

CANTERBURY TALES

✚ OUR NEW VICAR SHARES HIS FAITH JOURNEY ✚

Deep in the Heart

With some work yet to do in Yuma and other scheduled obligations, it will be some time yet before I am at the helm in Temecula. In the meantime, I will use the June and July issues of *Canterbury Tales* to begin our relationship with each other. I'll tell you my story and answer the question: "How'd I come to be Vicar of St. Thomas of Canterbury?"

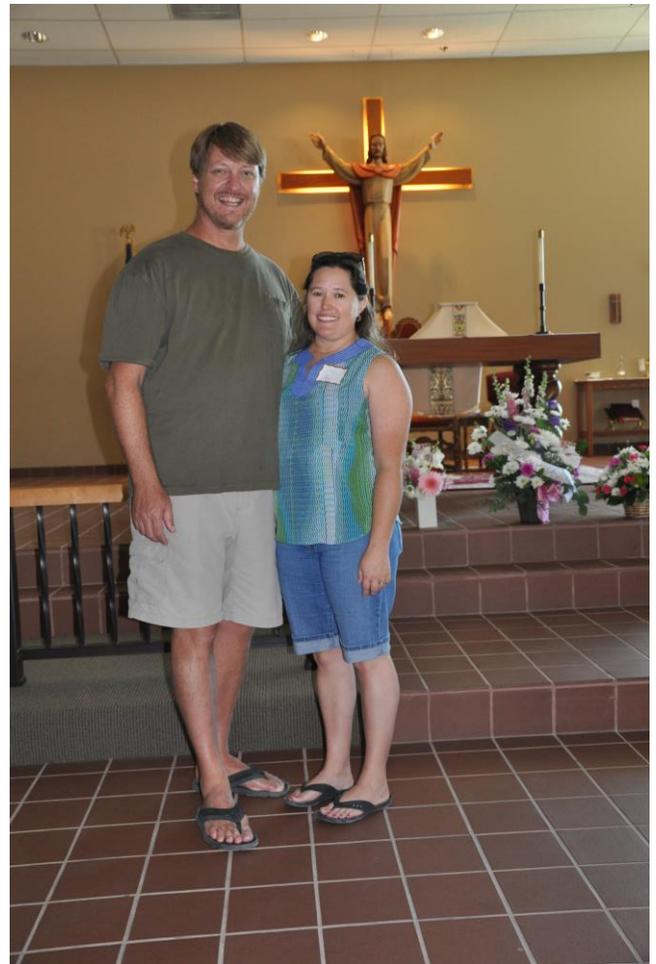
Growing up with an avocado orchard on the outskirts of Camarillo, California, my childhood was ideal in many ways. This was the day of no seatbelts or bike helmets, and even though video games were just coming into their own with companies such as Atari and microwaves and VCRs were all the rage, the pull of year-round spring-like weather and a couple acres was a strong enough lure to keep me outside most hours—when I wasn't preoccupied, that is, with the obligatory homework and piano practicing. Scouts, soccer, the neighborhood gang (20-ish kids within a 3-year age span), and my Dad's unquenchable thirst for adventure rounded out these formative years. Family meant everything to me then.

Church, however, was not a part of these idyllic times. I am not sure you could call us Trues atheists back then; God or no God, we just tried to figure out life on our own.

My parents' divorce changed all that. I was in middle school. My older brother and I would remain with Dad, it was decided, while Mom pursued her new life.

Suddenly, family no longer meant everything to me. How could it? It was no longer together. My rock, my foundation, had been pulverized. And thus began my search for new meaning, new hope, new salvation.

Occasional visits to campus Bible studies turned into regular visits turned into a ski-trip conversion experience turned into baptism and church membership. By now I was in college, trying to figure out what I should be when I grew up, involved in college Bible studies and ministry leadership and, during the summers, program work at a large Christian camp.



