



**AECST  
FOUNDED 1792**

**“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 **the Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany / Celebration of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. Absalom Jones / and the Parish’s 231<sup>st</sup> Anniversary**. Today, we are **blessed to have worshipping with us our Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church, the Most Rev. Michael Curry and our bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, the Right Rev. Daniel G.P. Gutiérrez.**

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. His remains and altar are in our possession.

Our parish boldly proclaims the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are an active, re-imagining 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. Again, welcome!

Faithfully,  
Martini Shaw +  
(The Very Rev. Canon) Martini Shaw,

17th Rector and  
Dean of the Schuylkill Deanery

**The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany  
The Feast of Absalom Jones  
Celebration of the 231st Parish Anniversary  
February 5, 2023**

**Presider and Preacher:** The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry

**Celebrant:** The Right Rev. Daniel G.P. Gutiérrez

**Chaplain to the Presiding Bishop:** The Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers

**Chaplain to the Diocesan Bishop:** The Rev. Canon Betsy Ivey

**Assisting Clergy:** The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw, The Rev. Fr. Gerald Collins,  
The Rev. Sarah Hedgis-Kligerman, The Very Rev. Judith Sullivan,  
The Rev. Canon Tyrone Fowlkes, The Rev. Andrea Gardner

**Deacon of the Mass:** The Rev. Canon Toneh Smyth

**Seminarians:** Kathryn Brossa and David King

**Verger:** Karen Ragland

**Music Ministry: Directors** – Mr. Waltier Blocker and Dr. Jay Fluellen

**Organist** – Pastor Brandon Joynes

**Percussionist** – Wayne Browne, Jr.; **Bass** – Wayne Browne, III

**Flute** - Diane Kay-Clarke; **Trumpet** - Michael Clark;

**St. Thomas Chancel Choir and St. Thomas Gospel Choir**

**Dance Ministry:** St. Thomas Angels in Motion

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**ORDER OF SERVICE**

**Prelude of Music**

St. Thomas Music Ministry

**The Introit** - “Blessed Absalom” Arr. Jay Fluellen

St. Thomas Chancel Choir

LEVAS # 44

1) Born in bondage, born in shackles, Born stripped of all dignity  
Absalom Jones was bound determined, That he would one day be free;  
Blessed Abs’lom, leads us, guides us, In the bonds of unity.

2) Seeking to expand horizons, Bible, primer he did find; To each word  
he was attentive, Learning, lest he fall behind.  
Blessed Abs’lom, liberates us From the prison of our mind.

3) When in Philadelphia settled, He sought persons in great need,  
Dedicated to empow’ment, His own people did he lead.  
Blessed Abs’lom, pray that we from All indifference may be freed.

4) One fine morning, while at worship, Wrested from his knees in prayer;  
He, his friends, were thus evicted: “You no more may praise God here.”  
Blessed Abs’lom, pray that we may Stand steadfast and persevere.

5) Founded he Saint Thomas’ Church for Afric’s sons and daughters blest;  
Full fledged members of Christ’s Body, They no longer were oppressed.  
Blessed Abs’lom, pray that we may Be the church at Christ’s behest.

6) Blessed Abs'lom Jones, first priest of Afric's stock within our fold;  
May we, inspired by your witness Raise up priests with hearts of gold!  
Blessed Abs'lom, pioneer, prophet May your story long be told!

7) Praise to Christ the Liberator; Praise Creator ever blest; Praise the  
Spirit, Source of comfort North to south, and east to west;  
Blessed Abs'lom, priest, exemplar, In God's bosom now at rest.

**The Opening Hymn** - "The Church's one Foundation"

1982 Hymnal #525

1) The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;  
she is his new creation by water and the word: from heaven  
he came and sought her to be his holy bride; with his own  
blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

2) Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth, her charter  
of salvation, one Lord, one faith, one birth; one holy Name she  
blesses, partakes one holy food, and to one hope she presses,  
with every grace endued.

3) Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of her war she waits the  
consummation of peace for ever more; till with the vision glorious  
her longing eyes are blessed, and the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest.

