



# The Episcopal Church of St Thomas the Apostle

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## Annual Meeting of the Parish

February 5, 2023

11:45 AM, Nave

### Agenda

- I. Call to Order and Opening Prayer: The Rev. Christopher Thomas, Rector
- II. Approval of Annual Meeting minutes of 2022
- III. Senior Warden's Report: Stephen Toon
- IV. Junior Warden's Report: Joe DeuPree
- V. Financial Presentation: Michael Legacy
- VI. Formation Report: The Rev. Dr. Stephen V. Sprinkle
- VII. Commissioning of the 2023 Vestry and Officers: The Rector
- VIII. Rector's Address
- IX. Meeting conclusion and adjournment

**I. Call to Order and Opening Prayer: The Rev. Christopher Thomas, Rector**

**II. Approval of Annual Meeting minutes of 2022**

St. Thomas the Apostle Annual Meeting  
Sunday, January 30, 2022

1. Call to Order and Opening Prayer: The Rev. Christopher Thomas, Rector Fr. Christopher Thomas calls the meeting to order at 11:42 a.m. with a prayer.

2. Approval of Annual Meeting Minutes of 2021  
Motion to approve annual meeting minutes of 2021 (printed in the Meeting Packet)  
Moved by Fred Ellis  
Seconded by David Hess  
Minutes are approved by unanimous vote

3. Senior warden's report: Joe DeuPree  
A written report was included in the Meeting Packet by Joe DeuPree. Joe covers the past year, and his time as senior warden, thanking those who have been with him during his time serving as Senior Warden. He recalls bringing in Fr. Christopher Thomas as rector, Allen Junek as seminarian, and starting up Mission Outreach and Stewardship committees again after the pandemic slowed. He covers the financial report for 2021 and briefly covers what money, land, and other property was received.

4. Junior wardens report: Michael Legacy  
New scrubbers, lost scrubbers and circuit boards. Had some issues during the freeze. Sinks and toilets were replaced. Two AEDs added, one gifted. A third is expected for the south room but that is coming later. Some parishioners are already trained, but others may participate in training happening in the near future. Part of the north room is now the music room and home for storing the Bells. Awaiting final Organ repairs, the pandemic has slowed that. Gutters have been repaired, screening all of them. Fiber optic cable added to improve WiFi. Lighting has been added along the back drive. Repairing and painting outside of church is needed.

5. Treasurer's report: Joe DeuPree (Randy herring absent)  
Joe DeuPree is giving the treasurer's report in Randy Herring's place. Joe details the incoming funds & expenses. No physical property was bought, no debts incurred or owed. Grand money was dedicated to Cafe Momentum and Ewing House

6. Budget Presentation: Michael Legacy  
Current pledges are at \$37k. Expenses for audio visual services added. New Controller doing great balancing and reflecting the budget. About to have a 15-20% increase in insurance premium. Advent

wreath needs fixing. Altar flowers budget being reevaluated, to budget for plants up front instead of flowers. Water bill going up, as well as electricity and natural gas (looking at 50-100%)

#### 7. Recognitions & Presentations: Joe DeuPree and Fr. Christopher Thomas

Fr. Christopher and Joe offer gifts to outgoing vestry members, Murray Followill, David Hess, and Andrew Basterman (absent). Fr. Christopher offers a gift to Mtr. Virginia Holleman. The vestry has decided to honor her with the title as assisting priest for her faithful service to St. Thomas and her meaningful presence within our parish.

#### 8. Rector's Address

Fr. Christopher reflects on the past year and all of its joys and sorrows. Over the past year we have navigated online service moving to in-person and slowly trying to shift back into normal services and life. We have many clergy to thank for their help over the last year. We thank Allen Junek for his time as Seminarian in residence and our joy at seeing him accepted into the postulancy. We thank Lee Corbin for his talents as organist. Many others are called out by name and thanked for their help. We have been able to reach others across the world through online streaming. Retiring vestry members, as well as Junior and Senior warden have contributed much to our congregation and we thank them for their time. A major theme this year has been revisioning hope, and we have done just that. We met and exceeded our operating budget. We increased pledging units, and the average pledge is high for a congregation. Stephen Toon has agreed to serve as senior warden at the appointment of Fr. Christopher Thomas. Joe DeuPree has been elected as Junior Warden. We are revisioning the position of parish secretary as Pam Liles has resigned.

Meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

## **Annual Parish Meeting Minutes**

### **Call to Order at 11:48 am Oct 30, 2022 by Fr Christopher Thomas**

Good Morning.

I would like to call this Annual Parish Meeting of The Episcopal Church of St. Thomas the Apostle open for purposes of election of 3 Vestry persons each for a 3 year term; 1 Diocesan Convention Delegate for a 3 year term ; 1 Alternate Convention Delegate for a 1 year term and 1 member of the Endowment Fund Committee for a 3 year term.

#### **Eligibility to Vote:**

I would like to remind everyone that to be eligible to vote you must be a baptized and confirmed member of this Parish of at least 18 years of age and have contributed of record to the financial support of the Parish at some time during the last year and have received communion at least 3 times in last year and be physically present at this meeting. (Proxy voting is not allowed).

### **Vestry Person Election:**

I would like to introduce the 3 candidates for Vestry person. Please stand when I call your name and remain standing:

Janet Page Elsea

Dan Hall

John Van Buskirk

I would like to thank these persons for their willingness to serve if elected. You may be seated.

At this time, I will open the meeting to nominations from the floor for Vestry person. I request that any person nominating someone for Vestry person must have previously contacted the person they desire to nominate prior to this meeting and the person being nominated has indicated they are willing to serve and that the person has indicated that they meet both the Diocesan Canons and Parish Bylaw requirements for Vestry persons. Those requirements have been published in the Doubter.

### **NO NOMINATIONS SUBMITTED FROM THE FLOOR**

Hearing no nominations, and since we have 3 candidates and 3 open positions, I will entertain a motion from any member of the parish eligible to vote that we elect these three candidates by acclamation. **Joe DeuPree** offered such a Motion. **Fred Ellis** seconded the motion. All in favor please raise your hands. All opposed raise your hands. Motion carried **with no opposing votes**. Congratulations to our new Vestry persons.

### **Turning now to Diocesan Convention Delegate and Alternate:**

I would like to introduce the candidate for delegate Stephen Toon and the alternate delegate David Hess. Please stand and remain standing;

I would like to thank these persons for their willingness to serve if elected. You may be seated.

At this time, I will open the meeting to nominations from the floor for Diocesan Delegate. As noted before, I request that any person nominating someone for Convention Delegate must have previously contacted the person they desire to nominate prior to this meeting and the person being nominated has indicated they are willing to serve and that the person has indicated that they meet both the Diocesan Canons and Parish Bylaw requirements for Convention Delegate. Those requirements have been published in the Doubter.

### **NO NOMINATIONS SUBMITTED FROM THE FLOOR**

Hearing no nominations, and since we have 1 candidate for Delegate and 1 open position. I will entertain a motion from any member of the parish eligible to vote that we elect Stephen Toon as

Convention Delegate. **Michael Legacy** offered such a Motion. **Janet Elsea** seconded the motion. All in favor please raise your hands. All opposed raise your hands. Motion carried **with no opposing votes**. Congratulation to our new Convention Delegate.

At this time, I will open the meeting to nominations from the floor for Alternate Diocesan Delegate. As noted before, I request that any person nominating someone for Alternate Convention Delegate must have previously contacted the person they desire to nominate prior to this meeting and the person being nominated has indicated they are willing to serve and that the person has indicated that they meet both the Diocesan Canons and Parish Bylaw requirements for Alternate Convention Delegate. Those requirements have been published in the Doubter.

### **NO NOMINATIONS SUBMITTED FROM THE FLOOR**

Hearing no nominations, and since we have 1 candidate for Alternate Delegate and 1 open position. I will entertain a motion from any member of the parish eligible to vote that we elect David Hess as Alternate Convention Delegate. **Fred Ellis** offered such a Motion. **Stephen Toon** seconded the motion. All in favor please raise your hands. All opposed raise your hands. Motion carried **with no opposing votes**. Congratulation to our new Alternate Convention Delegate.