College is where I met Holly, my future bride. We studied music and sang in the university choir together. We both attended the same church. This running in the same circles continued for a year or so until I finally got the nerve to ask her out on a date, which turned into another date, and another,

and so on, until we married, me fresh out of college, her with a year to go, on Sept. 11, 1993.

September 11th was our anniversary first, by the way.

Anyway, back in college, back when I was thinking about what I should be when I grew up, the idea of vocational, ordained ministry was a constant. I considered other options, sure. But this idea I couldn't shake. So I prayed about it. A lot. And I talked with Holly about it. A lot.

No wonder, then, that my first real job was as Director of Youth Ministries at a Baptist church.

Now, remember, I hadn't attend much church before college. The idea of vocational ministry in my mind mostly looked like parachurch Bible studies (think Young Life, if you know what that looks like) and summer camp. Youth ministry in a Baptist church confronted me with messy things I'd never thought about before, like a board of Christian education: a committee that was effectively my boss.

Long story short, three years there was long enough to convince me I wasn't a Baptist. The strong, internal sense of call to ordained ministry remained, sure. But as for which denomination, tradition, or perspective, I was befuddled, perplexed, and nonplussed.

I retreated into working other jobs—teaching mostly, but also some engineering and music

directing and accompanying. I had bills to pay, not to mention an increasing number of family members to support.

Some twelve years passed—and in that time we passed through some churches and denominations, from Baptist to Presbyterian to Episcopal—until we found ourselves with our four daughters settling into St. John's, New Braunfels, in the Diocese of West Texas, drawn to the Episcopal Church by its sacramental theology and its appreciation of and respect for liturgy and music.

Only to hear the rector declare, shortly after Holly and I had been confirmed, "The vestry and I have decided to leave the Episcopal Church! Next Sunday will be my last."

And I be like, "What? No way! You can't do this! This is my spiritual home! I can't even!" Etc.

So I wrote a deeply thought out and probably passionate letter to my bishop expressing my frustration and my long-time desire to be ordained, and wouldn't it be especially helpful now!

And my bishop replied, asking me to meet with him for a one-to-one conversation.

To be continued . . .

The Rev. Timothy True



A mission of the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, St. Thomas is a "pet-friendly" church that cares deeply for our beloved pets. We work with local senior citizens to provide food for their pets and support the Animal Friends of the Valleys. We also hold a blessing for the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, and welcome well-behaved pets to attend worship with us.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

MEN OF ST. THOMAS (MoST) – Saturday, June 10 at 8:00am

MoST is an informal fellowship that meets each second Saturday of the month at 8:00am for a potluck breakfast, brief Bible Study, and assisting afterwards with maintenance and property projects at the church. All are welcome including friends and neighbors. The emphasis is on fellowship. Come join the fun!

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP -- Monday, June 5 at Noon

The Book Discussion Group meets in the St. Benedict Conference room from 12 noon to 1 PM. The group has been reading *Song of the Lion* by Anne Hillerman. This is a popular novel about imagined contemporary events in the Navajo and Hopi lands of Arizona. Even if you have not been reading the book, please come and share your ideas for our next selection. This is an informal group that meets on the first Monday of the month and is open to anyone interested in lively discussions on diverse subjects. Please call or email Bill Liesman for more info.

BETHLEHEM HANDCRAFTS—June 17-18 in the Narthex

Based in San Diego, Bethlehem Handcrafts operates on behalf of Christian families in the Holy Land. These families are currently facing an economic hardship that has caused many to relocate to more secure and stable places to live and work. For centuries, Bethlehem's Christians have supported their families by carving Olive Wood religious art for visiting pilgrims. Our congregation will have the opportunity to view and purchase a wide range of these wonderful artifacts before and after services this week in the Narthex.

EPISCOPAL NIGHT AT THE PADRES – Friday, June 23 at 7:10pm

Plan on attending the always fun annual Episcopal Night at the Padres. This year's game will match up the San Diego Padres battling the Detroit Tigers on Friday, June 23 at PetCo Park. Please contact Lee Eisenhut to order tickets.

