

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF  
ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE



October 24, 2021

**The Twenty-Second 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*

THE  
DODD  
BUCKER



## The Rev. Christopher Blake Thomas

October 21, 2021

### EVERY PERFECT GIFT! The Stewardship 2022 Campaign

My Dear Doubters of Great Faith,

I find myself sitting, yet again, in amazement and gratitude for all of the “perfect gifts” that were on full display this last Sunday as we Doubters celebrated the culmination of our “Every Perfect Gift” stewardship campaign with the ingathering and blessing of commitments for 2022 on Christ’s altar, the place that has witnessed the generosity of so many perfect gifts across all these many years. This is, after all, the altar where so many of us, past, present, and future, have brought the many blessings of who we are, great and small, joyous and sorrowful, significant in their insignificance. I find myself wondering what makes every gift perfect.

It seems that what makes a gift perfect is the place, the location from which the gift is generated. Perfect gifts, no matter the size, shape, or color, initiate in the heart. They come from a deep longing and desire to share what we have as a way of connecting to something (someone) beyond ourselves, bridging the gaps of distance in time and space. I want to be with you, and so here is some of who I am, to solidify who we are, together, as a community, bound up in our hopes, and our dreams, our good times and bad.

I witnessed sacred, sacramental moments of reconnection as each of you came forward and gave of yourselves to God, touching the incarnational holy place with a piece, “Every Perfect Gift,” of who you are. You put yourself on the altar, yet again. It was an incredibly beautiful thing to participate with you in blessing our offerings.

Those sacred sacramental moments of reconnection were not and are not confined to pledge cards. Thanks to your generosity of spirit and heart, your “Every Perfect Gift,” we had a lovely receiving of Bishop George Sumner and his wife, Stephanie. I know they felt the hospitality, the love and joy that are hallmarks of the St. Thomas the Apostle community.

I am happy to report to you that as of ingathering Sunday, you have brought us to 79% of our stretch goal for 2022. We have taken in 50 pledges for a total of \$235,227 toward our goal of \$296,490. This is an amazing representation of your commitment to God and to the St. Thomas the Apostle community, and to the work and ministry that God has for us on this corner in the upcoming year, particularly as we re-emerge and rejoin ourselves on the heels of a pandemic.

It is my fervent hope and prayer that everyone, all of our “Doubters of Great Faith” will feel that deep sense of longing to reconnect, with God, and with this place, and will want to place the very best of what we have on this altar that we love so much. Because it really is our very being, for better and for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, everything that is offered up to God, the living sacrifice, that draws us together into “Every Perfect Gift!”

Please don’t miss out on that!

Fr. Christopher+

# Annual Parish Meeting & Elections

The Rector announces that the Vestry has set the date for the Annual Parish Meeting for election of:

- three (3) Vestrypersons, o
- one (1) Diocesan delegate,
- one (1) Alternate Diocesan delegate, and
- one (1) Endowment Fund Committee member

will be held in person in the sanctuary of St. Thomas the Apostle at 11:45 AM following the 10:30 in-person Sunday service on Sunday October 31, 2021. Pursuant to Canons and Bylaws only confirmed members of at least 18 years of age who have contributed to financial support of the Parish in the last year and who are physically present at this meeting shall be eligible to Vote. (There will be no proxy voting and no online voting for attendees. In order to vote, members must attend the meeting at 11:45 AM in person.)

The following Vestry members will complete their terms effective December 31, 2021: David Hess, Andrew Besterman, and Murray Followill. We thank them for their service. To be eligible to serve on the Vestry, an individual must be at least 18 years of age, a confirmed member, have been a contributor of record to the support of the Parish for at least one (1) year before the date of the election, and have taken communion at least 3 times in the last year. If you wish to nominate a person for the Vestry, please confirm with that person first that they are interested in serving and meet the criteria. Additional information on the nominating process will be forthcoming.



