

“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 **Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost and the Observance of the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi.**

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 USA, and proudly a part of the world-wide Anglican Communion. 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 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,
The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw
17th Rector and
Dean of the Schuylkill Deanery



Please use the QR Code or Text “AECST” to 73256 to contribute to the church ministries.

**The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
The Observance of the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi
October 4, 2026**

The Celebrant: The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw
Homilists: Fr. Shaw, Deadra Cannon, Phyllis Cater, Gail Harris,
Quentin Heyward, and Susan Ben
Assisting: The Rev. Fr. Gerald Collins
Vergers: Dr. Naomi Johnson Booker, Eugene Golson and Karen Ragland
Music Ministry: St. Thomas Chancel Choir
Livestream/Sound Ministry: Yaseen Farooq and Ryan Chatman

Order of Service

The Opening Meditation

The Verger

The Prelude

St. Thomas Music Ministry

The Opening Hymn- “On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand”

Lift Every Voice And Sing (LEVAS) #99

1) My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil. [Refrain]

Refrain:

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand:
All other ground is sinking sand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

3) His oath, His covenant, and blood,
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay. [Refrain]

2) When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;

4) When he shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in Him be found:
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne. [Refrain]

A Word of Welcome

The Celebrant

The Opening Salutation

Book of Common Prayer (BCP) Pg. 355

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

The People: And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. Amen.

The Collect for Purity

BCP Pg. 355

The 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 (*sung*)

The Celebrant and the People

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 Proclamation of the Word

The Collect of the Day

The Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

The People: And also with you.

The Celebrant: Let us pray:

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The First Reading: Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

Deborah Camp-Frye

A Reading from the Book of Exodus.

Then God spoke all these words: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. For six days you shall labor and do all your work.

Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance, and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die." Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin."

The Reader: The Word of the Lord.

The People: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 19

Sharon Harper

The heavens declare the glory of God,*
and the firmament shows his handiwork.

One day tells its tale to another,*
and one night imparts knowledge to another.

Although they have no words or language, *
and their voices are not heard,

Their sound has gone out into all lands, *
and their message to the ends of the world.

In the deep has he set a pavilion for the sun; *
it comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber;
it rejoices like a champion to run its course.

It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens
and runs about to the end of it again; *
nothing is hidden from its burning heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect
and revives the soul; *
the testimony of the Lord is sure
and gives wisdom to the innocent.

The statutes of the Lord are just
and rejoice the heart; *
the commandment of the Lord is clear
and gives light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean
and endures forever; *
the judgments of the Lord are true
and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold,
more than much fine gold, *
sweeter far than honey,
than honey in the comb.

By them also is your servant enlightened, *
and in keeping them there is great reward.

Who can tell how often he offends? *
cleanse me from my secret faults.

Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins;
let them not get dominion over me; *
then shall I be whole and sound,
and innocent of a great offense.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my
heart be acceptable in your sight, *
O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

The Second Reading: Philippians 3:4-14

Kim Phillips

A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Philippians

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

The Reader: The Word of the Lord.

The People: Thanks be to God.

The Gradual Hymn— “Done Made My Vow to the Lord”

LEVAS # 123

**Done made my vow to the Lord, And I
never will turn back, Oh I will go,
I shall go to see what the end will be.**

**1) Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down;
See what the end will be, But
still my soul is heav'nly bound, See what the end
will be.**

**Done made my vow to the Lord, And I
never will turn back, Oh I will go,**

I shall go to see what the end will be.

**2) When I was a mourner just like you,
See what the end will be, I
prayed and prayed 'til I came through,
See what the end will be.**

**Done made my vow to the Lord, And I
never will turn back, Oh I will go,
I shall go to see what the end will be.**

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 21:33-46

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

The People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said, “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’?”

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

The Priest: The Gospel of the Lord.

The People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Homily Hymn– “Done Made My Vow to the Lord”

LEVAS # 123

**Done made my vow to the Lord, And I
never will turn back, Oh I will go,
I shall go to see what the end will be.**

**1) Sometimes I’m up, sometimes I’m down;
See what the end will be, But
still my soul is heav’nly bound, See what the end
will be.**

**Done made my vow to the Lord, And I
never will turn back, Oh I will go,**

The Stewardship Homily

The Call to Christian Discipleship

**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**

I shall go to see what the end will be.

