

Saint Thomas Church



The Rector's Chronicle Summer 2018

My dear friends,

It has been several months since my last Chronicle and a lot has happened in that time. Our Christmas services were well attended, the Angel Tree Party was a terrific success and many, many parishioners helped raise significant funds for disadvantaged children in New York.

The Burns Night Celebration which we held at Bonnell Hall at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church was sold out and parishioners enjoyed great food and traditional Scottish dancing to a live band. The highlight of the evening was listening to Pamela Lewis recite 'Address to a Haggis' during which she yielded a rather frightening carving knife!



We welcomed a number of visiting preachers; Fr. Stephen Gerth, the Rector of St. Mary the Virgin, Time Square, The Rev. Dr. Scott Black Johnston, the Senior Pastor at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, and another local Rector, Fr. John David van Dooren.

During Lent we enjoyed some splendid sermons on the theme of 'women of faith' from Mother Anne Mallonee, Mother Lynn Sanders from St. Bart's, Mother Ezgi Perkins from the Cathedral in Fond du Lac, and Dr. Michael DeLashmutt and The Very Rev. Kurt Dunkle from the General Theological Seminary. On the fifth Sunday of Lent, we were joined by delegates from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Delegates from all over the Anglican Communion enjoyed fellowship with our Bishop and enjoyed a tasty dinner in Andrew Hall. Hearing news from very different provinces in the Anglican Communion is both exciting and sobering – stories of fortitude and creativity but also stories of poverty and injustice.



In Holy Week, we were blessed by the very pastoral sermons of Fr. Mark McIntosh, which were made all the more poignant when the parish discovered that he was suffering with ALS and that he was struggling to climb the stairs of the pulpit. His encouragement to reflect on our relationship with the Lord Jesus as we celebrated the events of his passion, death, and resurrection, many found comforting and helpful.

On Good Friday we heard some of the finest preaching on the seven last words from the Cross; friend of the parish, The Rev. Fleming Rutledge,

was masterful in weaving current day events into reflective insights on the historical biblical texts. Fleming hopes to have these sermons published.

Eastertide and the last few weeks of term saw some other friends of the parish return to preach: Fr. Sean Mullen, from St. Mark's Locust Street, Philadelphia, and an alumnus of our Choir School, the Dean of Westminster, the retired Bishop of Argyle and the Isles (who also gave a talk on prayer and the wounds of Christ), the retired Archdeacon of London, and Bishop Andrew St. John.

Bishop Mary made her first visitation on behalf of Bishop Dietsche and preached a powerful sermon on the baptismal covenant's references to evil. People commented on her strong and confident singing and her liturgical presence which suited the ceremonial of our sanctuary. Next year we will welcome Bishop Dietsche for the annual visitation.

Strategic Planning

WELLSPRING  CONSULTING

Some time ago I shared with you the decision of the Vestry to begin work on a 5-10-year development plan. After a great deal of hard work by a small but dedicated group of vestry members and parishioners, we are about to embark on this exciting program. The Vestry have engaged the services of Wellspring Consulting who have a long track record of successful engagements with not-for-profit organizations, including some churches and faith groups.

The 10-month project will start with a period of self-study and afford a chance for parishioners, old and new, to participate through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. There will also be congregational meetings after each of the Sunday masses several times during the program.

We have three goals:

- **Grow our church.**
- **Balance our budget.**
- **Ensure the future of the Choir School in perpetuity.**

By the summer of 2019, we will have a plan to help us with our mission over the next five to ten years. Implementing that plan will be crucial to the success of these three stated goals and I encourage you to participate fully in this planning process.

Nearly 75% of the funds needed for the fees has been raised from parishioners. If you would like to contribute towards the finances of this project, please contact Ann Kaplan at akaplan@SaintThomasChurch.org.

We will keep parishioners informed of the modules and progress by regular email blasts and future Chronicles.

Sunday School and welcoming young families to Church

Sunday School resumes on September 9 long with a picnic in Central Park. The Standing Committee recently discussed the difficulty of young parents who have babies or toddlers in strollers being able to keep their child, particularly if the child is asleep, close to them in Church on Sundays. We are going to try an experiment and will provide a small area for parents to sit with their strollers. The small pews near the icon of Saint Thomas will be removed and replaced with chairs; at the same time, we will provide a rug and small table and chairs in the North Aisle together with bags of books, crayons, and coloring materials to keep very young children happy especially when the Sunday School is in recess.

I am very pleased that the Ushers and the Vergers have helped initiate this important work of making parents of young children welcome.



Staff and Volunteer Changes over the summer

Over the summer there are a number of staff comings-and-goings.

Goodbyes...

After eight years at Saint Thomas Church, **Andrew Kimsey**, our Head Verger, is returning to his former music career and IT work. Writing to the staff he says, “Rest assured, this is not goodbye as Kyle and I plan to continue as parishioners at Saint Thomas. It has been a great privilege to be a part of the Saint Thomas family these years and to work with each of you.”

We are delighted that he and Kyle will be together in the pews once again. Andrew hopes to return to the sanctuary as an Acolyte and Subdeacon in due course.



After his vacation, **David Daniel** will be moving on to new opportunities. His recent talks on the theology of the Church building were fascinating and members of the Christian Doctrine Class

enjoyed hearing his insights into our beautiful building at the end of each session.