**Nomination Form**

**Return by Sunday, October 24, 2021**

**Positions available for nomination:**

**Vestry Member (3)** for 3-year terms

**Delegate to Diocesan Convention (1)** for a 3-year term

**Alternate Delegate to Diocesan Convention (1)** for a 1-year term.

**Endowment Fund Committee (1)** for a 3-year term

**Person being nominated:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position nominated for:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Person making nomination:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Following is to be completed by the person being nominated:**

- 1. How long have you been at member of St. Thomas and what brought you to St. Thomas?**
  
- 2. What other positions have you held at St. Thomas/Diocese?**
  
- 3. What do you believe you bring to this position, the diocese, and the future of St. Thomas and the diocese?**
  
- 4. What is the date of your confirmation/reception into the Episcopal Church?**

**\*\*If needed, please feel free to continue answers on another page and attach to this form.**

6525 Inwood Road Dallas TX 75209 214 352-0410

# From the Vestry

At our regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, all members were present either in person or via ZOOM.

The Financial reports for September were approved. Our income for the 9-month period is a little over \$10,000 lower than what was budgeted for that period; on the other hand, expenses were nearly \$17,000 lower than budgeted. It's important that folks make sure their pledges are current as we approach the end of our year.

The Stewardship campaign is moving along nicely. However, follow-up calls, visits, and mailings will be forthcoming to those who have not yet pledged. Save yourself from hearing from members of the Stewardship Team by returning your pledge cards!

Father Christopher told us that there are 8 individuals planning on being confirmed at a ceremony at St. Matthew's Cathedral on Sunday, November 7<sup>th</sup>. This news was greeted with joy as it's the largest number many of us could remember in a very long time.

The Vestry will be meeting in person on Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, in a "wrap up" to our Vestry retreats we've had this year. Newly elected Vestry persons will also attend this meeting.

Our traditional Toy Drive with Community Partners of Dallas (CPD) benefiting children within CPS will be back "in person" this year after doing it virtually in 2020. As soon as we receive our cards from CPD, our little Christmas tree will be set up in the vestibule to the north of the Narthex and filled with cards to pick up. Be on the lookout for it!

It's not too late to run for a position on the Vestry, delegate to the Diocesan Convention, or a member of the Endowment Fund. Fill out the form and get it in!! All that meet the previously detailed requirements will get on the ballot.



# Mission Outreach Minutes

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

The Mission Outreach Committee met on Tuesday October 12 for our monthly meeting. Several on-going projects were discussed with more information needed before they can be presented to the Parish for Volunteer action.

The Committee decided to focus on three projects for the remainder of 2021. They are continuing to expand our participation at the Cathedral of Hope, partnering with the Community Partners of Dallas in their annual toy/gift drive, and completing and publishing the survey of each parishioner volunteer hours.

Please read Mother Virginia's article regarding our possible expansion of our volunteering at Cathedral of Hope into food distribution. The Doubter will publish what food and toiletries Cathedral of Hope needs that week. The Committee believes that if we know exactly what they are short of, our Parish will help provide those items.

Stephen Toon will have more information about the Holiday Angel Tree sometime this month. We will convey to the Parish what is the plan for our gift giving to Community Partners for the 2,500 children in the Child Protection Service system in Dallas County. No, we are not seeking 2,500 Angels! We will have just a few, but enough for each of us to have one Angel to shop for. Stephen Toon also provides the get-well cards for us to sign each Sunday. These cards go to the shut-in members of St. Thomas.

Last, watch the Doubter for the link to the survey of our volunteer activities. It will include detailed instructions on how to do this so that those of us from the non-digital generation can participate.

The Committee noticed that sometimes during Sunday Happy Hour the coffee is not ready when our service is over. Amelia Robert, coordinator of Sunday Treats, suggested that who ever brings the treats turns on the coffee pots, the hot water pot for tea and single serve machine. Pam sets all this up for us so all we must do is flip a switch. Thank you, Pam, for doing this.

David Aston reported that he and Dan Hall polished the hand bells making them ready for use. Since I know nothing about hand bells, we learned from David that each bell can make 25 different sounds depending on how the bell is rung. He continues to recruit members for the hand bell choir. If this intrigues you, let David or Lee know. They will train, so experience is not required.

With Fall here, start looking for items that the homeless will need. If you see polar fleece blankets on sale, please consider putting one or two in your buggy. If you have or see other items people will need in the winter, please bring to the church for distribution.

