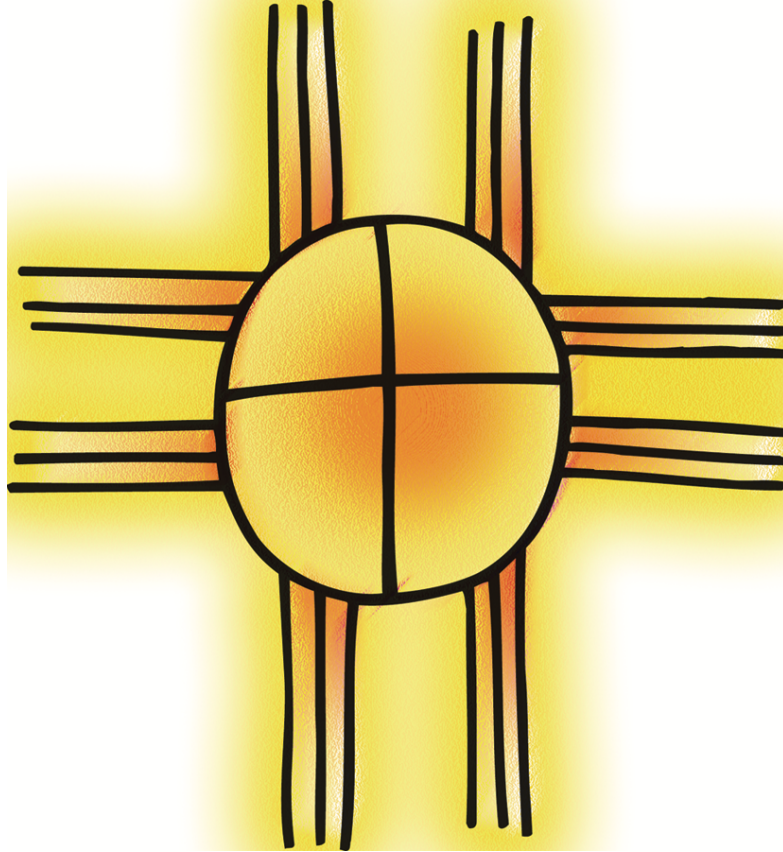


THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF
ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE



August 15th, 2021

**The Twelfth 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 12, 2021

#BlackLivesMatter

My Dear Doubters of Great Faith,

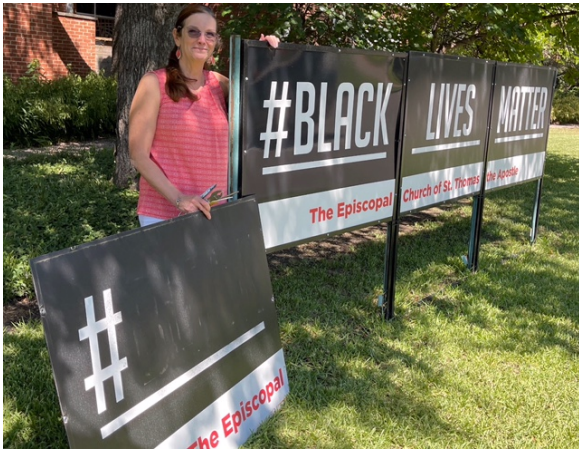
As most of you know, your Vestry voted in 2020 to erect a sign along Inwood Road staking a bold claim about the sentiment of this parish, St. Thomas the Apostle, regarding the sanctity of human life represented in Black and Brown bodies. While some feel this is an inflammatory claim to make, seeing that all life is sacred (a fact which I completely agree), we know that for many, many years people of color have NOT been afforded and accorded the equal benefit of full participation in the rights and respect of humanity. Black and Brown lives have NOT mattered in the same ways that white lives have.

I have just finished reading author Jim Schutze's "The Accommodation," written in 1986. It details the state of race relations in Dallas, Texas, particularly how and why things developed in our city the way that they did, and it offers clues as to why things operate the way they do. Although Dallas certainly had its share of ugly collisions, through many well-orchestrated accommodations, always coming at the expense of the Black community, horrors that boiled over in other parts of the United States were largely avoided in Dallas. That doesn't, however, mean that people were treated any better, or any more justly. As a matter of fact, the Black community endured all the same hardships, horrors, and subjugation. Their response to all of that was in large part silenced, "accommodated away."

