

Saint Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church
CANTERBURY TALES

❧ DECEMBER 2020 ❧

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



Dear Saint Thomas family,

“Kiss Me, I'm LIMINAL”

“lim-i-nal. *Adjective*

1. relating to a transitional or initial stage of a process.
2. occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold.”*

*Oxford University Press, (2020). Liminal. In Google's *Oxford Languages dictionary*, *languages.oup.com*. Retrieved November 30, 2020 from <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary>.

My word-loving daughter purchased a t-shirt emblazoned with this slogan the moment she saw it. Anyone who could appreciate the wry humor of an invitation to kiss someone on the threshold of change, just as they were teetering on the transformative would certainly have to be courageous, daring, and lighthearted, all qualities she wanted for herself and her fellow travelers in life.

After nine months of shifting realities and routines, of seeking safe practices for self and others, of a moment of steadiness followed by a wobbly hour, and gradual adjustments to uncertainty while longing for a surer foothold for the next step, I am glad to say that the slogan still makes me smile.

I have not quite lost my sense of humor, however taxing the constant adjustments seem to be.

In March, Coronavirus-19 jumped into the center of our everyday universe, upsetting routines and evoking strong opinions about its nature as a mild or major interruption.

At Saint Thomas, we were directed by the Bishop, as well as by the State and County, to close the Preschool and secure the building for the sake of those whose customary use would put them at risk of infection. Though we might have found comfort from being with one another, we began to understand that “being together” physically could be deadly. Nine months and hundreds of thousands of deaths, millions of cases, and recurrent surges of infections later, we have reached a sort of solitary stability, accustomed to degrees of isolation we could not have imagined a year ago.

Sacrificing for the well-being of others is now less about doing something with someone, and more about not doing anything with anyone other than with the few members of our households or droplet-tolerating-pals. Whether they are called pods or bubbles, the number of people with whom we have intimate contact is small, and previously friendly interactions are potentially dangerous. The need for cautions and the unpredictable behavior of the virus are no laughing matter. Yet, it is our refusal to succumb to abject despair that allows us to laugh now and again at the absurdity of our helplessness against the unimaginable, and to weather constant change without losing ourselves.

Insisting on staying close to an open door, on a threshold rather than settling deeply into a room, is an act of courage. Regardless of the weariness that comes from being bantered about by changing winds, staying on the threshold allows the greatest chance of seeing an opening and reacting to the first sign of an “all clear.”

Now, back to that t-shirt...There are fewer kisses being exchanged these days, at least in public. I miss the happy, easy hugs and kisses we saw between friends on the street. I find myself more keenly aware of the withdrawing this virus has forced when I see multiple hugs and kisses going back and forth between children and their parents at preschool drop-off. A few have rituals that involve masks pulled out of the way for full kisses, and for the enjoy a full-face smile of reassurance at parting. Because children absorb the world, and grow at an incredibly fast rate, they are regularly becoming someone new. Their rate of change makes the transitions more obvious, and their excitement at discovering or conquering new elements of their world is irresistible. Who doesn't want to smile at a child's triumph? Who can resist the joy of a child peeking into the future person they could become? A hug and kiss under those conditions is almost expected.

When the changes are more grim, and the view of the future more somber, the impulse to celebrate or laugh dissolves. That threshold does not engender high-energy giggles of delight. But, the one standing on the threshold of change driven by fear or grief needs tenderness as much as a child taking on the world. If it cannot come in the form of a physical hug or kiss, as much as one might want to offer those, what *can* one offer?: an intentional pause to enquire about how things are going; an offer to share a book or recipe; a thoughtful token of affection; time, time to linger on the phone letting silence carry what words cannot; time spent writing letters or copying out poetry and lyrics for a friend; time creating with your hands, however imperfect the end product, perfectly full of love.

We are all **liminal** these days, and we all need to love as much as we need to be loved. Loved, especially when kissing isn't an easy option.

Yours in Christ, Julie +

December Service Schedule

Join us for Sunday Worship by Zoom at 9:00 a.m. or In-Person in the Saint Francis Courtyard at 10:15 a.m. Social distancing protocols will be followed, including the wearing of masks. Zoom Meeting ID: 809 865 440. Please call Rev. Julie Bryant: 310-625-9377, for the Passcode.

