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## **God's Way, Not Our Way**

Over the years I have been drawn to a brief passage in the Book of Proverbs; a passage that is elegant in its simplicity, overwhelming in its message, and a mystery in its fulfillment.

Proverbs 3:5-6 states, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."*

Isn't this at the heart of Christian life? More than almost anything else, don't we want to know God's will for us? Don't we wish that an angel would appear, or a heavenly voice just would tell us what God wants us to do?

It doesn't quite work that way. God wants a relationship with us of our own free will. He patiently waits for us to draw near to him and accept his love. And his blessings when we do that are greater than we could imagine. St Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:9, *"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."*

But our own ideas sometimes get in the way. We can be tempted to ask God's blessing for solutions we already have worked out rather than truly seeking his will for us. Sometimes it seems we only turn to God at the end to ratify our plans rather than prayerfully discerning his guidance in forming those plans in the first place.

But God calls us to trust him; not just ourselves. And this means being willing to seek and place his will above our own understanding, even though we cannot fully grasp God's plans for us. Perhaps we need only contemplate the depth of St Paul's faith when he said in Romans 15:13 *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

These brief verses from Proverbs glow with the promise that God will care for us. They tell us if we truly trust God rather than ourselves when circumstances become difficult, then God's way will overcome. And if we trust in God's way, we can be confident that bumpy roads of our own making will yield to smoother ones of God's design.

*Fr. Bill*

## Senior Warden's Report



We almost have completed our program of stewardship socials hosted by church members. Everyone in the church was invited to one of these events. We have enjoyed social time together and have had fruitful small group discussions about stewardship and the church.

A unique format was used for our discussions. We passed around a basket containing slips of paper, with a question written on each slip. People drew slips out of the basket (with the option to exchange it once), and then commented on the question. Others also were free to comment.

A lively discussion covered areas such as our dreams and visions for St. Thomas, how God has blessed us, what it means to be a good steward, and why giving to charity is not the same thing as giving to the church. These are examples of the twenty questions that were in the basket.

One of the socials focused on our young people, and we had a good discussion about youth programs. This included not only the needs of our youth at St Thomas, but also participation in youth activities in the larger Diamondhead community.

Our response to this stewardship program is very important this year. We would like to have resources to help the church grow. We are coming back from the tragedy of Katrina, and our average pledge now is getting closer to the average pledge for Episcopal churches for the state of Mississippi. We hope to be able to reach that average in 2011. Please help the church grow and reach into the community

*Patty*

## Stewardship Committee Update



Your Stewardship Committee is continuing to implement our stewardship campaign for 2011. We are finishing a series of eight stewardship socials hosted by members of the church in their homes. Patty Hourin's article, right above this one, discusses these socials in greater detail.

You soon should be receiving an invitation to our annual Stewardship dinner at the church on Sunday evening, November 14 at 5:00. Our own Amazing Praisers will offer a timely performance for our enjoyment. You don't have to bring anything. Just come and enjoy dinner with us. This always is a fun time with good food.

Pledge cards for 2011 will be mailed around November 9. This is in preparation for Stewardship Sunday on November 21, when we ask that you return your completed pledge cards during the regular collection at the 8:00 am and 10:00 am services. Our goal is that 100% of the congregation will return pledge cards.

This is our second year as Chairs of the St. Thomas Stewardship Committee. Last year we had a successful campaign and were able to begin the year with a balanced budget. We have, however fallen behind in pledges beginning last summer, and we urge all to catch up as soon as possible. We also ask that you prayerfully consider your pledge for 2011, and help St. Thomas be able to grow and reach out to young families.

We sincerely appreciate the cooperation we have received and the good will that has been so evident as we have worked with you on stewardship since September. We are glad that St. Thomas is our church home, and we want to do all we can to help the church in its worship and work.

*Sid and Mary*



### November Birthdays

- November 04 Jim Williams
- November 07 Charlotte Crowe
- November 10 Elise Breen
- November 19 Stephanie Austin
- November 27 Betty Pennington

If your birthday is not listed, call the office and make sure Debbye has it on in our data base. Thanks and Happy Birthday!