Turning now to Member of the Endowment Fund Committee:

I would like to introduce the candidate for Endowment Fund Committee member Wynne Voorhees. Please stand and remain standing;

I would like to thank Wynne for his willingness to serve if elected. You may be seated.

At this time, I will open the meeting to nominations from the floor for Member of the Endowment Fund Committee. As noted before, I request that any person nominating someone for Convention Delegate must have previously contacted the person they desire to nominate prior to this meeting and the person being nominated has indicated they are willing to serve and that the person has indicated that they meet both the Parish Bylaw requirements for Member of the Endowment Fund Committee. Those requirements have been published in the Doubter.

### **NO NOMINATIONS SUBMITTED FROM THE FLOOR**

Hearing no nominations, and since we have 1 candidate for Endowment Fund Committee member and 1 open position. I will entertain a motion from any member of the parish eligible to vote that we elect Wynne Voorhees as a Member of the Endowment Fund. **Joe DeuPree** offered such a Motion. **Fred Ellis** seconded the motion. All in favor please raise your hands. All opposed raise your hands. Motion carried **with no opposing votes**. Congratulation to our new Member of the Endowment Fund Committee.

Round of applause in appreciation for our outgoing Vestry Members, Joe DeuPree, Kathy Carson, and Michael Legacy.

There being no further business, I close this Annual Parish Meeting. I remind you that we will have another Parish meeting in January to present the budget for 2023 and provide the Rector's, Sr. Warden's and Jr. Warden's annual reports for 2022.

### **Meeting Closed at 11:57am by Fr Christopher Thomas**

Respectfully submitted by Alyssa Abadinsky, acting Clerk for this meeting

### **III. Senior Warden's Report: Stephen Toon**

#### SENIOR WARDEN VESTRY REPORT TO CONGREGATION FEBRUARY 5, 2023

When Farther Christopher called me to request, I serve as his Senior Warden, I accepted the position with the promise that it would be only for one year. The past year has presented a few challenges, Father Christopher, Joe the Vestry and I have worked together to resolve.

In January we became aware that our Bank of America checking account had been impacted by Fraud. You need to know that the fraud was committed by an individual not affiliated with St. Thomas, It was completely a result of Bank of America not following our contract specifications that TWO signatures are required on each check written. We need to thank Rusty Rippamonti, our Chancellor and Joe DeuPree, Jr. Warden, The Finance Committee: Jackie Williams, Jerry Knight, Michael Legacy and Wynne Voorhees all who walked that journey along with the Vestry to resolve that issue.

Fr. Christopher had challenged us to research the issue of a monthly expense of water for the Community Garden and Landscaping. We have two meters, one for 6529 the Garden and irrigation and 6525 the Church and Offices & Parish Hall, Joe contacted a plumbing service to investigate the issue, they found a small leak from the main meter for the Garden area. Rusty Rippamonti immediately sent a letter to the City of Dallas Water Utilities and contacted them, a team was sent out to examine the meter. The City discovered an issue with their equipment that required a new meter. That combined effort resulted in a refund that has impacted that expense, Thank you Rusty and Joe.

It is required by the Diocese and our By Laws that an Audit be done yearly. I want to commend Jerry Knight and James Brown for their commitment to complete this process. Remember Pam left us in early January 2022. Jerry, James and I were challenged with locating the documents needed, we spent hours going through the files, requiring searching multiple files for one document. James and Jerry did an outstanding job, we need to recognize their commitment to our ministry.

Your Vestry meet monthly, they also are selected to join committees, Finance & Budget, Buildings and Grounds, Outreach and Ministry who meet monthly to resolve issues, look at the required maintenance on the property and seek opportunities on how our ministry can serve our community. Their efforts are presented to the Vestry for discussions and approval. As you can see dedicated service to this Ministry by those you elected, volunteers and Vestry officers have worked for you and God's Church, please thank them.

In closing I need to express our thanks to Joe DeuPree & Michael Legacy for their three years of dedicated work. Without their support with Father Christopher and Allen Junek how would St. Thomas have survived? I invite you all to stand and show your support and thanksgiving for Christopher, Joe & Michael.

