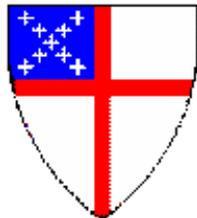


Tidings



of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church

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December 2002

From the Rector's Desk - The Rev. William D. Oldland

Advent is upon us and with Advent we tend to become super busy. We go into overdrive in order to prepare for Christmas. So very early in the season of Advent we already start to think about a mother and father, a stable, a star, and a little baby in a manger. Our thoughts turn to the Christ child.

However, Advent is not about celebrating the coming of the Christ child. We tend to think of Advent as a time of preparation to celebrate the anniversary of Christ's birth. Our thoughts are only partly correct. We are in a time of preparation. We are not preparing to celebrate the birth of Christ. Advent for the Christian church is a time of preparation for the second coming of Christ.

This season is not preparing for the coming of a baby. This season is preparing for the coming of a risen Lord in all of His glory. Advent calls us to prepare ourselves, our souls, our spirits for the time when we will meet Christ face to face. To this end the reading for the First Sunday of Advent from Mark concerns the coming of Christ with angels to gather the people. We are told in the lesson to be awake and to be prepared. For in this world know one knows when Christ will come again.

During this season of Advent we will be bombarded with reminders of Christmas. We will see decorations in the stores, ads on television, Christmas shows, and many reminders to spend lots of money. We will feel pressured and pushed to prepare for the coming of a child. We will feel pressured and pushed to move faster and do more things. Perhaps this year we might try something a little different? We might take a few moments each day, ten minutes of quiet time, to ask ourselves the following questions:

What would it be like if Christ came again on the 24th of December before the presents are opened?

How would I respond to being in the presence of Christ?

Am I ready for the coming of Jesus Christ if He came tomorrow?

What would it take for me to be ready for Jesus? What would I change? How would I change?

These are the questions Advent is really asking us to ponder. Then on Christmas Eve, at the midnight service, we celebrate. We celebrate the gift God has given us in the Son. We celebrate the time we have had to prepare ourselves. We celebrate with clean hearts and a right spirit the wonders of God in our lives. I pray we all have some time to prepare, to think about what the Second Coming means to us.

Peace,

Bill +

VESTRY

Sr. Warden - Bill Horsley	342-2869	wfh@horsley-peraldo.com
Jr. Warden - Tom Ham	349-7261	tjhamiii@vnet.net
Finance - Bob Lee Watt	342-2305	fwatt@bellsouth.net
Pastoral Care - Larry Johnson	349-7688	lkjohnson100@hotmail.com
Christian Ed. - Jim McCloskey	349-3354	jimmccloskey@adams-electric.com
Outreach - Donna Van Ness	349-9956	ddvdoodle@yahoo.com
Long Range Planning - Grace Moffitt	342-3905	gracemoffitt@mosescone.com
Parish Life - Richard Piazza	349-5827	rjpiazza@netzero.net
Worship - Bettie Benton Rhodes	342-4897	brhodes3@triad.rr.com

Open Vestry Meetings are every third Monday at 6:45 p.m.

Inside This Issue . . .

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- ⇒ Thanksgiving Dinner @ St. T.
- ⇒ Vestry Meeting Highlights
- ⇒ Music Ministry
- ⇒ Fran McKendree Concert
- ⇒ Diocesan Involvement

Highlights of St. Thomas' Annual Meeting

any capital expenses this year. The playground is in the process of being upgraded to meet safety codes. To enhance the playground, Adam Wilson's Eagle Scout Project involves setting up new equipment. John and Dorothy Black have done an outstanding job maintaining and cleaning the inside and outside of the church.

Worship - Freda Watt, Chr.

The Worship Committee meets every other month and helps the rector plan all special services, such as this year's Blessing of the Animals of St. Francis' Sunday, The Great Vigil on Easter Eve, and All Saints' with Zion Baptist Church.

Music - David Zoernig

Special music continues to receive strong support in the church. This year, we've had artists from the NC School of the Arts, Greensboro Symphony Orchestra, Piedmont Triad Symphony, and the Gianinni Brass. Recordings of the special services and Bishop Curry's visit are now available through the St. Thomas website: stthomasreidsville.org.

Outreach - Tom Balsley, Chr.

Community organizations supported in the last year include Habitat for Humanity, Reidsville Soup Kitchen, Reidsville Outreach Center, Help, Inc. - Center Against Domestic Violence, Rockingham County Prison Ministry, and Humane Society. St. Thomas has adopted three families

for which Christmas gifts will be given.