4) Yet she on earth hath union with God, the Three in One, and  
mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won. O  
happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we like them,  
the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with thee.

**A Word of Welcome**

The Rector

**The Opening Salutation:**

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

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

**The Collect for Purity**

**Celebrant:** Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. AMEN

**The Gloria in excelsis** arr. Waltier Blocker

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King,  
Almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of  
the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ  
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. AMEN

**The Anthem of Praise** - "Lift Every Voice and Sing" LEVAS#1

St. Thomas Gospel Choir

## **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.

Set us free, heavenly Father, from every bond of prejudice and fear; that, honoring the steadfast courage of your servant Absalom Jones, we may show forth in our lives the reconciling love and true freedom of the children of God, which you have given us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. **Amen**

### **The First Reading: Isaiah 42: 5-9**

Cordelia Biddle, St. Peter's Church

#### **A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah.**

Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

**Reader:** The Word of the Lord

**People:** Thanks be to God.

### **Psalm 126**

David King, Seminarian

Psalm Response - "His Love is Everlasting" (Response)

LEVAS # 273

**His love, His love,**

**His love is everlasting. [Response]**

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, \*  
then were we like those who dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, \*  
and our tongue with shouts of joy. **[Response]**

Then they said among the nations, \*  
"The Lord has done great things for them."

The Lord has done great things for us, \*  
and we are glad indeed. **[Response]**

Restore our fortunes, O Lord, \*  
like the watercourses of the Negev.

Those who sowed with tears \*  
will reap with songs of joy. **[Response]**

Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, \*  
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves. **[Response]**

**The Second Reading: Ephesians 4: 1-6**  
**A Reading from the Book of Ephesians**

Avery Jones, St. Thomas

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

**Reader:** The Word of the Lord

**People:** Thanks be to God

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

LEVAS# 207 (Vss. 1-4)

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. **[Chorus]**

**Chorus:** By and by when the morning comes, when the saints of God are  
gathered home, we'll tell the story how we're overcome;  
For we'll understand it better by and by.

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. **[Chorus]**

3) Trials dark on every hand, and we cannot understand,  
All the ways that God would lead us to that blessed promised land;  
But He guides us with His eye and we'll follow till we die,  
For we'll understand it better by and by. **[Chorus]**

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. **[Chorus]**

**The Holy Gospel: John 15: 12-15**

The Rev. Canon Toneh Smyth

**The Deacon:** The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

**The People:** Glory to you, Lord Christ.

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father'.

**The Deacon:** The Gospel of the Lord

**The People:** Praise to you, Lord Christ.

**The Sermon Hymn - "Oh How I Love Jesus"**

LEVAS# 95 (Vss. 1-4)

1) There is a name I love to hear, I love to sing its worth;  
It sounds like music in mine ear, The sweetest name on earth. **[Chorus]**

**Chorus:** O how I love Jesus, O how I love Jesus,  
O how I love Jesus, Because He first loved me.

2) It tells me of a Savior's love, who died to set me free;  
It tells me of His precious blood, The sinner's perfect plea. **[Chorus]**

3) It tells me what my Father hath In store for every day, and though  
I tread a darksome path, Yields sunshine all the way. **[Chorus]**

4) It tells of one whose loving heart Can feel my deepest woe, who in  
each sorrow bears a part, that none can bear below. **[Chorus]**

**The Sermon**

Presiding Bishop and Primate, The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry

**The Call to Christian Discipleship**

The Rector

**A Dance Selection**

St. Thomas Angels in Motion

**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.

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**

Nava Hall, Christ Church; Colin Mitchell, St. Thomas

**Colin:** In Peace, we pray to you, Lord God:

Let us pray for the Church and for the world. Grant Almighty God, that all who confess your Name, may be united in your faith, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world. Lord in your mercy;

**Hear our prayer.**

**Nava:** For Michael our Presiding Bishop, Daniel our Bishop, Martini our Rector, Gerald our Associate Priest, Kathryn and David our seminarians, Paul and Thomas our Associate Ministers, Karen and Stephen our Vergers, and for all bishops and other ministers. Lord in your mercy; **Guide and bless them O Lord.**