Advent Services:

Sunday Eucharist at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom with Father David.*
 Sunday Eucharist at 10:15 a.m. with Mother Julie in the Saint Francis Courtyard.*
 *They will alternate preaching the Gospel.

Christmas Eve Services:

4:00 p.m. In-Person and via Zoom for a Family-oriented Pageant & Holy Eucharist.
 10:00 p.m. Festal Eucharist with Music.

Christmas Day Service:

10:00 a.m. Pre-recorded service of Lessons and Carols via Zoom.



****Communion:** if you wish to have it delivered to your home, please email: adminasst@episcopalchurchtemecula.org with: your name, the number of persons receiving, and your telephone number. Also, please let us know if you need Gluten-free Hosts. Please **Do Not Hesitate** to ask for Communion to be brought to you. We are eager to share the blessing of the Sacrament!

A NOTE OF



At the end of November, we bid farewell to The Reverend Tim Wetherington and his wife, Terri, who have been Servants-in-Residence for the last two months, pitching in wherever they have been needed. We give thanks for all of their volunteer work!

Advent Holy Land Virtual Tour

Everyone is invited to join St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Columbia, South Carolina, for a Virtual Journey following the Footsteps of Jesus: <https://www.smifsc.com/advent-pilgrimage>.



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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Announcements



Recycleables Wanted:

Please bring them to the church on the **second Wednesday of the month between 7a.m. - 11a.m.** Leave them in front of the courtyard gate. It would be very helpful if cans, plastic, and glass are already separated.

The **next collection is Wednesday, December 9.***

*** HELP WANTED:** We need someone to do a **monthly transport of recyclables** to the recycling center next to Ralph's on 79S and Butterfield Stage. Please contact Mother Julie if interested: 310-625-9377.

Saint Thomas of Canterbury Work Parties Continue!

We continue to make great progress to renew and refresh the Saint Thomas property! Our Saturday Work Parties will resume on Saturday, December 5, and every Saturday thereafter! "Work" hours are 8:00 a.m. to Noon. Refreshments will be provided. Please consider pitching in an hour or two or three and helping with this important effort! If you have any questions, please contact Tom Reid: Treid44@bellsouth.net or Tess Crawford:

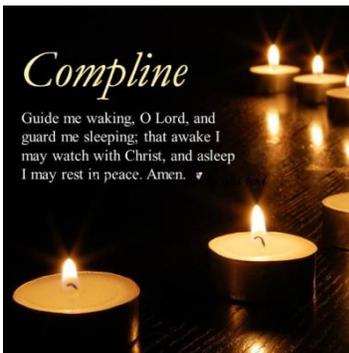
Tess.crawford@icloud.com.



"Hear the Word of God" Bible Study Group with Lani-Karyn Jones on Tuesdays, at 2:00 p.m.

Lani introduces, 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 a deeper relationship with God and the human family.

Note the New Zoom ID: 832 8612 5079. Please call Mother Julie for the passcode: 310-625-9377. Or Participate by phone +1-669-900-9128.



COMPLINE moves to 8 p.m., Nightly. Zoom Meeting ID: 216 377 3567. Please call Mother Julie for the passcode: 310-625-9377. Compline is a wonderful way to end the day with time in God's word, with wonderful friends.

3 Quiet Hours: Melody, Meditation, and Musing- A Conversation among Women for Advent, Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m., December 2, 9, and 16. Zoom Meeting ID: 216 377 3567. Please call Mother Julie (listed above) for the passcode.



Reminder: Pledge Payments can be made through the mail or electronically via the “Give/Pledge Online” button on the Saint Thomas website: www.episcopalchurchtemecula.org. Thank you so much for keeping your pledge current.

In honor of this past Giving Tuesday, December 1, think of who you might honor with your gift to the **BLESS Annual Appeal of The Episcopal Church**. A tribute gift to The Episcopal Church is a thoughtful way to remember loved ones during the holidays. Friends committed to the on-going ministries of Saint Thomas, to the work of Racial Reconciliation, Creation Care, to walking the Way of Love.