BISHOP MATHES' FAREWELL – Saturday, July 1, 1:00pm to 3:00pm

A fond and final farewell to Bishop Mathes will be held at St. Paul's Cathedral, San Diego. The bishop's last day will be Saturday, July 1. He will begin his new role as associate dean of Virginia Theological Seminary in August.

What Do We Do While We Wait for Our New Vicar?

See Peter Mandery!

In accordance with the canons of the Episcopal Church, the Bishop's Warden (Peter Mandery) will either handle each individual matter himself or direct it to Canon Alyson Thomas to be handled by the Diocese. The duty of our supply priest (Fr. Schuneman) is to be here for Saturday night and Sunday services only. Any other needs for a priest beyond that, including pastoral care requests, should be directed to Peter Mandery at (760) 535-14889.

Let's pray that this will be a smooth time in our parish journey!

Wednesday Night Holy Eucharist with Healing

The Wednesday night Holy Eucharist with Healing will be replaced with Evening Prayer until Father Tim arrives in August. The Wednesday Evening Prayer service will remain at the same time at 7:00pm.

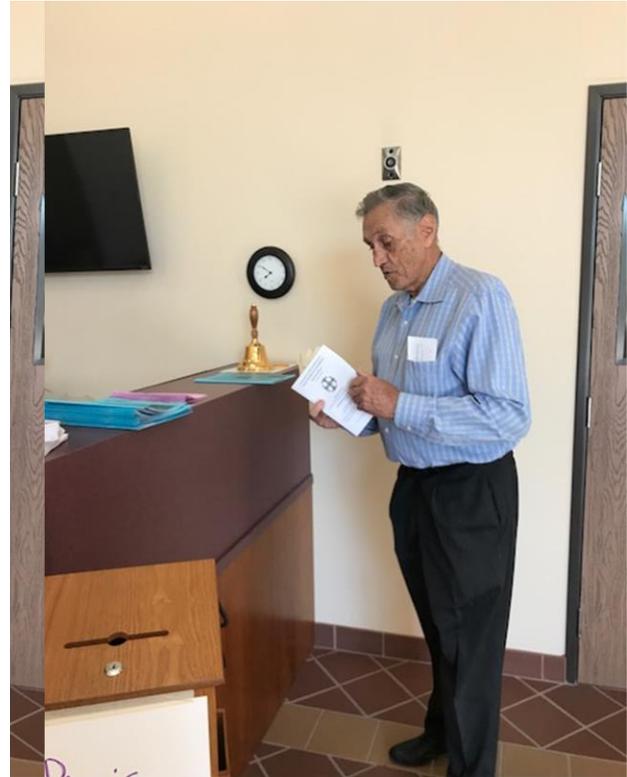
Member Spotlight

ROLAND STEELE

While Roland Steele identifies as "usher" at St. Thomas, that certainly is the most understated title anyone in the congregation holds. He is often greeter and usher combined at the 8 AM service. Roland shows up early to make coffee on Sunday mornings and to set up for fellowship and Adult Formation. He epitomizes the welcoming character of St. Thomas, and many newcomers have remarked over the years that they returned just because he was so inviting to our church. At St. Thomas, Roland is happy to work behind the scenes setting up, running errands, putting chairs and tables away, helping in the church office, cleaning, and generally keeping everyone else on their toes. He volunteers for most extra services at St. Thomas including funerals and weddings, but always shuns the spotlight.

But who exactly is this rugged and timeless gentleman who is such an anchor for the early service at St. Thomas? The curious interviewer would be hard pressed to get the subject to talk about himself, but a little history is instructive.

Roland grew up in Watertown, Connecticut, a leafy, sleepy suburb of Waterbury in the central west part of that state. As a child, he walked three miles with his family to services at the beautiful, new Christ Episcopal Church, built in 1924. As a young man, he served in the Army during World War II and during that time was stationed in the Pacific theater. His oral



history of that period is fascinating but self-effacing. For anyone who knows about Asia now, his knowledge is an interesting counterpoint to the present dynamism of that forward-looking region.