If you have an idea or know about a way St. Thomas can continue reaching out, please let one of the Mission Outreach Committee members know. Those in need may come from within our church or from the world outside our doors. St Thomas has an open-door policy that we truly mean when we say, “All are Welcome here”.

Mission Outreach Committee members are Stephan Toon, Virginia Holleman, Randy Herring, David Aston, Amelia Robert, Caroline Hoffman, Father Christopher Thomas, Allen Junek and Kathy Carson. If this project interests you, please join us. We will find something for you to do have no fear as this is a working committee not an advisory one.

Kathy Carson,

Coordinator

## **Serving “To Go Meals” at the Cathedral of Hope**

We have two opportunities to help at the Cathedral of Hope in their feeding programs for the unhoused people they are assisting – Saturday breakfasts and Monday lunches. Both require a Food Handlers Certification. Mtr. Virginia has taken the course on-line; it’s about 2-1/2 hours with a cost of \$7.00. (<https://www.360training.com/learn2serve/food-handler-training>)

Sign-up for volunteering is through SignUp Genius, and we can help with food preparation, serving, or welcoming and distributing the “to go” meals. If you are interested, please go on-line and take the necessary course and then forward your Certificate of Completion to John McFarland at the Cathedral of Hope. John is the lead for the Saturday Morning team. His email is [chefmcfarland@gmail.com](mailto:chefmcfarland@gmail.com). And let Randy Hering and/or Mtr. Virginia know of your interest. Then we can plan to volunteer together!

**The contact for serving Monday I Care lunches is Gil Jesus. In addition to the food Handlers Certification mentioned above, volunteers must be able to stand for an extended period of time and commit to at least two Mondays per month. Gil’s email is [gil\\_jesus@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gil_jesus@sbcglobal.net) (that’s an “underscore” between his first & last names) or call him at 214-280-4570 to let him know of your interest.**

Mtr. Virginia Holleman

# Opportunities...

## *to serve your church:*

- ✿ the **Acolyte Guild** is in need of people to participate in the service as Crucifer and Torches. If you are interested or have questions, please contact David Hess at [davida Hess@sbcglobal.net](mailto:davida Hess@sbcglobal.net) .
- ✿ the **Audio/Visual Guild** is in need of people to set-up and monitor the equipment for live-streaming during the 10:30 am Sunday service. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Fred Ellis at [fellis@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fellis@sbcglobal.net) .
- ✿ we are seeking nominees for our **Vestry**, a **Diocesan delegate** and an **Endowment Fund Committee member**. If you are interested, please contact a Vestry member or the church office.

## *to serve our community:*

- ✿ through our partnership with Cathedral of Hope, you can donate food to their Food Pantry to help feed the food insecure. A collection basket is located in the Narthex.
- ✿ also through our partnership with Cathedral of Hope, you can donate travel size toiletries for the homeless. A collection basket is located in the Narthex.
- ✿ unwanted clothing is collected for the residents of Austin Street. There is a collection bin in the Parish Hall.
- ✿ There are opportunities to help in Cathedral of Hope's three food programs. To sign up or receive additional information, please contact Anita Haddy at the following link <https://cathedralofhope.com/anita-haddy> or call (214) 351-1901.



If you would like for your loved ones to be honored in the November 7th Doubter for All Saints' Day, please email the name(s) to [pam@thedoubter.org](mailto:pam@thedoubter.org) by Noon on **Tuesday, November 2nd**. If you would like to make a memorial donation, please note on the memo line of your check "All Saints" and mail to St. Thomas, 6525 Inwood Rd., Dallas, TX 75209.



There is information from Episcopal Relief & Development on the table in the Narthex for those who may be interested in making a contribution to help with their on-going work for disaster relief.

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](mailto:pam@thedoubter.org).



