

St. Thomas' Parish Newsletter

Chapel of the Incarnation, Brandywine

St. Thomas' Church, Croom

The Rev. Debra Brewin-Wilson, Rector

Volume 1, Edition 3

November 1, 2011

From the Rector



August and September 2011 will certainly go down in our books as two difficult months. The earthquake not only damaged the bell tower of St. Thomas' Church, it also opened up some new cracks around the building and it appears to have worsened some pre-existing problems that were on our "to do" list for the future. The rain from the tropical storms that passed through our area demonstrated some new leaks in the church.

Terry Windsor, our property chairperson, is obtaining estimates on repairing the damage, and the property committee and Vestry will plan a course of action. Right now, the thinking is that the needed repairs will be done in phases, with the most critical needs being addressed first (relating to safety and halting any further damage to the structure); the other needs will be repaired as finances permit. We are fortunate that no structural damage occurred at the Chapel or our (many!) other buildings.

And no, our insurance does not cover earthquake damage. In that way, we are in the same boat as the National Cathedral. Unlike the Cathedral, we do not have a foundation working full-time to raise money to support our parish. While St. Thomas' has some investment funds available for capital projects like this, there is not enough money in those funds to cover what needs to be done. So we'll be looking into applying for grants from various sources, raising funds from the community, and investigating other sources of funding that may exist for churches, in addition to whatever support you—the parishioners and friends of St. Thomas'—will be able to offer.



This is a critical time for our parish—and it is a time of opportunity. It is a time when we all need to pull together so that the everyday work of the parish continues, even as we face the challenge of repairing the church building and securing it for future generations. By working together to achieve some common goals—repairing the church, continuing to connect with the community, building up our congregation—we can become a stronger, more Christ-centered, more welcoming parish.

Please continue to pray for our parish's mission and future. God has plans for us!

In peace,

Debbie

The Rev. Debbie Brewin-Wilson
Rector

Mission and Vision Task Force Report

“Encountering God, Strengthening Community, and Reflecting the Love of Christ into the World.” This is the Mission Statement that the task force offered in its report to the Vestry at its July meeting and was subsequently adopted by the Vestry.

The report also included recommendations that are long range and have not been voted upon in any manner by the Vestry.

1. The task force recommends that the vestry of St. Thomas' Parish convene the Chapel Committee to update the Chapel 2016 document previously adopted by the vestry, "in principle", to reflect the current goals of the St. Thomas' Mission and Vision Statements which may include options of decreased or ending of regular Sunday worship, a parish thrift shop, interface with the County for senior citizen services, continued use by the CSS, possible use for liturgical expressions from different cultures (African-American, Latino, Western European) within the Episcopal Church, and possible use by the diocese. The Task Force recommends that the vestry carefully consider the report of the Chapel Committee, its recommendations and

alternatives. [Note: According to the September minutes the Chapel Committee, comprised of Gary Hogue, George McLaughlin, Dick Bergren and the Rector, has had a meeting and the “possible use for liturgical expressions from different cultures” is not feasible.]

2. Explore one service at the Church;
3. Do environmental and health analysis of the parish buildings including asbestos and lead paint assessments and an energy efficiency audit on the buildings as well;
4. Consolidate or reduce the use of the Hall by scouting groups and expand third party use;
5. Consider selling the rectory and diBrandi Chapel House when the real estate market turns around and use the proceeds to fund an endowment for capital improvements and renovations;
6. Consider closing all parish cemeteries;

Task force members were Greg Gill, Chair, Franklin Robinson, Cindy Crump, Jeff Colburn, Juanita Charter and Rector Debbie Brewin-Wilson, ex officio. A copy of the complete task force report, including an expansion of explanation for each of the recommendations, will be

available through the office. The next newsletter issue will contain the other parts of the task force report.

Parishioner In Profile

Gay Scott

By Thomasina Rogers

Born in Quincy Massachusetts, Gay Scott is third generation Episcopalian who attended Episcopal schools. She and her husband Bill have extended the family tradition into a fourth generation by raising their two sons in St. Thomas' Church and educating them at Episcopal schools in the county.

Because of her father's position in the State Department, Gay attended schools in Okinawa, Hawaii and the Philippines. An Episcopal high school in Manila left an indelible impression. There, she and her seven American and European classmates, some of whom were children of missionaries, learned the invaluable lesson that there

was nothing beyond their reach in making this a better world.

Gay infused her own life with that same can-do attitude and discovered that it propelled her into many unlikely places. Because she was always good in math and science, and importantly, had the daring spirit to navigate roads less traveled by girls at the time, she entered and succeeded in the George Washington University School of Pharmacy. She knew no women in science-based professions and consequently blazed her own trail. After graduating from GWU in a class whose only other female member was a Medical Missions nun she decided on a career in hospital pharmacy--out of her desire to do the greatest good. Fifty years and many area hospitals later, she has no regrets and feels that she has fulfilled her ambition to help people. She encourages girls to prepare themselves for the challenges of this science-based field and to enjoy the many rewards it holds. She cites among her greatest achievements participating in the mass immunizations to eradicate polio.

Gay's religious foundation and spirituality have been strong currents that flow through her life and that power her commitment to St. Thomas' and its community of worshipers. She has long been active in Episcopal Church ministries, following in her mother and grandmother's footsteps. She joined the altar guild at 12 years old. Immediately after arriving at St. Thomas in 1978, in addition to joining the Altar Guild, she delved into pastoral care work by visiting church members who were unable to attend church. For more than ten years she has been a licensed Eucharistic Visitor, taking Communion to shut-in members, including those in hospitals or nursing homes--sometimes sharing in the most private moments with families she has helped.