Finance Committee - Bob Watt

This committee meets monthly to review the financial situation and to make recommendations to the vestry for action. During this year, a new software, Church Windows, was installed and used. All checks are now printed with this new program; integration of reports with the CPA is still on going. The Every Member Canvass for 2003 resulted in reduced income for the church, primarily due to deaths and moves, and the current economic situation. The committee will have a 2003 budget for the December Vestry Meeting.

Pastoral Care - Larry Johnson

Continuing to be very busy, this committee has delivered countless meals this year, made phone calls, sent cards or small gifts, sat with members recovering from illnesses, offered rides to doctor's appointments and hospitals, performed household chores, and taken tapes of Sunday services to shut-ins each week. The goal of the committee is to show Christ's love to church members by helping provide for physical needs, and support them emotionally and spiritually in times of grief, illness, or joy, such as the birth of a child.

The Men's Club - Richard Piazza

Meeting the first Thursday every

month for dinner, the men of the church have been busy this year—rang the bell for the Salvation Army, offered the Pancake Dinner on Fat Tuesday, supported the youth mission trip to Mt. Pleasant, SC, cooked for the September Shrimpfest, contributed money for a new playground swing set, donated \$1000 to help cover the expenses of the Sextons, served breakfast to the parish on Easter Sunday, and hosted coffee and lemonade each Sunday after the 11:00 service.

Long Range Planning- Grace Moffitt

Through regular meetings during the year, the committee has two major accomplishments for the year 2002. First, the committee finalized the plan for a new permanent sign, currently under construction. It is the goal of the committee that the sign will provide increased visibility from Main Street for visitors looking for St. Thomas. John Bullock, Kris Rogers, and Tom Ham have been instrumental in this project. In addition, the committee designed a means to update parishioners' demographic information and a tool for them to indicate interests, talents, and desires in becoming more involved in the life of the parish. Updated parishioner information will enable to Vestry to plan for 2003.

The Every Member Canvass is virtually complete and the results are not encouraging! To date, we have received 73 pledges with total giving of \$134,084. Last year, we received 80 pledges, which totaled \$159,000. If we do not increase this year's giving, the Vestry will have to reduce the church budget by \$25,000 or we will have to spend a large percentage of our meager reserves in order to fund our current programs.

If you have not made a pledge, I hope that you will consider doing so as soon as possible. If you have turned in your pledge, but would like to increase the amount of your gift, please call Steve Worth at 349-7538. He will be delighted to hear from you!

If you have not paid your 2002 pledge in full, please try to complete payment as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continued financial support of our church.

Yours in Christ
Bob Watt, Treasurer

Advent Meditation Guide Written by Parishioners

Last year around this time, I went to a Diocesan meeting with a member from All Saints' Episcopal in Concord, NC. By chance, Dave Miller happened to have a few copies of the Advent Meditation Guide developed by his parish Special Programs Ministry. I bought one.

For me, Advent 2001 was a time of deep reflection. With two brothers living in Manhattan on 9/11 (one of whom has now moved to a ten-acre ranch in Missouri), I remain thankful they were not hurt, and for the lessons contained in that little book, written mostly by complete strangers who called for peace, hope, and faith.

I asked Dave for the "recipe" behind the Guide, and received nothing particularly supernatural,

rather some guidelines, a suggested timeline, a blank sign-up list, and sample letters.

Knowing that Dave and his wife Jan had printed several Advent and Lenten Guides with the participation of their parish family, I chose not to tinker too much, other than seeking a talented artist within our church community, Colin Ferguson, for the cover work.

Our Advent Meditation Guide is truly a parish-wide effort, six months in the making!

Parishioners may pick up their Advent Meditation Guides following services on Sunday, December 1 or may contact the church office (349-3511) to have one mailed to their homes.

We are grateful to Ed Felts, who has provided the beautiful printing for this meditation guide.

A total of twenty St. Thomas' parishioners, some former rectors, and priests who have visited have all penned pages! The Rev. Bill Oldland graciously set the prose for Christmas Day.

It has been exciting to find so much talent in our church family!

All Saints' parish has found success producing an Advent Guide one year and a Lenten one the following church year. Should we choose that schedule, and with God's blessing, I pray that forty saints will come forward for the Lenten 2004 Meditation Guide.

—David Zoernig
Organist & Choir Director

Stewardship

Waiting. We have all had our share of it. We have our everyday interruptions that try our patience – like waiting at the stoplight or the grocery checkout line or in the line for the bank teller. Then there are the more serious waits – like the follow-up visit with the doctor or sitting with someone in a hospital room. It's at times like this when we are able to distinguish between the important and the unimportant trials of our lives. But waiting is something that we do not do well. We need to feel that our time should be spent being productive and full of activity.

