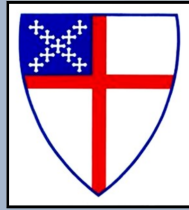


The Builder

Making Disciples for Jesus Christ

St. Thomas's Episcopal Church
(540) 672-3761
Rector: The Rev. Dr. Lin Hutton



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Editor: Ann Wood

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February 2023

Issue No. 1

From the Pastor

Recently, I realized that this February issue of *The Builder* marks 16 years of articles for our parish newsletter. February, sixteen years ago, I wrote my very first newsletter article. I went back to look at what I had written. I noted that we had just been through three liturgical church seasons [Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany] in rapid succession, just like now. And, with Ash Wednesday right around the corner, we are heading into our fourth season, the Season of Lent. What a whirlwind!

Frankly, I find myself looking forward to Lent and a period of normalcy and an intentional focus on spiritual growth. I pray that each of us will have what the church calls a “holy Lent.” By that, we mean a time of intentional reflection and discernment. Lent is not just a time to abstain from, deny ourselves, or to “put-off” desirable things that we like, although such an approach can bring spiritual rewards.

Nor is Lent just a time to increase our prayer time, take on Bible studies, or new spiritual disciplines, although they too bring their rewards. Rather, a holy Lent is really very “Anglican,” because it is best when the disciplines of “abstention” and “inclusion,” are *both* employed. I encourage each of us to take this time to evaluate what is cluttering or distracting our lives and resolve to set them aside, at least for the five weeks of Lent. Likewise, I encourage each of us to resolve to increase our spiritual awareness—become a prayer warrior, visit a shut-in member who would welcome your company, tackle a challenging book of the Bible, participate in our Wednesday Lenten Evening Prayer and Program on *The Book of Ruth*, and so forth. There are any number of opportunities to explore and I will be happy to offer suggestions if you would like.

Let us take this time to slow down and to be still, to listen to where Christ would have us go.

Pastor Lin +



For All the Saints...

Cornelius, the Centurion ~ February 4, c. 45 AD



Cornelius, his family, and entire household became the first Gentiles converted to the Christian faith. All we know about Cornelius is contained in Chapters 10 and 11 in the *Acts of the Apostles*. A centurion was a commander of a company of one hundred men in the Roman army, responsible for their discipline, both on the field of battle and in camp. A centurion was a Roman citizen, a career military officer, well-paid and generally noted for courage and competence. Some centurions, such as Cornelius, and those whom we know from the Gospel narratives, were men of deep religious piety.

Cornelius' conversion was a significant and critically important event in the shaping of the young Christian faith. Up to this point, only Jews were Christians. However, the author of *Acts* records that the conversion and subsequent baptism of Cornelius and his household by the Apostle Peter came about as a result of divine intervention and revelation, and as a response to the preaching of Peter.

The event is often referred to as the “Gentile Pentecost” as served as the precedent for the momentous decision of the First Apostolic Council held in Jerusalem a few years later [around 49 AD], which agreed to admit Gentiles to full and equal partnership with Jewish converts in the Christian faith.

According to tradition, Cornelius was the second Bishop of Caesarea, the metropolitan See of Palestine. Undoubtedly, Cornelius and his household formed the nucleus of the first Church in this important, seaport city, a Church that was first gathered by Philip the Evangelist [Acts 8:40 and 21:8].

Absalom Jones, Priest ~ February 13, 1818



Absalom Jones was born a house slave in 1746 in Delaware. Using the New Testament and other books, he taught himself to read. At the age of sixteen, he was sold to a storeowner in Philadelphia where he attended a Quaker-run night school for Blacks. He purchased his freedom in 1784, having earlier married another slave and purchased her freedom with his earnings.

Jones served as lay minister to the Black membership of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church and along with his friend, Richard Allen, greatly increased Black membership, which alarmed the white vestry, who subsequently decided to segregate Blacks into an upstairs gallery, without notifying them. The following Sunday, when ushers attempted to remove the Black membership to the gallery, the Blacks walked out in a body.

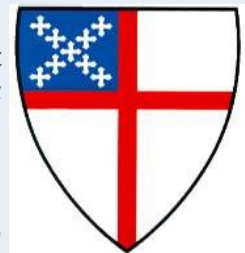
In 1787, Black Christians organized the Free African Society, the first organized Afro-American society, and Jones and Allen were elected as overseers. The Society built its own church, which was dedicated on July 17,

1794 and then applied for membership in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania. Bishop White of Pennsylvania admitted the church as: *St. Thomas African Episcopal Church* with the agreement that the entire church be received as an organized body, that they have control over their local affairs, that Absalom Jones be licensed as lay reader, and, when qualified, as a minister. Bishop White ordained Jones as deacon in 1795 and as priest on September 21, 1802.

Jones was an earnest preacher, who denounced slavery and warned the oppressors to “clean their hands of slaves.” To Jones, God was the Father, who always acted on “behalf of the oppressed and distressed.” *St. Thomas Church* grew to over 500 members during its first year. Known as “the Black Bishop of the Episcopal Church,” Jones was an example of persistent faith in God and in the Church as God’s instrument.

