

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF
ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE



August 8th, 2021

**The Eleventh Sunday after
Pentecost**

Our Mission Statement

*Helping Hands - Healing Hearts
Welcome All*

Our Vision Statement

*To be an engaging, passionate, spiritually healthy
community, open to all God's people*

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The Rev. Christopher Blake Thomas

August 5, 2021

My Dear Doubters of Great Faith,

As of this writing, Judge Clay Jenkins has returned Dallas County's COVID-19 threat status to red, the highest of its color-coded threat assessment system, indicating that there is a high risk of virus transmission in our community. Our county has not been at this level since March, as vaccines began to roll out, and it seemed that we were beginning to find our way out of this pandemic morass. The red level indicates a shelter-in-place order, as well as the mandating of face coverings, particularly in indoor settings.

All of those generalized public health control measures have been taken from local authorities and centralized in the Texas governor's office.

This does not mean, however, that we do not have control, and for that matter, responsibility in how we live out our Christian faith in light of the public health of those around us. We have a Christian duty and responsibility to not be a part of making this current situation worse. If there are things we know we can do to avoid the spread of COVID-19, it is our responsibility to do just that.

First of all, if we can get fully vaccinated, we simply must. This is our front-line protection against serious illness, hospitalization, and death. If you are not yet vaccinated, I urge you to do so at your earliest opportunity. There are many who cannot, because of their own health status, and so we must try to halt this virus, for their sakes, as well as our own.

Secondly, I implore you to wear a mask at all times when you are circulating in public, particularly and most critically if you are in indoor settings. Remember, it is not just for yourself that you are doing this. It is for others. And it is the "radical other" that is your (each of our) Christian responsibility.

These two things, vaccines and masks, are our defense against this virus that has claimed over 650,000 lives and stands to claim more.

Now, today's understanding is that the current wave is the "Pandemic of the Unvaccinated," which would imply that it's their problem, not ours. If life, particularly the Christian life, worked that way, it really would be survival of the fittest. But that's not the way the Christ-journey works. We are NOT in this alone. And neither are the unvaccinated. We are on this ship, in this storm, together, for better or for worse.

What does this mean for the Episcopal Church of St. Thomas the Apostle?

For the immediate future, ALL those attending the in-person worship will be expected to properly wear a mask over their nose and mouth throughout the service. If you show up to service without a mask, you will be given one. Please remember that you are doing this for Henry and all those who CANNOT be vaccinated. We masked when we worshipped in the Parish Hall, and we made it just fine! Coffee hour will be moved to the breezeway, and masks will be worn when refreshments are not being consumed.

Several small groups, such as Foyers, have begun to meet again. These small groups are acceptable, as long as attendees have been vaccinated, and all members agree to participate.

Attendance will need to be tracked for contact-tracing purposes. (My personal choice is to return to outdoor dining only during this time, but that is only my personal choice.)

We will continue to track those who attend the in-person service in the event that contact-tracing becomes necessary. And if you are ill in any way, PLEASE STAY HOME! If you become ill, please be tested, and please let the office know if you have attended a church function so that others may be notified so that they may quarantine.

I believe that we can and must continue to consider the well-being of ourselves, each other, and the whole. By doing this, we can survive, and our beloved community will thrive in spite of this storm!

Yours in faith,
Fr. Christopher+

Did you know...



that the Plate Income from the 2nd Sunday of every month goes to the Rector's Ministry Fund? This fund allows Fr. Christopher to spread the message of St. Thomas beyond the church campus, reaching into the community to help persons and organizations who are in need.

An Opportunity to Service Your Church



As we return to our Sanctuary, and resume a more familiar worship service, an opportunity exists to take a more active role in our services. I am the Interim Acolyte Guild Head. The Acolyte Guild provides the Crucifer, and 2 Torches to each of our in person services, and for special services, when needed. It is an all volunteer group. At this point, each Acolyte will ideally serve no more than 2 Sundays each month. If you have a desire to become an Acolyte, or would like to know more about serving as an Acolyte, please feel free to contact me at davidaheess@sbcglobal.net.