Those on the lower socio economic level understand that a good portion of their time will be spent waiting. These persons stand in line for food stamps, or the soup kitchen, or the social services de-

partment or the homeless shelter. Jesus' family was in this group. His father and mother had to take what was given them for overnight accommodations, even if it was a shed for the animals.

As Christians, Advent is our season for waiting. However we often are impatient and fill up our time with the customary trappings of the season. Or we become despondent over the worries in our lives and troubling events in the world and wonder if Christ will ever come to us. How can we receive the Good News when our lives are so cluttered and sometimes seem to be in such disarray?

We must remember that God came quietly in the night – not with great fanfare or acclaim. Only a few were even aware of his birth and none understood its meaning or importance. But, his parents, the

shepherds and the magi were open to the possibilities of this wondrous event. So it is with our lives. If we unlock our hearts and slow ourselves down from the busyness that seems to engulf us, we too, will be touched in miraculous ways. Christ can come in the smile of a neighbor, or the thank you of a child, or the embrace of a family member or friend, or the gratitude of someone who thought they had been forgotten by everyone else in the world. And, like Christ's birth, this will come at a time or a place that is totally unexpected. Hopefully we can be still and peaceful and receptive in our waiting for those moments when he enters our lives. Christ *will* come again. That is his promise.

Tom Balsley
Year Round Stewardship Chair
Junior Warden - Tom Ham
It has not been necessary to make

Episcopal Church Women

By Laura Felts

DIOCESAN EVENT

The St. Thomas' ECW hosted a reception welcoming participants to the 120th ECW Annual Meeting of the Greensboro Convocation at The Summit on November 14th.

Food was prepared by Willie Mae Adkins, Dottie Worth, Dot Ferneyhough, and Tymesia Forbes. Grace Moffitt and Laura Felts prepared the tables and flowers, and served wine and food to approximately 100 guests.

Both Bishop Curry and Bishop Gloster attended the reception. Marian Safriet and Dot Trent were convocation delegates.

IN DECEMBER. . . The final ECW Business Meeting of 2002 will be held in the parish house, on December 8th following the 11:00 worship service.

Officers for the year 2003 will be elected at this meeting. Decisions for Christmas outreach will also be made. All women in the church are encouraged to come.

The ECW Morning Chapter meeting will be held December 12th at 10:30 a.m. at Dottie Worth's home. Christmas goodie bags will be prepared for shut-ins. Please bring goodies and plan to attend and assist with these Christmas remembrances.

The Evening Chapter of the ECW will not meet in December, but will resume on January 16 their regular monthly meetings on the third Thursday night at 7:30 in the Pipkin Parlor.

All ladies at St. Thomas are invited to join either the morning or the

evening chapter of the ECW. The morning chapter meets the second Thursday of each month at 10:30, usually in the home of a member. A devotional period is led and a program given. Members support many St. Thomas' outreach projects, such as the Day School, the Soup Kitchen, and the Shelter for Victims of Abuse, and initiate some of their own.

The Evening Chapter was formed so that ladies who work during the day have an opportunity to participate in the work of the ECW. A devotional period begins the meeting and then members work on projects. The present project is making Baptismal Banners which are presented to children baptized at St. Thomas. The banners are designed to be hung in the room of the child to serve as a reminder of this special event in his or her life.

ECW Officers:

President - Laura Felts
349-4554

Secretary - Martha Balsley
349-3638

Sec. Chris. Ed. - Mavis Simon
349-7622

Sec. Parish Life - Dot Trent
349-3179

Vice Pres. - Jeanne Horsley
342-2869

Treasurer - Willie Mae Adkins
349-5565

Sec. Devotional Life - Dot Ferneyhough
349-3630

UTO Chr. Mildred & Mary
Cummings 349-9545

Men's Club

The Men's Club continues to meet for dinner the first Thursday each month at 6:30. Members take turns cooking and everyone enjoys the results!

Recently the Men's Club has purchased some new equipment to better serve coffee following the 11:00 worship service. They ordered a super deluxe 101 Cup Coffee Maker and an insulated Air Pot Carafe in which to keep the coffee hot.

Another purchase was a new sound system to be used in the parish house. The system includes a four channel amplifier, speakers, and a microphone.

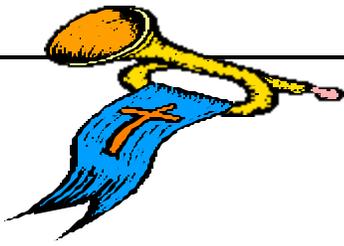
In order to better prepare for large cooking events like the Shrimpfest and the Pancake Supper, the Men's Club has replaced the large pot in the kitchen.

