We pray that our Advent worship at St. Thomas will help lead us to a more holy and spiritual Christmas season.

This time of Advent begins a closer look at Jesus, the person. We leave Pentecost behind, when we focused on Christ's teachings. Now we embark upon a new cycle when the focus begins to shift to Jesus Christ himself, and his birth, ministry, death, and resurrection.

During the past year we heard much about the kingdom of heaven. We know that the kingdom began with Christ's birth and will end with his coming again in glory. Our Advent liturgy starts at the ending and works backward. The Gospel reading and sermon on the First Sunday in Advent will be about Jesus' second coming. As the following three weeks unfold we will move away from that end time and toward the beginning. The Gospel of the Fourth Sunday in Advent will be about the angel Gabriel's visit to Mary, and the amazing message he gave to her.

And we know that the kingdom still is a work in progress. The baby has been born, and we await his return as a man. In Advent we recognize both. It is a time of joy and celebration, but it also is a time of prayer and reflection.

There are many ways to prepare for this holy season. I would like to suggest that an increased emphasis on prayer could strengthen us individually and as a parish family as we consider more deeply who Jesus Christ really is.

I have mentioned that there are different types of prayers. We frequently call upon God with prayers of the 911 variety. We all have done it, and it goes something like this. "God, I have an emergency, please help me through this situation.

God is merciful and just, and he hears and answers those emergency 911 prayers. But he also wants to hear our 411 prayers. Those prayers say something like this "God, I need some information, some guidance, please tell me what I should do to be obedient to your will."

I hope that during this Advent season we can emphasize the 411 prayers. And I pray that they will enable our hearts to be filled with faith in God's love for us, and that we may know the peace that allows God's power to possess us. This is one of the promises of the kingdom, and through the advent of our Lord and Savior we are assured of its fulfillment.

*Fr. Bill*

## NOTES FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN by Dick Park



The Stewardship Campaign is going well. So far, the value of the pledges we have received from those who pledged last year is up 20%! We have received 56 pledges, including several new ones. However, that leaves a significant number that have yet to be returned. Our goal is 100% participation so we can prepare an accurate budget. If you have been putting money in the plate instead of making a pledge, won't you consider making a commitment to the parish? The "final" budget will be voted on by the vestry at the Dec. 9th meeting, so make your pledge now and we won't have to adjust the budget later.

### Vestry Elections / 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 which will be held on either January 10 or January 17. The outgoing members are Dick Park, Lynda Gilmore, and Nell Frisbie. In accordance with our practice, they comprise our Vestry Nominating Committee, and will be receiving information about candidates interested in filling their vacancies. Please contact one of them if you feel called to service on the Vestry. You must be confirmed or received as a member of the church to serve on the Vestry.

### Take a Test Drive with the Choir



Next week, on December 7, we will have our traditional Service of Lessons and Carols. It has alternating readings and Christmas music.

This would be a good time for anyone who is interested in joining the choir to try it out and see what it is like. There is no commitment, but rather an opportunity to rehearse and sing with the choir on a one-time basis. If you like it then you might wish to continue. Please let Alana or Fr. Bill know if you are interested.

### Pledge Receipts are Behind



We continue to be behind in receiving our 2008 pledges. If you are not yet current on your pledge for this year, we request that you try to catch up as soon as possible or please let us know when you will be able to complete your pledge. Also, if circumstances will prevent you from completing your pledge, we would appreciate knowing that. This information will help us plan the budget. Contact Debbye if you are not sure where you stand with your pledge. Donations must be received and deposited by December 31.

### Be an Oblationer

Beginning in December we will have "Oblationers," rather than the Ushers, bring the bread and wine forward at the 10:00 am service. If you are interested in serving in this capacity please see Father Bill or sign up in Johnson Hall. This can be a family activity, or you can serve individually



### New Office Hours

Beginning January 1 the office will not be open on Fridays. Office hours will be in Monday-Thursday 9-3.

