



The St. Thomas Times and Tidings

January 2009

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That's Then, This is Now

Christmas has come and gone, and activities and preparations that occupied our minds a month ago are fading into our memories. Are there things about this past Christmas that we treasure? Or are there recollections that trouble us? Either way, they are in the past, and they are what they are.

But now we are entering the church season of Epiphany that will continue for seven weeks until Ash Wednesday on February 25. After that, the holy season of Lent begins. And as Lent of 2009 begins at the end of February we might find ourselves able to think back about this time of Epiphany, just as we now look back on Christmas, and ask the same questions. Are there memories that we treasure or that trouble us?

But that's then. This is now. And "then" is in the future, not the past. Epiphany has only started and those seven weeks are still ahead of us. We are in a position now to influence our future memories. When we get to Lent this year, and look back on January and February, what will we think? Were we on the right track? Was God in our lives?

But we aren't there yet. We just started Epiphany. So what should we do, or not do, during this time? Are there positive things on which we can build? Are there destructive patterns to change or avoid? What can Jesus do for us in the time ahead? And how can we know him better or experience him more fully in our common life here at St. Thomas?

The word "epiphany," in its traditional sense, can describe the dawning of an insight that previously had not been apparent, or a flash of intuitive understanding. It also can refer to clarifying a commitment to a goal that is obvious, but for some reason hasn't registered as plainly as it might.

God gives us opportunities to shape our lives as we choose unless, of course, we let the time pass and the opportunity diminishes. The seven weeks of Epiphany do not seem very long, and it would be easy to allow inertia to prevail. We might think that we can address any important matters during Lent.

But what if we start to address one or more of them now, even in some small way? Then, when Lent comes around, we already will have a sense of accomplishment. This is not a tall order. It has a definite expiration date. And if we ask God to help us now with some of the small things, then the larger things that we might consider during Lent won't seem so large.

I pray that when the season of Epiphany ends on Ash Wednesday, we will be able to look back and know where God was in our lives, and how he can take an even greater role in the time ahead.

Fr. Bill

NOTES FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN by Dick Park



This is my last column as senior warden. It has been a pleasure to work with Fr. Bill, the vestry, and the congregation. Although it was not my intention to serve again, when Fr. Bill asked me two years ago, it only took a minute to consider before saying "yes." The reason was that I believed we had embarked on a new, dynamic phase in the parish—one that would take St. Thomas to a new level. History has shown that to be true. As the "rector's warden" it has been a challenge to keep up with Fr. Bill. In consultation with numerous people and later guided by the parish survey, he has initiated an amazing array of programs, with emphasis on youth and pastoral care. My role has been largely that of sounding board and liaison to the congregation. Of course, there was a period this fall when Fr. Bill was ill and I was caretaker of the parish; I'm just glad that is behind us! In closing, thank you all for your help.

2009 Great Decisions Foreign Policy Series Update

By Alice Edson "Ali" Grady

As I write this in mid-December 2008, I am so pleased that we have 37 officially registered participants in the inaugural Great Decisions program. A bulk book order was placed at the end of December; however, if you did not register by year-end, there is still an opportunity to join this series. Books can be ordered individually from the Foreign Policy Association. In addition, we ordered more books than necessary. These books are available as long as the supply holds out. If you have not picked up your background materials and registration form, please contact Ali Grady as soon as possible to register and place the book order.

Topics for Great Decisions 2009 include *The U.S. and Rising Powers*, *Afghanistan and Pakistan*, *Energy and the Global Economy*, *The Arctic Age*, *Egypt in the 21st Century*, *Global Food Supply*, *Cuba after Castro*, and *Universal Human Rights*.

The meetings will take place on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in Johnson Hall, and will continue for eight months in order to cover all the issues. The first topic will be *The U. S. and Rising Powers*; the first meeting will be Tuesday, February 10. Our group has been registered with the Foreign Policy Association as Great Decisions Gulf Coast with St. Thomas Episcopal Church listed as the headquarters.

For those interested, please contact Ali at 228-255-9262 or agrady1070@aol.com for more information and to register. Participant reservations and the \$20 fee, which includes the Great Decisions book, must be received as soon as possible for planning purposes. We are excited about this educational opportunity for St. Thomas members and the possibility of bringing non-members into our midst.



TLC!

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.

