



St. Thomas's News

Welcome to a brief update of news and topics of interest to members of the St. Thomas's faith community.

The Communications Team of St. Thomas's is happy to provide this printed update to those who may not be able to access our electronic communications channels.

June 2017



Chapter 22, Page 175 – Forward in Faith

"The place God calls you to be is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC
by Frederick Buechner

*"... and the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and **SELF-CONTROL**. There is no law against such things." Galatians 5:22-23*

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I confess I am a little more than nervous as the days and months wind away into the transitions we will experience together, but in different ways. And for me, the idea of the Spirit's gift of SELF-CONTROL is not quite as inviting or comforting as the other gifts of the Spirit. It is the one gift I need to be particularly aware and careful in using, knowing the past events in my life and what that life

was like when I thought I was **large and in charge!**

In the front of my Book of Common Prayer I have a copy of a prayer used by Martin Luther before leading worship services. The final line is my companion for living and walking **alongside** the Holy One – *"Use me as an instrument of thy service. Only do not leave me to my own devices, for if I am left to myself, I will CERTAINLY bring it all to destruction. AMEN."* It is my helpful marker to live into this gift **carefully, prayerfully, and responsibly** by walking **alongside** with the Holy One.

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"Ultimately, the only power to which a person should aspire is that which they exercise over themselves." Elie Wiesel

So then, how do I include SELF-CONTROL in my faith living now and onward? Well, the thing I have been attending to is not to ADD to but DECREASE that which does not invite me to living a more open, free, faith filled life. A current reality television show might be appropriate analogy – **Hoarder!** Many have asked what I plan to do in the next chapter of this life, what ideas I have, and what programs I have scheduled. For me, "healthy" SELF-CONTROL comes best when I stay most present in the moment, side-by-side with the Holy One. In her

book, **The Cup of our Life**, Joyce Rupp provides words to my desire ...

"I don't know about you but it seems like I am forever trying to get rid of physical clutter in my life. The same thing is true for me spiritually. There are so many kinds of inner clutter. Things like anxiety, resentment, harsh judgments, self-pity, and mistrust ... The strident voices, negative thoughts, useless fears and worries, old wounding messages, and the 'have to's and want to's' that bully me around, squeeze out the good things that are awaiting me. Anything can be clutter if it keeps me totally absorbed in myself and unaware of what God is offering to me. There's not much room for God's agenda when mine takes up all the nooks and crannies.

God often speaks in whispers ... Listening attentively is essential for spiritual growth ... [and] 'Be-ing' helps us to develop awareness to focus more keenly our inner activity without needing to do anything except be attentive." [pp. 47-50]

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"A life without regret can be attained by full awareness of one's actions in the present moment." Michelle Cruz-Rosado

This journey of reflection over these past months has not been without intention for you and for me. For you, the people of St. Thomas's, you will venture into the time as the title of these reflections speaks -- **Chapter 22, Page 175 – Forward in Faith**. In this 175th year of ministry, you begin the journey toward inviting your 22nd rector and priest into mutual ministry in the year to come.

Your vestry worked together in a lively retreat on May 12-13 setting the stage going forward with the questions who are we **NOW ... what will we be called to be and become ... and how can we begin living into this next chapter NOW?**

For me, I will begin **Volume 3** of this life journey after 20+ years of business life, now 25 years of ministry service, into what will await ahead for me. The questions of your journey are much the same for me -- **who am I NOW ... what will I be called to be and become ... and how can I begin living into this next chapter NOW?** This is where I come to embrace SELF-CONTROL as a gift of the Spirit. I can **just be still and know, and listen ... listen ... listen.**

Of course, when we think about it, we have been in a 2100+ year transition time as a people along the Way. Maybe we just need to live Jesus' model for ministry a.k.a. **the Jesus Movement**, found in Matthew 28:16-20. You can look this up to read, mark, learn, inwardly digest, and LIVE in your days ahead.

Perhaps by taking this pathway of *SELF-CONTROL* now, we can best live into **"Self-control - the commendable ability to be your best self without being a nuisance to someone else."** Criss Jami

With gratefulness always, your servant in Christ

Fr. Paul+

Journey of Change: Calling our 11th Bishop for the Diocese of Delaware

You can access all up-to-date information from www.bishopsearchdiodel.org.

Announced on May 6, our slate of five candidates are the Rt. Rev. Laura Ahrens, Suffragen Bishop, Diocese of Connecticut; the Very Rev. Michael Battle, Director of the Desmond Tutu Center at General Theological Seminary, New York, NY; the Rev. Kevin Brown, rector Church of the Holy Comforter, Charlotte, NC; the Rev. Patricia Downing, rector, Trinity & Old Swedes Parish, Wilmington, DE; and the Rev. Canon Scott Gunn, Executive Director, Forward Movement, Cincinnati, OH. A book containing all information about each candidate, including resume and responses to questions during the process, is available to review on the nametag table. This is the ONLY COPY, so please return when you are finished reading. Please add to your prayers each of our candidates and our delegates to the Special Convention: Devon Miller Duggan, Marilyn Prime, Sr. Jackie Fossler, and Mariah Payne

Diocesan Prayer for 11th Bishop Search & Calling

In your Name, Lord Jesus, the community that is the Diocese of Delaware has been raised up and has flourished. We pray that in our day we as a Diocese may continue to be a sign of your presence in this State, a people devoted to You, and willing agents of your peace. In this time of transition as we seek a new bishop, help us to discern your will for us, to receive with joy and grace those who offer themselves to the election process, and to celebrate the episcopal ministry we have been given and that which is yet to come. Give us open and gracious hearts, patience with

one another, and joy in anticipation. Lord Jesus Christ be with us in these days, as you are with us always, for You, with the Creator and the Holy Spirit, are one, Our God, now and forever. Amen.

175th Anniversary of St. Thomas's

St. Thomas's Parish was first organized on August 1, 1842 – 175 years ago in 2017. This year-long birthday party recognizes our enduring ministry in Newark and our warmth as a parish of faithful people. Watch The Carpenter's Helper and webpage for further details as the celebration develops. Please contact Nicole Cebula, Laura Greene, or Tom Fairchild to learn more about our plans and how you can help.

In honor of St. Thomas's 175th anniversary, we will continue research into the parish's history that we began in 2015. This will include organizing the parish archives, researching in various sources, and sharing the information with the parish and the larger world. All that is required is an inquiring mind and a commitment to accuracy. If you're interested or have questions, contact Connie Cooper at 302-731-7595 or cjcooper15@verizon.net.

Ways to Stay in Touch

In addition to the Google group mail list, keep in touch via St. Thomas's website at stthomasparish.org or via St. Thomas's Facebook page. To join our Facebook community, go to Facebook, search for St. Thomas's Episcopal Parish just be sure to click that you like us! The weekly Carpenter's Helper and sermons are published via all three avenues.

St. Thomas's Episcopal Parish

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