**IV. Junior Warden's Report: Joe DeuPree**

**V. Financial Presentation: Michael Legacy**

**VI. Formation Report: The Rev. Dr. Stephen V. Sprinkle**

**FORMATION/EDUCATION REPORT 2022  
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE**

Janet Elsea, Ruth Woodward, Deacon Jennifer Smith,  
Stephen V. Sprinkle, Fr. Christopher Blake Thomas

**Overview:** The Formation/Education Task Group for the parish fielded a variety of formation and education experiences throughout 2022. Formats were both in-person in the parish South Room, and online.

**Technology advances:**

- South Room tech upgrades included mounting a large monitor screen that facilitated document and image sharing, as well as hybrid Zoom presentations for participants from a variety of offsite locales in Texas and around the nation.
- Purchase and implementation of the OWL vastly improved hybrid Formation/Education opportunities.
- Fr. Thomas and Lee Swift were invaluable tech support for all events.
- In addition to in-person participation by members and guests of the parish, Zoom facilitated attendance and participation by persons from several locations in Texas as well as New Mexico, Oklahoma, Indiana, North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Illinois, Arkansas, and Lisbon, Portugal.

**Formation/Education Events for 2022**

- Episcopal Study Sessions led by Fr. Thomas open to all on Wednesday evenings. Bumper crop of confirmands prepared for confirmation.

- Hybrid in-person and Zoom study, *The Church Emergency Created by the Invasion of Ukraine by Russia*, led by Theologian-in-Residence Dr. Sprinkle, Wednesday evenings from March 9 to April 6, five weekly sessions for 1½ hours.
- Hybrid in-person and Zoom study, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* by Fr. Henri J.M. Nouwen, facilitated by Janet Elsea and Dr. Sprinkle, Wednesday mornings from September 14 to October 12, six weekly sessions of 1½ hours.
- Regular Lectionary Text Study sessions led by Deacon Jennifer Smith, Sunday mornings, 9 to 10 a.m. (continuously offered currently).
- Hybrid in-person and Zoom study, *Christian Nationalism's Challenge to Christian Faith*, facilitated by Dr. Sprinkle, Wednesday evenings from November 30 to December 21, four weekly sessions of 1 hour 15 minutes.
- Book Club, *Dinners With Ruth: A Memoir on the Power of Friendship* by Nina Totenberg, led by Janet Elsea. Book read independently during November. Hybrid Book Club study session Wednesday, December 7 for 1 hour 15 minutes.

Respectfully submitted,



**THEOLOGIAN-IN-RESIDENCE REFLECTIONS  
PRESENTED TO  
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE**

The **REV. STEPHEN V. SPRINKLE, Ph.D.**  
Theologian-in-Residence  
For the Parish

Your Theologian-in-Residence has worked to lift the theological consciousness and skills in the art of theological reflection of the parish throughout 2022, under the direction of our Rector, Fr. Christopher Blake Thomas.

Throughout the year, I have held membership in the Formation/Education Task Group, along with Janet Elsea, Ruth Woodward, Deacon Jennifer Smith, and Fr. Thomas. As the Formation/Education Task Group report for 2022 shows, I have participated in the full range of study sessions and study groups enumerated there, and led and facilitated three major multi-week sessions:

- The Church Emergency Created by the Invasion of Ukraine by Russia



- *Reaching Out* Study Sessions
- Christian Nationalism’s Challenge to Christian Faith

These three sessions required my original work and leadership, spanning 15 weeks, either on Wednesday mornings or evenings throughout 2022, plus material to be read throughout the duration of the Christian Nationalism sessions. Preparation and transportation times are not reflected in this report. These sessions delivered an aggregate of 21½ contact hours of education to those who attended them all.

I authored two Words to the Parish on matters of grave theological importance during 2022, including:

- “Profession of the Freedom of the Children of God”
- “Regarding Governor Greg Abbott’s Attack on Gender-Affirming Health Care”

These Words were delivered to the Rector and Vestry of the parish as matters requiring consideration and action.

I also authored a Plan for the Development of Pastoral Care for one of our seminarians at the request of the Rector. This was a multi-month, multi-layered development plan. It was incorporated in her term of service at St. Thomas Church.