The Men also donated \$250 to The Sally Howard Fund.



**Men's Club
will ring the
bell for the
Salvation
Army at
K-Mart on
Friday,
December 6**

**Sign up by
calling
Richard 349-
5827**



Confirmation Class Begins in January

By The Rev. William D. Oldland

Confirmation is a time for the members of the church to affirm their baptismal vows. For those who have not been confirmed, they take the vows made for them by their parents and godparents for their own. In essence, they stand before the Bishop and the congregation to profess their belief in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

In addition to Confirmation for the first time, there are other opportunities to affirm one's faith during the Bishop's visit. Someone new to the Episcopal Church can join the church by Reception. At that moment, they become a member of the church with all privileges of voting and possible membership on the Vestry.

Long time members of the church may Reaffirm their commitment to Christ. Reaffirmation gives a person the opportunity to refresh themselves on the teachings of the Church and to renew their relationship with Christ.

This year's Confirmation Class begins on January 12 in preparation for Bishop Michael Curry's visit March 30. The class will last for eight weeks and will cover all aspects of our Christian life. Anyone over the age of twelve or who will be twelve by March 30 can register for the class.

The class is open to anyone who may wish to be confirmed, received into the Episcopal Church, or reaffirm his/her faith. Held on Sunday afternoons, the class will last approximately 1 1/2 hours, with a small break.

Please contact the church office to register:

349-3511 or stthomas@vnet.net

Christian Education Opportunities

From Director of Christian Education, Polly Yeago

The children in Sunday School are having a fantastic time learning about Advent! If your child has not attended Sunday School in a while, now would be a great time for him/her to join in on the fun.

The children are presenting a Christmas Pageant during the 11:00 Worship Service on December 22. All ages are welcome to participate in this special annual event. Practice is scheduled for Saturday, December 21 at 1:00, with refreshments after the rehearsal.

During Advent, the children in Tiny Saints will help Bill Oldland teach the story of Christmas at the 11:00 Worship Services. They will be using figures from a new, large nativity set, recently purchased by the church.

The Tuesday Noon Bible Study has just finished studying

the 1st letter of John. Beginning December 3rd, the class will begin to study the Gospel of Mark. Mark is the shortest of the Gospel stories and it is the one chosen for Sunday's readings from the lectionary for the next year.

The class includes some history of the text. We read certain portions of the text each week and discuss what they mean and how the meaning impacts our lives today.

Come and join our lively discussions!

"One large extended family. . ." Jim McCloskey, Chris. Ed. Vestry Liaison

St. Thomas' is really one large extended family, each of us in our own ways, trying to follow where Christ Jesus is leading us.

We, who serve on the Christian Education Committee, feel especially excited by the wonderful support of all the parents for the programs offered here.

Thank you for sharing your children and young adults with us each Sunday.

We look forward to your families' continued participation in all the upcoming holiday programs at St. Thomas.

Sponsored by the St. Thomas' Outreach Committee

Community Thanksgiving Dinner

Led by St. Thomas' very active Outreach Committee, members of St. Thomas and others from the community worked hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder, car to car on Thanksgiving Day to host and serve hundreds of people in the community.

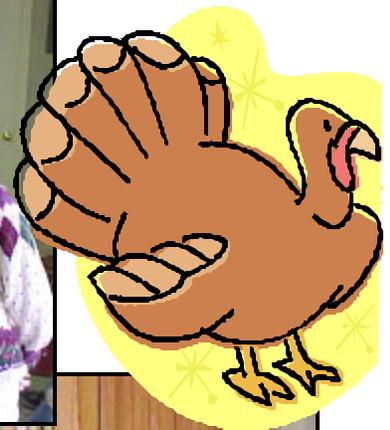
The large group of volunteers, headed by Donna Van Ness, Vestry Liaison for Outreach, and Tom Balsley, Outreach Chair, decorated, cooked, chopped, unwrapped, spooned, laughed, dropped, cleaned—and somehow ladled out plates and plates of turkey dinners to people in the community who came to eat at St. Thomas.

Nancy Bennett headed up the drivers to deliver meals to homes of people physically unable to manage the trip to the church parish house.

The Sanitary Café prepared all the vegetables needed and the youth group made pumpkin pies. Talented ladies in the ECW donated their time and talent to creatively decorate tables.

A St. Thomas tradition for 16 years, the Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner makes sure that area needy people enjoy a delicious turkey dinner.





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- * Director of Christian Ed. -
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- * Church Secretary -
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- * Sexton-
John Black 349-3511

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