A new way to see church!



We are now live-streaming our 10:30 AM service on Facebook Live. You do **NOT** need a Facebook account to watch the service. Simply click on the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/TheDoubter/live/>

You will then have 3 options, log in to your Facebook account, create an account, or click on the livestream that you want to watch. If you do not have a FB account, simply click on the livestream that you want to watch, and it will open.

We will go live approximately 5 minutes prior to the start of the service. We hope that you will worship with us in person. However, we are offering this as we continue to move forward in a post COVID-19 world.



Celebrating 136 years of Prayer, Service and Evangelism

All women members of the church can look into this LIFETIME COMMITMENT to this important service to the Parish and our Rector by going to the website - <http://www.doknational.org> - prayerfully consider joining. They may call and leave word on Nan Alexander's voicemail and I will be happy to be of help to anyone interested. This is not a guild but a commitment.

St. Thomas the Apostle in Person Service

DATE: Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

NOTE: The ZOOM service remains at 9:00 a.m.

IN-PERSON LOCATION: The Nave

During the months that the property was closed down due to COVID-19, the HVAC system throughout the entire property has been outfitted with advanced equipment for our safety. St. Thomas has installed air scrubbers on all of its HVAC units.

These air scrubber systems are many times more powerful than normal HVAC filtration systems at eliminating airborne pathogens. HVAC systems can capture dirt and dust from the air through their regular air filter inserts. Meanwhile, the scrubbers using UV light can get rid of much more minute living organisms such as bacteria and viruses, which further improves the air quality.

Parking is available in both the South and North Lots.

Masks are required for all in-person services.

Temperatures will be taken prior to entering the Nave. Individuals with temperatures of 100 degrees or higher will not be allowed to enter.

In case of the unanticipated need for contact tracing, attendees will need to sign a register in the Narthex before going into the Nave.

The entire service will be in a printed bulletin.

Music accompaniment will be provided by the organ.

There will be congregational singing.

During the exchange of the Peace, please be sensitive to those around you during this time. If you sense that someone might not be comfortable with hugging or even touching, respect that person's space.

Parish Schedule

Week of August 8th

08 Sunday	The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
9:00 am	Rite Two Eucharist/Zoom
10:30 am	Rite Two Eucharist/Nave
11:30 am	Coffee and Social time/ PH
09 Monday	Office closed
10 Tuesday	
6:00 pm	Mission/Outreach Group/SR
11 Wednesday	
7:00 pm	CoDA/NR
12 Thursday	
13 Friday	
14 Saturday	
8:00 am	Step Up/SR
	Serving Altar Guild Members B. Day & R. Hering
Key Code:	SR - South Room; NR - North Room; CG - Community Garden; PH - Parish Hall; CR - Office Conference Room; K - Kitchen; N - Nave; IG - Interior Garden



Consecrated Hosts are available at the church office for those participating virtually in Sunday services. Please email or call the office (pam@thedoubter.org or 214-352-0410, ext. 104)

PRAYER LIST

Do you know someone who is in need of our prayers? Please email pam@thedoubter.org to add them to our Prayer List. Names will be kept on for the current month unless notified otherwise and those names are in *italics*.

Healing in the Lives of: Ben Gloria Ann Patricia Melba
Ginger Annie Sandy JR Merjen Jack Harold
Kelly David Rusty Tim George John Rodney Ronny
Linda Wynne Cody Boes Family JT Carlo

God's Grace for: Children of Belize Gary Don Tammy James

Guidance: Gwen

In Prison: Allen Orlando Steven Aaron Brandon Hank
GR Stephanie Frank

Serving in the Armed Forces: Alex Aaron Connor Joyce
Collin Tyler Jesse

Seeking Employment: Bryan Maurice Brook Robin Vicki
Trey Gabby Gabriel Gail Oliver Aarib