Throughout the year, I have prepared sermons and preached in worship as assigned by the Rector, with appreciation to him for the courtesy of the pulpit.

This work in its entirety is presented *gratis*.

I serve at the pleasure of the Rector in my office of Theologian-in-Residence, an office that is still in the process of development. I am happy to hear from members of the parish about topics, issues, and approaches to the advancement of theological reflection for our parish life, and our work in the community and the world. Let me hasten to say that I deeply appreciate the

trust and willingness of the parish, the Vestry, and the Rector for the opportunity to serve in this capacity.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen V. Sprinkle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Theologian-in-Residence  
The Episcopal Church of St. Thomas the Apostle  
Dallas, Texas

## VII. Commissioning of the 2023 Vestry and Officers: The Rector

Through the intentional modeling of the baptismal covenant, the Vestry provides a foundation of leadership that promotes the active, vibrant, transformational ministry of all.

Sisters and Brothers in Christ Jesus, we are all baptized by the one Spirit into one Body, and given gifts for a variety of ministries for the common good. Our purpose is to commission these persons in the name of God and of this congregation to serve as Wardens, Vestry Members, and Officers of the Episcopal Church of St. Thomas the Apostle.

Are you prepared by a commitment to Christ as Lord, by regular attendance at worship, and by the knowledge of your duties, to exercise your ministry to the honor of God, and the well-being of God's Church?

If so, answer, "**We are.**"

You have been called to serve as Wardens, Vestry Members and Officers in this congregation. Will you, as long as you are engaged in this work, perform it with diligence?

*I will.*

Will you faithfully and reverently execute the duties of your ministry to the honor of God and the benefit of the members of this congregation?

*I will.*

I present to you these persons to serve as Wardens, Vestry Members, and Officers in this congregation.

Let us pray.

O Eternal God, the foundation of all wisdom and the source of all courage: Enlighten with your grace the Wardens, Vestry Members, and Officers of this congregation, and so rule their minds, and guide their counsels, that in all things they may seek your glory and promote the mission of your Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

In the name of God and of this congregation, I commission you as Wardens, Vestry Members, and Officers of the Episcopal Church of St. Thomas the Apostle.

## VIII. Rector's Address

### Rector's Annual Report – 2022

You are the salt of the earth...  
You are the light of the world...

- *Matthew 5:13-14*

My dear Doubters of Great Faith,

Salt, and light...

Salt, and light...

Oh, how I wish that I could take some credit for the choice of this day in the lectionary cycle, to gather here this morning/afternoon in Annual Meeting. For if we are to measure, how could we possibly measure, the places we've been, the successes and failures we've had, where we are, and where we dream to go, without salt, and light.

For in this moment, sandwiched so neatly between beatitudes and commandments, Jesus so eloquently and so elegantly tells us who we are (identity), and what we do (behavior).

You are the salt of the earth, the one who brings the flavor, and the spice, and yes, sometimes the bitterness, but always the perseverance.

You are the light of the world, the one who mirrors God's great love for humanity in the world.

We just experienced Incarnation, God come among us, Immanuel, a little over a month ago, and we have spent the better part of that month trying to comprehend what that dawning light means, for each of us, as individuals, and for this world. Epiphany IS the season of light!

And so, these metaphors of salt, and light, give us opportunity of measure, and that is, after all, what people come to expect from annual meetings. Measure. "Tell us how we did. Celebrate the wins. Where did we miss the mark? Cast a vision for where we are going."

Salt, and light...

Are we salty, or have we lost our taste?

Is our light shining, or have we hid it under a bushel?

How is our spiritual health?

In last year's Annual Meeting address, the vision that I cast was that we, as individuals, and as this body of faith known as St. Thomas the Apostle, would spend the year of 2022 intentionally viewing the world through the lens of Jesus Christ's great challenge to us, the Baptismal Covenant.

- Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers (will you come to church)?
- Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin (separation), repent and return to God (do something different)?
- Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ (be little evangelists and invite folks to church)?
- Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself (even the ones you don't like)?
- Will you strive for justice and peace among ALL people, respecting the dignity of EVERY human being (even the ones you don't like)?

This is, after all, our Anglican yard stick of salt, and light.

