

# St. Thomas' Episcopal Church



## ***The Front Page***

December 2018



The Christian calendar begins its new year not on January 1, but on the first Sunday of Advent – which is always four Sundays before Christmas. Our word “Advent” derives from *Adventus*, which means “coming,” and originally referred just to the feast of Christmas. But over time the season of Advent took on a double meaning. Today it refers both to the “first coming” of Jesus Christ in his birth at Christmas, and to his “second coming” at the end of time.

For many of us today the weeks of December are filled – usually *overflowed!* – with activities and family traditions. Our days are packed with festive preparations: buying presents, baking cookies and breads, preparing for guests, decorating trees, and perhaps attending parties. So it can be disconcerting to find that when we arrive at church on the Sundays of Advent we encounter not only hopeful signs of the birth of the baby Jesus but also somber warnings about judgment at the end of time and a call to “forsake our sins” in preparation for Jesus’ second coming. We celebrate the light of Christ coming into the world – but it comes to a world that is often broken and dark.

It is important to remember that Advent is not just a season in which we recall an event of the past – Jesus’ birth – but also a time in which we look to the present and the future. When will Jesus come again? When will we see the Kingdom of God on earth, as it is in heaven? And, of course – no one knows. And so the more important questions might be: What can we do as the Church, Christ’s body here on earth, to bring about God’s reign of justice and peace today? What can we do as individuals to reorder our lives, in the light of God’s love?

Each Advent we turn to these questions anew. Advent is a time of spiritual preparation; may we prepare ourselves with a profound sense of God’s peace in our lives.

Advent Blessings! Rev. Susan+



## GIFTS FROM BETHLEHEM



On Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> we will be featuring a wonderful assortment of items that are handmade out of olive wood from the Holy Land. If you would like to buy any of these items for gifts, these will be available ONLY on that weekend. All the monies raised go back to Bethlehem to support Christians who are living there. Ornaments, crosses, creches and more will be available after services. Mr. Husam Qumseya represents a school in Bethlehem, and will be here with us on these two days. These unique handcrafted ornaments and other pieces provide needed income for Christians in this region. Come up to the parish hall and check out his display!



## GIVING TREE DEADLINE NEARS

Once again St. Thomas' and Tri-town Social Services have partnered to help brighten the lives of children from ten needy families during this holiday season. How can you help? Head for the bulletin board in the parish hall which is next to the kitchen! It has been transformed into a tree with brilliantly colored tags. Simply choose a tag with a child's name and their Christmas wishes listed on it. Or choose several! Next, enter your name and phone number in the red binder next to the tree on the page indicated for you child's family number and name. Then enjoy opening your heart as you shop! Please return your wrapped gifts, labeled with the child's name and family number, **by December 9th!** If you wish, you may attach the original tag to the wrappings for this purpose. During the week ahead you may leave your gifts in the parish hall if you wish. Thank you for all your love and generosity! Questions may be referred to Sandy Leigh.

Newsletter Editor: Karen Pare: [klplamb24@gmail.com](mailto:klplamb24@gmail.com)

Production Manager: Nancy Burton

Individual contributions of personal, spiritual experiences are welcomed.

## A SWEET TREAT COMING YOUR WAY!!



Our annual sale of Christmas cookies will be held this year on Saturday, December 15, from 9am to noon, or until the cookies run out! This is an event open to the community, so we always have a good turnout of both parishioners and others from the Northwest RI region who love delicious treats. How can you be involved? We need people to bake cookies, volunteers to help with the sale that day, and, of course, people to purchase the goodies. Please sign up on the sheet on the ministry table, listing the type of cookie you will contribute, to avoid duplication. Last year we had a vast array of over 30 different kinds of cookies available! With the date so close to Christmas, the sale is the ideal place to buy cookies to share at holiday visits and events with your family and friends. Questions can be addressed to Deb Farrar. Happy eating!



Don't forget to use Amazon Smile when shopping for your holiday gifts this season. Amazon donates .5% of any purchase to our church. Link us to your existing account for an easy and fast way to support St. Thomas' Church. Copy this link into your browser to set it up: <https://smile.amazon.com/> then look for "St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, Greenville, RI". Of course, purchases made all during the year produce the same benefit to us!