Rest of the Soul: Mildred Joyce George

In the Diocese: **The Diocesan Staff:** The Rt. Rev. George R. Sumner, The Rt. Rev. Michael G. Smith, The Very Rev. Robert Price, The Rev. Cn. Jordan Hylden, The Rev. Cn. Dr. Victor Austin, The Rev. Cn. David Petrash, The Rev. Cn., Jerry Morriss, The Rev. Cn. Canon Carrie Headington, Mrs. Ticoy Youngs, Ms. Virginia Wilder, Mrs. Amy Wooten, MS. Kimberly Durnan, Ms. Susan Mills, Mrs. Kim LaNore, Mrs. Laura Faulkner

Liturgical Assignments & Lectionary

Sunday, August 8, 2021

Counters: David Hess & Murray Followill

LEMs: **Sub-Dcn:** **2nd LEM:** N/A **Ext:** Terri Torres

Lectors: **9:00 am Zoom Service**

1st & Psalm: M. Legacy **2nd:** M. Legacy

POP: Allen Junek

10:30 In-Person Service

1st: Fred Owen **2nd:** Murray Followill

POP: Allen Junek

Ushers & Greeters: K. Carson, J. DeuPree, T. Chnaey

Acolytes: **Crucifer:** D. Hess; **Torches:** S. Arellano & A. Galue

Sound: Fred Ellis

First Reading

2 Samuel 18: 5-9, 15, 31-33

Psalm

130

Second Reading

Ephesians 4: 25-5:2

Gospel

John 6: 35, 41-51

Click on or paste the following link to see the daily Lectionary selections:
www.lectionarypage.net

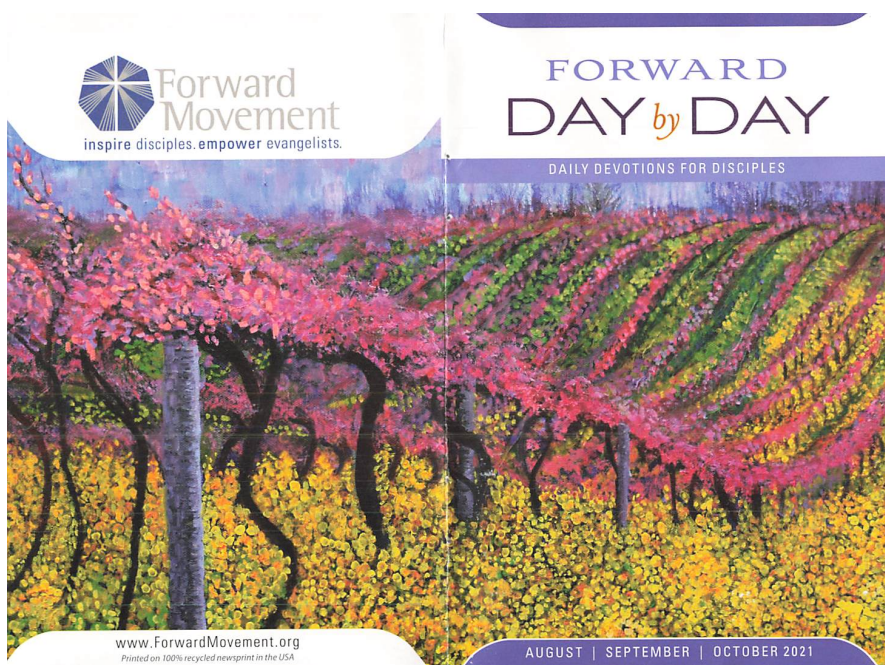
We now have a weekly service in the Nave on Sundays at 10:30 followed by a social gathering in the Parish Hall. We need folks to step up and take on some responsibility for making it happen. If you can help with:

- Coming a little early and help with setting up the service;
- Providing a snack; or
- Staying a little longer and helping put items away

please let Pam know at pam@thedoubter.org Together we can put social in the Social Time.



As we gather again in person for worship, if you would like to sponsor the **Altar Flowers**, **Mary Candle** or **Sacrament Lamp**, please contact pam@thedoubter.org.



Forward Day by Day
for Aug/Sept/Oct
is now available in the
Narthex, the church office
and on the newsstand
outside the South room.