**2) When I was a mourner just like you,
See what the end will be, I
prayed and prayed ‘til I came through,
See what the end will be.**

**Done made my vow to the Lord, And I
never will turn back, Oh I will go,
I shall go to see what the end will be.**

Fr. Shaw, Deadra Cannon, Phyllis Cater,
Gail Harris, Quentin Heyward and Susan Ben

**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 worshipped 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

Seth Williams

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

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.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good.

Silence

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.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

Silence

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.

Silence

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.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Make us instruments of reconciliation and peace and teach the nations of the earth to walk together in the ways of justice, mercy, and love.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Gracious God, on this observance of the Feast of St. Francis, we give thanks for the beauty of your creation and for the animals who bring companionship, comfort, and joy into our lives. Bless the pets gathered here today and bless those who care for them. Teach us to treat every living creature with gentleness and to be faithful stewards of the earth you have entrusted to us.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

The Concluding Collect

The Celebrant

The Confession

The 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)

The 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 by 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

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

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

The People: And also with you.

The Stewardship Offertory Message

Judy Tillman

The Holy Eucharist

The Offertory Sentence and Offering

The Celebrant

Offer your gift now via text: Text "AECST" to 73256

Or use the QR Code on page 1

The Musical Offertory Selection

St. Thomas Chancel Choir

The Great Thanksgiving**The Celebrant:** The Lord be with you.**The People:** And also with you.**The Celebrant:** Lift up your hearts.**The People:** We lift them to the Lord.**The Celebrant:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.**The People:** It is right to give God 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 forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

The Sanctus (*sung*)**The Celebrant and the 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:

The Memorial Acclamation (*sung*)**The Celebrant and the People****Jesus Christ has died.****Jesus Christ is risen.****Jesus Christ will come again.**

The 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 forever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer *(sung)*

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant: Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

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

The Agnus Dei *(sung)*

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

The People: Have mercy upon us.

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

The People: Have mercy upon us.

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

The People: Grant us thy peace.

The Prayer of Humble Access

Let us pray: 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.

The Distribution of Communion

All baptized persons who accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, are invited to receive the Holy Sacrament. If you only wish to receive a blessing, please cross your arms on your chest.

The Communion Selection

St. Thomas Music Ministry

The Post Communion Prayer

BCP pg. 365

The Celebrant and the 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.

Sending Forth of the Lay Eucharistic Visitors

The Celebrant: In the healing name of Jesus and with the compassionate embrace of this parish family, I send you forth bearing these Holy Gifts to those to whom you go today, so that they may share with us in the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood.

The People: **We who are many are one body, and we all share one bread and one cup.**

The Announcements

Richard Jones, Rector's Warden

The Recognition of Visitors and Guests

The Blessing of Birthdays, Anniversaries and Travel

The Blessing of Animals

The Final Blessing

The Closing Hymn - "In Christ There is No East or West"

LEVAS # 62

**1) In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North;
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth.**

**2) In Him shall true hearts everywhere Their
high communion find; His service is the
golden cord Close binding human kind.**

**3) Join hands, disciples of the faith, What
e're your race may be! Who serves my Father
as a son Is surely kin to me.**

**4) In Christ now meet both East and West, In
Him meet South and North; All Christly souls
are
one in him Through out the whole wide earth.**

The Dismissal

The Postlude

St. Thomas Music Ministry

The Sunday Spearhead
The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
The Feast of St. Francis of Assisi
October 4, 2026

Welcome all pet family members attending service today.

Condolences to the family of **Francina Norris**, who passed away on Monday, September 28, 2026. May the soul of Francina rest in peace and rise in glory. Funeral arrangements are pending. Please pray for the family.

Condolences to Tynecia Wilson and family on the death of her grandfather, **Rupert Robinson**. The service will be held at St. Thomas on Thursday, October 15, 2026. Viewing from 10:00 AM -11:00 AM. Requiem Mass at 11:00 AM. May the soul of Rupert rest in peace and rise in glory. Please pray for the family.

Oops!