### Birthday and Anniversary Blessings

Our traditional birthday and anniversary blessings will be on the first Sunday of the month, November 7. Everyone with a birthday or anniversary during November or who missed our October blessing, may come forward and receive a blessing just before The Peace. Our special church bank once again will be available so that everyone who receives a blessing may deposit one penny for each year of age or marriage.



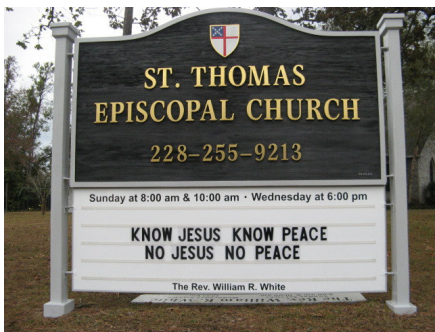
### Dates To Remember

- November 7 Time Change
- November 12 Silver Screen
- November 13 ECW
- November 14 Stewardship Dinner

- November 16 Vestry Meeting
- November 20 Mens' Breakfast Group
- November 25 Thanksgiving Day
- November 27 Making Advent Wreaths
- November 28 First Sunday in Advent
- December 5 Confirmation Classes
- December 11 ECW *Gourmet To Go*
- December 12 Service of Lessons and Carols (10:00 am service, regular service at 8:00 am)

### Donations for the Needy

An increasing number of needy people from Hancock County have been visiting the office to seek financial assistance. Fr. Bill's Discretionary Account exists for this purpose, There is no line item in the church budget for this purpose. A box is in the narthex near the baptismal font to receive donations to help the needy of Hancock County. We urge you to offer tax-deductible donations at any time.



### NEW ST. THOMAS SIGN

As you drive around Diamondhead Circle or up Diamondhead Dr., you will see a new

reader board sign, a bequest from the Estate of Jack Boice. There is space for showing scriptures, spiritual sayings, and advertising events. The sign gives us a new way of supporting and promoting St. Thomas; bringing more attention to our activities as well as displaying inspirational and thought-provoking sayings.



### Thanksgiving Food Drive

The entire month of November is brown bag month as we collect nonperishable food items for delivery to the Hancock Food Pantry for distribution at Thanksgiving. Please place your items in or near the box in the foyer under Bishop Gray's picture.



### Wednesday Eucharist and Healing Service

The Wednesday Eucharist and Healing services begin at 6:00 pm. 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.



### Mens' Breakfast Group

Mens' Breakfast Group meets the third Saturday of each month, at 8:30 am, in Johnson Hall. The next meeting will be Saturday, November 20; for information, contact Gary Gilmore (255-4396).



ECW meets the second Saturday of every month. The business meeting begins at 10:00 a.m. with fellowship afterwards as we enjoy breakfast snacks and coffee. We continue to plan for the rest of 2010 and for 2011. Next month we will have our Christmas Gourmet to Go in place of the meeting. (see details below)

Please come with your ideas and interests about how we can continue to be a vital ministry to St. Thomas and the surrounding community.



### CHRISTMAS GOURMET TO GO

This popular ECW fund raiser will be held on December 11 beginning at 10:00. All you cooks and bakers start researching your best recipes for casseroles, side dishes, cookies, pies, cakes, and preserves. This is advertised community-wide, so come early to pick-up your favorite, delectable dish. The donations can be either frozen or fresh and should feed six to eight people. This year we will have some other interesting articles to purchase.



### Stewardship Dinner on November 14

Please mark Sunday evening, November 14 on your calendars. We will hold our annual Stewardship Dinner at the church at 5:00 pm. There also will be a timely performance by our Amazing Praisers. This always has been a good social time and chance to enjoy fellowship. Invitations were mailed this week.

### Silver Screen



Our program of classic movies for adults continues this month on November 12. We had technical difficulties last month which postponed the showing of the advertised movie "Elmer Gantry". We will try again this month using a new TV donated by Patty and Jim Hourin. Thanks to them for their generosity. This year we also will work in some old TV classics. A social hour begins at 6:00 pm and the movie begins about 6:45 pm, Please bring heavy hors d'oeuvres and other refreshments in lieu of dinner. Call Bobbie Stephens (255-1241) for further information

### ADVENT WREATHS



Families, individuals and children are invited to St. Thomas' annual Advent Wreath Making party on Saturday, November 27. The Season of Advent begins the next day on November 28. Most supplies will be available, including styrofoam wreaths, candles and candle holders, glue guns, and floral holders, plus some decorations. Please bring your own fresh greens from surrounding woods or in your yard; your own decorations and ribbons, and any other special adornments. This is always a fun activity as we share our creations with each other and sip warm apple cider with cookies. Starting the very next day the first candle can be glowing in your home for Advent.



