

# ST. THOMAS' QUEST - APRIL 2010

## THOUGHTS FROM FR. BOB

*Second in a series on the four parish goals.*

### Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

With that glorious acclamation we begin the celebration of Eastertide, moving from the dark of Lent midway through the Easter Vigil, into the full brightness of the Resurrection with lights, candles, the organ and choir and congregation singing full out. It's the perfect way to end our Lenten disciplines and usher in the Great Fifty Days of Easter. That single phrase is **the** defining summary of the Gospel itself: In the risen Christ, our separation from God, each other, ourselves, and even Creation itself is ended forever. Because Jesus died and now lives, we will not die and we don't have to be afraid or anxious or uneasy – about anything! Our place in creation and in God's eyes and heart is assured forever.



And because the sheer enormity of what Christ has done for us, by his most generous and free gift, is something we can't pay back to God, we can only pay it forward. Jesus says in Matthew 25 that "just as you did it the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." And so Christians throughout the ages have recognized that it is in showing unconditional *agape* love – wanting the best for the other person as one created in God's own image - that we live out the commandment of Jesus to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, and clothe those with none.

We at St. Thomas' are doing this! Did you know:

- We operate a thriving Hiker Hostel ministry that's known up and down the Appalachian Trail as one of the most welcoming places to spend the night.
- Several times a year we open our space in the Steele Community Room to those who have no place to live through our participation in the Interfaith Hospitality Program.

- We have the only food pantry in the township that is open 24/7 in the vestibule of our lobby, so that those who need to partake and those who wish to give can do so in dignity and privacy.
- Every second Tuesday a team from our parish cooks and feed lunch to those in need at Harvest House in Sussex.
- Our pews groan with food and gifts for families in need during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday times.

As a Christian community we are surely living out the agape love of Jesus in the passion and Resurrection by our actions. And yet we ought not take pride in what we do. In fact, as St. Paul reminds, we have no room to boast anyway, since it is only by God's action first that we have any say in salvation at all. And that always begs the question: Are we doing enough? Are we doing the right things? Is there opportunity for each member of the St. Thomas community to accept the Lord's command to reach out?

That's our second parish goal: "to continue to develop our inreach and outreach programs." We have some long-standing out-reach programs in place, and this year the Executive Committee is working to reach in as well, to ensure we all have opportunities to worship and grow spiritually, to serve others and each other, and to enjoy each other's company together in community – to worship, serve, and play together. Your ideas are always welcome on how we can make sure all our members are equipped to do the work of ministry as faithful witnesses of Christ, in our schools and homes and work and play, and not only in our time together on Sundays. Our calling and duty – and joy – is to make the Easter Alleluia ring out in our lives, as we sing with our lips:

**The Lord is Risen Indeed! Alleluia! .**

Fr. Bob

**WARDENS' NOTES:**

Well, here we are two months into our new roles as Sr. and Jr. Warden. Dan and I have been busy meeting with property people and assisting in setting forth some Parish Goals and work days.

As I ponder as to what to report for this area of ministry, I find that the Wardens are indirectly involved in a number of areas of ministry, perhaps not directly, but indirectly.

One issue discussed was to replace the side entry door for the Chapel. A new door should be installed before you receive this newsletter. St. Thomas' was fortunate to receive a donation from the Historical Commission for a good portion of the cost of this door. The door will be, as much as possible, historically correct for this historical building.

There are several "Fun"draising events coming up; you will hear more about those from the leaders of that ministry. But they do sound like "fun"!

As ever, if you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to contact either Dan Kadish or myself, Nancy Hansen.

**FROM THE TREASURER**

Parish Finances as of March 31, 2010

	<b>March</b>	<b>Since Jan.</b>
Offerings Received	\$8,502	\$20,480
Offerings Promised	<u>\$5,788</u>	<u>\$17,365</u>
Difference	\$2,714	\$3,115
Total Income	\$12,867	\$33,750
Total Expenses	<u>\$12,021</u>	<u>\$37,546</u>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>\$846</b>	<b>-\$3,796</b>
Unrestricted Cash on hand:	\$30,646	

The Executive Committee is asking the congregation to help supply our church office. Items that can be donated include:

- white copier paper by the ream 8 1/2 by 11 inch
- white copier paper by the ream 8 1/2 by 14 inch
- standard size staples
- paper clips
- postage stamps (forever stamps by the book) or rolls of 100.

Please arrange to leave your donations in the office.

