

ST. THOMAS' QUEST - MAY 2010

THOUGHTS FROM FR. BOB

Third in a series on the parish goals.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

Is it *still* Easter?

Yup, it still is! Eastertide, the Great Fifty Days, begins with the Easter Vigil and ends after Evensong on Pentecost, which is the Fiftieth Day. So we still have a few more weeks of celebration for the Good News that God is accomplishing in the Resurrection.



And we have been celebrating! We have been using our best stuff – music, vestments, chalices and altar service – to help us live into the best party we Christians can ever have. Every Sunday is a little Easter and that's why we gather together in Christian community – to remind us of what God is doing for us. And these Great Fifty Days are a heightened form of that.

It's a deep Christian and even human tradition that on festive times of the year we give and receive gifts and presents for and from those around us. Think of Christmas, after all. And there are times in Jewish and Islamic religious life that are also traditional for the giving and receiving of gifts.

Easter, though, might seem different. True, many of us look forward to an Easter basket of chocolate bunnies, jelly beans, and colored eggs. I myself really like the malted milkball eggs! But in general, we usually don't think of Easter as a time of exchanging gifts, and certainly for the most part, does the secular culture either.

In fact, however, it's a perfect time for presents. After all, the stupendous love that God has for each of us is the quintessential gift – we can't earn it and certainly don't deserve it. But God in Christ says, "I love you so much that nothing you do or don't do can ever make me love you less!" And of course, since there's no way we can respond to God, except in praise and thanksgiving for that present he gives each of us, we have to show that by giving *others* the gifts and gratitude we wish we could give to God.

We do that at St. Thomas a great deal through our outreach and our inreach. That's the primary way we are "paying it forward." Our second parish goal is "continue to develop our inreach and outreach ministries." Last month I listed some ways we do direct outreach, that is, with our own hearts and hands. But there is another way as well, and that's by pooling our resources – usually money – so that we can extend our reaching out to others beyond the reach of our own community.

Here's what we have been doing so far this year:

- Haiti Relief: \$558.37, including \$133.37 from the Sunday School and \$360 as the parish tithes on our

Parish Auction. We sent \$180 to Episcopal Relief and Development and \$180 to Harvest House.

- Souper Bowl of Caring: \$54, which the Sunday School children will decide how to use for a charitable purpose.
- Vicar's Discretionary Fund: \$374, which helps when parishioners or others approach me privately for help with groceries, etc.
- Bishop's Church Extension Fund: a pledge of \$250 for the year, with \$50 paid so far. This fund, run by the Bishop, is an emergency fund to help with critical property issues that churches may have. We have been a recipient of this fund in the past.

That's a total of \$1236.37 that the members of this parish have directly contributed, above and beyond our pledges to the ongoing work of the parish itself. We can all be grateful for the work God is doing through us on behalf of others!

There is another way that we can extend the reach of our hands and hearts beyond Vernon. At the Annual Convention in January, the Diocese decided to create a special fund called the Alleluia Fund, which will be used to fund the Diocesan-wide outreach ministries that we do each year. You can read more about this fund from Bishop Beckwith on the back page of this month's newsletter. Each parish has been challenged to contribute, if possible, \$1000 to this fund.

I am very pleased and proud of the Executive Committee to be able to announce the **St. Thomas Alleluia Challenge Grant: for each dollar contributed by a parishioner to the Alleluia Fund, the parish will match it dollar for dollar.**

This is an amazing and grace-filled way to extend our outreach across all of the Diocese and even beyond, and it's both duty and joy to be able to help in His name. To encourage all members to participate, **I will personally contribute 25 cents for each dollar directly contributed by a parishioner. That's a total match of \$1.25 for each dollar!**

I do hope you will consider participating in the 2010 Alleluia Challenge. You can learn more about the Alleluia Fund on the Diocesan webpage at <http://dioceseofnewark.org/Alleluia/>

It's *still* Easter. We have so much to celebrate!

The Lord is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

Fr. Bob

WARDENS' NOTES:

We have been actively meeting, discussing concerns that have come to our attention or the Executive Committee's attention during the month. New items of discussion are discussed then brought to the Executive Committee.

As Parish Workdays continue, we thank all our dedicated who have used their Stewardship of time and talent in making our place of worship beautiful.

A Warden's Dinner is in our parish's future. This endeavor will aspire to be a combined effort of past and present wardens. An idea of a wonderful dinner dance is in formation.

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 April 30, 2010

	April	Since Jan.
Offerings Received	\$8,376	\$28,856
Offerings Promised	<u>\$5,788</u>	<u>\$23,154</u>
Difference	\$2,588	\$5,702
Total Income	\$12,343	\$46,092
Total Expenses	<u>\$13,642</u>	<u>\$51,189</u>
Difference	<u>-\$1,299</u>	<u>-\$5,096</u>

Unrestricted Cash on hand: \$33,683

Our thanks to all the special Easter donations, including special contributions of \$1200, \$1000, and \$500 for the use of the parish. Your generosity is a blessing to us all!

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
- postage stamps (forever stamps by the book) or rolls of 100.
- Donations for printer ink.

Please arrange to leave your donations in the office, with thanks!

"FUN RAISERS"

Need Cash? The ECW is holding a **"Gold Exchange" on Saturday, June 26** from 9:00 am to 3pm. Any gold, silver or platinum pieces whether broken or not can be turned into "cash on the spot". Just bring in the jewelry you do not want anymore and turn it into your own pot of gold. New jewelry pieces will be

on hand if you would like to purchase gifts or spend the money you receive from the old pieces on something new.