And so, I find myself wondering how we, this body of faith, measured up, to the salt, and light, that Jesus challenges and expects us to be if we are indeed to call ourselves the Episcopal Church of St. Thomas the Apostle, to be "Doubters of Great Faith."

To be certain, we did a LOT of church in 2022. In your handout, you can see a myriad of statistics and events, numbers which lay claim to the "salt and light" of this congregation.

And I would draw you deeper into the people who are behind the statistics, the ones those numbers represent, because that is where the story of salt and light can, will, and is being told. It is in the people. I witness you all, every day, day in and day out, living out your baptismal covenant, being salt and light.

You disorder the status quo by living out your baptismal covenant!

If you need an example of this, I point you no further than your outgoing Vestry Class of 2022: Kathy Carson, Joe DeuPree, and Michael Legacy, and last year's Senior Warden, Stephen Toon. I thoroughly believe that these people get up every single morning and put on their baptismal covenant. These people are my examples of the baptismal covenant lived out. These are the people that led you through a pandemic of epic proportions. These people were here, every single time your Rector called, wanted to quit, or give up, or not live out his own baptismal covenant. These people, and the rest of your Vestry, were making sure that the salt was there and the light shined throughout 2022.

The salt and light extends to the unqualified blessing of the (non-compensated) clergy bench that bring their very distinct salt and light into our presence. The services that have been led, the sermons that have been preached, the classes that have been taught, the pastoral care that has been done, the lives that have been changed, by Stephen Waller, and Virginia Holleman, and Stephen Sprinkle, and Jennifer Smith, and Andy McCarthy, and Sandi Michels, and now Teresa Terry, and our very soon-to-be-ordained and always loved Allen Junek. Salt, and light!

The worship we have, it sits at the very core of who we are, would not be what it is without so much more salt, and light. The generous sharing of the many gifts and talents of our singers and bell-ringers, led so capably by Lee Corbin; the altar, so lovingly and so painstakingly prepared and cared for by our Altar Guild, led by Dan Calhoun and Murray Followill; to all of the many servers and services so dutifully scheduled, trained, and led by Michael Legacy; to readers so carefully and respectfully coordinated by Randy Lacy; to ushers and greeters, Tim Chaney, who make ready the Nave and welcome the seekers into God's holy temple. All of this, salt, and light. And the salt and light goes out into the world in the form of our blessed Eucharistic Visitors, who take this salt and light to those who cannot come here to get it!

And it does not end there. For to miss the salt and light in those who hold forth the foundations of this place, those who have helped to ensure that it will be here, legally and financially, for the future generations, deserve our thanks and our thanksgivings. I am unceasingly grateful for the dedicated heart and soul of chancellor Rusty Rippamonti, treasurer Wynne Voorhees, and Vestry clerk Caroline Hofmann. Your Endowment Fund board, led so capably by Fred Ellis, insures that the investments of this Church exist and continue into the future, enabling St. Thomas the Apostle to be salt, and light.

In 2022, we welcomed the salt and light of Lee Swift, as Office Administrator, and Laura Giffin, as Controller. The work that they do, helps us in so many different ways to be the people of faith that God has called us to be.

Now, there are all sorts of ways that we might look at, try to gauge the saltiness and light of this congregation, the "Doubters of Great Faith."

One way is to look at how many folks made the decision to join us in this place over the last year. Our ranks increased officially by 15 (transfers in/reception/confirmation). Four folks left us, two by transfer, and two more by... So, overall, membership went up. Is that salt and light?

Were we salt and light in our giving? I won't rehearse the trend line for you. You can see it for yourself. We did increase the number of new first-time pledging households by 14. But that also means that several who pledged last year were not heard from for 2023. The good news is we set another stretch goal to move toward financial independence from our reserves. As you heard in the financial report, there is still much more work to be done. Salt, and light.

I hope you can get an idea from seeing in one place the highlights of all of the many different and varied events that took place in addition to the faithful worship that go on here. We instituted a rector, we married and buried people, we had education classes, we had cake walks, we blessed and confirmed people and pets, we said goodbye to a beloved garden ministry. We did a LOT of stuff. Salt, and light.