 <p><b>TLC!</b></p> <p>The St. Thomas Samaritan Guild, which comforts those in our church family who are ill or infirm, also helps family members and others who are burdened with caring for those loved ones. This ministry, called TLC, 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 in Johnson Hall.</p>	<p><b>Dates To Remember</b></p> <p>Dec 07 Second Sunday of Advent Service of Lessons &amp; Carols</p> <p>Dec 09 Vestry Meeting</p> <p>Dec 12 Popcorn Theology</p> <p>Dec 13 ECW "Gourmet to Go"</p> <p>Dec 14 Youth Tree Trimming Party</p> <p>Dec 18 Acolyte Training</p> <p>Dec 20 Men's Breakfast Altar Guild Meeting</p> <p>Dec 21 Bishop Gray's Annual Visit (Youth Christmas Party)</p> <p>Dec 22 Celebration of the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle</p> <p>Dec 24 Christmas Eve services at 5:00 pm and 10:00 pm. The Amazing Praisers perform at the 5:00 service</p> <p>Dec 25 Christmas Day service, 10:00 am</p>
 <p><b>Wednesday Healing and Eucharist Service</b></p> <p>The Wednesday night services are held at 6:00 p.m. Please consider attending either or both parts of this service. The Eucharist is celebrated first, followed by a dismissal. The healing service begins shortly thereafter.</p>	<p><b>Great Decisions Program</b></p> <p>As part of the St. Thomas outreach program, the church will sponsor a foreign policy discussion open to the public. It will examine eight major global issues facing our country over an eight month period beginning in February 2009. The program is modeled after a similar program sponsored by the Foreign Policy Association, with which our program will be co-ordinated. Participants will receive a study book that outlines the pros and cons of the various issues, which will include The U.S. and Rising Powers, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Energy and the Global Economy, The Arctic Age, Egypt in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Global Food Supply, Cuba after Castro, and Universal Human Rights. Please sign up in Johnson Hall if you believe you might be interested. For questions or further information, contact Ali Grady (255-9262) or agrady1070@aol.com</p>
 <p><b>Ministry Sign-Up Booklets</b></p> <p>Sign-up booklets for St. Thomas' ministries and programs are on the table in the foyer under Bishop Gray's picture. Please consider areas in which you can assist the church as we extend ourselves to each other and to the community.</p>	
<p><b>Altar Guild</b></p> <p>There will be a meeting of the Altar Guild on Saturday, December 20, 9:00 a.m., in preparation for the Bishop's visit and the Christmas season. Hopefully, all Altar Guild members can be in attendance. We always welcome new members! If you would like to be a part of this important ministry, please contact Patty Hourin (255-1203).</p>	

**December Birthdays**

December 02— Penny Edwards  
 December 08— Catherine Flynt  
                   Susan White  
 December 09— Helen Davis  
 December 10— Robert Eddy  
 December 11— Alan Clay Bruce  
 December 13— Katie Montjoy  
                   Arva Kyger  
 December 14— Rose Rybiski  
 December 20— Maria Frallic  
                   Richard Park  
 December 24— Mary Mizell  
 December 26— Jack Allen  
 December 30— Jim Hourin



**Brown Bag Sunday**



The first Sunday of each month is Brown Bag Sunday at St. Thomas. The next date is December 7. Please bring nonperishable food items on Sunday or during the following week after each Sunday for delivery to the Hancock County Food Pantry. Please remember those in need during this difficult economic time and the Christmas season. Place your items in the designated area in Johnson Hall.

**St Thomas Sun Catchers**

We have a few of the beautiful stained glass sun catchers for sale. These make wonderful Christmas gifts! If interested, please contact Maren Casano (255-4117) or Darlene Park (255-0241). If demand is high, special orders can be taken.

**Men's Breakfast**



The Men's Breakfast Group meets on the third Saturday of each month, at 8:30 am, in Johnson Hall. The next meeting will be Saturday, December 20. For more information, call Gary Gilmore (255-4396).

