

Saint Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church
CANTERBURY TALES

∞ JUNE 2020 ∞

St. Thomas Preschool Reopens

School Facilities Carefully Prepared in Response to Pandemic

Following Covid-19 “Phase 2” directives in the state of California and Riverside County, and under the express and careful conditions required by the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, St. Thomas Episcopal Preschool (STEP) welcomed students back to the physical classrooms on May 27. This was a joint effort under the watchful supervision of Priest-in-Charge Rev. Julie D. Bryant as well as School Director Sandra Guajardo, her staff, and the members of St. Thomas’ Bishop’s Committee. All preparations and protocols met or exceeded CDC guidelines.

The reopening was focused on the children of essential workers and for the time being is limited to the use of two classrooms (pictured here and p. 2). Preparation included the deep cleaning of the entryway, accessible spaces, restrooms, and classrooms, as well as repairing and repainting of walls and fixtures. At presstime there were 14 students enrolled. As parameters expand more students will be added. Many voluntary hands contributed to the preparation, painting, repairing and welcoming the students back, for which the congregation and the school are very grateful.



School Reopens—(Continued from p.1)



Above Left (and on p.1): Classrooms Ready for Students

Above Right: Painting the Walls

Left: Wendy Hill touching up

Right: Rick Barclay splashing color



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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St. Thomas Continues to Meet Online

Join us online for regular worship and many activities including Christian formation, fellowship, and ministry meetings that take place daily. For the latest schedule please refer to the Weekly Announcements, the church website at episcopalchurchtemecula.org, or your email. All worship gatherings and meetings are easily accessible via the internet on your computer or internet-enabled smartphone. Please call Rev. Julie at 310-625-9377 with any questions or concerns

Stopping to Pray *as Recounted by Chantel Blas*

During the last week while welcoming students to the preschool in the morning, a teacher has observed a man being dropped off for his shift at the medical building next door to our church. Before walking to his building for his work shift, he pauses in front of the church and bows his head in prayer. Sometimes this is done in silence and other times he prays out loud. Though our doors are closed during this time of sheltering-in-place, it is uplifting to see that our church is a part of someone's morning routine of prayer and reflection. Katie and Maggie Reid have used chalk to draw images and write a message of greeting and welcome to our praying neighbor.



Meet Bishop's Committee Member Anne Meservey



As a child, I discovered change and global diversity early on. My father was a History Professor whose grant-funded research led us to move often; internationally and across America. My Episcopalian parents were very religious. Each time we moved around the country and globe, we joined the local Episcopal church.

Moving to Greenwich Village, New York in the 5th grade was pivotal for me. I went to Grace Church Episcopal School & Grace Church, James Renwick's 1846 Gothic Revival masterpiece on Broadway at E. 10th St. The school provided an advanced curriculum, fast-paced with strict rules and uniforms, yet it did not mask student ethnic and cultural diversity. I loved NYC immediately as it opened my eyes to a new world.

I went to Columbia University in NYC for college and graduate school where I married a fellow Columbia student. We soon moved to Paris for my then husband's doctoral research. Later, we moved to Rome for my doctoral research where I lived and worked until I returned to the U.S. eight years later with my baby daughter (who is now a married lawyer in Washington DC with a baby girl of her own!)

Moving to Boston from Rome to start work at Boston University headed up my nearly thirty-year career in graduate and international admissions, university enrollment management, strategic planning, and outreach/community relations.

Several decades later, and after having visited my daughter for years while she lived in California, I determined to relocate here in my retirement years. I chose Temecula for the beautiful mountains and easy access to the ocean, but I soon fell in love with St. Thomas Church as well.

Finally arriving in Temecula in February 2019, my first stop was St. Thomas Church, as the nearest Episcopal Church. At my first Sunday service, John Crawford and Peter Mandery greeted and chatted with me. Answering my questions about ministries and church activities, John introduced me to Tess, his wife, who invited me to a women's luncheon that Tuesday!