You can make a gift to The Episcopal Church that supports our shared work in each of these ministries. Your loved one will receive a card, letting them know that a gift was made in their honor. Also, you will receive a card confirming your gift in their honor. To be sure that your celebration card arrives before Christmas, **please make your gift by Monday, December 14**. Better yet, make your gift today! You can give in any of these ways: <https://episcopalchurch.org/give>; Or call (800) 334-7626, extension 6002; or text: “Appeal” to 91999. Thank you in advance for inviting The Episcopal Church to celebrate your friends and loved ones with you this year.

Flower and Candle Dedications:

Providing fresh flowers to brighten our worship space and the candles that acknowledge the presence of Sacrament in the Tabernacle is a lovely way to remember those we love, the living and the dead, or to celebrate the gifts of ministry expressed in our common life. At Easter, we used funds donated for that purpose to brighten the flowerbeds at the front of the church, bringing a bright spot to the neighborhood. With the restrictions about gathering for worship in common, and advice to limit exposure by sheltering at home, the habit of having flower and candle dedications has lagged.



Let's bring it back for Christmas; designate a poinsettia as a Thank Offering or in memory of someone special! If we're able to gather In-Person, we'll want to set an especially beautiful altar for that Holy Night. Also, since potted poinsettias thrive outdoors, we'll set them out front for everyone to enjoy. Additionally, we are ready to have flower and candle dedications for 2021!

To make a dedication, please send a note to the church or email adminasst@episcopalchurchtemecula.org with: date, dedication details, and your name. (For example: “Christmas. In thanksgiving for Mary’s ‘Yes!’ by the Shepherd Family.” - or – “Sunday nearest January 6. In Memory of Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, who made the most of life's journey, from Bright Star and the Angels.”)

The suggested donation for Christmas Poinsettias is \$10; for Sunday Flowers, \$35; and for a Sanctuary Candle, \$5. Donations can be sent to the Church, with “Flower” or “Candle” written in the “Memo” line.

SACRED GROUND

Dr. Deb Mitchell

Our two discussion groups have now completed 3 sessions of this series. For the third session, we watched Episode 1 of the PBS video *We Shall Remain: After the Mayflower*, and read excerpts from Howard Thurman's *Jesus and the Disinherited*, Debby Irving's *Growing Up White*, and an article entitled "*Unshackled by Visions and Values*" by Martin Brokenleg. We reviewed a map of Native American Tribes in this country before European conquests. It was stunning to observe the number of tribes from the east to west coasts and north to south that called America home and appalling to recognize that European settlers believed this was their land for the taking.

Jim Wallis, in his book *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America* (2016), states "to suggest that differences in skin color would or should change the created reality of all human beings, made in the image of God, is both preposterous and profoundly evil." He goes on to say "Together, humankind was to oversee the rest of creation—to have dominion or "stewardship" over the planet and all creatures." Instead, humans have sought to dominate one another in the manner of Manifest Destiny, a phrase coined in 1845, promoting the idea that we are destined—by God, as believed by its advocates—to expand its dominion spreading democracy and capitalism across the entire North American continent.

Political statements are not part of our discussions nor are we "pointing fingers." As we delve deeper into the **Sacred Ground** curriculum, we acknowledge that unity in Christ was meant to be one of the most important pillars of the church. Paul tells us in Galatians 3:28, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ."



Saint Thomas Preschool Events



During the month of November, our students were very busy and having lots of fun. They have been creating fall art projects, discussing what they are thankful for, celebrating our veterans, and spreading love.



On **Veterans' Day**, our students had a parade waving their American flags and waving to the cars going by! We were even greeted with a military fly-over and enjoyed waving up to the skies!

On Friday, November 13, we celebrated **The Day of Love** by drawing messages of love on the Saint Francis Courtyard. We hope you have had a chance to see them!



You may have noticed our **new sign** near the driveway - it looks amazing! Also, thank you to all of our sponsors who have donated to help our students. It has been a great help in covering the cost of supplies and getting school shirts. Every student and teacher has received a new school baseball tee shirt! We have STEP Merchandise for sale if you would like your own STEP shirt, mask, mug, or sweatshirt.



In **December**, our students will be gathering food items for **Christmas Dinner Bags to deliver to Project Touch**. We hope you will be able to join us in filling 50 Christmas dinner bags that will be delivered on December 22. (See more details on page 13.)

