

Saint Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church

CANTERBURY TALES

∞ DECEMBER 2019 ∞

A First Message from Our New Priest

“Hitting the Pause Button”

By the Reverend Julie D. Bryant, DMin., Priest-in-Charge

All over the world, annoying morning alarms prompt growling and groping as those who are not ready to get going for the day find and poke their snooze buttons, then flop back down on the pillow knowing they're going to be bothered by that alarm again before they want to be. Intentionally pausing is an altogether different thing. At the threshold, we take a moment to see and feel the coming shift. I am, both finally and suddenly, pausing.

On the morning of November 24, I said good-bye to a congregation I've served for a decade. Now, I'll take the first steps on a new journey with you who are the St Thomas community. The few days between were for rest, extra hours of sleep, finding my way to a few pretty places I haven't seen for a while, and gratitude.

Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles Bishop John Taylor remarked at the conclusion of last Sunday's leave-taking, "it is easier to unbind oneself ritually than it is emotionally or spiritually." Those who have walked together for a season, or a decade, and sometimes for only a moment, can find it hard to loosen themselves from one another because they have been changed by the being together. Our preface for the Eucharist at Burial notes that 'Life is changed, not ended.' We go through many small funerals, putting to rest ways we have been, and closing chapters in favor of others.



The church calendar offers us similar chances to pause at least twice a year. I am thinking of the hours between remembering Jesus' Good Friday crucifixion and Easter resurrection, and this past week

between Last Pentecost and First Advent. In the Triduum, we are waiting for a reversal of death; by contrast, the days of Advent preparation are ones in which we await birth.

I've not given myself much time for unwinding from one journey before starting another. Whether it is a learned expectation that one must be busy to be of any value, or the Holy
(continued, p.2)

Spirit's urging, doesn't matter so much as listening to those I trust. I cannot just rush headlong into the new. I must pause if I am going to be able to see the way ahead more clearly.

So, I come to you full of excitement, and eager to join the work of praising and serving God as you've been doing for a long while, all while hearing the words of beloved friends ringing in my ears. Words of rest, words of listening, words of watching for God's quickening presence, words of comfort, words of great joy.

I am grateful to be at the threshold, and excited about where we might be led as we take up the tools and practices that will allow us to write the next St Thomas chapter.



Advent/Christmas Schedule

- Advent begins Sunday, December 1st.
- Sunday, December 22, 8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m., regular times.
- Greening of the church follows the 10:15 a.m. Service on the 22nd.
- Tuesday, December 24th - Christmas Eve--Our Schedule Is:
 - o 5:00pm, Christmas Pageant and Eucharist
 - o 10:30pm, Lessons and Carols
 - o 11:00pm, Festive Eucharist
- WEDNESDAY, December 25, 10:00am, Christmas Day Eucharist.



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

“ALMSGIVING”—ADVENT OUTREACH PROJECT—December 1-15

See p. 9 for details

CHRISTMAS PARTY—Saturday, December 7 – 6:00 PM at the Church

See p. 14 for details

BOOK SALE—December 8 and 15—in the Narthex

Congregation member and famed author Pam Bowen’s books for sale. See p. 10

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP—Monday, December 9 Noon-1 PM (Special Date)

This is an informal group open to all who like reading and fellowship. The group has been reading *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis, described by critics as a satirical novel that addresses Christian theology in a unique way. The group meets in the St Benedict conference room. All are welcome. Even if you have not read the book please join us and help us choose the next one. Email Bill Liesman asiabill@aol.com for more details.

KNIT W.I.T.S.* (*With Intent to Serve)—Monday, December 9 from 7-9 PM

At Andrea Liesman’s home. Email ministry leader Irene Eisenhut ipeisenhut@gmail.com for details.

MEN OF ST. THOMAS (MoST) – Saturday, December 14 at 8:00 AM

MoST is an informal fellowship that meets each second Saturday of the month at 8:00 am in Julian Hall for a potluck breakfast, brief Bible Study, and sometimes 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!

ST. NICHOLAS CELEBRATION—Sunday, December 15—9:00-10:00 AM

In Julian Hall. Children of all ages are welcome

BISHOP’S COMMITTEE MEETING—Thursday, December 19 at 6:30 PM

All Congregation members are welcome to the non-executive portion of the meeting. In St. Benedict Conference Room.

GREENING OF THE CHURCH—Sunday, December 22 after the 10:15 AM Service

CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICES—See p. 2

**STEP—Saint Thomas Episcopal Preschool
BAKE SALE!
Support Our School
Every first Friday of the month—December 5**

Saint Nicholas is coming to St. Thomas!

Sunday December 15th between services. (9:00-10:00 a.m.)