### Stewardship Sunday on November 21

On Sunday November 21 we will offer our 2011 pledges to God during the collection at the 8:00 am and 10:00 am services. Please bring your completed pledge cards at that time. If you cannot be with us that day please mail your pledges or bring them to the church office as soon thereafter as possible. We pray that we all will be generous as we recognize the blessings God has conferred upon us.



### The Prayer Shawl Ministry

The group of prayer shawl knitters (the Knit-Wits) continues to meet on Mondays from 1:30—3:00. Come and enjoy good company and lively conversation while knitting or crocheting the shawls destined for friends or family members in need of the comfort, warmth, and solace a shawl can bring. For anyone recovering from illness, or grieving, or undergoing hospitalization, the shawls are available, free of charge, to anyone in the congregation. To request one, please call Barbara Ford (255-4401) or Georgia Pickens (255-0651). Father Bill will bless the shawls before they are sent or given by a parishioner.

If you knit or crochet or would like to learn, please join us. You might prefer to take the yarn and do it at home, especially if the Monday time is inconvenient. You are more than welcome and we, in advance, appreciate you. We will supply the yarn and needles.



### The Amazing Praisers

Christmas Eve is always an exciting time, especially for children. And what is more fun and inspirational than to tell the Christmas story once again in a skit. This year, as we have done in the past, we will call on our children to be a part of this wonderful story. Stay tuned for an announcement from the Amazing Praisers for rehearsal dates.

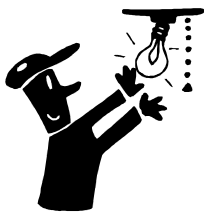
We need adults as well to play the part of The Holy Family, the Innkeeper and other roles. Our children always star in roles as shepherds, wisemen, and of course angels.

Our next production will be at the Stewardship Dinner on November 14 at 5:00. Don't miss this skit of a parody on a congregation meeting at "The Church of Good Cheer"

The Amazing Praisers is open to all ages, talents, gifts, carpenters, artists, seamstresses, and many whose talents are still to be discovered. Call Susan White, 255-2568 for more information

### Handy Helpers

The Handy Helpers ministry is here to do just that; help when you need a hand. Please feel free to call Frank Cuervo or Darlene Park with small requests for assistance around the house. They have lists of people who can be dispatched to deal with things such as changing ceiling light bulbs, fixing toilets that won't stop running, leaky faucets, and other similar tasks. This ministry does not include projects that contractors, electricians, or gardeners normally would do.



### Lectors and Chalicers Needed

We need additional people to be trained as Lectors (come up from the congregation and read on Sunday,) and Chalicers, formally called Lay Eucharistic Ministers (who are vested and serve at the altar on Sunday). Please contact Fr. Bill if you feel called to serve in either or both of these ministries.

### A Blessed Event

Congratulations to parents Allison and Ronnie Vanney, Jr. and grandparents Connie and Skip Giffin, on the birth of their daughter/granddaughter, Madison Jeanne, on October 12. All are thriving.



### Pledge Receipts Still Behind



We continue to be a little behind in receiving our 2010 pledges. We began the year with a balanced budget and were operating with a slight surplus at the end of May. However, we fell behind in June and remain behind now. If you are not current on your pledge for this year, we request that you catch up as soon as possible. You already have received a statement from the church with an update on your 2010 pledge through September. Pledges must be received and deposited by the church before noon on December 31, to be tax deductible by the IRS. All or part of your 2011 pledge may be pre-paid in December for a 2010 tax deduction.



### Discount Dining Cards (Fine Dining While Helping the Church)

St. Thomas is offering the above dining card: 20 free meals for \$20. The bearer will receive one free entre when purchasing an entre at Salute and Back Bay restaurants (10 meals each). The church keeps one half of the price of each card. Cards are available in the church office. This is a great deal, and helps the church as well. To date the church has made a \$560 profit.