It's a fascinating book, and I commend it to your reading list.

The reality is you simply cannot "accommodate away" the sub-human treatment of another human being without "accommodating away" your own humanity. As Christians, we know this. Everyone has a basic need and right to be seen, to be acknowledged, and to be treated as human. Being told "get over it, move on, that was in the past" does not make right those injustices. Systemic racism must be boldly addressed. Systems of injustice must be challenged and changed.

And so, our signage went up along Inwood Road, on the edge of Highland Park, at one of the major intersections of the great City of Dallas, #BlackLivesMatter! And the responses began to flow, a conglomeration of threats and slurs, eventually being vandalized with spray paint. Mark Ramsay, member of Church of the Transfiguration, contacted me about funding a replacement of the damaged panel, because he felt strongly about supporting St. Thomas' message, and that panel has now been produced.



And today, Pam Liles, Parish Secretary, went out, in the early morning of the rush hour commute, to put the new signage in place. The comments, racial slurs, epithets, and threats, that she received as she bolted the “#Black” panel into its holder, demonstrate why this sign, and our work in this city, and in the world, are so completely and totally necessary, in 2021.

Accommodation does not work. Accommodation does not allow for true, complete, and lasting reconciliation and healing. Accommodation does not address the real sickness that dwells at the heart of the matter, racism.

This Sunday, we have the distinct joy and privilege of participating in the baptism of Emmett Sanchez-Brown. We will witness Emmett’s parents and godparents take on the baptismal vows for baby Emmett, and more importantly, we will be reaffirming our commitment to our own baptismal covenant. If we take those vows seriously, as I hope and pray that each of us do, we owe it to Emmett to insure we are doing every single thing that we can to eliminate the scourge of racism from the human heart.

“Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?”

Yours in baptism,
Fr. Christopher+

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.

Mission/Outreach Committee

The Mission Outreach met Tuesday and has three projects they are presently focused on. They are the development of a hand bell choir, the partnership with Cathedral of Hope supporting their "I Care" program, and the expansion of our participation with Dallas Champion Academy.

Hand Bell Choir:

Dave Aston reported that they have identified between 7-8 members of St. Thomas who have expressed an interest in joining the handbell choir. He also said that he had been in contract with some of the handbell members from Central Christian, but nothing was settled. One end of the north room will be dedicated to the storage of the multiple handbells we have.

Cathedral of Hope Partnership:

Cathedral of Hope's "I Care" program is directed at the homeless who come to their church for meals. Each person is given a small bag of personal toiletries. Randy Hering is our liaison with the "I Care" program. There is a basket in the church for you to bring small or travel sized toiletries. Fr. Christopher will bless the basket once a month before Randy delivers it to Cathedral of Hope. This is an ongoing collection so put travel toiletries on your grocery list. The basket will be there waiting to be filled.

Dallas Champion Academy

Carrie Harrington from the Diocese's Evangelical office will be at St. Thomas on Sunday August 22 when she will speak about the programs and opportunities for our participation with the Dallas Champion Academy programs. We are classified as a sponsoring church after we donated \$3,300 to DCA summer and school program.

Upcoming Project:

Mission Outreach has started exploring methods for collecting our volunteer hours. We think it is important for us as a church and the world to know about the width and breadth of our contribution to not only St. Thomas guilds and programs but the other nonprofit organizations and programs. We know we are busy helping others. It will be interesting to learn where, with whom and how often St. Thomas is out in the world doing good.

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.



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.