We are holding a **cell phone-raiser** 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!

The annual Fish Fry will be on Friday May 21st. Tickets are 14.00 for adults and 7.00 for children. See the sign up sheet in the lobby for more information

The progressive dinner will be held on Saturday evening June 5th. Starting at John Mohr's home at 6pm for appetizers we will move on to The Lazicki's home at 6 Eric Trail for dinner and then to the Shapiros for dessert. Tickets are \$10.00 per person. \$15.00 per couple and must be purchased in advance. Call Ellen Shapiro, chairperson for tickets.

Other fun raisers and social events being planned for the year are a parish picnic, Trip to Skylands to see a baseball game and a fleamarket/ craft & vendor fair for September 18th. And much, much, more..... so check the newsletter each month for added events and come and enjoy!!

COMMUNITY HOUR NEEDS YOU

Our Community Hour after each Sunday service is one of the great ministries of our church. Who doesn't like friendly conversation along with a good cup of coffee and an assortment of delicious food? This time of fellowship is a wonderful opportunity to catch up on news with friends and acquaintances from church that we don't see during the week. Help is needed though, to provide coffee hour each Sunday. It is easier than you think to provide this wonderful time for our church members. All you have to do is check the day before to see if there is enough milk and half and half for the coffee and purchase some if there is not enough. Then on Sunday morning, make the coffee and put out an assortment of goodies that are provided by the church. Lastly, when coffee hour is over you will need to clean up, put everything away that was used, and turn off the coffee maker. Sounds simple, right? It is and it is so appreciated by everyone too! If you think you need help in doing coffee hour, Paulette Beer (973-697-2264) or Karen Scott (973-579-5080) are willing to help you out. Please consider signing up for a coffee hour on the sign up sheet posted on the bulletin board in the Lobby. Thanks for your time and talent - Paulette Beer and Karen Scott

SUNDAY SCHOOL NOTES:

On Palm Sunday we began following our liturgical calendar counting the 50 days of Easter from beginning Pentecost. The Sunday school had a great time joining in the procession with their palms and then coming to Sunday school.

Our discussion on the history of Eucharist began. We had a children's sermon on Easter. The 2nd Sunday of Easter, we again counted the 50 days of Easter on our calendar and talked about believing without needing to see or touch.

The Sunday school group is practicing the Easter acclamation, Alleluia, Christ is risen! _____, Alleluia!

I think just about everyone knows that by now. We check our calendar every week to see how far along we are from the Resurrection and how many days we have until Pentecost. We celebrate Easter each Sunday with a special Easter treat. As we are following along with the same liturgy as upstairs each week, you pretty much know what we have been discussing. We have gone fishing and shared a meal with Jesus on the bank. You were able to see our fish on the bulletin board. This meal was then related to the meal we share at Eucharist. Just this past week we became shepherds and each explained the job of a shepherd. We knew that if we didn't own the sheep, we probably would not care as much for them. We also were reassured that Jesus is indeed the Good Shepherd and knows all of us by name and loves us no matter what.

We continue our Bible study and miss some of our friends who are not here. Some of us are looking forward to becoming 10 years of age so that they too can become acolytes! That is good news!

The kindergarten and preschool group has been creating butterflies and sheep. The children's art can be seen on our bulletin board. They have also been learning prayer and scripture through stories and playing games.

Thank you to Susan Moffitt, Gale MacPeck, Nicole Belli and our families for their faithful donations of time and talents! - Nancy

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, May 20 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 directory and let us know what changes we should make. We particularly want to update the birthday list and begin an anniversary list. Please update your listing on the parish website at: <http://www.st-thomas-vernon.org/form2/form2.html>

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 June 12 and Saturday, July 10.**

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 May 16 (note the date change) and June 13.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The Feast of the Ascension is Thursday, May 13 at 7 PM. This Principle Feast of the Church is one of the seven most important days we observe each year, right up with Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, and All Saints Day. Please join with guest preacher the Rev. Laurie Matarazzo and a light reception afterward.

Memorial Day Eucharist. We will remember those who have fallen in the service of their nation on **Memorial Day, Monday, May 31 at 8 AM.** Veterans may wear uniforms. Please bring the names of those you would like to remember to be included in the prayers on that day.

The 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.

Our full calendar for May and June 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 Sell or Donate:

Help Offered, Help Wanted:

Computer Help Needed! If you can help get my computer back on the Internet, please call me - Dave Mertens 973-209-4320.

FROM THE BISHOP:



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 A-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

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.

<u>Ministry</u>	<u>Primary Leadership</u>
Chairperson	Fr. Bob
Education	Fr. Bob
	Nancy Hansen (2010)
Fundraising	Linda Lazicki (2012)
Financial/Administration	Kathy Moore (2012)
Hospitality, Social Events	Karen Scott (2011)
	Paulette Beer (2012)
	Linda Lazicki (2012)
Inreach	Debbie Belli (2012)
Outreach	Paulette Beer (2011)
	Emilie Dupont (2010)
Property	Dan Kadish (2011), John Mohr (2010), Bob Winter (2010)
Stewardship	Nancy Hansen (2010) Tom Brath (2010)
Worship, Pastoral Care, Communications	Fr. Bob

DIOCESAN CONVENTION DELEGATES

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

STAFF AND APPOINTMENTS

Music Director	David Christensen
Sexton	Ginny Mohr
Parish Accountant	Diane Bryan
Pledge Accountant	Rich Poplaski
Sunday School	Nancy Hansen