### Nursing Home Ministry

### Woodland Village Ministry Continues

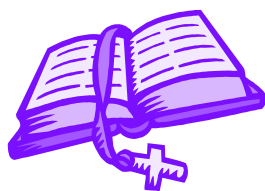
Each Friday we conduct a worship service at the Woodland Village Nursing Center on Gex Road south of the church. We will celebrated our first anniversary of services at Woodland Village in September. This is a wonderful opportunity to serve the elderly in our community in their own setting. Please see Fr. Bill if you are interested in serving in this minis-



### Memorial Garden Update

The Memorial Garden is nearing completion. We thank Paul Montjoy for his dedication to this project. The installation of lights has been completed. The next steps are moving the niches from the columbarium in the back of the church to the outside under the altar, and installing additional niches. These outside niches will be water-proof and designed for all weather conditions. The cost of a niche will remain the same as it has been, which is \$2,500 per niche.

There also will be separate opportunities to permanently affix one or more plaques for \$300 each to the bricks on the front of the altar. It is not required that ashes be in a niche in order to have a plaque. Many people might want to have some lasting memorial for their years of worship at St. Thomas even though their final resting place might be elsewhere. Plaques also may be placed by members in memory of family or friends. Please see Fr. Bill with questions.



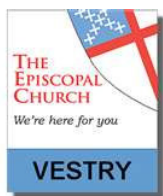
### Bible Study

Women's Bible Study will continue with the Study of the Book of Acts of the Apostles. Please join us every Monday at 3:00-4:30 pm at the church Call Maren Casano (255-4117) for more information or just show up.



### Confirmation/ Reception Classes

Classes begin Sunday, December 5, at 9:00 between the services for all wishing to be confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church. This is one of the sacramental rites of the church and historically has been a step in Christian development. Bishop Gray will be at St. Thomas later in the year to confirm and receive new members. This also would be a good Christian education course for anyone wishing to refresh their knowledge or deepen their faith. Please contact Fr. Bill if you are interested or have questions.



### Vestry Elections

The annual meeting of the parish will be held in January 2011 at a date and time to be announced. One of the agenda items will be the election of three new vestry members. Members whose terms expire are Don Ball, Patty Hourin, and Tyrone Sartin. By tradition these out-going members serve as a committee to help recruit candidates for the Vestry. Please contact one of them if you think you might be called to service in this way. Vestry members must be confirmed communicants

of St. Thomas. Those who were confirmed in an Episcopal church elsewhere must have their membership letters on file at St. Thomas, or be able to forthwith move them to St. Thomas.

# Fall Clean-up and Grill

Thanks to all who helped with our annual Fall Clean-Up on October 17. This is a wonderful time to enjoy friends, fellowship, and food as we help spruce up and organize the church. See the pictures below.



Tough job Michael, right Leslie?  
(Michael and Leslie Cowan with Nyle and Noah)



Jane Cohen and Nancy Boice work in the flower beds.



Abbey Nicholson (climbing) Caroline and Kate Tibbs (seesaw) gave the new playground a workout.



Ashley Tibbs slaves over the grill as Skip Giffin supervises.



Marci Rogers, Carmen Nicholson, Lynda Gilmore, and Elise Breen give the inside a sprucing up.



Gwen Montjoy, Sean Zeigler with Gabriel, Tyrone Sartin, Sid Mizell and Gary Gilmore trim up the east side of the church.