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 15th

15 Sunday	The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost Baptism of Emmett Sanchez-Brown
9:00 am	Rite Two Eucharist/Zoom
10:30 am	Rite Two Eucharist/Nave
11:30 am	Coffee and Social time/ IG
16 Monday	Office closed
17 Tuesday	
7:00 pm	Vestry Meeting/SR
18 Wednesday	
7:00 pm	CoDA/NR
19 Thursday	
20 Friday	
21 Saturday	
8:00 am	Step Up/SR
11:30 am	Crochet Guild/NR
	Serving Altar Guild Members Dan Calhoun & Murray Followill
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) before coming to ensure there is someone here.

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 Christoria

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: College Ministries
Hospital Chaplaincies

Liturgical Assignments & Lectionary

Sunday, August 15, 2021

Counters: D. Hess & K. Carson

LEMs: Sub-Dcn: 2nd LEM: N/A Ext: C. Mullins

Lectors: 9:00 am Zoom Service

1st & Psalm: R. Woodward 2nd: R. Woodward

POP: R. Woodward

10:30 In-Person Service

1st: J. DeuPree 2nd: R. Hering

POP:

Ushers & Greeters: B. Day, C. Reed, R. Hering

Acolytes: Crucifer: K. Carson Torches: D. Hess & R. Hering

Sound: Fred Ellis

First Reading

1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14

Psalm

111

Second Reading

Ephesians 5: 15-20

Gospel

John 6: 51-58

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

Sermon for the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

Christopher Thomas

Sermon for the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 14, Year B – 8/8/21

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

Psalms 130

Ephesians 4:25 – 5:2

John 6:35, 41-51

When people show you who they are, believe them!

- *Maya Angelou*

Do you remember where you were, when you were, who you were, the moment you realized you were an adult?

Were you one of those people that just woke up in the morning knowing what you wanted to do with your life, be a doctor, or a lawyer, or a fire-fighter, that burning desire, that purpose, that goal was already there, and you set your course early on, and got about it?

I always wished I could be that person! I prayed to be that person!

No, my ongoing journey (and it is just that, an ongoing journey, even at 55 years old), seems to have been and continues to be a process of fits and starts, testing one thing, and then trying another. Oh, if adulthood is based solely on a set of responsibilities, accountabilities for resources here and there, I've certainly made my share of good decisions and quite a few boners.

But I am nothing if I am not mimetic in my human nature. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, I know how to surround myself with those whose world views I most admire and have striven and continue to strive to imitate, adopting as my own the creation of this thing I call identity.

And so, my journey to adulthood cycles through a list of saints and sinners, those who have gone before and some who are still here. And my learning seems to be that as each one crosses over, transitions, pierces the veil between this world and the next, each time, I get just a little bit closer to this thing called adulthood.

Now, my mentor and friend Canon John Logan has never claimed to be a spiritual person. He always says, "I'm religious, not spiritual."

I have known John long enough to know what he means when he says that. It's a play on the popular cultural phenomenon of today, "I'm spiritual, but not religious," the phrase many use to avoid the identity of organized religion, to opt out of Church (big C). And John is deeply committed to the body of Christ represented in and by the Episcopal Church.

But John is, in fact, deeply spiritual and he reveals to us who he is, when John reads the Gospel, or celebrates the Eucharist. John's spirituality is wrapped up in his voice. John reads the Gospel as though he actually believes it. The Eucharistic Mass is not simply a script for John. He really believes it. I have known John for 35 of his 68 years of ordained ministry, and it has ALWAYS been like that. He speaks with the authority of knowing that all of this stuff is true, and that has been the bread that John has fed the body of Christ for nearly 70 years. People are assured by the sound of the shepherd's voice.

When people show you who they are, believe them.

Sermon for the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

And the religious authorities, who know (everything, because that is what religious authorities know, everything), know where this man called Jesus comes from. He did not descend from God. No, this is Jesus of Nazareth, a Galilean, of the questionable pairing of Joseph and Mary fame. That is the Jesus we are identifying. And we know!

For how could, after all, our faith be so incarnational? Does God really come among us? How could our faith be standing right here, before us, in flesh, like ours, of all things? "I am the bread of life. Feed on me, and you will never go hungry!"

But that is, after all, what Jesus had gone about, to and fro, demonstrating, in the "I AM" instances, each and every one. Every time a miracle is procured, a soul healed, nourished, fed, returned to life, Jesus shows them, and us, a little bit more about who he, in fact is, incarnation.