By reading the St. Thomas' weekly email news blast, I found news and engaging events in the Diocese of San Diego, and soon jumped into diocesan activities in my first weeks. In March of this year, I engaged in: The Diocese Leadership Academy; Diocese Women's Retreat; Diocese Annual Meeting of ECS; Diocese Annual Convention; events at the Cathedral of Saint Paul; and forums and symposiums in other EDSD churches.

By connecting with the Temecula Community, I was able to also join: Interfaith Council of Murrieta and Temecula Valley; Interfaith Women's gatherings with Muslim Women from the Islamic Center of Temecula Valley; engaged in Habit for Humanity regional projects; and, joined the San Diego Region Interfaith Collaborative.

I love the St. Thomas community and every diocesan event and church I have attended in the EDSD. I've been deeply impressed by each of the church's inclusiveness and steadfast focus on meeting the needs of their local community. I feel called to the Bishop's Committee to use my community-building skills and experience to serve the needs of the Temecula Region.



Let's celebrate the Class of 2020!

St. Thomas' graduates and congregation members with graduates in their families were recognized on Trinity Sunday June 7 before the 9 AM Service and many in the local area were visited with a caravan and drive-by celebration later that day. Thanks to Chantel Blas for organizing this event and all who participated to make this a memorable day in a memorable year for all taking the next step in their lives.

Preschool Graduates: Benton Blas and Lily Martin (granddaughter of Lisa and Frank Simpson)

Middle School Graduate: Ronan Anderson (Joel Patton's grandson)

High School Graduates: Melmar Almodiel, Avalon Anderson (Joel Patton's granddaughter), Alex Gurski (Virginia Patton's grandniece), Sarah Higgins, Holli Marie Mandery, Ted Pinkerton (Virginia Patton's grandnephew), Francine Rojas, Vivian Rojas

Masters Recipient: Andrea Martin (Lily's Mom and daughter of Lisa and Frank Simpson). **In addition,** Elena Gimpel's granddaughter is attending Kansas State University and is entering her final year of veterinary medicine. She was meant to have her White Coat Ceremony on May 8th, but it had to be cancelled. Please remember her as she passes this milestone in her education and career!

Hear the word of the
Lord

On Tuesdays 2:00 - 2:30 p.m., Lani-Karyn Jones introduces and then reads passages of the Bible. This is a time to immerse yourself in the beloved Word, to let it wash over you, and carry you into deeper relationship with God and the human family. We're in the early chapters of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians.

Zoom Meeting ID: 810 6810 3771 No
Password Required.

The Navajo Nation Combats Dikos Ntsaaígíí-19 (Covid-19)

By Dr. Deb Mitchell, Prayers and Squares Coordinator

Yá'át'ééh! Many of you know Melissa Christiansen and I tutor on the Navajo Reservation. We have become increasingly concerned for our former students and their families and our friends. Within a population of 173,667 *Diné* (Navajo) currently living on a reservation spanning three states and covering over 27,000 square miles, the reservation has 4,002 cases translating in numbers to 2,304 cases per 100,000 people. If the Navajo Nation were its own state, it would have the highest per-capita rate of positive coronavirus cases in the country. By contrast, particularly hard hit New York state now has a rate of 1,806 cases per 100,000 and New Jersey, 1,668 cases per 100,000 people. Navajo officials have traced the start of the outbreak to a large evangelical church rally in the tiny town of Chilchinbeto, Arizona.

At the end of March, the Navajo Nation invoked one of the strictest stay-at-home orders in the country including no visitors or tourists allowed on the “Rez” until further notice. On April 5th, a 57-hour ongoing, weekend lockdown was instituted from Friday-8pm to Monday-5am that is enforced by Navajo police checkpoints/roadblocks. Unfortunately, case numbers continue to rise because multiple generations live in one small home or adjacent homes making social distancing impossible; 30%-40% of the residents do not have running water or electricity to maintain sanitization; and a lack of food sources means more people crowd 13 small grocery stores, convenience stores and gas stations on this 17,544,500 acre reservation.