Dates To Remember

- Jan 04 Brown Bag Sunday
- Jan 06 Epiphany Service
- Jan 07 *No Weds. Service*
- Jan 09 Popcorn Theology
- Jan 10 ECW Meeting
- Jan 17 Men's Breakfast
- Jan 18 Annual Meeting
- Jan 20 Vestry Meeting
- Jan 21 Parents Meeting & Dinner
- Jan 23 Silver Screen
- Jan 25 SeaWolves Hockey Trip
- Feb 6-8 Diocesan Annual Council, Hattiesburg
- Feb 10 Great Decisions program



Wednesday Healing and Eucharist Service

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.

Annual Meeting

The annual parish meeting will be held immediately after the 10:00 a.m. service on January 18. New members to the vestry will be elected, the budget for 2009 will be presented, and other business will be conducted as necessary. Please contact Fr. Bill or Dick Park if you have any questions or want further information.

The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ

The Epiphany is a major feast of the church, and always is celebrated on January 6th, which is a Tuesday in 2009. The Eucharist and Healing service will be held at 6:00 p.m.



Ministry Sign-Up Sheets

Sign-up sheets 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.



Youth/Parents Wednesday Evening Dinner

The youth group, with the assistance of some parents, will host a parent's meeting and dinner on the third Wednesday of each month, beginning at 5:00 p.m., in Johnson Hall. The dinner should be over in time for those who wish to attend the 6:00 p.m. Eucharist, or Healing Service, or both. The date for this month is January 21.



Pick Up a Poinsettia

Poinsettias are in Johnson Hall for anyone who wants to take one or more home. Please help us clear them out. We will not be watering them, and will dispose of any that are left when they start to look dry.

January Birthdays

January 02—Rowena Zubieni
 January 16—Maren Casano
 January 16—Devin Lockard
 January 23—Don Ball
 January 25—Mary King
 January 29—Barbara Boos



Brown Bag Sunday



The first Sunday of each month is Brown Bag Sunday at St. Thomas. The next date is January 4. 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.

Sign up to be Oblationers

We are returning to the practice of having members of the congregation bring forward the wine and wafers at the 10:00 a.m. service, after the passing of the peace and before the Eucharist. We need at least two people each Sunday, and would welcome participation by families. If you are interested in serving as an oblationer, please sign up in Johnson Hall.

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, January 10. For more information, call Gary Gilmore (255-4396).

Youth Hospitality



Beginning January 2009, the youth of St. Thomas will be responsible for refreshments after the 10:00 a.m. service, every fourth Sunday. Please contact DeAunna Ruzicka (304-1564) or sign up in Johnson Hall if you are interested in helping with the hospitality program.



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

Pledge Envelopes



ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
 5303 DIAMONDHEAD CIRCLE
 DIAMONDHEAD MS 39525
 "Building for the Future through
 God's Grace Today"

AMOUNT \$ _____
 NAME _____

Pledge envelopes for 2009 are in Johnson Hall, arranged alphabetically. Please pick up your envelopes. If you do not see your name, check with Debye to make sure we received your pledge card. We are recycling extra envelopes from 2008 rather than incur the costs of printing new envelopes and throwing old ones away. Please disregard the slight discrepancy of dates on the envelopes.

Women's Bible Study



Women's Bible Study resumes January 5 after a Christmas break. We meet 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).



ECW News

by
Dee Daigle

Our "Gourmet-to-Go" event was a great success. We raised approximately \$1,000! Thanks to all who donated, volunteered, and purchased our holiday gourmet goodies and gifts. Our next meeting will be Saturday, January 10th, 10:00 a.m., in Johnson Hall. We invite all ladies to join us. Child care will be provided. For information about ECW, please call Judy (228-216-3528) or Dee (586-6132).

Adult Education Resumes

Our Adult Education program resumes on January 11 at 9:00 am between the services. We begin with a study of the Bible itself as a document, and cover its authenticity (do we have an accurate copy of the original?) its authority (assuming it is authentic, is it true?), and its history, among other things. A more complete schedule for the rest of the winter and spring will be available at the first session on January 11.

Youth Activities

1. Youth Hospitality starting January 2009, the youth will be responsible for refreshments after the 10 am service.
2. Wednesday Evening Dinner. The youth group with the assistance of some parents, will host a parent's meeting and dinner on the third Wednesday of each month, beginning at 5 pm in Johnson Hall.
3. Sunday Evening EYC. EYC will resume with a bonfire at St. Peter's in Gulfport on January 11.
4. SeaWolves Hockey. The youth group will attend a SeaWolves hockey game on January 25.



Welcome

We welcome to our church family those who were confirmed, received, and baptized by Bishop Gray during his visit in December: Shannon Hourin, Ashton Hourin, David Hector, Jr., Mary Pattison, John Fairchild, Ali Grady, Frank Cuervo and baby Aden Vanney.