STEP will be having our annual **Christmas Program on Friday, December 18, at 11:00 a.m., outside on the Saint Francis Courtyard**. Our students will be a part of the live nativity scene and will sing some of their favorite songs of the season. If you would like to join us, we would love to see you. Please RSVP to: preschool@episcopalchurchemecula.org, by Monday, December 14. We will be providing socially-distanced seating and everyone over the age of two is required to wear a mask.



Hey, Saint Thomas, Join us on Instagram!

#stthomasintemecula #stepreschool #stepreschoolmerch
#virtualclassrooms2020

NOVEMBER EVENTS

The 47th Diocesan Convention successfully took place on November 6 and 7, 2020. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Diocesan commitment to the health and well-being of all its members, the convention was held virtually. Despite a few hiccups, the virtual convention was successful in bringing the diocese together for faith-filled worship, thought-provoking presentations, and the important business of the diocese. For more information on the convention, here is the website address: edsd.org.



Saint Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church Honors Veterans

On Sunday, November 15, Mother Julie and members of Saint Thomas recognized Veterans Day by honoring our members who have served our country. Deb Mitchell presented a Quilt of Valor (made by herself and Marva Ross) to Roland Steele to honor and thank him for his service. Deb is a member of the Quilts of Valor Foundation, whose mission is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor.

Pinecone Wreaths Craft and Fellowship



Susan Reed organized a craft and fellowship meeting, which was held on Saturday, November 21, on the outside patio of the church. Crafters (including Mother Julie) used pine cones, paint, glitter, and ribbons to decorate wreaths for the holidays. Donations were provided by Susan, Tess, Irene, and Mary. Several people brought their own glue guns.

The main idea for the wreaths was found on Pinterest, and Susan supplied the



pinecones from her yard, along with art supplies from the 99-Cent and Dollar stores. The crafters had so much fun making the wreaths and they came out looking like they were professionally done, so we thought some of you might want to try it for yourselves. Here are the general directions:

The pinecones were prepared by washing them and then drying them in the oven. Later, they were air-dried for a few days. Then the pinecones were cut with a pair of loppers into flower shapes, and groups of these "flowers" were spray-painted various colors. Once at the church, the crafters covered green Styrofoam with dots of hot glue and burlap before gluing on the pinecone flowers. Some people chose to use the natural-looking wreaths to directly hot-glue the pinecones on, then all crafters tied on bows.



The Bishop's Visit on November 22nd



The Saint Thomas of Canterbury congregation was honored by The Right Reverend Doctor Susan Brown Snook's visit on November 22.

Church members were able to watch via Zoom as people were baptized, confirmed, and received by the Bishop out on the Saint Francis Courtyard. (Baptized: Camila Lee De La Cruz, Confirmed: Camille Parady, Received: Brandon De La Cruz).

Deacons attending were The Reverend Cindy Campos and The Reverend Tim Wetherington.



Marimel Almodiel and Dave Weaver played music for the event, which was live-streamed on Zoom as well.



Health Update By Dr. Ed Rather

-Vaccines-

Well, thanks be to God, Advent and Christmas are upon us!

Since COVID-19, vaccines are being discussed so often, it would do us well to be certain that we are up-to-date on all our immunizations as the New Year approaches.

The most important vaccines which we all should have had and should keep track of include:



- 1) FLU VAX YEARLY... never too late.
- 2) TETANUS, which is included in Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis). We should get boosters every 10 years.
- 3) MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella)... the BIG 3 ... and vital for everyone to have.
- 4) PNEUMOCOCCUS ... everyone over 65... (earlier for those with chronic illnesses).
- 5) MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS... particularly for young adults going to college, military service, etcetera.
- 6) CHICKENPOX/VARICELLA... IF OVER 12 and have never had this illness.
- 7) SHINGLES/HERPES ZOSTER... adults over 60. The newer Shingrix appears to be better.
- 8) HEPATITIS A and B ...particularly if you have a greater risk of exposure.
- 9) HPV (Human Papilloma Virus)... over age 9-10. This virus is strongly associated with Cancer in young women and young men.
- 10) IF YOU ARE PLANNING **FOREIGN TRAVEL** (when we can do this again!!!),be sure to check with your physician about what is needed in the area where you plan to be... Hepatitis, Yellow Fever, Typhoid, etcetera.
- 11) COVID-19 vaccines surely will be available to us within the next 6 months or so, and this one will be a life-saver to be sure.