After several interesting careers including police officer, Roland retired to California and started attending St. Thomas in 1988. The church was then in a light industrial building on Commerce Center Drive. Roland has experienced five vicars and numerous interims and supply priests as well as three bishops (with a fourth coming) while a member at St. Thomas. Roland's closest family member is a daughter and son-in-law who live in Phoenix, and to call him independent and self-sufficient is the same understatement as calling him "usher."

Roland started meeting with some of his fellow World War II vets when he first arrived in Temecula. While the numbers have dwindled, the comrades in arms still meet regularly in the mornings at McDonald's on Jefferson just to be together and reminisce.

Roland often says he has had a long and healthy life because the "Lord is mad at me." He also offers this quote "I tried to be an atheist, but the Lord kept getting in the way."

Ministries Update

From the Desk of Bishop's Committee Member Deb Mitchell:

Stephen Ministry

Everyone faces periods of crisis, transition, and personal difficulties in life. During these times, one greatly benefits from a caring relationship with someone who will faithfully listen, empathize, pray with and for them, and encourage them with Christ's love

Caring for people in need is at the heart of a congregation's pastoral care ministry. Unfortunately, priests and staff may exhaust themselves trying to meet these needs and their efforts can fall short. The priest provides immediate care at the onset of a crisis, but no priest can provide ongoing follow-up care for an extended period. Lay people want to help, but may lack the knowledge, skills, and confidence to care effectively. Those whose needs go unmet can struggle in their faith and even stop participating in the congregation. With the Stephen Ministry, people no longer need to go through crises and difficulties alone. Instead they have a Stephen Minister – a well-trained, caring, Christian friend who will walk beside them for as long as necessary, providing the emotional and spiritual care they need. After training, each Stephen Minister is paired one-on-one with a care receiver. (Men are paired with men, and women with women.) The Stephen Minister meets with that person on a weekly basis to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support. Ministers will meet with the leader and priest twice monthly for supervision. Those interested in serving in this ministry should contact me or Father Tim.

Involvement in this non-denominational organization requires a one-time, life-time enrollment fee paid by the church. I learned St. Thomas paid this fee and has been enrolled in Stephen Ministries for about 20 years but became inactive.

I am excited to attend a training session in Dallas, July 9th -15th, 2017 which includes 50 hours of education through lecture, demonstration, discussion, video, reading, and skill practice to initially prepare me to lead the ministry in our congregation. To offset expenses for St. Thomas, I have personally contributed the \$1200 cost of the course (which includes room/meals) and will provide my airfare.

Stephen Ministry is a resource for people who are hospitalized, those who are grieving, suffering loneliness or discouragement, those who are separated or divorced, those who are dying (including family members and friends), unemployed persons, those fighting cancer and other debilitating diseases, those providing long term care for a loved one, those dealing with complications of relocating, those who are homebound, convalescing, or rehabilitating, victims of disasters, those in spiritual or other crises.

Prayers and Squares Quilt Ministry

This is an interfaith outreach organization with over 1,000 chapters in 11 countries that combines the gift of prayer with the gift of a hand-tied quilt. Unlike many other groups that make quilts for charitable causes, the purpose of Prayers & Squares is not to make and distribute quilts, but to promote prayer using quilts. The idea behind these prayer quilts is simple: each knot represents a prayer. A heavy thread is used to take stitches through the quilt layers, and the ends are left free to be tied with a square knot. As each knot is tied, a silent prayer is said for someone in special need, who then receives the finished quilt.

Our St. Thomas Chapter 46 meets on Fridays from 9:30-12am and is led by Deb Mitchell. Members currently include Virginia Patton and Charlotte Casher with help from Sonja Jump and Laurel McKee when available. Our chapter distributed 15 quilts during 2016. Each quilt represents a special gift of love made by our busy quilters with prayer knots tied by our church members. Our quilts have been distributed to adults and children facing surgery, serious illness or personal crisis, to members who have moved away, and to families experiencing the loss of a loved one. Last year, for the first time, Deb designed a special "remembrance" quilt made from t-shirts and special fabrics for Laura Palma on the unexpected loss of her husband, Carlos. If you are interested in a "remembrance" quilt or pillow, please contact Deb. Our Quilt Raffle raised \$700 towards the AED. Thanks to all of you who supported our efforts.