MORE, “101 Reasons to be an Episcopalian”—

Reason # 10: “Asking questions about our faith is expected. In the Episcopal Church, God doesn’t get upset if I wonder why some things are as they are. And God doesn’t get upset if I suggest that some things should not continue as they are.” *La Reverenda Martha Sylvia Ovalle Vasquez, Diocese of Delaware*



Reason # 82: “The Prayer Books bids us to come to God’s table for strength and renewal, not for solace and pardon only.” *Agnes L. Haviland-More, Diocese of Connecticut*

Congratulations to our new Vestry Members!

Bernice Walker, Eddie Hutchens, Susan Prock

Thank You for your Service to our *Off-going members:*

**Graham Barton, Senior Warden, David Acree, Junior Warden,
and Sunithi Gnanadoss**

We are grateful for the gift of your time during your already busy lives and most especially for your guidance and assistance during the challenges that the COVID Pandemic placed upon us all!

Thank You ALL!

Events During the Season of Lent



February 21, 2023: 5:00pm

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Hosted by your Vestry



February 22, 2023: 12:15pm and 5:30pm

Ash Wednesday Services



February 23, 2023 5:30pm

Stations of the Cross

Make plans to join us for a season of reflection, study, and prayer during Lent

Wednesdays 12:15 p.m. Community worship and lunch
5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer followed by soup supper
6:00 p.m. Bible Study "The Book of Ruth"

Thursdays 5:30 p.m. Stations of the Cross

NOW SHOWING



Set on a remote island off the west coast of Ireland, *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN* follows lifelong friends Padraic (Colin Farrell) and Colm (Brendan Gleeson), who find themselves at an impasse when Colm unexpectedly puts an end to their friendship. A stunned Padraic, aided by his sister Siobhan (Kerry Condon) and troubled young islander Dominic (Barry Keoghan), endeavours to repair the relationship, refusing to take no for an answer. But Padraic's repeated efforts only strengthen his former friend's resolve and when Colm delivers a desperate ultimatum, events swiftly escalate, with shocking consequences. ~ IMDB



Friday, February 24th at 7pm in Robertson Hall

~ cost of admission is one non-perishable food item ~



February 2023

St. Thomas Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>If you are interested in assisting in worship or in volunteering around the church please speak to the Rector or to any member of the Vestry.</p> <p>You may also call (540-672-3761) or email (saint.thomas.orange@outlook.com) the church office for more information.</p>			1	2	3	4
<p>5 <i>The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany</i></p> <p>Holy Communion 8 and 10:15 am</p>	6	7	8	9	10	11
<p>11 <i>The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany</i></p> <p>Holy Communion 8 and 10:15 am</p>	13	<p>14</p> 	15	16	17	18
<p>19 <i>The Last Sunday after the Epiphany</i></p> <p>Holy Communion 8 and 10:15 am</p>	<p>20</p>  <p>Presidents' Day Office closed</p>	<p>21 <i>Strove Tuesday ~ Pancake supper hosted by your Vestry at 5:00 pm</i></p>	<p>22 <i>Ash Wednesday</i></p> <p>Worship 12:15 & 5:30 pm</p>	<p>23 <i>Stations of the Cross</i></p> <p>5:30 pm Vestry meeting follows</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Movie Night 7 pm</p>	25
<p>26 <i>The First Sunday in Lent</i></p> <p>Holy Communion 8 and 10:15 am</p>	27	28	<p>Make plans to join us for a season of reflection, study, and prayer during Lent</p> <p><u>Wednesdays</u> 12:15 p.m. Community worship and lunch 5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer followed by soup supper 6:00 p.m. Bible Study "The Book of Ruth"</p> <p><u>Thursdays</u> 5:30 p.m. Stations of the Cross</p>			



~Birthdays~

02/11 Sarah Soderbergh
02/14 G.W. Gray
02/15 Ginny Dulin
02/18 Sarah Likins
02/19 Sunithi Gnanadoss
02/20 Keith Frick



*The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine upon you and be
gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you and give
you peace.*



Food Pantry

Special request for February is **canned fruit, canned peas, and toothpaste**. All food items and cash gifts are always welcome and appreciated.

The clothes closet accepts clean, gently used clothing, towels, sheets, and blankets (no used underwear, please). You can drop off donations at the Love Outreach Food Pantry each Tuesday from 8:00-10:30 and on Wednesday from 8:00-12:00. Their mailing address is: Love Outreach Food Pantry, Inc., P.O. Box 788, Orange, 22960. You may also bring any donations to the church to be delivered.



Prayer List

We pray especially for our church's leadership:

Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury; Michael, Presiding Bishop; Mark, David, and Ted, bishops for this diocese

Our country: President Joe, Vice President Kamala, & Governor Glenn

For the men and women in our armed forces serving our nation around the world.

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation:

For: Terrell, Margaret, Harriet, Ellen, William, Susan Earlene, Casey, Bev, Aubrey Elaine, Heather, Charlie, Lynne, Keith, Kevin, Carroll, and Jack

Want to add something to The Builder? Contact Ann Wood at annwood304@gmail.com by February 22, 2023 with your information!

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
119 Caroline Street
Orange, VA 22960

February 2023

