



The Tower

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
168 West Boston Post Road
Mamaroneck, NY 10543
914-698-0300
www.SaintThomasmmrk.org



Volume 09, Issue 10

December 2011, January 2012

Dear St. Thomas Family,

Were you afraid of the dark when you were little? I sure was. There was no peace for anyone in my parents' house until we had checked my bedroom closets for monsters and my nightlight was on at bedtime. It's not as bad now, but I still have nightlights strategically placed in my house so I can see better if I get up at night – that's my story and I'm sticking to it – and sometimes I truly welcome the dark.

We are in the midst of Advent, the season in our church year which precedes Christmas. In our part of the world, it coincides with the approaching winter, with shorter days and lengthening darkness. We really do feel the loss of the sunlight we've gotten used to. Another way to look at Advent, though, is as a quiet time of germination. Before flowers blossom to life so brilliantly in the spring, they spend a winter in the darkness of the soil, absorbing water,

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taking in nourishment, truly preparing for the light of day. Advent can be such a time for us.

The holiday season is a wonderful time and I hope you find real joy and fun in all the preparations that will occupy a great deal of the time between now and Christmas. I know there are gifts to buy, meals to plan and cook and decorations to put up, but I also know if we're not careful, it can get kind of crazy and even feel a little out of control.

I want you to "think Advent" between now and Christmas and I assure you it will make a difference. It may take a little effort, but "thinking Advent" means you will make some time to seek out moments of stillness and to sit in some darkness from time to time, away from the bright lights that attract and distract. It doesn't have to be burdensome, so don't make it a "job." You don't have to have big chunks of time, either. Take a few moments each morning or evening and visit www.d365.org/followingthestar for a daily meditation. You can find quiet in the car, while you're loading the dishwasher, even while you're wrapping gifts to go under the Christmas tree. Steal a few moments of darkness in the morning before all the lights go on or at night, right after they've all gone off. Think Advent and be still.

Think Advent. Think germinating seed time spent in the soil of God's grace, fed by God's love and refreshed with the living water of Jesus Christ. Think hearts prepared in stillness for the coming Lord of Life. Imagine how bright the light of Christmas will be this year with a little Advent thinking.

The King shall come when morning dawns and light triumphant breaks; when beauty gilds the eastern hills and life to joy awakes. (Hymn 73)

God's Peace, *Pastor Tanneant*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Over the past few months I have had the privilege of facilitating the Thursday Morning Study Group. We have been reading, analyzing, and meditating upon the stories of the Old Testament's heroines. Indeed, I plugged such a Bible study in the last issue of *The Tower* as a way to learn about the parts of the Bible that we seldom encounter in the Sunday Lectionary.

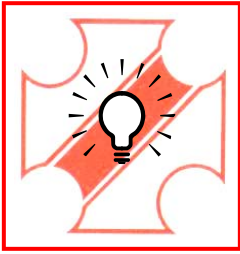
But we have another compelling reason to study the Bible in depth: the work of the Holy Spirit. This third person of our triune Godhead responds to the specific situation in which God's people find themselves. In really dissecting the sacred narrative, we uncover the context in which the Holy Spirit operates and, thereby, discern how the Spirit moves in a given passage of Scripture.

Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah, and Tamar all lived in a very different time and age than we do now. Some customs which might seem bizarre and even unjust to our modern eyes may have actually promoted wholeness and dignity in their original context. To put it another way, the Holy Spirit may have been moving in such a way as to appear arbitrary and even capricious when we simply look at the letter of the text, when we look at the narrative in a vacuum. However, when we pry open the text, taking into account the nuances of the original language as well as historical, cultural, economic, and social background, we may see the Spirit moving us to a different understanding entirely.

Thus I extend my invitation to any and all who are interested in exploring the Hebrew Scriptures through the eyes of its women.

In Peace,





Deacon Thinkin'

I wanted to make a u-turn the other day, but I was faced with that big bold" NO U-TURN" sign.

I was tempted to ignore it. After all, there was no traffic in the way, and a quick look around did not reveal any police cars. Should I or shouldn't I?

In thinking about that traffic sign and the countless others that we encounter every day -- STOP, YIELD, MERGING TRAFFIC, ONE WAY, to mention only a few -- it occurs to me that these can serve as daily (even many times in a day) reminders of what Advent is all about.

STOP and listen; wait with patience. Let your heart be your ears so that you will know that it is God who speaks. Let every STOP sign remind you that God is near.

YIELD to the grace of God. Let your spirit be drenched in his love. Don't shut him out. Invite his love and will into your life. Let Him be in charge. YIELD to all that he wants for you.