Sermon for the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Stephen V. Sprinkle

Sermon for the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 11, Year B – 8/01/21

Exodus 16: 2-4, 9-15

Psalm 78: 23 - 29

Ephesians 4: 1 - 16

John 6:24 - 35

“Here’s the Question No One Seems to Ask Any More”

Then [the crowds who tracked Jesus down after he fed the 5,000] said to him, “What must we do to perform the works of God?” – John 6:28

So, what did you want to be when you grew up—back in the day? I used to be asked that question when I was a kid. Didn’t you? So, how did you answer? And I have a further question for you then, the same one I put to myself:

“Was your public answer the same as the secret answer you held in your heart for who you wanted to be?”

John Claypool, the longtime Baptist pulpiteer who later in life became a big steeple Episcopalian, said that when he was a child, and when grown ups asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up, he’d answer in ways that would flatter them. Smart kid. For example, if an attorney asked him what he wanted to be, he’d say, “I want to be a lawyer!” If a school teacher asked him, then Little Johnnie would say, “Why, I want to be a teacher!” And if a doctor asked him, he spoke right up and said, “I wanna be a doctor, just like you!”

But in his secret heart, Johnnie Claypool admitted he really didn’t want to be any of those things. Instead, he confessed, *“I want to be King of the World!”*

So, take a moment right now, and think back. What was your childhood answer to what you wanted to be when you grew up? Was your public answer the same as your secret wish? And then, in these moments of private candor, how is all that working out for you, now that you are all grown up?

We compartmentalize, don’t we?

- Public commitments and private wishes
- Childhood dreams and mature adult decisions
- Fantasies and quote “Real Life” unquote

So, where does God fit in to what we wish to become, either publicly or privately—or does God figure into the equation of what *makes up* your public and/or private life at all? Perhaps we Christians would be better served by flipping the question, so that it confronts us where we live:

“Where, Dear Christian, do you fit into what God wishes each and all of us to become, rather than the other way around?”

So much hangs on our continuing struggle to set ego aside, and become God’s person.

Look back at the Gospel reading for this morning. Yes, there are striking ways that have markedly changed since Jesus got questioned by his followers that day in Capernaum...that day following the way he fed the 5000+ back on the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

Here’s the first marked difference: these boats-full of Jesus’s newest admirers crossed land and sea to catch up to Jesus again. They had experienced a miracle! They had heard this Jesus teach with the authority of God! They had eaten their fill of loaves and fishes until they couldn’t stuff in another bite

Sermon for the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

—but they were hungry for more. And they asked for it.

You see, to them, Jesus was the irreplaceable link to the God-sized hunger they bore in the very center of their being. So, they went looking for him—not to do them another miracle. He had already given them a miracle.

They rented, borrowed, or even commandeered boats to cross the Sea of Galilee to where they heard Jesus had gone. They were not in search of his pastoral care or to secure him as a recommendation for their résumé—or even to join them for lunch. They sought for Jesus himself! Like they say in the southland from which I come: *“Honey, who looks for Jesus anymore? Who goes the distance to find Jesus and ask him the question upon which our Christian lives depend?”* Especially if discipleship like that requires us to do the hard work of changing our minds and learning how to pray with out ceasing again.

That’s the second way the followers of Jesus did something markedly unlike what we do in Dallas today: They asked him the question nobody seems to be asking much at all anymore:

“Tell us, Jesus: What must we do to do the works of God?”

- Not what are you going to do for me, Jesus?
- Not how are you going to satisfy my consumer demands on the church, the church staff, and my feelings?
- Not how can I get my religion fix for the week, or punch my attendance card until I just happen to get around to attending church again sometime this month or next?

I suspect the hunger of our ancient faith ancestors drove them to stumble beyond their own egos into a more momentous question than they originally had any intention of asking:

“What must I do to do the works of God?”