**CHURCH DIRECTORY NEWS:** Good news! Our long-awaited Church Directory will be here soon! Your copy will be available at the St. Thomas' Annual Meeting in January. The directory will provide addresses and phone numbers for participating parishioners, for easy access and communication. Don't forget that only members who had their pictures taken will receive a directory.

# A Service of Light



The holidays can be difficult times for anyone who has suffered loss or hurt. Many congregations across the country now offer a special service to recognize that reality. Often called a “*Blue Christmas*” or “*A Service of Comfort*”, WE have chosen to call ours “***A Service of Light***”. Sometimes our culture calls us to feel jolly and festive and we simply do not feel that way. By gathering in sacred space, we can recognize the depth of the season and help process those feelings that might be held within during the holidays. By doing so, we can all celebrate more fully, knowing we have acknowledged those who are no longer with us. This is a service that incorporates silence, hauntingly beautiful music, and the gradual lighting of candles to help dispel the darkness of the longest night of the year, Friday, December 21<sup>st</sup>. Coming together, we can provide comfort and hope for one another. This service starts at 7:00pm and all are welcome to join us at this simple, peaceful service.



***Gathering prayer:*** *God of mercy, hear our prayer this Advent season for ourselves and for our families who live with painful thoughts and memories of loss. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of your Christ who shares our lives in joy and sorrow; death and new birth; despair and promise. And may the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace that we may abound in hope in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*



# **CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

## **Monday 12/24/18**

### **Christmas Eve**

*Eve of the Feast of our Lord's Nativity*

#### **12:00 noon Holy Eucharist, with music.**

This service will include Christmas hymns & carols.

#### **4:00 pm Holy Eucharist, with music.**

The *Liturgy of the Word* will include the telling of the Christmas Story while the children place the figures into the Crèche.

#### **9:00 pm Holy Eucharist, with music.**

This service will include the choir & candlelight.

## **Tuesday 12/25/18**

### **Christmas Day**

*Feast of our Lord's Nativity*

#### **10:00 am Holy Eucharist.**

This service is a traditional Christmas morning service with quiet, instrumental Christmas music

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

PO Box 505, Greenville, RI 02828

Telephone: (401) 949-2260

Email: [office@stthomasepiscopalri.org](mailto:office@stthomasepiscopalri.org)

[susan@stthomasepiscopalri.org](mailto:susan@stthomasepiscopalri.org)

Website: [www.stthomasepiscopalri.org](http://www.stthomasepiscopalri.org)

Rector: The Reverend Susan M. Carpenter

Office Hours: Wed., 9am-4pm, or by appointment

## Notice of our Annual Meeting

Pursuant to the By-Laws of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church  
The Annual Meeting of the parish will be held on

**Sunday, January 20, 2019**

At St. Thomas' Church, 1 Smith Ave. Greenville, RI  
Commencing at 11:30 am

### **Business to be transacted at the meeting shall include:**

1. Annual Reports of the Rector, Wardens, and Committees
2. Presentation of the proposed 2019 Budget
3. Election of new Vestry members and Diocesan Delegates to Deanery and Convention.



### Parish Ministry Annual Reports from 2018

If you are a leader of a ministry here at St. Thomas', now is the time to begin thinking about your Annual Report to the parish! If you have any questions, direct them to Rick Kyte, our Senior Warden.

**December 28, 2018 is the deadline** for submitting your report to the office so that it may be included in the Annual Reports booklet of St. Thomas' Church that will be distributed before our parish Annual Meeting: **January 20, 2019**.

*(The exceptions are those committees that need end-of-the-year financial figures.)*

Submissions should be made *electronically* and sent to Joan at:

[office@stthomasepiscopalri.org](mailto:office@stthomasepiscopalri.org)



## Remember to submit your 2019 Pledge Card!!

We will be providing boxes of Offertory Envelopes to everyone who would like them AND submits a 2019 pledge form requesting them. (Make sure you check the line on the pledge form asking for envelopes!) Envelopes will be available in the back of the church on Christmas Eve.