We are always searching for more members and we will gladly teach you how to quilt beginning with simple 5" squares. All materials are provided (fabric, thread, batting, quilting implements, etc.) from our "fabric closets" in the St. Scholastica room. We also have several machines for your use. Contact me on my cell via text message (951-440-1919).

Quilt request forms are in the Prayers and Squares mail box in the office. Fill out the form and leave it in the box. We generally have several quilts on hand suitable for a man, woman, or child from which you may choose. Special quilt requests take four weeks. You may also contact me via text message at 951-440-1919.

Important Message from Mother Eleanor

On May 20, I returned from some time away to find the beautiful and inspiring "Ecclesiastes" picture hanging in my bedroom, exactly where I had envisioned it going.

I want to thank you all for presenting me with such a meaningful gift as I departed my interim Vicar season with you.

Ecclesiastes, as Jack Bundy pointed out at the farewell celebration for Bishop Mathes and myself, is among the Wisdom writings in the Hebrew Bible. The title, "Ecclesiastes," is a Latin transliteration of the Greek translation of the Hebrew "Kohelet," usually translated as "Teacher," or "Preacher." I had the privilege of being both with you and find the gift one of the most thoughtful gifts I have ever received. I shall treasure it, particularly since a number of us shared the experience of studying the work of the artist, John Swanson, in our Lenten Adult Forums.

Thank you also for the purse you provided to help me in my transition. You were again, generous and thoughtful. Our reception was cheerful and celebratory, and just right. Thank you for all the effort and good will!

I know Fr. Tim could come to the spring picnic. I'm happy for him and for St. Thomas! You will flourish together, and I thank you again for being able to be with you "on the way," as we bridged the time between your last long-term vicar and the next.

I keep St. Thomas in my prayers and will continue to do so. You are important to me.

Have a blessed summer and know how much I think of you all.

May the road rise up to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rain fall soft upon your fields
and until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his Hand.

M.Eleanor+

Health Update

Dr. Ed Rather

This month, I have two things, I think, of interest. Firstly, I want to quote Dale Carnegie:
"Remember, today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday." Great advice.

1) *Lactose Intolerance*: This certainly can cause worry! It is common and is associated with not being able to fully digest lactose sugar found in milk products; this results in bloating, gas, abdominal cramps, nausea and sometimes diarrhea. It is different from malabsorption, gluten problems, irritable bowel, etc. An enzyme, **Lactase**, is deficient in the small intestine, which makes milk product digestion a problem, and this continues into the large intestine (colon) where the symptoms occur. Usually, yogurt, some cheeses (particularly hard types), and small amounts of whole or chocolate milk are tolerated; soy milk is all right, and lactase enzyme tablets are very helpful. Hidden lactose can be found in certain breads, salad dressings, candies, and medications so read the labels!

2) *Human Genome Editing*: A more intellectual topic, but very important for us to consider, is the altering of genes in insects, foods, animals and, of course, human beings. Science is rapidly moving ahead using new methods including more recently the use of an RNA guided CRISPR genome system. This is more efficient, cheaper, and easier than other enzyme systems previously used. Development of antiviruses against HIV, Herpes, Hepatitis, eradicating insect vectors carrying Malaria, yellow fever, dengue, Zika, West Nile, Leishmaniosis, Lyme's, etc., altering genetic disorders such as Downs, spina bifida, Hemophilia, anencephaly, etc., and targeting cancer cells of various killer cancers all will be possibilities using gene editing of this type. The ethics in doing this, where stem cells can be obtained, being extraordinarily careful without causing harm to individuals, and where to stop in modifying human beings all are important considerations. We will be dealing with this, so don't bury your head. I think we will accomplish these without compromising our religious beliefs, and I do think it is important for us to do this instead of sitting on the sideline and allowing this to happen in Europe, China, Japan or elsewhere. Medically, this is thrilling to consider, so more later!