# Parish Schedule

# Week of October 24th

<b>24 Sunday</b>	<b>The Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost</b>
8:00 am	Rite One Eucharist/Nave
9:00 am	Rite Two Eucharist/Zoom
10:30 am	Rite Two Eucharist/Nave <b>**Also Live-streamed on Facebook**</b>
11:30 am	Coffee and Social time/ IG
<b>25 Monday</b>	<b>Office Closed</b>
<b>26 Tuesday</b>	
<b>27 Wednesday</b>	
Noon	Rite Two Eucharist/Nave
7:00 pm	CoDA/ZOOM
<b>28 Thursday</b>	<b>St. Simon &amp; St. Jude</b>
<b>29 Friday</b>	
Noon	Bell Practice/M Choir/N or M
<b>30 Saturday</b>	
8:00 am	Step Up/SR
	<b>**Serving Altar Guild Members**</b> Available Members
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; M-Music Room

## PRAYER LIST

Do you know someone who is in need of our prayers? Please email [pam@thedoubter.org](mailto: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 Ginger  
Annie Sandy Merjen Jack Harold Kelly  
David Rusty Tim George John Rodney Ronny  
Linda Wynne Cody Boes Family JT Carlo Christoria  
John S. Stephanie Annette Edward Dane & family Gina  
Malcolm Ronnie Darin Gary Don People of Houma Chase  
Maxine Frank Gwen Diana

**In Thanksgiving For:** This Parish

**God's Grace for:** Children of Belize Anne

**Guidance:**

**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

**Holy Death:** Glen

**Repose of the Soul:** Sara Reba Helen

**In the Diocese:** Commission on Ministry  
Spanish Language Ministries Committee

# Liturgical Assignments & Lectionary

**Sunday, October 24, 2021**

**Counters:** J. DeuPree & R. Woodward

**LEMs:** Sub-Dcn: 2nd LEM: N/A Ext: D. Calhoun & R. Lacy

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

M. Legacy

10:30 In-Person Service

1st: J. Brown 2nd: J. Knight

POP: Congregation Volunteer

**Ushers & Greeters:** K. Carson, A. Montague, R. Hering

**Acolytes:** Crucifer: S. Toon Torches: C. Reed & D. Hess

**Sound:** Fred Ellis

## First Reading

Job 42:1-6, 10-17

## Psalm

34:1-8

## Second Reading

Hebrews 7:23-28

## Gospel

Mark 10:46-52

## Sermon for the Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

**George R. Sumner**

**Sermon for 21st Sunday after Pentecost, Year B, Proper 24 – 10/17/2021**

Job 38:1-7, (34-41)

Psalm 104:1-9, 25, 37c

Hebrews 5:1-10

Mark 10:35-45

All human societies have rites of initiation, things you have to go through to qualify for something or other- boot camp, HR intro, spring training, frosh week. You can surely think of examples in your life. For most of us clergy, at least of my vintage, this included something called CPE, clinical pastoral education. It meant long hours in a nursing home or a prison or a psych ward or somewhere similar, including on call weekends with a beeper if someone should die. And then, in small groups, it meant processing what you had experienced, and submitting yourself to critique about how your own family of origin, affected how you see things. A little self-awareness is a good thing in a priest. It having been the 70's, I happened to have landed in TA CPE. Enough with the acronyms! Transactional analysis claimed that the way we interact follows certain scripts- my child talking to your parent, your adult talking to my child- An A and a P and C lodged inside us all. I chafed at all this at the time, as I reckoned that the dramatic personae, and the plot lines in us were way more varied than those. But this much I grant, that there is a side of humans which can be analysed dramatically- think of the highly influential Erving Goffmann, and his famous book 'presentations of the self.' Who are the characters, and what is the plot line, according to which we enact our lives?

In this spirit, I want to consider our readings this morning. I rarely take all three on, since there is usually way more in one for a sermon length meditation. But let's consider them by plot and actor. Since they are God's Word, we should not be surprised that they show us models of our own interactions with one another as Church, and each and all of us with God. So let's begin. In the Old Testament, our reading from the book of Job comes at the conclusion of the story. Job the righteous professes faith, but he also complains, and not a little, but chapter after chapter. When his friends tell him to hush up, he will have none of it. He challenges God to show up and answer his list of what's been unfair in his life, and the world. Let us call this the Script of believing complaint. We aren't denying God, but we are demanding a reckoning. Our reading is the uh oh moment- He has indeed shown up, and he is God after all. The gist of the retort is 'who do you think you are?' and 'where were you?' In other words, God does listen and answer, but don't expect him to accept your soliloquy on face value. Job is reduced to sackcloth and ashes. But of course if you read on, something equally surprising happens. Job is rebuked and then he is blessed. As a human he is meant for dialogue with God, who can take some hard words, and come back with some of his own! What if this is the model for real prayer? What if this is what it looks like to take God as God seriously,