As for MERGING TRAFFIC, be alert for all the distractions that strain to compete with and block God's purpose for you -- the pressures of work and home, the demands others place on you, the retail stores' collective mission to have you spend more, the frenzy to get everything just right. Do not be a victim to MERGING TRAFFIC this Advent. Instead, let the star of Bethlehem guide you through the maze of distractions and place you safely on the right path.

ONE WAY: This is the sign that really says it all, and not just in Advent. There is only ONE WAY to be at peace with ourselves and others. Following the ONE WAY will help us to

remember to STOP, to YIELD and to be alert for MERGING TRAFFIC. There is only ONE WAY and you know the way.

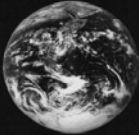
Perhaps we should not limit our attention to the messages of these signs to the Advent season alone.

Perhaps we should let them become daily, even hourly reminders of God's unending love and care for us -- of His call, His will and His presence in all things, always.

Oh, and by the way, just in case you are wondering ... I did *not* make the u-turn. So I can give you this advise with a clear conscience: follow the signs.

Peace,



<p>YOUR CHANGE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD</p> 	<p>THANK YOU FOR GIVING YOUR CHANGE TO OUR CARPENTER'S KIDS</p> <p>Total to date \$532.53</p>
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st. Thomas All about Our Advent



Sunday School

Our kids are spending this Advent in Sunday School and pre-confirmation programs preparing the way for the birth of our Lord. We kicked off our Advent by making Christmas ornaments with beautiful fabric from Tanzania, with the help of the Crook family. Then, the pre-confirmation kids sold those ornaments, along with Tanzanian made bags, jewelry and artwork to benefit our Carpenter's Kids at the Christmas Fair. In this way, we learn to serve God by helping others.

During this season of preparations, we will also make handcrafted gifts for our loved ones while we learn about John the Baptist. And the choir children have been rehearsing like crazy to make a joyful noise at the family service on Christmas Eve. Still others have been toting instruments to church so that they can accompany our carols at that service. And others will be earning their Equity cards playing in our "Pageant with a Purpose". Also, with our families, we have been granting Christmas wishes to local families in need, shopping for, and wrapping gifts for our Angel Giving Tree.

Through these activities we seek to show our children a path to a deeper spiritual experience at Christmas. I hope your kids can join us on our journey!

Kate Beeby

Sunday School Director
914-833-3237 katebeeby@optonline.net

Special Events Ahead:

12/18: Rehearsal for “Pageant with a Purpose”, choir and band at 10 AM (our Sunday School activity for the day)

12/24: Christmas Eve Family-Friendly Service at 4PM, arrive early if you want to take part in our Pageant

12/25: NO Sunday School

1/1: NO Sunday School

1/8: King’s Day Celebration and baking of Galettes des Rois at 10 AM



**LET US GO NOW WITH ADVENT
ANTICIPATION.**

**EXPECTANT OF GOD'S LIGHT.
WATCHING FOR SURPRISE.
AND DELIGHT.
AND BLESSING.**

From: <http://www.d365.org/followingthestar>



Musical Notes

With Christmas just around the corner, our wonderful Choir is busy preparing for our always much-anticipated Christmas Eve services.

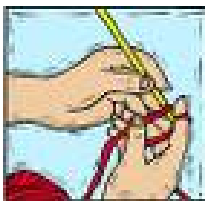
At our 4pm service, we will be presenting music that is familiar and child-friendly.

And at our 10:30pm service we will be presenting a beautiful, eclectic mix of music from different centuries and different countries.

As always, it is a privilege for us to provide music to enhance your worship experience. It is a mission that we take very seriously. (And yes, I admit it: we have a load of fun doing it.)

Wishing you a beautiful and blessed Christmas.

Noel Hart
ExcellentSingers@aol.com



Helping Hands - Christmas At Sea

Terry Giallorenzo

Helping Hands recently sent a package of knitted scarves, hats and vests to the Seamen's Church Institute Christmas At Sea program.

Thank you to our knitters for their dedication and talents: Mabel Atkinson, Carol Campbell, Silvia Chandras, Betty Pollak, Margaret Poney, Linda Sherman and Genevive Tepedino.

Generosity at Work

St. Thomas was remembered by Hampton Bynum, a long-time parishioner, who died recently at the age of 93. Mr. Bynum left a bequest to St. Thomas and because of his generosity, the vestry was recently able to meet an important fiscal responsibility without having to draw on investment funds. In addition to that intangible but vital expenditure, the vestry also voted to fund a much-needed upgrade of the alarm system at the church, as well as an improvement to the church's sound system which will enable better recording of our remarkable choir. A fund was established which will underwrite experiences for our youth, such as a pre-confirmation retreat or a weekend away at the Heifer Project Farm in Massachusetts. Once all of these expenses are met, the remainder will be put in the Reserve Fund for Capital Projects. We are deeply grateful for such generosity.