## November Serving Schedule

	<b>The 24th Sunday after Pentecost November 7</b>	<b>The 25th Sunday after Pentecost November 14</b>	<b>The Last Sunday after Pentecost November 21</b>	<b>The 1st Sunday Of Advent November 28</b>
<b>Altar Guild</b>	<u><i>Team 3</i></u> Crowe, Mueller Rogers, Swayze	<u><i>Team 4</i></u> D & J Fairchild, Floyd, Giffin	<u><i>Team 1</i></u> Ball, Bentson, Breen, Hourin	<u><i>Team 2</i></u> Casano, Gaupp, Gilmore, Park
<b>Flower Guild</b>	Arva Kyger	Rusty Cobb	Bobbie Stephens	Barbara Boos
<b>8 am Chalice Reader</b>	Chalice—Weidlich Reader—Allen	Chalice— DeDeaux Reader—Calvert	Chalice—DeDeaux Reader-Calvert	Chalice—Weidlich Reader-Allen
<b>10 am Chalice Reader</b>	Chalice—DeDeaux, Giffin Reader—Casano	Chalice—Park, Floyd Reader—White	Chalice—Stephens, Cuervo Reader—Hourin	Chalice—Park Reader—P. Edwards
<b>Acolytes</b>	Caroline Tibbs	TBA	TBA	Allie Edwards Reagan Edwards
<b>Usher— 8am</b>	<b>8 am</b> —Frallic	<b>8 am</b> —Young	<b>8 am</b> —Frallic	<b>8 am</b> —Young
<b>Usher— 10 am</b>	<b>10am</b> —Crowe, Gilmore	<b>10am</b> —Tibbs, Floyd	<b>10:00</b> —Young Crowe	<b>10 am</b> —Goeman Crowe
<b>Greeter-10am</b>	Paul Montjoy	Paul Montjoy	Paul Montjoy	Paul Montjoy
<b>Hospitality</b>	Marge Edwards	Penny Edwards	Lady Anne Bruce	Rose Rybiski
<b>Bulletin Helpers</b>	For Thursday Nov 4 Pris Williams	For Thursday Nov 11 Mary Minor Fargason	For Thursday Nov 18 Mary Sartin	For Wednesday Nov 24 Georgia Pickens



## Choose Prayer

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Phi 4:6*

St. Thomas is a praying church and committed to bringing requests from His people to Him through members of the St. Thomas Prayer Team. You are invited to seek and offer prayers for yourselves and others.

Prayers are essential in our Christian life, and gathering others to pray with you and for you is very powerful.

The prayer team is also committed to confidentiality and to respect each other's privacy. Prayers can be offered for a need, a request, for protection, healing, or in thanksgiving, a revelation, and intercessory prayer — or anything else that needs to be supported by others.

*"For when two or three come together in My name, there am I with them."  
Matthew 18:10*



As we experience the Holy Spirit together when we pray, His power is released to enhance our prayers, bring us peace and comfort, and to encourage the joy of this life.

The Prayer Ministry has three ways of offering and lifting to the Lord our requests:

† **The Prayer Chapel** ~ a team of two people from the Prayer Team will pray for you each Sunday. The team will be in the Prayer Chapel (the columbarium) during communion and after services;

† **The Prayer Box** ~ a black box with forms next to it is located in the foyer. These forms are used for prayer requests which are sent out by e-mail to others in the Prayer Team. There is no need to sign the requests or to name others.

† **24-Hour Emergency Prayer Requests** ~ members of the Prayer Team are alerted should a situation arise that needs immediate prayer.

On Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m., there is a Holy Eucharist and a Healing Service at St. Thomas. At the healing service, Fr. Bill prays with each person as they kneel at the altar. He also offers Holy Unction for those wishing to be anointed. Also at this time, when requested, members can gather around and lay hands on a person for a need.

Please make use of these powerful prayer ministries. We are here to serve and to minister to each other.

## Newsletter Distribution



In an ongoing effort to reduce expenses, we will make newsletter copies available in the foyer and on the website [www.stthomasdiamondhead.org/](http://www.stthomasdiamondhead.org/).

Serving schedules for each month, as well as the weekly News and Announcements in the Sunday service bulletins are also on the website.

We will use snail mail for the few out of town copies we send, and for anyone in the parish who specifically requests it. Please contact Debbye in the church office for this service.

*Susan White*, Editor, [susaninms@bellsouth.net](mailto:susaninms@bellsouth.net)

*Debbye Jones*, Publisher, [deb@stthomasdiamondhead.org](mailto:deb@stthomasdiamondhead.org)

*The Rev. William R. White, Rector*  
5303 Diamondhead Circle  
Diamondhead MS 39525  
228-255-9213 (PH) 228-255-7044 (FX)  
[frbill@stthomasdiamondhead.org](mailto:frbill@stthomasdiamondhead.org)  
[www.stthomasdiamondhead.org](http://www.stthomasdiamondhead.org)

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
5303 Diamondhead Circle  
Diamondhead MS 39525