Election of New Vestry Members

The terms of three of our Vestry members will expire this year, and their successors will be elected at the Annual Meeting to be held January 18. The outgoing members are Dick Park, Lynda Gilmore, and Nell Frisbie. In accordance with our practice, they comprise our Vestry Nominating Committee, and are 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.



Movie time at the Silver Screen

With the success of our popcorn Theology movie night for kids, we will try our luck with a movie night at the church for adults on the fourth Friday of each month, starting on January 23. Social time with refreshments will begin at 6:00 pm, with the movie to start around 6:30-6:45. The program will be called "Silver Screen" to indicate the vintage of the movies. They generally will be classics. We are planning to start with "Casablanca", which won the Oscar for best movie in 1942. We also will take a survey about future plans.

January 2009 Serving Schedule

| | January 4 1st Sunday after Christmas 8 HE: Rite I 10—HE: Rite II | January 11 1st Sunday after Epiphany 8 HE: Rite I 10—HE: Rite II | January 18 2nd Sunday after Epiphany 8—HE: Rite I 10—HE: Rite II | January 25 3rd Sunday after Epiphany 8—HE: Rite I |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| 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 2</u> Bryan, Casano, Gilmore, Park |
| Flower Guild | Bobbie Stephens | Barbara Boos | Barbara Mueller | Sue Stewart |
| Chalicers—8am Reader— | Chalice—Weidlich Reader—Calvert | Chalice—Weidlich Reader—Allen | Chalice—Weidlich Reader—Calvert | Chalice—DeDeaux Reader—Allen |
| Usher—8 | Bruce Frallic | Don Young | Bruce Frallic | Don Young |
| Acolytes—10 | Matthew Saucier Sydney Ruzicka Ciara Ford | Evan Ruzicka Heather Haines David Hector, Jr. | Matthew Saucier Ciara Ford | Heather Haines Alan Bruce |
| Lector(s) 10am | Maren Casano | Patty Hourin | Tyrone Sartin | Jim Williams |
| Chalicers-10am | Darlene Park Joe Floyd | James DeDeaux Susan White | Sally Kappus Skip Giffin | Bobbie Stephens Frank Gaupp |
| Usher—10 | Eddy and Gilmore | Eddy and Boos | Eddy and Crowe | Eddy and Floyd |
| Greeter-10am | Paul Montjoy | Paul Montjoy | Paul Montjoy | Paul Montjoy |
| Oblations 10 am | Nancy and Jack Boice | Barbara and John Boos | Lynda and Gary Gilmore | Charlotte and Lou Crowe |
| Hospitality | Judy and Frank Gaupp | Georgia Pickens Helen Davis | Corny Swayze | Youth |

January 2009

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|--|-----|--------------------------------------|--|
| | | | | 1 | 2 Noon—AA | 3 Noon—AA |
| 4 8—HE Rite I 9—Adult Ed. 10—HE Rite II 10—Sunday School | 5 Noon—AA 1:30—Shawl Ministry 3—Bible Study | 6 2pm—Samaritan Guild 7:30—Al-Anon | 7 Noon—AA 6pm—HE and Healing Service 7pm—Choir | 8 | 9 Noon—AA 6pm—Popcorn Theology | 10 10am—ECW Johnson Hall Noon—AA |
| 11 8—HE Rite I 9—Adult Ed. 10—HE Rite II 10—Sunday School | 12 Noon—AA 1:30—Shawl Ministry 3—Bible Study | 13 2pm—Samaritan Guild 7:30—Al-Anon | 14 Noon—AA 6pm—HE and Healing Service 7pm—Choir | 15 | 16 Noon—AA | 17 8:30am—Mens Breakfast Group Noon—AA |
| 18 8—HE Rite I 9—Adult Ed. 10—HE Rite II 10—Sunday School | 19 Noon—AA 1:30—Shawl Ministry 3—Bible Study | 20 2pm—Samaritan Guild 7:30—Al-Anon | 21 Noon—AA 5pm—Parents Meeting & Dinner 6pm—HE and Healing Service 7pm—Choir | 22 | 23 Noon—AA 6pm—Silver Screen | 24 Noon—AA |
| 25 8—HE Rite I 9—Adult Ed. 10—HE Rite II 10—Sunday School | 26 Noon—AA 1:30—Shawl Ministry 3—Bible Study | 27 2pm—Samaritan Guild 7:30—Al-Anon | 28 Noon—AA 6pm—HE and Healing Service 7pm—Choir | 29 | 30 Noon—AA | 31 Noon—AA |

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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