Episcopal Diocese of San Diego Convention

St. Thomas Well Represented

The EDSD annual Convention was held at St. Margaret's in Palm Desert November 8-9. Over 150 delegates attended, and many clergy and lay visitors also were there. Rt. Rev. Bishop Susan Brown Snook presided over her first Convention and set the tone for a collaborative, spiritual, and inclusive gathering. Bishop Snook gave a compelling address on day one, announcing she was modifying the "Fearless Love" slogan of recent years to "Courageous Love," noting that courage in the face of fear is something we experience as engaged Christians. She also outlined a three-year program of Discipleship, Evangelism, and Service, challenging members in the diocese to develop these traits in ourselves and our congregations to grow the church. Bishop Snook followed on this theme with an inspirational sermon at the morning Eucharist on day two asking all to be witnesses of the love of Jesus in our lives and interactions with our communities. Both her address and sermon are available on the edsd.org website and are both must see/hear for all members.



St. Thomas Senior Warden Jon Floth processes with the St. Thomas Banner at Morning eucharist on Nov 9



Junior Warden Frank Rojas received a well-deserved Bishop's Service Ministry Award

Convention (Continued)



St. Thomas was well represented at convention with three voting delegates, led by Senior and Junior Wardens Jon Floth and Frank Rojas, and member Bill Liesman. In addition, our new Priest-in-Charge Rev. Julie D. Bryant attended as a Clergy Visitor, and Anne Meservey attended as a Lay Visitor and took

some of the photos here (thank you Anne!). In addition, our resident author Pam Bowen attended as an exhibitor. See page 6 for the substantial youth presence.



Canterbury Youth Group (CYG) at Convention



The diocesan youth were very visible at Convention and performed an intensive service project at a food bank in the Coachella Valley on day two. Here is the larger group as well as the impressive St. Thomas delegation, led by Brigitte Sipra.



Lauren Walton was a Chalice Bearer at the morning Eucharist November 9



Thank You, Fr. David Jackson

On Sunday, November 24, St. Thomas recognized the invaluable contributions made to the congregation by Fr. David and Yvette Jackson during our transition to the appointment of our Priest-in-Charge. Fr. David became our de facto Supply Priest from the unique perspective of a member and “retired” clergy. His service is a milestone in our journey, and we welcome him and Yvette back to the pews!



Bishop's Committee member Tom Reid, Yvette and Fr. David, and Senior Warden Jon Floth recognize the Jacksons at an enthusiastic and well attended coffee hour after the 10:15 service.

Health Update

Happy Advent season and Merry Christmas to all.

1) Did you know that there is an ongoing attempt to develop a universal Flu Vaccine? This is most difficult due to the rapid mutation of the flu viruses involved. Did you know that other vectors that carry influenza besides human beings are pigs and birds? Also, you might have guessed that it is important and not too late to get your flu shot. There have already been deaths recorded in SD and LA areas. A little discomfort, if any, is not worth being in the ICU or worse.

2) Did you know that there has been an increase in cases of Mumps? This is not surprising since the Measles “MMR” vaccine also protects us against Mumps and Rubella. There is approximately a fifteen percent association of possible infertility with the Mumps, which can be totally avoided. Also, we are seeing more Measles cases once again (three in Georgia very recently), and there is an epidemic developing in the Samoan Islands presently with 15 deaths, fourteen of whom have been children under the age of five years.

3) Did you know that the American Medical Association is asking for there to be uniformity in the manufacturing of blood pressure devices bought anywhere? Many of these are inaccurate and some come from unethical “companies” which have no testing facilities. I do think it is good to check your blood pressure, but it is absolutely necessary to check your cuff’s readings with your doctor’s and to be taught how to properly use it.

4) Did you know that 20-25% of teenagers have used Vaping/vaped in the last three months? Also, did you know that recent tests are showing that Vaping is more harmful to our hearts than cigarettes, which are bad enough? Deaths from vaping are increasing at an alarming rate, with no way to know who will develop the pulmonary inflammation that appears to cause permanent damage, if the patient is lucky enough to survive. Regardless of past use, there does not appear to be any way to know now if this extreme response could occur.

5) Did you see one very good piece of news that use of cigarettes in the US has decreased to its lowest level in historical data taking? According to the CDC, only 13.7% of us are smoking. Now we need to stop the absurd vaping epidemic.

6) Lastly, I want to revisit something essential. This wonderful and happy season of the year as we approach Christmas should be just that. However, we know that depression increases, and stress is a huge factor in all our lives. Instead of joy, stress brings on frustration and even anger. I personally have found the relaxing effect of deep breathing by taking one or two DEEP breaths while shopping or driving, particularly when we have been cut off in traffic, or had some other irritating episode take place. Say that quick Jesus prayer. Be sure to remember that if you are suffering with any depressive feeling, don’t be embarrassed or afraid to share this with family or friends, and, of course, do not hesitate to seek professional help if need be.

So, dear friends, have a blessed Advent and Merry Christmas, stay healthy, and I will see you in the new decade. Your friendly, but retired, Dermatologist,

Ed



ALMSGIVING BAGS

Advent is a season of spiritual preparation, self-reflection, joyful anticipation, faith in God's promises, hope, and anticipation of the unbridled joy at the arrival of God's priceless gift.