--And Jesus answered them: *“Get hungry. Get hungry for something besides your own self-gratification. Get hungry for the Bread of Life. I AM the Bread of Life. And anyone who tastes my Bread will hunger only to do the works of God who sent me.”*

Fr. Christopher and Fr. Stephen know that this year I am celebrating the 44th year of my ordination to the Ministry of Jesus Christ. I have served on five church staffs. Taught seminarians. Gotten degrees. I am painfully aware that like so many of the parishioners and students I have served, I have too often sadly majored in minor issues, groused about a life that is so full of abundance, and hungered for that which is not Bread. But like Rectors everywhere, I have also borne the discontent of a people who cannot get it through their heads that following God, doing the works of God, is not ultimately about them. So quickly the people of God forget God in their headlong search, not for Jesus, but for something to satisfy them. Like the Hebrew people grumbling and grouching about the food God sent them from the sky! Criticizing what they are called to do and to become, complaining that “We’ve never done it that way around here before”...preferring the comfortable fleshpots of the devil they know rather than the unknown open future they are called to travel into with Moses, and our Bishops, and our rectors and leaders. To seek Jesus, the Living Bread.

Do not think that ministry is a glamorous round of pleasant things. Sometimes, it may be, but just like Christianity, ministry is about God, and only about the people of God insofar as they become like Jesus in their works and ways. God has turned toward us, and now it is our turn to turn toward God. The work of ministers is to lead and equip the people of God to concern themselves with how the works of God may be done in this time and place—and then to go and do it. This, Beloved, is a hard saying.

I posted a meme on social media as a reflection on my work as a minister after four decades of ordination. To date, it has gotten 137 likes or loves, 19 comments, and 15 shares. This meme has proved more provocative than I at first imagined, so it must point to a real problem and a real truth. It reads as follows:

EVERY CHURCH WANTS A GREAT PASTOR UNTIL THEY FIND ONE THAT REQUIRES THEM TO BE

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GREAT CHRISTIANS.

Could not the same thing be said of Jesus, the Living Bread? Everyone wants a true redeemer until that redeemer says to them, *“Take and eat of my Living Bread. You shall never be hungry for anything else ever again. So, get up! We must be going to do the works of the One who sent me.”*

Remember what you once secretly hoped to become? How’s that been working out for you? You still have a chance to become something new if you are hungry enough... to follow Jesus.

Amen.



Happy August Birthday!



2nd Wynne Voorhees



3rd Bryan Long



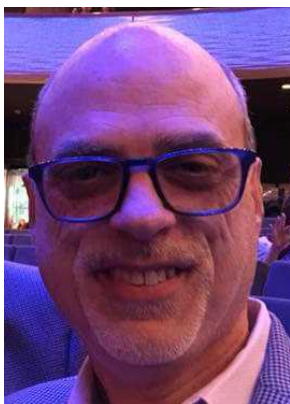
10th Fernando Baldaras



11th Mike Gsell



12th Don Walther



22nd Andrew Besterman



28th Brent Glass



30th Nancy LeGros

Parish Office hours are 8:00 AM until 2:00 PM

Tuesdays through Fridays

214-352-0410

Emergency contact: Rev 'd Christopher Blake Thomas 214-352-0410 ext 6

(Please leave message with name, call back number, and brief explanation of urgency. Fr. Christopher will receive an urgent message to call back as soon as possible.)

The Most Rev. Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop

The Right Rev. G. Wayne Smith, Bishop of Oversight (Missouri Diocese)

The Right Rev. George R. Sumner, Bishop of Dallas

The Right Rev. Michael Smith, Assistant Bishop of Dallas

The Rev. Christopher Blake Thomas, Rector

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Dr. Stephen V. Sprinkle, Theologian-in-Residence

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Mr. Allen M. Junek, Seminarian-in-Residence

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Mr Lee Corbin, Organist-Choirmaster

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Mr. David Aston, Assistant Organist

Ms. Pam Liles, Parish Administrator

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Ms. Paula McCormack, Controller

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The Episcopal Church of St Thomas the Apostle

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The 2021 Vestry

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Senior Warden

Kathy Carson

Lisa Pearson

Rusty Rippamonti

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David Hess

Ruth Woodward

Randy Hering

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Michael Legacy

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Paul McCright

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