Last Sunday, flowers on the High Altar were given in Thanksgiving for the **50th Birthday of Jenelle Wilson Johnson**, by her parents, Louise and Arnott Trotman; her husband, Gerald Johnson, Jr.; mother-in-law, Alice; brother and sister-in-law, Justin and Lee Anne; nephews, Addison and Axel; The Wilsons, The Cyruses, The Alexanders; The McCollins; The Bowrins and The Greaves families

Stewardship Campaign

October 4th is Kick-Off Sunday for the 2027 Stewardship Campaign. The Vestry will bring their Faithful Giving cards to the altar. Please take a Faithful Giving Card from the ushers before you leave this morning. Prayfully consider your pledge during the week then bring your Faithful Giving Card to the altar next Sunday, October 11th. You can also scan the QR code below to complete your pledge online:



A NOTE FROM THE RECTOR

- **REMINDER: Do not park** in the Overbrook Presbyterian Church parking lot on Sundays! Their office has told us this rule is still being violated! Thank you.
- Following the call to worship the Verger, or designated person, requests that the congregation maintain a spirit of reverence and silence as we prepare our hearts and minds for the worship of Almighty God. Please refrain from conversation.
- As a sign of reverence and respect for the worship of God and others, kindly remain in the church for the entirety of the liturgy, unless you have an unavoidable reason to leave early. Please refrain from exiting the church until after the closing hymn and the dismissal, as our worship is not complete until we are sent forth into the world to love and serve the Lord.

AECST LEGACY PATH CAMPAIGN

Leave a lasting legacy at The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas.

Personalized commemorative bricks are now available for purchase and will be permanently installed on the church grounds. Each engraved brick honors a loved one, marks a special occasion, or reflects your commitment to the future of AECST.

Your support strengthens our ministries, preserves our heritage, and helps ensure that St. Thomas continues to be a beacon of faith, hope, and love for generations to come. Each brick is \$125. Please contact Victoria Rivers at memorialtribute@aecst.org for information. Design and Personalize Your Brick at:

<https://share.google/OwnV8VD0cvLfbPcQQ>

HEALTH MINISTRY NEWS

Welcome to your 4-Week Fall Walking Challenge!

Fall is an ideal time for a walking challenge because the cooler temperatures, crisp air, and changing foliage make outdoor exercise comfortable and scenic. Scenic views and changing leaves reduce stress and help clear your mind. This challenge is specifically designed for absolute beginners. Start small, build your consistency, and focus on enjoying the season rather than pushing yourself to exhaustion. Be sure to check with your physician if you have any questions.

The Golden Rules for Beginners

Before taking your first step, keep these tips in mind to prevent injury:

- Avoid over-striding: Do not take massive steps to try and go faster. Take shorter, quicker steps instead. Roll your feet: Land on your heel and roll through to your toes.
- Wear flexible shoes: A low-heeled running or walking shoe that bends at the ball of your foot is best.
- Your goal is to build up your stamina gradually. Pick any **5 days a week** to walk and use the other 2 days for rest.
 - Week 1-10 mins/day
 - Week 2-15 mins/day
 - Week 3-20 mins/day
 - Week 4-25 mins/day

Week 1: Establishing the Habit

Goal: Walk 10 minutes per day, 5 days this week.

Pace: Easy and comfortable. You should easily be able to talk in full sentences.

Fall Tip: Keep it simple. Take a quick morning walk to grab a coffee or step outside right after dinner before it gets dark.

Scan the QR Code for the full 4 Week Program:



CATTO MINISTRY UPDATE

The General Election is November 3rd. That's less than a month away! Did you check your voter status yet? Please do it today. Use the websites below to make sure you are eligible to vote.

- PA residents - www.pavoterservices.pa.gov
- NJ residents - www.voter.svrs.nj.gov
- DE residents - www.ivote.de.gov

You can also make an impact on this important election by:

- Planning to take a friend, neighbor or elderly family member to the voting poll

- Helping a teenager or young adult who is not registered to complete and mail their voter registration form (*Did you know that teenagers turning 18 years old on election day are eligible to register and vote in this election?*)
- Becoming familiar with who and what is on your ballot. Check out a non-partisan website like the *Committee of Seventy*; www.seventy.org
- Some Philadelphia residents have already received their mail-in ballot. If you did, cast your vote and return your ballot as soon as possible!