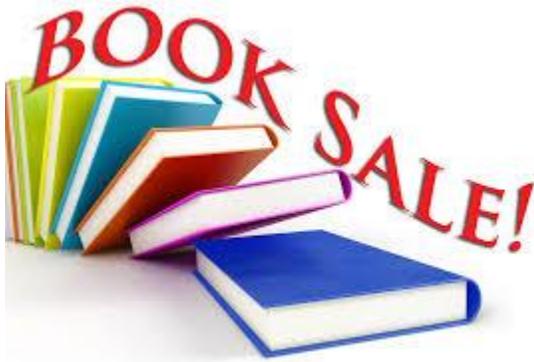
Saint Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church has partnered with Project Touch, Temecula to provide Almsgiving Bags to those who are homeless. In order to be a Project Touch client in good standing you are required to work towards a solution to becoming self-sufficient. Project Touch clients can use our help by providing Christmas dinner to the 80 units or families.

Starting the first Sunday of Advent December 1st there will be brown bags in the Narthex with a list of approved food items we are requesting you put in the Almsgiving Bag. We will need 80 bags returned to us on Sunday December 15th. This will allow Jackie Klippert, Liz Barclay, and Andrea Liesman time to go through each bag and make sure all items were included. The bags will be blessed during the service on Sunday December 22nd. We will deliver the bags to the Project Touch President/CEO on Monday December 23rd.

If you have questions please contact Andrea Liesman (951) 473-7992, Jackie Klippert (951)775-5236, or Liz Barclay (951) 265-2682.



Books for Sale!



Just in time for Christmas shopping, our congregation member and renowned local author, Pam Bowen, will be selling and

signing her books in the narthex on Sunday, December 8th and 15th.

Twenty percent of her sales will go to the church.

Her titles include children's books, devotionals, parables, journals, and historical memoir---something for everyone! You can pay by cash, check, or credit card. Happy shopping!



Greening of the Church *Sunday December 22*

The last Sunday of Advent this year is December 22.

Please join us on that Sunday after the 10:15 service to decorate the church for the Christmas Season.

Stewardship Ingathering a Grand Success!

The Stewardship Committee wishes to thank all who have pledged to the current campaign. At publication we have reached about 75% of our goal with more pledges expected. If you have not pledged for 2020 yet, please do so soon to allow for accurate budgeting and guidance for your Bishop's Committee. And be sure to add to the "Thankful Tree" in the Narthex.



St. Thomas Episcopal Preschool (STEP)

Many thanks to STEP Director Sandra Guajardo, her teaching staff, and parents of our students for a very successful Thanksgiving Feast celebration at our school. The children enjoyed decorating and dressing up, and the traditional foods were a learning experience for all. Please help support the good work of STEP.

Coming in January:

A New Adult Forum for the Epiphany Season!

On Sundays During the Epiphany Season, please join Father David as he leads us through a series called “If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat.” This will be a six-part series beginning on January 5th, between the two services (9:15 AM - 10:00 AM).

This series will help you answer Christ’s call to greater faith, power-filled deeds, and a new way of knowing how to discern God’s call, transcend fear, risk faith, manage failure, and trust God. Relating the story in Matthew 14 to life today, this series invites you to consider the incredible potential that awaits you outside your comfort zone.

A participant guide accompanies this series. It will be available for \$10.

November GNO (Guys’ Night Out)

On 15 November, 16 members and friends from St. Thomas met for fellowship, liquid refreshment, food, and fun at Killarney’s Restaurant and Irish Pub in Temecula. Many thanks to John Crawford and Dr. Ed Rather for organizing this event, and to Killarney’s (a long-time supporter of our Sweetheart Car Show) for putting up with the unruly group for the evening.



Know Your Church

The Hymn Board



That board with the hymn numbers on it on the left wall of the nave near the choir is diligently changed each week by Music Director Dr. Stephen Sturk. It lists the hymns in order that are sung at the 10:15 AM service with the numbers relating to those in the Hymnal. This simple yet effective device appears to have started in Protestant churches in Europe during the Reformation and initially included the first line of each hymn. The style of the boards is wide ranging. Use it as a guide for your singing, and look for them when visiting other Episcopal churches.

Special Plate Envelopes—December

As explained in previous issues of *Canterbury Tales*, those “extra” envelopes in your pledge packets serve a purpose—supplementing income for unexpected and unbudgeted expenses here at St. Thomas. Any contribution helps, even a few dollars, and if you use the envelopes, whatever is given is recorded and receipted as a donation. Please use them!



Dinners All Around Productions Presents

Jingle Bells

at St. Thomas



Saturday, Dec. 7 6 to 8:30 pm



Come jingle your bells at St. Thomas' Christmas Party and give a warm welcome to Rev. Julie.

Ring in the season with a delicious dinner with turkey and ham and sign up to bring other festive dishes. There will also be a silent auction and raffle.

Enjoy good food, great company, and fun for all!

Oh what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh.



**Sign up in
the Narthex!**





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WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

8:00am Holy Eucharist

10:15am Holy Eucharist

10:15am Children's
Chapel/Sunday School

Wednesday

7:00pm Evening Prayer