**"FUN RAISERS"**

The ECW is holding a Schwans Frozen Food Sale during the month of April with delivery to our own St Thomas parking lot on Sunday April 25, 2010 from 9am to Noon. Brochures are

located on the table in the lobby with orders needed by Sunday April 18<sup>th</sup>. Those attending the 8am services may hand in their orders to Linda Lazicki and those attending 10am services please hand your orders into Lois Mayer, President of the ECW. Let's try to make this a successful fundraiser. Get your orders in as early as possible Payment is made during pick up by cash, check, credit or debit card.

We are holding a cell phoneraiser on a continuous basis all year long. Any kind of cell phone with the batteries plus any brand of inkjet cartridges can be recycled. Help protect the environment and also help St. Thomas in its fundraising efforts.

Wells Fargo will pay St Thomas \$ 300.00 for any refinance or new mortgage that is obtained through Bob Goldwick, Mortgage Representative. Please pass the word on to friends and family. Last year we received \$600.00 for 2 referrals that mentioned St Thomas. Bob can be reached directly on his cell phone at 973-713-1416 or ask Linda Lazicki for more information. Remember you must mention St Thomas for us to get the check!

Other fun raisers and social events being planned for the year are a parish picnic, a progressive dinner, a gold exchange by the ECW and our fleamarket/craft & vendor fair in September. .... And much, much, more !

**SUNDAY SCHOOL NOTES:**

Our Sunday school is truly a blessing to us! As we continue to learn the Old Testament and New Testament, the 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> grade group is becoming very proud in the fact some of them can locate specific scriptures faster.

Not only are they able to do this for themselves, but take great pride in helping others learn the same skill. Someone, just a couple of Sundays ago, said, "I am practicing reading, so I am getting better." T his seemed important for her, as we take turns reading scripture aloud each week. Each enjoys this so very much! I am constantly, and pleasantly surprised by the group's continued interests, and as I said, blessed. There were a couple of poignant questions this month. So thought provoking and problem solving.

The first was asked while we were reading about Jesus' temptations in the desert. The question or I should say statement, was, "why didn't someone just kill Satan?" Another person answered, "We need Satan so that we know how to choose to live." "Life would be boring if everyone were the same." Everyone agreed that was true. The other question was based on Isaiah 43:16-21. The question asked, when we discussed new life in Christ was, "why'd He do it?" "If he knew what was going to happen, why'd he do it?"

The discussion that followed was better than the pre-prescribed Sunday school lesson! So many wonderful-critical thinking; problem solving questions and discussions! I can't wait until next month!

Under Susan Moffitt's and Nicole Belli's guidance the preschool and kindergarten group is actively listening and acting out our lectionary stories, creating a craft and playing Bible games.

Thank you to our so dedicated teaching staff: Gale MacPeck, Susan Moffitt, and Nicole Belli and thank you to parents who are dedicated in bringing your child to St. Thomas.

#### WORSHIP COORDINATION COMMITTEE

All parishioners interested in helping to discuss and plan our worship services are invited to the next meeting of the Worship Coordination Committee, to be held on **Thursday, April 8 at 6:00 PM** in the office upstairs. The meeting will be attended by the Directors of Music and the Altar Guild, as well as representatives from various other worship guilds. For questions, please contact Fr. Bob.

#### ADDRESS UPDATE

It's time to update the parish directory! Please review your entry in the and let us know what changes we should make. We particularly want to update the birthday list begin an anniversary list. You can also go online to the parish website and let us know of any changes.

#### PARISH WORK DAYS

There is always a lot to do around a parish like ours that is blessed with a large complex and beautiful grounds, inside and out. The Executive Committee would like to invite all members to participate in Parish Work Days, every second Saturday from nine until noon, with lunch afterward. Rain or shine, please come and help keep up our beautiful parish buildings and grounds. Men and women, children and retirees – all are welcome and needed: Next Parish Work Day: **Saturday April 10 and Saturday, May 8.**

#### HAVE A SUGGESTION, QUESTION OR COMMENT?

The EC welcomes feedback (questions, suggestions, comments, concerns) on all aspects of our congregational life. Parishioners are invited to communicate with the EC publicly at scheduled meetings, or privately as individuals, with regard to issues of importance to them. In order to provide an additional mechanism for communication, the EC has placed a decorated box in the lobby. This container is intended to serve as a receptacle for parishioner's statements about their hopes and dreams for St. Thomas and for our ministries. Please feel comfortable in reaching out to the EC in which ever manner is best for you.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2010

In an effort to open the doors to each meeting to St. Thomas' entire congregation, all members are invited to attend regular open meetings of the Executive Committee. **The regular schedule for EC meetings for 2010 is the second Sunday of the month at noon in the Office/Loft.** Please join us – the next meetings are April 11 and May 9.

#### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**Interfaith Hospitality Network:** We're hosting families for two weeks **beginning Sunday, May 25.** Please check out the sign-up sheet in the Lobby/Narthex – help of all kinds is needed. This is a great way to give back to the community.

**Hiker Hostel is Opening:** Our nationally-known Hiker Hostel is beginning its **2010 hiking season.** This unique outreach ministry is a great way to spend a little time without a large commitment. There will be a calendar in the lobby/narthex, and you are asked to sign up for a day a month or a week at a time. It's usually no more than 15 or 20 minutes in the evening with any hikers who are in, and it really extends the hospitality we're known for.

**The Annual Fish Fry is Here!** Mark your calendars now – **Friday, May 21,** we will hold our annual Argyles Fish Fry. Cost is \$14 for adults and \$7 for children and tickets are available now and at the door. Watch for details in the Lobby and bulletins!

**Progressive Dinner: On Saturday, June 5,** we will hold a progressive dinner for all who want to attend. Appetizers, main course, and dessert will all be at different houses, so that we'll "progress" from one home to the next as we eat. Further details will be announced as available. If interested in helping, or just want to know more, contact Ellen Shapiro.

**First Quarter Pledge Statements** are available in the narthex table. Please take your copy so that we can save some money on postage.

*Our full calendar for April and May is included in this newsletter or is available online at the parish website!*

#### PARISHIONER TO PARISHIONER

*By Parishioners, for Parishioners. To add an item, please call or email the office!*

#### Items Wanted and Items Offered:

##### Wanted to Buy:

- 1) Men's or women's lightweight, used, 10-speed bike for 54 woman.
  - 2) Used blender (for art projects, not food)
  - 3) Crochet hook and 2 or 3 crochet lessons
- Contact Emilie Dupont, at (973) 764-8434 or [emilron@warwick.net](mailto:emilron@warwick.net)

##### Wanted to Sell or Donate:

##### Help Offered, Help Wanted:



Alleluia is derived from the Hebrew "Halleluyah" and refers to joy and thanksgiving and celebration -- all at once.

After a six-week Lenten fast from the -word, Alleluia began our Easter worship -- and we will be proclaiming Alleluia at the beginning, middle and end of our liturgies for these next seven weeks.



This year, in the Diocese of Newark, the Easter season proclaims the inauguration of the Alleluia Fund. The Alleluia Fund is an opportunity for individuals and congregations to express their joy, thanksgiving and celebration -- through their financial giving to ministry projects that carry out God's work in the world. All funds given will go to support ministries in four areas, or "baskets": food, shelter, education and international.

The Alleluia Fund helps coordinate giving from across the diocese -- and it has the capacity to render more of an impact because of so many people participating. The individual flashlights of gratitude converge into a spotlight of generosity.

The Alleluia Fund is not an assessment. It is an opportunity. We hope to raise \$108,000. The Budget and Finance Committee set the goal, with the idea that each \$1,000 raised would represent one congregation.

We invite you to bring to the four Easter baskets whatever resources you can during the Alleluia season and join us in doing this mission work.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

- The Rt. Rev. Mark Beckwith, Bishop of Newark

Visit our new web page at [www.dioceseofnewark.org/Alleluia](http://www.dioceseofnewark.org/Alleluia) for more information about the Alleluia Fund. Online donation is available there as well.

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God - Romans 15:7

The Rev. Robert F. Solon, Jr., Vicar
Mrs. Nancy Hansen, Sr. Warden Mr. Dan Kadish, Jr. Warden
Mrs. Kathy Moore, Treasurer Mrs. Paulette Beer, Clerk

307 State Route 94, Vernon NJ 07462
973-764-7506 (O) 973-974-7509 (F)

http://www.st-thomas-vernon.org/ (web)
stthomas@warwick.net (email)

OUR VISION

We are a growing church family that reaches into and beyond the community. We have a relaxed and supportive environment, steeped in Christian tradition. We value new opportunities to enrich the minds and souls of all who come here.

GOALS

- 1. Inspire and energize our church community for growth. 2. Continue to develop our inreach and outreach ministries. 3. Enhance our existing Christian education programs. 4. Achieve parish status.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The year next to each name indicates the last full year of elected ministry.

Table with 2 columns: Ministry and Primary Leadership. Rows include Chairperson, Education, Fundraising, Hospitality, Social Events, Inreach, Outreach, Property, Stewardship, and Worship, Pastoral Care.

DIOCESAN CONVENTION DELEGATES

Ginny Mohr (2011), Kathy Moore (2012), Francine Vince (2013)

STAFF AND APPOINTMENTS

Table with 2 columns: Position and Name. Rows include Music Director, Sexton, Parish Accountant, Pledge Accountant, and Sunday School.