This is a critical election. Don't waste the opportunity to cast your ballot. Voting is your **SUPERPOWER!**

Next *Sunday, October 11th, is Catto Sunday*. The Honorable Chris Rabb, the presumptive 3rd Congressional District representative will be the guest speaker. Plan to stay for an Eagles Chat & Chew... Fly Eagles Fly!

THE MEMORIAL TRIBUTE MINISTRY

All Saints'/All Souls' Pew Memorial Plaques

All Saints'/All Souls' Day will be acknowledged on Sunday, November 1, 2026. This is a time to commemorate and share a day of Intercessory Prayer for those who are deceased.

Please contact the Memorial Tribute Ministry at memorialtribute@aecst.org if you are interested in purchasing a pew plaque to memorialize a loved one. Pew plaques can be purchased through this ministry and are \$500.00 each. The deadline to purchase plaques is October 16, 2026.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Pilgrims on a Journey Adult Bible Study meet on Tuesdays at 7:00 PM. If you are interested in joining the ministry, please email Fr. Jay, associatepriest@aecst.org.

ATTENTION: All Groups/Ministries/Organizations and Fellowships

- Announcements and flyers for the Sunday Bulletin and digital Spearhead should be received on Mondays by 12:00 Noon. If you have any questions, please contact Gladyce in the church office, (215) 473- 3065.
- Please submit a "Request for Meeting Space" form to the office for all meetings in the Church and on the Church campus, two weeks prior to the event. The church office maintains the calendar for all events. If you have any questions or need a form, please contact the church office at (215) 473-3065 or email 1792@aecst.org

OUR DEDICATED OUT OF TOWN FAMILIES

We give thanks to God for these active and dedicated members of St. Thomas who presently live in other cities, states, and countries, but remain connected weekly through various media platforms:

Constance Anderson- Florida

The Reverend Dr. Paul Bach and Dr. Julie

Hergerather-Washington

Deadra Cannon-Georgia

Dr. Tracy Collins-North Carolina

Nora Corbin-Illinois

Paula Cropper-North Carolina

Lee Daniels-New York/California

Stacey Davis-New York

Andrew and Lisa Renee Dumas-Portugal

The Reverend Fr. Daren Evans-Texas

Rashid, Christie, and Gabrielle Faisal-Michigan

The Reverend Dr. Wil Gafney-Texas

Bradley Hammond - Tennessee

Richard and Gwenda Hart-South Carolina
Yvonne Hyde-Carter-New York
Dr. Calvin Johnson-Florida
Bettie Jones-North Carolina
Richard Jones, Jr.-Virginia
Dr. Sheila Jones-Smith-South Carolina
Steven and Jameela Lewis-Colorado/California

Nohjay Nimpson-Texas
Zennetta Peters-North Carolina
Richard and Rebecca Scales-Florida
Shelly and Ann Stewart-Florida/Massachusetts
Jillian Theorgood- Georgia
Howard Tucker-Brazil/Philadelphia
Allison Young- Maryland

STREET RE-NAMING CEREMONIES

Street Renaming Honoring Bishop Richard Allen

First pastor of Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church
 Wednesday, October 7, 2026, 11:00 AM
 Corner of 6th and Lombard Streets

Street Renaming Honoring Octavius V. Catto

Former Vestry member of St. Thomas
 Thursday, October 8, 2026, 2:00 PM
 Corner of 8th and South Streets

MUSIC MINISTRY CORNER



- “You Can Tell The World: Black Composers” in concert at the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas **TODAY**, October 4, 2026, at 3:00 PM. An afternoon of art song and sacred repertoire by Black composers and original compositions featuring Chantal Freeman, soprano; James A. Early, piano; and Dr. Jay Fluellen, piano. This is a free-will offering event.
- Come celebrate the Holidays with Waltier Blocker and the St. Thomas Gospel Choir as they return to the Kimmel Center for “A Philly Holiday Spectacular.” In addition to STGC, the concert will feature vocalists Ryan Shaw and Morgan James, The Philadelphia Boys Choir, The Philly Pops Chorus, The Philly Pops Orchestra and a special visit from Santa Clause! Concerts dates are as follows:
 Friday, December 11th - 7:30 PM
 Saturday, December 12th - 2:00 PM
 Sunday, December 13th - 7:00 PM
 Tickets may be purchased through phillypops.org or by calling the Kimmel Center at 215-893-1999
- The St. Thomas Chancel Choir is a dynamic music ministry that sings on 1st and 3rd Sundays of every month, in addition to special services. We welcome anyone who loves to sing, regardless of age or skill

level. The choir sings a wide variety of musical styles, including anthems, Spirituals, and Gospel, among others. Our rehearsal schedule is as follows:

Saturday, October 17th - 10:00 AM

Saturday, November 7th - 10:00 AM

Saturday, November 21st - 10:00 AM

Saturday, December 5th - 10:00 AM

Saturday, December 21st - 10:00 AM

- Vocalists and Musicians Wanted! You are invited to join the professional recording St. Thomas Gospel Choir. The Gospel Choir (STGC) is directed by Waltier Blocker and sing on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month, in addition to special services. Rehearsals are every Wednesday at 7:30 PM in Anderson Hall.

The Readings for the Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

October 4, 2026

The First Reading - Job 1:1; 2:1-10

Psalm 26

The Second Reading - Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

The Holy Gospel - Mark 10:2-16

The Holy Gospel Readings for the week of October 4, 2026

Sunday - Matthew 14:1-12

Monday - Luke 6:39-49

Tuesday - Luke 7:1-17

Wednesday - Luke 7:18-35

Thursday - Luke 7:36-60

Friday - Luke 8:1-15

Saturday - Luke 8:16-25

This Week at AECST – October 4, 2026

Monday, October 5th

- Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc meeting in Anderson Hall 6:00-9:00 PM

Tuesday, October 6th

- Adult Bible Study with Fr. Jay via Zoom 7:00 PM
- OPC Advocacy Outreach Group Meeting in the Undercroft 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Wednesday, October 7th

- St. Thomas Gospel Choir Rehearsal in Anderson Hall 7:30 PM

Friday, October 9th

- Retired Person's Ministry meeting in the Undercroft 10-11:30 AM

Saturday, October 10th

- Sisterhood Purse Bingo in Anderson Hall from 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Catto Ministry Set-up after 4:00 PM

SICK AND SHUT-IN / SPECIAL PRAYERS REQUESTS

In Rehab: - Verger Stephen Hannum - St. Francis Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

In Long Term Care Residences: Helena Allen - Simpson House; Gwendolyn Langford - Arden Courts of Cherry Hill; Ola Bass - Atria, Lafayette Hill

At Home: Robert Brown, Cornelia Camp, Regina Meacham Devero, Vernetta Dow, Virginia DuBrey, Patricia Walker-Ellison, D. Lynn Joell, Karen Ragland, Joyce Stewart

Special Prayers: Carmen Brown, Edita Gauthney, Joan Hall, Richard Jones Jr., Dr. Cassandra Ruffin, Cathy Stafford, Carolyn Summers, Daryn Stewart, Justin Trotman, Lisa Woodley, Charlene M. Wiltshire, Bettie Jones, Thomas Harris, The Rev. Dr. Paul Bach

We pray for those who are incarcerated and their families, as well as those affected by their actions.

If you have prayer requests and wish to be added to this list, please call Gladys in the church office, or email 1792@aecst.org.

UPCOMING SUNDAYS

Sunday, October 4th

- Stewardship Season Kick-Off
- Church School classes begin
- The Feast of St. Francis of Assisi
During morning worship - please bring your feathered, furry, four legged, no legged, family members

Sunday, October 11th

- Celebration of the Life of Octavius V. Catto
Guest Speaker - The Honorable Chris Rabb, 200th District State Representative and presumptive 3rd Congressional District representative

Sunday, October 18th

- Breast Cancer Awareness Sunday - please wear something pink

Sunday, October 25th

- Youth & Young Adults Sunday
- Church School Trunk or Treat in the parking lot after service

The word "Youth" is written in a stylized font. The "You" is in red and the "th" is in black.

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS' NEWS

IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE RECTOR

St. Thomas celebrates children and youth not only as the church of TOMORROW, but also the church of TODAY! We welcome and encourage their full presence and participation in our Sunday worship.

Church School begins October 4th in the Undercroft. All Students must be registered in order to attend Church School. Please use the QR Code to register your child for this Church School year.