As the Navajo have suffered in this pandemic, so, too has Gallup, New Mexico, whose fate has long been tied to the neighboring Navajo Nation since it borders the eastern side of the reservation. Like clockwork, payday brings tens of thousands of people from the Navajo reservation and other rural stretches along the New Mexico-Arizona border into Gallup, a desert oasis of just 22,000 that can quickly quadruple in size since it is a crucial source of supplies and water. Shoppers converge on the Walmart Supercenter and Tractor Supply. On May 1, the mayor of Gallup closed all roads leading into the city calling in the National Guard and declaring a state of emergency. Businesses were to close daily between 5pm and 8am, vehicles were restricted to two passengers, and the sale of alcohol has been restricted.

An extremely high incidence of underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and respiratory conditions combined with cultural norms have resulted in a public health state of emergency. Despite the unfolding crisis, Navajo nation has still not received federal coronavirus relief funding (\$699M). The six Indian Health Service reservation hospitals have a total of 222 beds with most Covid-19 patients sent to hospitals off reservation.

In 1978, the Episcopal Church created the Navajoland Area Mission AKA the Episcopal Church in Navajoland from regions of three dioceses within and surrounding the Navajo Nation. Each region supports three churches. Bishop David Bailey has expressed serious challenges for ministry at this time as a result of reservation closures, stay-at-home orders, loss of income due to isolation, and lack of visitors, partners and volunteers who normally help meet the church's financial and service needs. With addiction, domestic violence, and suicide rates already high in the Navajo Nation, concerns mount that severe restrictions placed on the Navajo during this pandemic may cause these rates to move even higher.

(Continued next page)



Since 2013, our friends, Eric and Tracy Kee, have served as the ministry team at the Tuba City Church of Christ, Tuba City being one of the hardest hit areas. At least half or more of the cases and deaths have been in Tuba City. The Arizona Department of Health Services, which recently began releasing breakdowns of COVID-19 deaths by ethnicity, reported Native Americans comprised 21% of COVID-19 deaths in the state where race and ethnicity was known.

Our St. Thomas **Prayers and Squares Ministry** team sent 150 face masks to the Navajo Nation: 70 masks (including 30 youth masks) were sent to the Tuba City Church of Christ and provided to families living “off the grid” in what is called the “deep Rez” and another 80 masks were sent to the Navajo Nation through the Episcopal Diocese there. We have probably made over 100 face masks for our congregation, preschool teachers, family and friends. An additional 70 were provided to the Temecula Valley Hospital and 40 were made for a friend of Julie’s working in health services.

I want to recognize the “labors” of Marva Ross, Mary Lou Thomas and Pam Bowen in this effort. Once one gets into her own “rhythm,” it takes about 20 minutes of time to cut, sew and press. That’s 3 masks an hour...I’ll let you do the math! None of us could have accomplished this tremendous, loving outreach on our own. Thank you all from the depths of my heart!

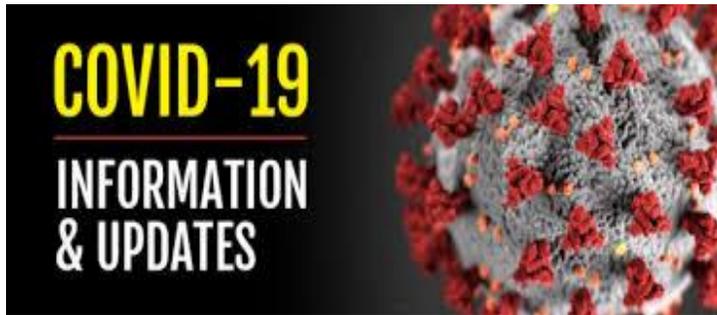
Melissa and I hopefully will return to the reservation for a week of tutoring and visiting with friends this October. As we continue to pray during this pandemic, please keep the Navajo Nation in your prayers and on your hearts.

Information for this article has been gathered through personal correspondence, the guardian.com, New York Times, Washington Post, Navajo Times, CNN, Deseret News, The Episcopal Church in Navajoland, Tuba City Church of Christ, and other sources and is accurate as of May 20, 2020.