As a part of her Altar Guild commitment, Gay has studied floral design at the National Cathedral and honed her skill in arranging flowers for the altar to a fine art. Her love of flowers and gardening is in evidence throughout the seasons of the church. Notably, in early spring, the perennial Lenten rose, which she planted along St. Thomas' fence, adorns the altar. In her own garden she finds great

joy in growing azaleas, rhododendrons, hellebores, daffodils and irises.

At Christmas Gay always makes a notable contribution to decorating the church, and when she arranges the flowers for Easter, they are glorious. Before Christmas, she leads a workshop on decorating with winter greens.

For relaxation and enjoyment, Gay enjoys reading, knitting, opera, and ice skating and skiing. She smiles softly when she recalls how she met husband Bill while skiing in Switzerland those few years ago. And while she eschews any reference to herself as such, Gabrielle Scott is truly the "Cosmopolitan in Croom."

The Vestry Corner

By Jack I. Thompson, Jr.

The Mission and Vision Task Force presented an updated mission for St. Thomas' Parish: "Encountering God, Strengthening Community, and Reflecting the Love of Christ into the World" as well as a five-year long-term and short-term strategic plan. The mission statement has been adopted.

The Vestry allocated \$500 toward the 2011 tuition of our postulant Debbie Kirk as a means of supporting her mission, and ours.

Repainting and repairs to Showell Fellowship Hall will be made, at a cost not to exceed \$4,500. The shingle roof on Church House will be replaced, at a cost not to exceed \$12,858.

Stewardship: How We Use Our Treasure

By Shirley Duwall

In the last newsletter I discussed two of the stewardship Ts: Time and Talent. St. Thomas' parishioners are very generous in their offering of both to God and the parish. Now we turn to the tough one. Treasure: Treasure refers to the monetary gifts we offer in grateful response to all that God has given us. Jesus often mentions money, and how people use it, giving us lesson after lesson. The Old Testament also has many references, specifically to the tithe, which means, literally, one tenth, the first fruits, to be given back to Him to use for the spread of his kingdom. The Bible is very clear about

the need to make monetary offerings to God, and in our hearts, we know this. As with talents, God has not given to all of us in equal measure. That's why we are not asked to give the same amount of money or even a "fair share" of the total that it keeps St. Thomas' operating in a manner that gives glory to God. Only He knows what we have, what our circumstances are, and only He is the one who should judge whether we are giving back to Him a loving and glorifying portion of that which He has given to us in the first place. Signing a pledge is not the same as signing a contract. If our circumstances change, we need only notify the parish treasurer. God know all and understands all. People who say "my money is mine because I earned it" are not recognizing that if it were not for the time and talents which God has given us, we would not be able to earn that money. In some instances, some of what we have is from inheritances or gifts, and is that not all the more reason to be grateful and show God in a tangible way how much we appreciate it? Stewardship is part and parcel of discipleship: the two cannot be separated. Nothing shows more clearly our Christian commitment than the

priorities we set and the choices we make in spending our money. So long as we set aside our pledged giving to our parish first, every Sunday, the rest of our commitments, needs and wants, will fall into place. The ingathering of our pledges for 2012 will take place on Sunday, November 20. Each of us is asked to increase our pledge to demonstrate to God our increasing love for Him, and in recognition of the increasing budget needs of the parish.



Penny, Greg & Franklin clean up on "Jeans Sunday"



Richard Stewart helps cleanup

Upcoming Events:

- Adult Sunday school has sessions October 16 through November 13 from 9:30 to 10:30 at Church House.
 - Adult education sessions along with a simple supper will run October 27 through November 17 at St. Barnabas' and Trinity churches.
 - Stewardship Pledge Ingathering, as well as a possible Harvest Festival, will take place Sunday, November 20th
 - Upper Marlboro Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service, Monday, November 21, at 7 p. m., St. Paul's Moravian Church
 - A Christmas Tea will take place in Showell Fellowship Hall on Saturday, December 3. Besides the tea, it will feature a silent auction and gift shop. A limited number of tickets are available, to parishioners first, at \$30 and may be purchased from Virginia Downing.
 - Christmas Craft Workshop will be held on Saturday, December 17.
 - A dramatic reading of "A Christmas Carol", along with light refreshments, will take place on Wednesday, December 28, at Chapel of the Incarnation.
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Breakfast at Trinity



Gary



Charlotte



Keith & Juanita

October Birthdays and Anniversaries

Eden Bishop	October 2 nd	9 years old
Tom and Sheila Hood	October 3 rd	married 2 yrs
Chris and Donald Downing	October 3 rd	
David Duvall	October 4 th	
Reeseman Walker	October 5 th	9 years old
Mary Porter Duvall	October 17 th	
Angelo Espinal	October 17 th	13 years old
Jack Thompson	October 21 st	
Sue Ward	October 28 th	
Madelyn Calomeris	October 30 th	9 years old
Kate Downing	October 31 st	6 years old

November Birthdays and Anniversaries

Yvonne Johnson	November 1 st	
Don Barksdale	November 5 th	
Tom Hood	November 6 th	
Evelyn Downing	November 17 th	
Gwen McLaughlin	November 18 th	
Bill Scott	November 18 th	
Taqiyya Thomas	November 25	20 years old
Brad Wilson	November 29 th	
Chip Voros	November 30 th	

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

Deanne Adams	December 1 st	
Eleanor Bertrand	December 1 st	5 years old
Heather and John Woolls	December 3 rd	married 17 years
Ian Walker	December 3 rd	12 years old
Carrie & Alvin Meinhardt	December 4 th	married 57 years

Bi-Monthly Parish Newsletter

St. Thomas' Parish
14300 St. Thomas Church Road
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772