## Sermon for the Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

and yet to believe he invites debate, and to be ready to be called to account, and blessed for it? It is a more rough and tumble version of praying than we usually have.

Equally honest, and equally challenging, is the Gospel reading. It has to do not with your private prayers, but with the gathered, the Church, and how they present themselves to one another. Let us call it the Script of contention. And that is not meant in an altogether bad way. We strive, long, reach- we want to sit in the seats close to Jesus. But even at our best, even in our most religious moments, our egos manage to insinuate. The human is humble, though 5% of his heart says, 'humble I am indeed.' We are in the language of the New Testament, believers and yet no less gentiles, the unreconstructed. This is the essence of the Ash Wednesday anti-liturgy isn't it? This is who we are, a mix of aspiration and contention, and over against this the Gospel is loving challenge, gracious checkmate, a salutary humbling. The Script is I am with you Lord- (under your breath) more than they are, if you really understand me- (in the Lord's voice) it shall not be so among you, in the same tones he used for Peter. To be the Church is to be in a school of honesty, humility, bracing reminder.

They are both hard enough, and surprising enough. But then comes the Epistle, from the fifth chapter of the letter to the Hebrews. The passage begins by reminding us of all the ways we may describe Jesus as God's very Son. He carries the weak. He is miraculously both priest and sacrifice in the holy Temple of God. As such, he is as mysterious and unique as Melchizedek, who helped Abraham in the book of Genesis. But how is these things? By his suffering, by undergoing weakness with us. He is all these things by crying out, alone, rejected by his father. Eternal as God, he learns perfection by what he suffers- how can he be both at once? What kind of Script is this? The script of changing places, of role reversal. The faithful suffers. The divinely strong is weak. The all wise sheds tears. The son cries out for his father. A startling drama this, unsettling as it does what we might have assumed the word 'God' means.

But there is one more thing to say. This script, the script of divine love, takes places in the heart of God. These are not our lines, but God's. Some else is doing the talking, albeit on our behalf and to our good. The main character is the final act isn't us. This is a script overheard, lines borrowed perhaps. But even that is not enough to say. For this dialogue in the heart of God on behalf of his world does take place in a human life, that of Jesus. And it is uttered in our midst. And the job of the Church is to make sure that the Script reverberates down history. The incarnation is the making of this script to be ours, the atonement the yes to its internal sacrifice on our behalf, the resurrection its power to grasp us and reshape us, in spite of ourselves.

Church is not CPE, and it has a lot more to say than TA. But it does offer those enduring scripts that make sense of our experience. It holds a mirror up to us as creatures of God, as it invites us to that honest complaint for which we receive both a retort and a blessing. That is called prayer. And we are invited into a real-life family, only in this case the one used by God to reshape us, called Church. It holds a mirror up to our contradictions and conflicts, inside and between us. We are contentious, and it

## **Sermon for the Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost**

shows us the contrast with the Gospel. But even that is not all. Best of all, it allows us to overhear the most surprising script of all. And because it is a script between Jesus man and God, enacted in our broken world, we can repeat its words on our tongues, we the understudies, as if it were our own, which is what the bible calls 'grace.' Amen.



# October Birthdays



1 William Leazer



1 Martha Blair



3 Alberto Galue



4 Clara Cantu



12 Randy Hering



19 Bridgette Ball



19 Alyssa Montague



20 Linda VanBuskirk



22 Janet Elsea



22 Stephen Sprinkle



31 Betty Bass

**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](mailto:christopher@thedoubter.org)

The Rev. Stephen J. Waller, Rector Emeritus

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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

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Ms. Paula McCormack, Comptroller

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Ms. Annelies Moeser

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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