

“WELCOME TO THE MOTHER CHURCH”

“Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Give thanks unto Him and bless His name”

Psalm 100:4

Grace and Peace to you from God on this **Third Sunday of Advent and Rose / Gaudete Sunday.**

On behalf of the Clergy, Wardens, Vestry and People of God, welcome to the historic **African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas**, founded in 1792 as the first black Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. The first rector of this historic parish, The Rev. Fr. Absalom Jones was also the first black Episcopal priest in the nation.

Our parish boldly proclaims the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are an active, mission-minded and growing church family. Whoever you are and wherever you may find yourself on your spiritual journey of faith, you are always welcomed at St. Thomas’ Church, where we are joyfully and enthusiastically committed to Jesus’ message of love, hope, prayer, acceptance and faith. Today, as you worship in this place, may you experience and feel the presence of the Lord, and may you leave feeling renewed, refreshed and revived..

Faithfully,

Martini Shaw⁺

(The Very Rev. Canon) Martini Shaw,

17th Rector and

Dean of the Schuylkill Deanery

**The Third Sunday of Advent
Rose / Gaudete Sunday
December 11, 2022
10:00 am**

Celebrant: The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw

Homilists: Fr. Shaw, Kathryn Brossa & David King

Seminarians in Residence: Kathryn Brossa & David King

Music Ministry: St. Thomas Gospel Choir

ORDER OF SERVICE

The Organ Prelude

St. Thomas Music Ministry

The Opening Hymn - "Have Your Way Lord"

Verse #1

Have your way Lord, Have your way
Have your way Lord, Have your way
Do what you want to do, as long as you want to
Have your way Lord, have your way Lord
We're here right now have your way
We're here right now have your way

Verse #2

In this service, have your way
In this service, have your way
Do what you want to do, as long as you want to
Have your way Lord, have your way Lord
We're here right now have your way
We're here right now have your way

A Word of Welcome

The Rector

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath



Advent Wreath Liturgy

Eugene Golson: Our God comes to live among us!

Let us prepare His way with justice!

All: Stir in us, O God, a deep desire for peace through justice!

Reading: Revelation 3: 7-13

To the angel of the church at Philadelphia write: "These are the words of the holy one, the true one, who holds the key of David; when he opens none may shut, when he shuts none may open: know all your ways; and look, I have set before you an open door, which no one can shut. Your strength, I know, is small yet you have observed my commands and have not disowned my name. So this is what I will do: I will make those of Satan's synagogue, who claim to be Jews but are lying frauds, come and fall down at your feet; and they shall know that you are my beloved people. Because you have kept my command and stood fast, I will also keep you from the ordeal that is to fall upon the whole world and test its inhabitants. I am coming soon; hold fast what you have, and let no one rob you of your crown. He who is victorious, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; he shall never leave it. And I will write the name of my God upon him, and in the name of the city of my God, that new Jerusalem which is coming down out of heaven from my God, and my own new name. Hear, you who have ears to hear, what the Spirit says to the churches!"

Eugene: We light these three candles as a sign of our joy in Your promise to send us Jesus, who reveals to us the fullness of life. The Pink candle signifies Hope.

Two Purple Candles and the Pink candle are lit this week. Pause for a moment of silence.

Eugene: Let us pray.

All: *Loving God, Your care for us is reason indeed to live joyfully. In the actions of Jesus, You showed us how steadfast You are in Your commitment to being with us, even when we are afraid and in pain. We need Your help that we may become as steadfastly joyful as Jesus was. We ask, O Loving God, that as we prepare for the coming again of that same Jesus, Your Spirit will rest upon us as it did upon Him.*

*Let us go in peace To love and serve our God
Let us strive for peace with each and every other.
Let us be at peace within ourselves.
Amen.*

The Penitential Salutation:

Celebrant: Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

People: And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. **AMEN**

The Decalogue

BCP 350

Celebrant: Hear the commandments of God to his people: I am the Lord your God who brought you out of bondage.

You shall have no other gods but me.

People: Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not make for yourself any idol.

Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not invoke with malice the Name of the Lord your God.

Amen. Lord have mercy.

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

Amen. Lord have mercy.

Honor your father and your mother.

Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not commit murder.

Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not commit adultery.

Amen. Lord have mercy

You shall not steal.

Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not be a false witness.

Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Amen. Lord have mercy.

The Confession

BCP 360

Celebrant: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Let us kneel and confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and what we have left undone, We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. AMEN.

The Absolution

The Celebrant

Celebrant: Almighty God, have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **AMEN.**

The Kyrie elesion

BCP 356

Celebrant: Lord, have mercy.

People: Christ, have mercy.