It must be uncomfortable when God shows up before you, when, after all, that is not who, or where, or how you expect to encounter God, in the flesh, right in front of you?

For our encounters of God are limited to the readings of scripture, words (small w), partaking of bits and bites of Eucharistic crumbs, imaginings of Christ, on Sunday mornings. If, after all, Christ in the Eucharist takes all of us to be present, then it stands to reason that all of us hold some piece of the divine that is required to "remember," to incarnate Christ into our presences, again and again and again.

It makes life easy, when people show us who they are, to divide, to segregate ourselves, break down into "camps," our different ways of thinking, them vs. us. Conservative vs. liberal. High Church vs. Low Church. Anglo-Catholic vs. Protestant. Male vs. Female. Gay vs. Straight. Republican vs. Democrat. Vaccinated vs. unvaccinated.

When people show you who they are, believe them. Because it feels good! "I knew it!" Right triumphs over wrong!

What about when people show you who YOU are?

For that is, I believe, the great gift of Jesus' incarnational presence in today's Gospel, not to show them who he was, to claim his own identity, but to show them who THEY were. I don't know that that was not eventually the most difficult thing for them to hear, and what ultimately led to Jesus' downfall and demise. When the incarnational presence of God is standing in front of you, challenging everything you think and believe about the world, and God wants to show you something about you, it is scary stuff!

But that's what relationships are – reflections in others of the things that we like and admire (and maybe more importantly don't like, and therefore reject) about ourselves! Relationships are reflections of our own divinity AND our own humanity. That is the very gracious gift of relationship, and why we need to be in relationship, with those who are like us, but more importantly, with those who are not like us. Because they show us things about ourselves that help us to grow and to know God more deeply and more fully.

Sermon for the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

It is easy and comfortable to be in relationship with those who share our virtues and values, for in those relationships, it is easy to see divinity, our own and others'. But in those where difference is the hallmark, I venture that we see more of our humanity, the sides of ourselves that we don't like, shy away from, or would all together prefer not to see. For how many of us are only a few paychecks from homelessness, or poverty? Why would you want to see the divine on a street corner in downtown Dallas holding a sign asking for money? How could that possibly be the bread of life, living water that promises to quench hunger and thirst?

But we are in this thing called humanity together, all of us. And if we are willing to risk that look into our own humanity, to say "yes, we are all human, yes, but for the grace of God go I," then we also risk the joy of living into the fullness of God's mercy and grace. We all go together. That is the great joy and the heartache of incarnation.

"Putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another."

When people show you who they are, believe them.

When people show you who YOU are, believe them.

Amen.



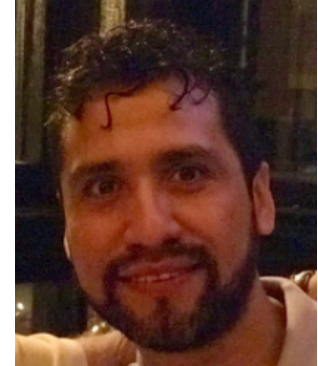
Happy August Birthday!



2nd Wynne Voorhees



3rd Bryan Long



10th Fernando Baldaras



11th Mike Gsell



12th Don Walther



15th Richard Elsea



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

christopher@thedoubter.org

The Rev. Stephen J. Waller, Rector Emeritus

doubttertom@thedoubter.org

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

steve@thedoubter.org

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

allen@thedoubter.org

Mr Lee Corbin, Organist-Choirmaster

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Mr. David Aston, Assistant Organist

Ms. Pam Liles, Parish Administrator

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The Episcopal Church of St Thomas the Apostle

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The 2021 Vestry

Joe DeuPree

Senior Warden

Kathy Carson

Lisa Pearson

Rusty Rippamonti

Chancellor

David Hess

Ruth Woodward

Randy Hering

Randy Hering

Treasurer

Michael Legacy

Junior Warden

Andrew Besterman

Murray Followill

Paul McCright

Clerk