**Colin:** 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.**

**Nava:** We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world. Lord in your mercy; **Hear our prayer.**

**Colin:** 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.**

**Nava:** Give us the grace to do your will Lord, everything in your name and for your honor and glory. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

**Colin:** Have compassion on those who suffer from any illness, anxiety, depression or unemployment. Lord in your mercy; **Hear our prayer.**

**Nava:** Gracious God, as we celebrate 231 years of your faithfulness, and grace, and rejoice in our present, we also look forward with eager eyes to the future. We pray that You would continue to make Your love known among us. Give us a zeal for mission. Help us to go beyond our walls to those who don't know You. Make this church a blessing to those around us, and embolden us to move forward re-imagining with strength towards what lies ahead. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our Prayer.**

**Colin:** 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. And we remember and pray for those who may have been affected by their actions. Lord in your mercy; **Hear our prayer.**

**Nava:** 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 are sustained by our Lord's promise to be with us for all eternity.**

**Colin:** Prince of Peace, helps us.  
**God of Grace, save us**

**Nava:** For those who have entered in to the joy of the heavenly Jerusalem, especially Blessed Absalom and others who have died; Lord, in your mercy; **Hear our prayer.**

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

(Silence is observed)

**The Concluding Collect**

The Celebrant

**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.

(Silence is kept)



**Celebrant and The People:**

**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 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.(Celebrant adds a Proper preface)

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 with Angels and Archangels and all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

**The Sanctus (Sung)** arr. Waltier Blocker

**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:

**The Memorial Acclamation:** “A spiritual melody”

**Jesus Christ has died.**

**Jesus Christ is risen.**

**Jesus 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** arr. Albert Hay Malotte

LEVAS # 264

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:** Alleluia, Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

**People:** Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia .

**The Agnus Dei** arr. Majorie Landsmark DeLewis

LEVAS # 270

**The Prayer of Humble Access**

**Celebrant:** 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**

**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.

## **The Distribution of the Sacrament**

(Please follow the direction of the Ushers)

All Baptized persons are invited to receive communion. If you have not been baptized, you are invited to come to the altar to receive a blessing. Please indicate by crossing your arms on your chest. Gluten free hosts are available upon request.

### **Post- Communion Prayer**

**Celebrant:** Let us pray

**Celebrant and People:**

**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 / Greetings / Presentations**

- **Deadra Cannon**- Rector's Warden
- **Arthur Sudler** - Director of St. Thomas Historical Society
- **Monica Lewis Jones, Catherine Stafford and Al Dandridge** - Co Chairs of 231<sup>st</sup> Parish Anniversary
- **Honorable Paul Anthony Hibner**, No. 18, 160<sup>th</sup> Most Worshipful Grand Master;  
Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania

**Recognition of Guests and Visitors**

The Rector

**The Blessing of Birthdays, Anniversaries and Travel**

The Rector

**Procession and Prayer at the Final Resting Place of Blessed Absalom Jones**

The Rev. Fr. Gerald Collins

**The Final Blessing**

The Most Rev. Michael Curry

**The Closing Hymn**-"Siyahamba" (We Are Marching in the Light of God)

1.)Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',  
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',  
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',  
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',

Siyahamba, hamba,  
Siyahamba, Ohooo  
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen', kwenkhos'

Siyahamba, hamba,  
Siyahamba, Ohooo  
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.

2.)We are marching in the light of God,  
We are marching in the light of God,  
We are marching in the light of God,  
We are marching in the light of God.

We are marching, marching,  
We are marching, Ohooo  
We are marching in the light of God,

We are marching, marching,  
We are marching, Ohooo  
We are marching in the light of God.

3.)We are singing.....

4.)We are shouting.....

5.)We are dancing.....

6.)We are loving.....

7.)We are serving.....

**The Dismissal**  
**The Postlude**

The Rev. Canon Toneh Smyth  
St. Thomas Music Ministry