As always, your friendly (but retired) Dermatologist.

Ed

Bishop's Committee Spotlight

JON FLOTH

Introducing the newest members of St. Thomas' Bishop's Committee . . .

JON FLOTH

Christian Formation



Recently elected to the Bishop's Committee, and a regular attendee at all services, Jon introduces himself in his own words:

"I was born in San Gabriel, CA. I spent most of my life in Orange County, at least High School and College years. I went to Cal State Fullerton for a degree in History (legal history with a minor in Archaeology). I have held different types of jobs over the years... cook, bartender, landscaper (although that would not reflect in the way my yard looks now), paralegal, and am currently and for the past 23 years a commercial truck driver for a freight company

"My wife, Donna, and I have been married since September 1990. We have two daughters, Mikel (23) and Christina (21). Mikel graduated from Cal State Fullerton in 2015 and is currently a flight attendant for Delta Airlines. Christina graduated from the same school this past May and is headed to Cape Town, South Africa for a month in June (summer class). We have a big black furry dog, Snowball, and two cats.

"I started coming to St. Thomas in early 2008. I have always been an Episcopalian, from having attended elementary school at an Episcopal school in Pomona, Ca. to attending various parishes and missions in Los Angeles, Orange, and Riverside counties throughout my life. I have served in most of those places in the same capacities that I have here at St. Thomas... Acolyte, Lay Reader/Eucharistic Minister, or at times, Vestry/Bishop's Committee member.

"I would describe my faith journey as ongoing and certainly evolving. I love the catholic traditions of the church and relish the welcoming and diverse attitudes of the Episcopal Church. I completed the four-year Education for Ministry (EFM) program last May. If anything, that Layman's-school-of-theology allowed me to know that it is okay to have and ask questions, and even doubt, about God. Just don't stop believing or doubt about God's existence. To paraphrase Nadia Bolz-Weber in her book *Accidental Saints*, 'God will just hunt you down to show His love.'

"I am currently on the Bishop's Committee here at St. Thomas and am responsible for leading Christian Formation. With my co-leader, Lynn Dordhal, we are trying to offer opportunities for the people of St. Thomas to enhance their faith through discussions and presentations (beyond the usual, but included, Bible study programs). As of now, it is an ongoing and evolving work-in-progress. Stay tuned to the Church Bulletin and Canterbury Tales for announcements."

Fun and Fellowship in the sun

CHURCH PICNIC HITS THE SPOT

The St. Thomas of Canterbury annual Church Picnic was held Saturday, May 20 in the St. Francis courtyard at the rear of the church.

Around 60 congregants enjoyed glorious sunny weather and a wonderful selection of food and drink as an eclectic selection of music filled the air.

Pete “The Grillmaster” Hicks held sway over the barbecue wielding his spatula and tongs with panache as he kept up a constant supply of delicious burgers and hot dogs to feed the hungry throng.



The hamburgers and hot dogs were supplemented by a very creative array of side dishes and salads brought by the attendees.



We were blessed to have the company of our incoming vicar, Tim True and his wife and two of his children which gave many of us the opportunity to informally meet him.





After a hearty repast Jean Hicks organized a few rounds of water balloon toss which provided a great way to cool off from the heat particularly for the kids who kept coming back for more and more balloons!





**Church Picnic
2017**

This was certainly a great way to spend a hot Saturday and a grand time was had by all.

Special thanks to Pete and Jean Hicks and Jack Bundy for overall organization, the men of MoST for helping with set up and take down, Michelle Lee for taking the photographs and everyone who brought food and contributed to the day.



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WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Saturday

5:00pm Holy Eucharist

Sunday

8:00am Holy Eucharist

10:15am Holy Eucharist

10:15am Children's
Chapel/Sunday School

Wednesday

7:00pm Evening Prayer