If you have not already made your 2019 pledge, please return your form in the plate on Sunday or mail it into the church office. Your Vestry leadership is working hard at crafting our budget for next year. Additional pledge packets are available in the entrance of the church, or by contacting the office ([office@stthomasepiscopalri.org](mailto:office@stthomasepiscopalri.org)) and one can be sent to you. You can also contact our Treasurer Henry Dziadosz or Reverend Susan with any questions. Thank you for your generosity and commitment to the ministry of God in this faith community!

## St. Thomas' to "Go Green"!



I went to Convention for the first time this year and was caught up in the energy generated by our wonderful Bishop. One of his concerns is the green life of our planet. I have asked the vestry for permission to assume the role of "green coordinator" for our church. The diocese is establishing a Green Committee, but I wanted to give St. Thomas' a lead position in the venture. We have already done great things at our church, such as having energy audits and changing the heating system from oil to gas for greater efficiency. We will be taking the ecological challenge one step further! Your Vestry plans to eliminate Styrofoam from our usage, especially at dinners and Sunday coffee hours. We will also seek to exclude repetitious pages from our Sunday bulletins. By reducing the bulletin by just one page, we can save 175 sheets of paper each week!

Although these are small steps, they will make a difference in managing the resources with which we have been blessed. Stay tuned for other ideas, or come to me with your suggestions! I look forward to speaking with you.

Kim Murdoch



## BAZAAR THANKS!



You may have heard the expression “It takes a village to raise a child.” Here at St. Thomas, “It takes a parish to put on a bazaar”! This was certainly true this year, as over one hundred parishioners chipped in to make our recent bazaar a resounding success.

With that in mind, special thanks are extended to:

- ~Crafters who worked for weeks to produce wonderful, colorful items of all sorts, both at church and at home
- ~Cooks, wait staff, and kitchen crew who operated our cafe
- ~Bakers whose wares flew off the shelves of our bakery and pantry table
- ~Folks who supervised publicity, solicited ads, and contributed as Bazaar Boosters
- ~The clean-up, set-up, and break-down crews
- ~Parishioners who contributed items for the Penny Socials, Secret Santa room, and other tables
- ~Those who tracked the finances as the day progressed
- ~Everyone who shopped, ate, and brought their friends
- ~The bazaar committee for many behind-the-scenes actions
- ~All who extended a warm St. Thomas’ welcome to shoppers

Thanks to all, our financial profit topped \$15,000, but the benefits of the bazaar, in terms of fellowship, mutual cooperation, and involvement of so many people, far exceeded the monetary gain! It was a wonder-filled day as so many old friends and new friends came through our doors!!

**WINGS Note:** There will be no meeting in December. Look for activities to resume on Monday, January 21st.



## SNOW!!

Yes, we've already had a first snow storm and it's not even Winter yet!

I'd like to set up a **Church Shovel List** of folks who are available to clear the walks (parking lot plowing is already taken care of). If we have enough people to cover the winter it wouldn't fall on one person to get the job done.

These are the areas to be done:

From parking lot to church hall

From parking lot to front of church, including sidewalk

Walks/steps to Rectory

Path behind the Rectory

Handicapped ramps

Small deck on the back of the hall needs to be cleared so the door opens out, especially in case of fire.

(Salt will be available on the Rectory porch, hall side)

I've broken up the "winter" into time segments. You can sign up for certain time period and if a storm comes during that time, you would be responsible for getting the areas cleared.

I'd also like to set up a contact list of people who could be called on to help out. **PLEASE EMAIL, TEXT, CALL ME** to get your name on the list as well as being responsible for a time slot. My contact information is below.

These are the time slots:

December 1<sup>st</sup> – December 23<sup>rd</sup>

December 24<sup>th</sup> – January 13<sup>th</sup>

January 14<sup>th</sup> – February 3<sup>rd</sup>

February 4<sup>th</sup> – February 24<sup>th</sup>

February 25<sup>th</sup> – March 10<sup>th</sup>

(Praying that the snow will stop on March 10<sup>th</sup>, LOL!!)