Health Update

Dr. Ed Rather Advises Us on the Pandemic

This month of June we are still in the Covid 19 Pandemic, which may be hiding around the corner. So, my best advice medically includes the following:



1) Let's all listen to our Surgeon General who advises us to wear a mask when out in the public arena, as well as practicing social distancing. These two things (annoyances) protect others from us, as well as protecting ourselves. This is a public health priority for all.

- 2) Be aware of signs of depression, such as withdrawing from contacting friends and family! Talk about this in your social circles. It can happen to anyone.
- 3) Don't forget we are in allergy season. We can have a runny nose, sneeze more, have itchy eyes with tearing, or have skin rashes. If ill, these symptoms usually include fever so do not be fooled one vs. the other. It can be tricky!
- 4) Prayer is of great assistance to us all; this is no big surprise and is a medical fact. Praying for others and the needs of our community, our country, and the world seems to give us the greatest solace, so let us practice our religious beliefs! We certainly need it.
- 5) While we are still isolating ourselves, continue to have a plan with a work schedule, play time, listening to music, reading, cooking, enjoying hobbies, etc. Staying organized gives us that sense of purpose, which is most important for our psyches.
- 6) Testing for this virus, as well as other infections, is extremely important. I expect that we are going to learn a huge amount of information for future use concerning proper testing for all illnesses, and we will get much better at this because of our lack of preparedness this time.
- 7) Lastly, let us practice **selflessness and not selfishness!** It makes us all better.

Until next time, be safe and well.
Your friendly, but retired, Dermatologist.
Ed

St. Thomas Rocks—An Update

In the May issue of Canterbury Tales, our Priest-in-Charge, Rev. Julie Bryant, revealed the “St. Thomas Rocks” project, an effort by some creative congregation members to paint polished rocks and place them out and about or

with others as a reminder of St. Thomas’ presence, and God’s love, in the community at large. In Rev. Julie’s words: “Part of this exercise is to bring a little joy to others,



but it's also designed to help us think about and pray for our whole community more intentionally.”



Some were placed in neighbors’ gardens, on park pathways, and given to strangers. And a few (thanks to Deniece Mandery and Andrea Liesman) ended up adorning the graves of loved ones in Oakdale Cemetery in Glendora! Two are pictured here.

STEP Recycles—A Double Benefit



During the “stay safe at home” directive, congregation members accumulated CRV recyclable containers. Many delivered their recyclables June 5 to the church parking lot and Chantel Blas with help from Benton took them to the recycling center earning almost \$100 for the preschool. Many thanks to the donors and especially to Chantel and Benton!



Thanks!
for giving

Thank you for keeping pledges current! Pledges can be mailed in the already addressed pledge envelopes, you can have your bank mail it through “bill pay” (for these two options there is no cost to the church), or you can pay by credit card or PayPal. The directions for the last two options are on the church website. There are five special plate envelopes for June—if you can send a little extra in them this month it would be greatly appreciated, and your account will be credited.



When cleaning out your closets and garages, a favorite activity during “stay at home,” please set aside items we can use for our Rummage sale planned for this July. Last July we made \$1,000 profit, and it's not too early to be collecting items we can use.

Celebration of Life for Tom Meden



Long time congregation member Tom Meden passed away earlier this year. He was an active member at St. Thomas for many years, was a lector, a member of MoST, and a member of the hospitality committee. He had a terrific sense of humor. As a Michigan native, he made sure that anyone who listened knew he was a staunch supporter of all the Detroit professional sports teams, particularly the Red Wings and the Lions. He moved to the Oceanside area for work a few years ago but attended services at St. Thomas when he could. His celebration of life will be held Saturday, June 20 from 9:50 to 11:30 AM at O'Connor Mortuary, 25301 Alicia Parkway, Laguna Hills, CA 92653. Tel 949-581-4300. The celebration can be attended online also. Please email Bill Liesman at asiabill@aol.com for remote access details.



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