Interested in help our children grow in their faith and understanding of God's love? Become a **Church School Teacher**. Please use the QR Code below to apply. No teaching experience required.



SCOUT TROOP #133

The Scout program resumes on Saturday October 3, 2026. All children are welcome to participate.
The Cub Scout Program is open to all children in grades 1-5 and meet from 2:00 - 4:00 PM on Saturdays.

The Scout Program is open to children 11-17 years old. Meetings are held on Saturdays from 1:00 - 3:00 PM in the Undercroft. For more information please contact Scout Master Howard Chapman at

howchaman@gmail.com

GIRLS' FRIENDLY SOCIETY (GFS)

GFS is in full swing. Our next meeting is October 17th in the Undercroft. at 11:00 AM. All girls are invited to join.

If you would like to join GFS as an adult Sponsor or be on the mailing list for future events, please contact our Branch Advisor, Nikkol Simms at **njsimms@verizon.net** for the schedule.

AECST ACOLYTE MINISTRY

Attention Young Adults: Becoming an Acolyte is a meaningful way to deepen participation in worship and connect to the liturgy. It's not just for the kids.

Email Nikkol Simms at **njsimms@verizon.net** or call, 267-934-3016. You can also email Juanita Miller at **juanitamiller91@gmail.com** or call, 267-283-8011 to discuss any questions and interest in this ministry.

REALM ANNOUNCEMENT

Thank you to everyone for maintaining your financial pledge/faithful giving during the summer months. Please continue to submit your offering through Realm or by mail if you're not going to be in church. That will be appreciated. Also, if there's a need to adjust your pledge, please email me at stewardship@aecst.org. Thank you again.
Judy Tillman and the Stewardship Committee.

HOW CAN YOU BE FAITHFUL TO GOD AND THE CHURCH THROUGH STEWARDSHIP?

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion,
For God loves a cheerful giver.” II Corinthians 9:7

The Stewardship Committee of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas recognizes that stewardship may take form in several ways: your time, talent, or treasures. The one commonality is that each of us must prayerfully ask God to guide us in making the right choices and have faith that He will guide us to the right decision.

Our church has a tremendous congregation that is thriving and growing. The ministries that we have serve all of God's children near and far. These endeavors require all three forms of stewardship, but especially your sharing of treasure. Prayerfully consider donating to one or all the special requests below.



Other ways to continue to be Faithful to God and the Church through Stewardship:

1) Sunday Offering Plate

2) Church website - <http://www.aecst.org/donations.htm> the button on the page that represents where you'd like your payment to be applied for, i.e., pledge, the AJ House, Easter, etc.

3) Members and visitors who previously donated through GIVI will use **Realm Connect.** If you donate via the church website, either directly or by using the QR code, you will see a new webpage and a corresponding QR code.

4) Cellphone: Text "AECST" to 73256 to donate.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Flowers on the High Altar are in loving memory of **Gail W. Lowe**, given by James T. Lowe and Jared M. Lowe.

Flowers on the High Altar are in celebration of the first anniversary of Tim and Regina Diane Barksdale, given by Tim Barksdale.

To order flowers, please return this form (please print) with payment to Alfreda Brockman or the Church Office. You can also order via the church website to order and pay for flowers; <http://www.aecst.org/donations.htm>

_ I would like to place flowers on the High Altar- \$80 each.

_ I would like to place flowers on the Absalom Jones Altar- \$70 each.

_ I would like to place flowers on the Columbarium- \$60 each.

In memory of _____

In Thanksgiving for _____

Given by _____ Envelope _____ Amount \$ _____

ALL SAINTS/ALL SOULS MEMORIAL CANDLES

All Saints/All Souls Observance: November 1st

On Sunday, November 1st we will observe the Feast of All Saints and All Souls. You are invited to bring photographs of your loved ones to place on the Columbarium.

You may also dedicate a Memorial Candle in honor of a loved one:

- \$2.00 per single name
- \$4.00 per married couple

To participate, please submit your completed form and payment to Alfreda Brockman, or mail them to the church office. **The deadline is Wednesday, October 28th.**

PLEASE PRINT

I would like to dedicate a Memorial Candle to:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Given by _____

Envelope # _____ Amount \$ _____