Jacki Zahn, Junior Warden 401-651-6401, call/text; [jmz222@outlook.com](mailto:jmz222@outlook.com)



## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Rev. Susan Carpenter 2	William Garrison 15	Carol Thurber 24
Margaret Hayter 2	Melanie Kohler 15	Miriam Freeman 25
Deborah Ciotola 7	Louis Lambert 15	James Ritter 25
Benjamin Todd 8	Gladys Kemp 16	Ellen Winsor 26
Jean-Marie Daniels 11	Carol Inman 17	Timothy Boucher
27 Stephen Grassel 11	Carol Parker 21	Emma Murdoch 27
James Gass 12	Philip Larkin 22	Martha Brown 28
Andrew Spaziano 13	Nancy Miller 22	Beatrice Morrow 92

## DECEMBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Jeff and Donna Doris 13  
Donald and Linda Packer 27  
Ron and Carol Slocum 30



## IN MEMORIAM



Our Christian sympathies are extended to parishioner Linda Thomasian on the death of her father, Charles W. Nelson, on November 2. Charles was a Korean War veteran who later worked at the US Navy Training Center in Great Lakes, Illinois, and as a general foreman installation officer and deputy director of logistics at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. His funeral service was conducted at St. Thomas' on November 8 by Reverend Susan Carpenter and Reverend Pam Gregory. Deepest condolences go to Linda and her extended family.



**2018 Christmas Flower  
Dedication**



The beautiful poinsettias, greenery and other plants that will adorn our sanctuary, narthex and nave will be a special part of the celebration of Christmas at St. Thomas' Church. We invite all parishioners to share in the experience through a memorial or thanksgiving gift. The amount of your donation is up to you. Names of the loved ones you honor or remember will be printed in the Christmas bulletins. Flower Dedication forms are in this edition of our newsletter and are also available in the narthex (entry of the church). They are due in the Parish office **no later than December 11<sup>th</sup>** if you desire the names of your loved ones to be in the Christmas bulletins. Let us join together to beautify our worship space to God's glory this Christmas season!

To contribute to the flowers, fill out the attached form and drop in the plate on Sunday or mail it to the parish office with your donation. **Please honor the deadline and have your donations in by Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>!**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Please make checks payable to St. Thomas' with "*Christmas flowers*" in the memo line.**

**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY**

**In memory of**

---



---

**AND/OR**

**In thanksgiving for**

---



---

**Your name and phone number** \_\_\_\_\_

**RETURN THIS FORM TO: St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, PO Box 505, Greenville, RI 02828**

# December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<b>1</b>  <b>5:30—HE</b>
<b>2</b> 8:00 HE 9:00 Gratitude Breakfast 10:00 HE 4:00pm Advent Lessons & Carols	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>  6:00-8:00pm Book & Movie Club	<b>5</b> 9:00 HE & Healing service  7:00-8:15pm School of Discipleship	<b>6</b> 10:00- 11:15pm School of Discipleship	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>  4:00pm Alzheimer Caregiver Support Group <b>5:30—HE</b>
<b>9</b> 8:00 HE 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 HE	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 9:00 HE & Healing service  7:00-8:15pm School of Discipleship	<b>13</b> 10:00- 11:15pm School of Discipleship  6:30pm Vestry	<b>14</b>  	<b>15</b> 9 – 12pm Cookie Sale  <b>5:30—HE</b>
<b>16</b> 8:00 HE 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 HE	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 9:00 HE & Healing service  7:00-8:15pm School of Discipleship	<b>20</b> 10:00- 11:15pm School of Discipleship	<b>21</b>   7:00pm "Service of Light"	<b>22</b>  <b>5:30—HE</b>
<b>23</b> 8:00 HE 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 HE Altar Guild decorating of the church	<b>24</b> Christmas Eve!!  Noon - HE 4:00pm - HE 9:00pm -HE	<b>25</b>  10:00am HE Christmas Day!!	<b>26</b> 9:00 HE & Healing service	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>  <b>5:30—HE</b>
<b>30</b> 8:00 HE 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 HE	<b>31</b>					

Saint Thomas' Episcopal Church

At Routes 44 and 116  
P.O. BOX 505  
GREENVILLE, RHODE ISLAND  
02828



The Newsletter of St. Thomas' Church  
December 2018



O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray,  
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born to us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell,  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

*-from "O Little Town of Bethlehem", 1982 hymnal*