So, as usual, we need to use good sense. We never want to postpone something, thinking it won't happen to us. Letting these serious or potentially fatal diseases occur should not be an option. Please be safe and be well.

MERRY CHRISTMAS to all. As always, your friendly but retired Dermatologist, Ed

Saint Thomas of Canterbury Christmas Party - A Virtual Event!



Saturday, December 12, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Let's gather by Zoom for an Open House-style Party; drop in for a few minutes or stay online all evening!

We'll enjoy Music, Games, an Ugly Sweater Contest, Award Prizes, and we'll hear from Santa himself.

Put on your most beautiful holiday attire, or your ugliest sweater if you're entering our contest, gather up appropriate beverages and holiday snacks, and brush up on your Christmas trivia!

We're expecting to see Santa at about 6:30 p.m., so you'll want to be on your best behavior, too. Join the fun!

Zoom Meeting ID: 869 1777 3205, Passcode: 897758.



SAINT THOMAS YOUTH GROUP OUTSIDE MOVIE EVENT



Sunday, December 13, 1:00 p.m.

It has been a long time since our Youth Group gathered because our "new normal" has prevented it. However, Mother Julie and Mrs. Monica Walton have agreed that we can gather with safe social distancing protocols in place so we can watch an outdoor movie and have lunch.

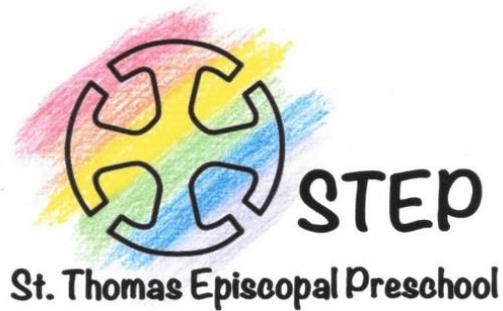
This will take place on Sunday, December 13, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. on the church patio. Bring comfy beach chairs and blankets, and we will distance by sibling groups.

Mrs. Walton will provide lunch from In-N-Out, which will need to be ordered ahead of time so that she can have them package the orders in individual bags. Drinks will also be provided, so you will not need to order those.

Due date to RSVP: Friday, December 11.

Mrs. Walton will also need your food order as to what kind of burgers and fries you would like. Please send your RSVP and lunch order to her email: monica.walton24@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing everyone again!



Christmas Program

Friday, December 18 at 11:00 a.m. on the St. Francis Courtyard

RSVP by Monday, December 14 to
preschool@episcopalchurchtemecula.org.

Join us for our annual Christmas Program in which the students will be a part of the live Nativity scene and sing a few of their favorite songs of the season. We are asking that you RSVP so we can set up seating that is distanced properly so everyone is comfortable and safe. Everyone over age two in attendance **MUST** wear a mask.





Christmas Dinner Bag Donations Needed for Project T.O.U.C.H.

(Together Our Unity Conquers Homelessness)

Saint Thomas of Canterbury and many parents of our STEP students are partnering with Project Touch, Temecula, again this year to provide Christmas Dinner Bags to those who are in need. Project Touch's mission statement is "Bridging Individual and Collective Bodies of Faith within our communities together with civil and business organizations to overcome homelessness and establish effective methods of homeless prevention."

"Project Touch serves over 200 individuals daily including 40-50 children, single mothers, emancipated foster youth, domestic violence victims, seniors, mentally and physically disabled, veterans and entire families. Those in the program receive case management, employment assistance, transportation, food, clothing, medical assistance and more! Project Touch is there to provide resources and support to homeless and potentially homeless individuals and families providing a safety net of Love and Hope."

We can help Project Touch clients by providing Christmas dinners to 50 units or families this year. Each dinner bag feeds a family of four and should contain:

- 1 Fresh Ham (we are working on a donation so please stay tuned for more information)
- Canned Vegetables
- Boxed potatoes
- Gravy packet
- Bread
- Dessert

Items can be brought to the church or preschool Monday through Friday. **The bags will be assembled on Saturday, December 19, at 9:00 a.m.** If you would like to volunteer, please contact Chantel Blas or Allan O'Neil.

The bags will be blessed during the service on Sunday, December 20. They will be delivered on Tuesday, December 22. If you have questions, please contact Chantel Blas at the preschool: 951-302-8498 or Allan O'Neil: 201-370-2154.



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