**Women's Bible Study**



Women's Bible Study meets Mondays at 3:00 pm in the large Sunday School room. We are currently studying the Book of Judges. Everyone is welcome! For information, please Contact Maren Casano (255-4117).

**Shawl Ministry**

By Barbara Ford

Each Monday at 1:30 pm, a group of women meet in Johnson Hall to knit or crochet prayer shawls. The shawls are made to be given to people who are facing a difficult situation and who might be comforted by receiving one. The shawls are made with love and prayers that they will be of solace to the recipient. Anyone in the congregation is welcome to take one to give or send to someone who needs a bit of comfort. There is no charge for the shawls. Please contact Barbara Ford (255-4401) or Georgia Pickens if you wish to take one. If you can join us, please do, or if you would work on one at home, contact Georgia or me.

**Office Volunteers Needed**



We are in need of office volunteers to help collate and put together the bulletins, newsletters and special mail outs. It only takes about 30 to 45 minutes and would be on a rotating schedule once a month. Contact Mary Sartin if you think this is something you would like to do.

**Bulletin Bloopers!**

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

## Youth Ministry

by Penny Edwards and Deaunna Ruzicka  
penny@stthomasdiamondhead.org

### "Popcorn Theology" Movie Night



Our next Popcorn Theology night will be **Friday, December 12th** at 6:00 p.m. The feature is "The Life of Jesus as Seen Through the Eyes of Children." We will be baking refreshments for the youth hosted Tree Trimming Party (see below). Please bring your friends and any fancy decorating items that you would like to use. Cookies will definitely be made and maybe some pumpkin rolls with cream cheese. Yum! We will also be working on Christmas ornaments that night, so plan to stay until 8:45 p.m. See you there!

**On Saturday, December 13,** we will join the ECW 's "Gourmet-to-Go" event in Johnson Hall from 10:00—1:00. They will be selling food items; we will be selling Christmas cards and ornaments.



**Also on December 13,** all youth interested in baking and preparing refreshments for the Tree Trimming Party (see below), please meet at the church at 6:00 p.m. Pizza and refreshments will be provided. We will be making Christmas ornaments and decorations for the tree.

### December 14—Tree Trimming Party— Immediately after 10:00 Service



*Everyone (all ages)* is invited to attend our youth sponsored Tree Trimming party! Refreshments will be served by the youth, so the hospitality committee is on break for this day! Please be sure to stop by and encourage our youth in this very busy time of year.



**Sunday School**  
**Sundays at 10:00 a.m.; then children join congregation before Eucharist**

**There are two rooms:**  
**Ages 3—Kindergarten and First —Fifth Grades**

### Gulf Coast EYC

EYC has stayed busy over the past several weeks. At the end of October, we took a spook-tacular trip to New Orleans for a Spirit Tour of the French Quarter, complete with tales of voodoo, cemeteries, ghosts...and Brad and Angelina's house, of course! THANK YOU to all the parents who took the time to join us!

November and December are months of outreach. In December we will adopt a family from the Salvation Army Angel Tree.

Some dates to keep in mind:

Convocational Youth Event: Dec. 6th (Sat.)

Christmas Caroling Fundraiser: Dec. 14th

Christmas Costume Party: Dec. 21st

Winter Solstice: Dec. 27th—Jan. 1st

No EYC on Dec. 28th

If you need anything, please feel free to contact one or both of us: Ginny (228-223-3836), Erin (228-493-0125). Peace!



## ECW News by Dee Daigle

Thanks to all who attended our November meeting. The Girl Scouts interviewed us, and we enjoyed sharing our life experiences. Our next meeting will be the "Gourmet to Go" event on December 13. Child care will be provided. We invite everyone to our ECW event. (See "Gourmet-to-Go" on the right of this page.) For information about ECW, please call Judy (228-216-3528) or Dee (228-586-6132).