And yet, as I think about resting in all of the saltiness and light that we are, I cannot help but wonder how we can, should, and MUST be more. Any laurel or accolade of 2022 cannot be rested upon. It is not enough. This broken and hurting world demands that it is simply not enough.

And so, as I mine the statistics in an attempt to dig deeper into the spiritual health of this place, to see from where "More than enough" might possibly emerge, I come time and again to ASA, average

Sunday attendance. This is an interesting, revealing, sobering, maybe even frightening measure of the spiritual health, the saltiness and light that we offer here, both as individuals, and as this body of Christ.

For one of the great gifts that I hear spoken of this congregation, time and again, is its overwhelming ability to welcome, hospitality, the reality of joy that pervades this place when those who don't know us, find us, wander in, and experience St. Thomas. I translate that as the presence of the Holy Spirit. That is why I say, every single Sunday, THANK YOU for bringing your little piece of the Holy Spirit with you when you come into this place, because each of the little bits and pieces of Holy Spirit add up to make a lot of Holy Spirit, and the folks who find their way into us are changed by that.

Presence, your presence, is important.

How much Holy Spirit we have depends directly upon how much YOU we have!

You won't find this on your statistical reports, but I will tell you that we are averaging about 50 or so in our main Sunday morning worship offering. I am led to believe this is about 2/3 of what your normal primary worship attendance would have been, pre-COVID, during prior rectorships. 75 or 80, maybe a little less or more. It may be anecdotal, but it feels about right, based on what I have seen and read.

The difference between 50 and 80 is important. In a room that seats roughly 120 comfortably, the difference between 50 and 80 is palpable.

I have talked with my clergy colleagues and peers, and read extensively about the emerging trends in church and church attendance, both prior to and after COVID, and many, if not all churches are experiencing the same trend of about half to 2/3 of attendance pre-pandemic. Other research says that people now believe that attendance once or so every three to four weeks constitutes faithful attendance. Many people got used to pandemic life on zoom, on the computer, and don't want to go back into the office, or church, because the computer offered ways to boundary these responsibilities, leading to phenomenon such as "quiet quitting." (None of that is in the baptismal covenant.)

I believe that if we are to continue being salt and light in this place, to be God's witness to this broken and hurting world, as we have been for 70+ years, we must confront these trends head-on, eyes wide open. It is and will be my charge to the leadership and to you during 2023 and beyond.

We must be willing to ask, time and again, the questions that I asked on Christmas Eve, and again this morning.

What brought you here?

What keeps you here?

Are you here?

Pair that with:

Who is not here?

Why are they not here?

What are we willing to change for them to be here?

Simple as these questions may seem, they are just a restatement (therefore a barometer) of the baptismal covenant for which you, and me, and St. Thomas the Apostle are responsible.

This Church lays claim to some of the most incredible resources in Christendom to do this “salt and light” work. I love to say that if we can’t do church here, it can’t be done anywhere.

We could not afford the land upon which we now sit, were we to have to purchase it today. Everyone under the sun goes through this intersection – it literally is the crossroads of the world.

These buildings, beautiful and inspiring, rise to God without deferred maintenance. No debt. We don’t owe anybody anything, except God. We have experienced, vital leadership, committed to the Christian journey. But our single greatest resource, the greatest font of salt and light to be the salt and light of Jesus Christ in the world, is YOU!

If we can’t do this great Christian thing right here, with everything we’ve been given, I am convinced it can’t be done

Faith always seems to be just about one angel short of what is needed.

I’m here to tell you that that angel is YOU.