Christmas Fair 2011

We are delighted to report that the annual Christmas Fair and Auction was a great success this year. Thanks to all the hard work from our wonderful volunteers, and the generous support of our customers. All the profits will go to KEEPS, the charity designated this year. As you may know, KEEPS is an after school program for children.

Many thanks go to all the team leaders and working crews at the Booths, in the Kitchen, the Auctioneers at the microphone, the Silent Auction team, and the Accounting table. Many dedicated people worked hard behind the scenes over many weeks to prepare all the items we had to sell at the Fair.

So, congratulations to everyone, we did it again!

Michael Ford



Photos of the Fair by: Lynn Werdal







Photos on this page:
Noel Hart

Whose birthday is it, anyway?

We believe the important news at Christmas is not who comes down the chimney, but who came down from heaven. We invite you to come and join us as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.



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2011 Christmas Services at St. Thomas

Saturday, December 24th

Christmas Eve

4:00 P.M. Family Service of the Holy Eucharist
with hymns and blessing of the crèche,
especially suitable for families with young children

10:30 P.M. Candlelight Service of the Holy Eucharist
with hymns and special music

Sunday, December 25th

Christmas Day

10:00 A.M. Said Service of the Holy Eucharist

Sunday, January 1st

Feast of the Holy Name

10:00 A.M. Said Service of the Holy Eucharist



December and January Birthdays:

Rose Ann Minnerly	06-Dec
Wayne Pollak	06-Dec
Jason Jones	09-Dec
Conor Liguori	09-Dec
Kate Beeby	10-Dec
Maria Thomas	11-Dec
Evans Apeadu	14-Dec
Laurie Ozelius	17-Dec
Ginger Willis	21-Dec
Christine Perciasepe	30-Dec
Donna Robinett	07-Jan
James Minnerly	10-Jan
Grace Gallo	12-Jan
Ruth Kapp	22-Jan
Henry Mustacato	22-Jan
Kenneth Thomas	27-Jan
Allana Condon	31-Jan

YOU DON'T WANT TO FORGET...



Tuesdays at 10:00AM-12:00PM: Brown Bag Lunch and Pantry Preparation and Distribution



St. Thomas' Study Group meets every Thursday from 9:00 to 10:00AM, discussing the Women of the Old Testament.



St. Thomas Men's Group meets every first Friday of the month at 7:30pm in the Chapel.



Community Dinner

Community Dinner on Saturday, December 10 and January 14. Set-up about 5:00 PM; dinner is served at 6:00 PM; clean-up is finished by 7:00 PM.



December 18, 10AM Chapel Church. After the 10AM service: Greening of the Church



On Saturday, January 7 the Farmers Market reopens. Schedule: January 7 to May 19, 9:00AM to 1:00PM (closed on February 25)



January 8, 10:00 AM: Youth Chapel



On January 22: One Service at 9:00AM. Annual Meeting to follow. Light Brunch will be served.

Transitions:

Deaths:

Suzi Nussbaum, William Hong

St. Thomas Clergy, Vestry, and Staff Directory

Rector: The Rev. Deborah G. Tammearu rector@saintthomasmmrk.org

Associate Minister of Youth: willfisher@msn.com
The Rev. William A. Fisher

Deacon: The Rev. Dn. Lynn Werdal deacon@saintthomasmmrk.org

Director of Music: Noel A. Hart, Jr. ExcellentSingers@aol.com

Senior Warden: Laurie Ozelius

Junior Warden: Ira Hart

Treasurer: David A. Brown

Vestry:

June Hendry

Peggy Saunders

Nigel Holloway

Louis Scenti

Mary Olsson

Pamela Sullivan

Sunday School Director: Kate Beeby sundayschool@saintthomasmmrk.org

Parish Secretary: Barbara Gessler office@saintthomasmmrk.org

Bookkeeper: Nancy Mustacato bookkeeper@saintthomasmmrk.org

Sexton: Edgar Garza

Sunday Sexton: Anner Garza

Service Schedule:

Sundays:	8:00 AM	Holy Eucharist (said)
	10:00 AM	Holy Eucharist with music
	11:30-12:45	Choir rehearsal

Christian Education for Young People:

10:00 AM Sunday School

Nursery care available from 9:45AM until the service ends

Deadline for articles and submissions for the next Tower: January 15, 2012

Submit articles to June Hendry at jhendry@idealcut.com