## Confirmation / Reception Classes

Classes began October 12 and will continue through December 14 at 9:00 a.m. between the services for all wishing to be confirmed into the Episcopal Church. This is a ten week series in preparation for Bishop Gray's annual visit to St. Thomas on December 21. Please see Fr. Bill if you are interested or have questions. Confirmation is for Baptized Christians who have not yet been confirmed in the Episcopal Church. The alternative or reception is available for those who have had the equivalent of confirmation in the Catholic or Lutheran denominations, and wish to become members of the Episcopal Church. The classes also might be interesting to anyone who wants to refresh their knowledge or learn more about the church, and all are invited to attend. Confirmation is one of the sacramental rites of the church and historically has been a step in Christian development. Under the Canon Law of the church, a person must be confirmed to serve on the Vestry. Please prayerfully consider your interest in this.



## ECW Presents

### "Gourmet-to-Go"



Saturday, December 13  
10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.  
Johnson Hall

Gourmet items for sale will include appetizers, breads, cakes, candy, canned jams & jellies, cookies, casseroles, pies, soups & stews, and regional dishes. These will be wonderful to include with your holiday entertaining or to use as gifts. Take advantage of this opportunity to sample the culinary offerings of the St. Thomas ladies, known to be good cooks. Our St. Thomas youth group will also have Christmas cards and ornaments for sale.

## VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

to help with the Gourmet-to-Go event. Any canned, frozen, or fresh food contribution will be very much appreciated. Please look for sign-up sheets in Johnson Hall this Sunday (Dec. 7) for food items, ice chests, or to help at the event. All donated items and dishes should be brought to Johnson Hall on December 13 at 8:00 a.m. Any questions, please call Judy (228-216-3528) or Dee (228-586-6132).



## Amazing Praisers

We are again planning our popular Christmas pageant. We urge anyone interested to participate! We need all ages and talents, including set designers, musicians, costumers, and actors.





For further information, please contact Susan White (susaninms@bellsouth.net or 255-2568).

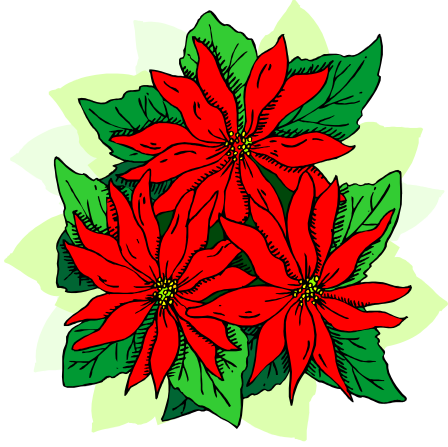
# December 2008

	<b>December 7 2nd Advent 8 HE: Rite I 10—HE: Rite II</b>	<b>December 14 3rd Advent 8 HE: Rite I 10—HE: Rite II</b>	<b>December 21 4th Advent 8—HE: Rite I 10—HE: Rite II</b>	<b>December 24 5 &amp; 10 pm December 25 10am</b>	<b>December 28 8—HE: Rite I 10—HE:Rite II</b>
Altar Guild	<u>Team 3</u> Boos, Crowe, Pickens, Swayze	<u>Team 4</u> Allen, Fairchild, Floyd, Giffin	<u>Team 1</u> Ball, Bentson, Breen, Hourin	<u>Team 1</u> Ball, Bentson, Breen, Hourin	<u>Team 2</u> Bryan, Casano, Gilmore, Park
Flower Guild	Sue Stewart	Arva Kyger	Rusty Cobb	Rusty Cobb <i>Christmas</i>	Bobbie Stephens
Chalicers—8am Reader—	Chalice— Reader—Calvert	Chalice— Reader—Allen	Chalice— Reader—Calvert	<b>Dec 25 10 am</b> Chalice	Chalice— Reader—Allen
Usher—8	Bruce Frallic	Don Young	Bruce Frallic	<b>Dec 25 10 am</b>	Don Young
Acolytes—10	Matthew Saucier Heather Haines Ciara Ford	Evan Ruzicka David Hector Alan Bruce	Matthew Saucier Evan Ruzicka Sydney Ruzicka Ciara Ford David Hector		Sydney Ruzicka Matthew Saucier Ciara Ford
Lector(s) 10am	Lessons and Music Will be assigned by Fr. Bill	Patty Hourin	Laurel Bruce	<b>December 24</b> 5pm Jackie Calvert 10pm	Tyrone Sartin
Chalicers-10am	Joe Floyd Bobbie Stephens	Susan White Skip Giffin	Sally Kappus Joe Floyd	<b>December 24</b> 5pm 10pm	Susan White James DeDeaux
Usher—10	Lynda and Gary Gilmore	Joe Floyd Lou Crowe	Lou Crowe John Boos	<b>December 24</b> 5pm 10pm	Bob Eddy Joe Floyd
Greeter- 10am	Paul Montjoy	Paul Montjoy	Paul Montjoy	Paul Montjoy	Paul Montjoy
Oblations 10 am	Charlotte and Lou Crowe	Betty and Bruce Pennington	Lynda and Gary Gilmore		Charlotte and Lou Crowe
Hospitality	Judy and Frank Gaupp	Georgia Pickens Helen Davis	Corny Swayze		Mary and Tyrone Sartin