Yours in gratitude,  
Fr. Christopher+



Parish Statistics:

Total Baptized Members in Good Standing, January 2022: 383

Transfers/Receptions/Confirmations in: 15

Transfers out: 2

Deaths: 2

Total Baptized Members in Good Standing, December 2022: 394

Total Number of Services Held: 165

Baptisms: 0

Weddings: 2

*Alyssa Michelle Montague & Steven Mark Abadinsky*

*Henry Clayton Coffield & Christopher Carl Schilling*

Funerals: 2

*Bryan Long*

*Jane Hook*

Confirmations: 4

Receptions: 7

Year	2023	2022	2021	2020
Total Pledge	331,258	307,070	266,490	252,025
# Pledges	78	70	63	60
Average Pledge	4,247	4,387	4,030	4,200

Average Sunday Attendance 2019: 59

Average Sunday Attendance 2020: 75

Average Sunday Attendance 2021: 66

Average Sunday Attendance 2022: 67

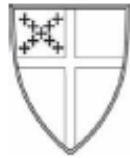
Total Sunday & Saturday Evening Eucharists	110
Total Weekday Eucharists	44
Total Private Eucharists	25
Daily Offices Held on Sunday	0
Daily Offices Held on Weekdays	11
Marriages conducted in 2022	2
Burials conducted in 2022	2

## Highlights of 2022

March 9 – April 6, 2022	“The Church Emergency Created by the Invasion of Ukraine by Russia”, Formation led by The Rev. Dr. Stephen Sprinkle
May 7, 2022	Marriage of Hank Cofield and Chris Schilling
May 14, 2022	Institution of our Fifth Rector, The Right Reverend Wayne Smith, the 10th Bishop of the Diocese of Missouri, on behalf of The Right Reverend Dr. George R. Sumner, Bishop of the Diocese of Dallas officiated
June 26, 2022	Celebrated the ministry of Allen Junek among us as Seminarian-in-Residence as he became a postulant in the Diocese of Texas and relocated to Austin
July 20, 2022	New Administrative Assistant to the Rector hired
September 11, 2022	Homecoming Sunday, covered dish and dessert in the Parish Hall
September 11, 2022	Cake and Desert Auction, raising around \$1,000 for Mission Outreach
September 14 – October 11, 2022	“Reaching Out: The Three Movements of Spiritual Life” by Henri J.M. Nouwen, Formation led by The Rev. Dr. Stephen Sprinkle and Janet Elsea
September 17, 2022	Parish Clean up, all volunteers
September 18 – on-going	Lectionary Study 9 – 10 AM, led by The Rev. Jennifer Smith, Deacon
September 21 – October 19, 2022	“Basics of Faith” class, led by the rector
October 2, 2022	Sunday service’s Special Guest Singer, Alison Bolshoi
October 2, 2022	Pet Blessing / St. Francis Day in the courtyard
October 30, 2022	Opening of Annual Meeting 2023 for Vestry Elections
November 5, 2022	Diocese of Dallas Convention, Episcopal School of Dallas
November 6, 2022	Feast of All Saints
November 6 – December 4, 2022	Angel Tree Toy Drive
November 13, 2022	Presentation to Bishop Michael Smith of 11 Confirmand, Received and Reaffirmed at The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Irving
November 17, 2022	Arrival of Willa Grace Moore to happy parents Lauren and Andy
November 20, 2022	Thanksgiving Feast in the Parish Hall
November 20, 2022	Honduras Threads presented a pop-up shop for the parish
November 30 – December 21, 2022	“Christian Nationalism’s Challenge to Christian Faith” Seminar led by The Rev. Dr. Stephen Sprinkle
November – December 2022	Water Leak Issue resolved, and credit received
December 7, 2022	“Dinners with Ruth” Formation Book Club, led by Janet Elsea
December 24, 2022	Christmas Eve Masses 7:30 & 10:30 PM, reception held between services
December 31, 2022	Community Garden closed

## IX. Meeting conclusion and adjournment

Appendix:



EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF  
**ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE**  
Leadership Prayer List

### VESTRY

Alyssa Abadinsky  
Janet Elsea  
Dan Hall  
Randy Hering  
Jerry Knight  
Lisa Pearson  
Stephen Toon  
John Van Buskirk  
Ruth Woodward

### EX-OFFICIO OFFICERS

Joe DeuPree  
Richard Elsea  
Rusty Rippamonti  
Wynne Voorhees

### CLERGY & STAFF

Lee Corbin  
Laura Giffin  
Virginia Holleman  
Allen Junek  
Andy McCarthy  
Jennifer Smith  
Steve Sprinkle  
Lee Swift  
Christopher Thomas  
Stephen Waller

### ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE

Paul McCright  
Wynne Voorhees  
Jackie Williams