Celebrant: Lord have mercy

The Proclamation of The Word

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant : The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

Cynthia Muse

A Reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help! *

whose hope is in the Lord their God;

Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; *

who keeps his promise for ever;

Who gives justice to those who are oppressed, *

and food to those who hunger.

The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind; *

the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;

The Lord loves the righteous; the Lord cares for the stranger; *

he sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

The Lord shall reign for ever, *

your God, O Zion, throughout all generations.

Hallelujah!

The Second Reading: James 5:7-10

Tyrone Keller

A Reading from the Letter from James

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Gradual Hymn - "We'll Understand It Better By and By"

1) We are often tossed and driv'n
on the restless sea of time,
somber skies and howling tempest
oft succeed a bright sunshine;
in that land of perfect day,
when the mists have rolled away,
we will understand it better by and by. **[Refrain]**

2) We are often destitute
of the things that life demands,
want of food and want of shelter,
thirsty hills and barren lands;
we are trusting in the Lord,
and according to His Word,
we will understand it better by and by. **[Refrain]**

Refrain:

By and by, when the morning comes,
when the saints of God are gathered home,
we'll tell the story,
how we've overcome,
for we'll understand it better by and by.

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

“Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

Priest: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Homily Hymn - “We’ll Understand It Better By and By”

3) Trails dark on every hand,
and we cannot understand,
All the ways that God would lead us
to that blessed promised land;
But he guideth us with His eye
and we’ll follow til we die
For we’ll understand it better by and by [Refrain]

4) Temptations, hidden snares,
often take us unawares,
and our hearts are made to bleed for
many a thoughtless word or deed;
and we wonder why the test
when we try to do our best,
but we’ll understand it better by and by. [Refrain]

Refrain:

By and by, when the morning comes,
when the saints of God are gathered home,
we’ll tell the story,
how we’ve overcome,
for we’ll understand it better by and by.

The Homily The Call to Christian Discipleship

Fr. Shaw, Kathryn Brossa & David King

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of
God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from
true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.

BCP 358

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy
Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. **Amen**

The Prayers of the People

Marie Golson

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

We pray for a Holy season of Advent. Lord, in your mercy; **Hear our prayer.**

Grant Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world. Lord, in your mercy; **Hear our prayer.**

Guide the people of this land, and all of the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good. Lord, in your mercy; **Hear our prayer.**

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory. Lord, in your mercy; **Hear our prayer.**

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation. Lord, in your mercy; **Hear our prayer.**

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom. Lord in your mercy; **Hear our prayer**

For those incarcerated: Guide them Lord in all they do with your Grace and Love and grant them your continual help. In all their problems, your guidance; in all their dangers, your protection and in all their sorrows, your peace. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those who for whatever reason are unable to worship with us in the breaking of the bread, the source of our faith; **That they be sustained by our Lord's promise to be with us for all eternity.**

Prince of Peace help us.

God of Grace save us.

In the communion of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Thomas, Absalom, and all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life to Christ our God; **To thee, Lord our God.**

The Concluding Collect

The Celebrant

The Peace

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

The Holy Eucharist

Offertory Sentence and Offering Offertory Musical Selection

St. Thomas Gospel Choir

The Great Thanksgiving

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

For you are the source of light and life; you made us in your image, and called us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Celebrant and People

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

The Celebrant

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all. He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Celebrant

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

The Lord's Prayer

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray,

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People: Therefore let us keep the feast.

The Agnus Dei

Celebrant: Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world

People: Have mercy upon us.

Celebrant: Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world

People: Have mercy upon us.

Celebrant: Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world

People: Grant us thy peace.

Let us pray:

Celebrant and People: We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy; Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. **AMEN**

The Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

(All baptized persons are invited to receive communion. If you have not been baptized, please still come to the altar to receive a blessing. For those not baptized, please indicate by crossing your arms on your chest.)

Post- Communion Prayer

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Announcements

Recognition of Guests and Visitors

The Blessing of Birthdays, Anniversaries and Travel

The Blessing

The Closing Hymn- "Soon and Very Soon" (Christ is coming)

LEVAS # 14

1) Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Christ is coming, Christ is coming
we're goin' to see the King!

2) No more cryin' there we are goin' to see the King,
No more cryin' there we are goin' to see the King,
No more cryin' there we are goin' to see the King,
Christ is coming, Christ is coming
we're goin' to see the King!

3) No more dyin' there we are goin' to see the King,
No more dyin' there we are goin' to see the King,
No more dyin' there we are goin' to see the King,
Christ is coming, Christ is coming
we're goin' to see the King!

4) Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Christ is coming, Christ is coming
we're goin' to see the King!

The Dismissal**The Postlude**

The St. Thomas Music Ministry