# December 2008



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Noon—AA 1:30—Shawl Ministry 3:00—Bible Study	2 2pm—Samaritan Guild 7:30—Al-Anon	3 Noon—AA 6pm—Holy Eucharist & Healing Service 7pm—Choir	4	5 Noon—AA	6 Noon—AA
7  8—HE Rite I 10—HE Rite II 10—Sunday School 5-7om—EYC	8 Noon—AA 1:30—Shawl Ministry 3:00—Bible Study	9 2pm—Samaritan Guild 7pm—Vestry 7:30—Al-Anon	10 Noon—AA 6pm—Holy Eucharist & Healing Service 7pm—Choir	11	12 Noon—AA 6om—Popcorn Theology	13 10am—1pm ECW “Gourmet to Go’ Noon—AA
14  8—HE Rite I 10—HE Rite II 10—Sunday School Youth Trim a tree party after the ser- vice 5-7om—EYC	15 Noon—AA 1:30—Shawl Ministry 3:00—Bible Study	16 2pm—Samaritan Guild 7:30—Al-Anon	17 Noon—AA 6pm—Holy Eucharist & Healing Service 7pm—Choir	18 6pm—Parents Meeting	19 Noon—AA	20 9am—Altar Guild Meeting Noon—AA
21  <b>One Service Only</b> 10—Confirmation, HE Rite II <i>Bishop Gray’s Annual Visit to St. Thomas</i>	22 Noon—AA 1:30—Shawl Ministry 3:00—Bible Study	23 2pm—Samaritan Guild 7:30—Al-Anon	24 Noon—AA 5pm—HE 10pm—HE  <i>The office will be closed December 24 until January 5</i>	25  10am Holy Eucharist	26 Noon—AA	27 Noon—AA
28 8—HE Rite I 10—HE Rite II 10—Sunday School	29 Noon—AA 1:30—Shawl Ministry 3:00—Bible Study	30 2pm—Samaritan Guild 7:30—Al-Anon  <i>The office will be closed December 24 until January 5 2009</i>	31 Noon—AA 6pm—Holy Eucharist & Healing Service 7pm—Choir	Jan 1, 2009	2 Noon—AA	3 Noon—AA



ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
offering for CHRISTMAS 2008  
Poinsettias and Garlands.

Please complete form (please print) and return to the Church Office or place in offering plate on December 21 with a check for \$25.00:

*Given by:*

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*In Memory of:*

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*InThanksgiving for:*

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## Prayer Ministry



The St. Thomas prayer ministry offers intercessory prayer for 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 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* and two prayer team members are available in the loft during Eucharist and in the back of the sanctuary after the 10:00 am service.

An *Intercessory Prayer Group* for anticipated or long-term needs also is available. Please write a prayer request on a form available on the table in the foyer and place it in the box on that table. A group of prayer warriors will pray for these needs during the week.

All requests are 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.

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