As I write this Chronicle, **Barbara Pettus** will have retired as Director of Administration and Finance. She has worked tirelessly for our Church and its Choir School for the past 14 years. We had some lovely farewell celebrations and we are delighted that she intends to keep in touch over the coming years and help us in different ways. Barbara spoke beautifully at her farewell gatherings and it is clear that she has been blessed by her time at Saint Thomas Church and we have been all the richer because of her dedication, knowledge, and skill. We hope that she enjoys her garden which is her new project in retirement.

We also said goodbye to **Midge Woolsey**, who has also retired. Midge took on the *Friends of Music* following the tragic death of John Scott. What could have been a fallow year became a year when



the *Friends* became even more committed to our concert series.

Midge has worked tirelessly in building up the *Friends* and cultivating new relationships as well as fostering old ones. Midge will also remain in the pews so we will enjoy her company with Jerry for many years to come.

Fr. Nathan Ritter, who graciously accepted the call to be an interim priest for several months will cease his full time work soon. His last Sunday will be September 2 and there will be a special coffee hour to say thank you to him. Over the past few months he has brought a degree of stability during a time of change when we have been very short-staffed. He has endeared himself to many parishioners especially those whom he has visited. The Friday Bible study group has enjoyed his immense knowledge and dry sense of humor. He has been a good colleague over these past few months and I am very grateful to him for his hard work and determination; we wish him and his wife, Jess, and his family well but I am glad that we will still see him at the altar as one of our honorary assistants.

Finally, after many years of faithful and meticulous service, **Heather Cross** has stepped down from leading the weekday acolytes and the lectors. We are all grateful to her for her dedication and hard work.

Welcome...

We welcome **Andrew Berko**, our new Director of Administration and Finance. Andrew has a fine pedigree and has already made progress on the setting of our budget for 2019 and beyond; he is excited about the strategic planning process and we all have high hopes that we will be successful in our goals with his help.

We are pleased to announce that the **Reverend Matthew Moretz** has accepted our call to join our clergy staff as Associate Rector. He will join us on Tuesday, September 4, his first Sunday with us being September 9.

For his first years of ordained ministry, Father Moretz served in Yonkers, New York, for multiple

parishes there: St. Paul's and La Iglesia Memorial de San Andres. He was then called to be Curate of Christ's Church in Rye, New York. In that time, Father Moretz began a light-hearted online video series introducing the life and teaching of the Episcopal Church called "Father Matthew Presents." He also led a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

In 2012, Father Moretz returned to New York City to become Associate Rector for Christian Formation at St. Bartholomew's Church. There he served in all sorts of capacities during a transition between Rectors.

In the Diocese of New York, he has served on the Board of Trustees for the General Theological Seminary, and he now serves on the Budget and Finance Committee of our Diocese.



Most recently, he was married to Megan Brandt-Meyer, who works for the financial services company, TP ICAP. Their household includes a dachshund named Beau, and they are the proud parents of Samuel who was just born on Tuesday, July 10.

Father Moretz tells us that he and Megan are eager to share in the life and ministry of St. Thomas Parish. They look forward to living and working among us.



Aaron Koch will assume the role of Head Verger in September; Aaron's gentle manner and deep knowledge of the Church's liturgy will benefit us hugely. We will be advertising for a Verger to work with him very shortly.

We welcome **Adam MacDonald** who has taken on the role of Concert Series Development Manager following Midge's retirement. Adam has high hopes for building on Midge's success and brings not only long experience in the music industry, but a wealth of knowledge and ideas to grow the Friends of Music.



From September to December, our dear friend of the parish, **The Rt. Rev. Andrew St. John**, will be acting as 'Bishop in Residence'. Bishop Andrew will be with us three days a week and will participate in pastoral work, preaching, and offering spiritual direction. This will release important time for the other clergy at the beginning of the strategic planning process. Bishop Andrew will also take on the Friday Bible Study.

Opportunities for Volunteering

We are all very pleased to see new members of the Usher Corps, Altar Guild, Acolyte Guild, and Tour Guides. Training has been offered to a number of new members and the Tour Guide group has begun an extensive program of integrating training and fellowship for our new guides.

At the moment we are particularly looking for weekday acolytes to serve at the Chantry Altar – 8 am, or 12:10 pm, or 5:30 pm – and at the High Altar. If you used to be an acolyte in another church we will be delighted to hear from you.

We have some new faces leading our various groups of volunteers:

Barry Capella is our new Head Acolyte, **Tessa Dunning** is our new Head Chantry Acolyte, and **Peter Whiteley** and **Pamela Lewis** will be coordinating and training the Lectors, respectively.

Ronald Spadafora

Recently, Saint Thomas Church welcomed the Fire Department of New York City for the funeral of Chief Ron Spadafora. Ron and Rhonda, his partner of many years, had made their spiritual home here at Saint Thomas Church. Ron was a deeply humble man and an inspiration to generations of firefighters; he was responsible for the recovery operation at Ground Zero after 9/11 which, poignantly, resulted in the illness that, eventually, claimed his life. He is the 178th member of FDNY to die with illnesses related to working at Ground

Zero and around 2000 members of FDNY currently have related illnesses.



All of us at Saint Thomas Church were deeply moved by the sense of ‘family’ exhibited by the Fire Department and they, in turn, have said that they felt very welcomed by the church. I was very proud of our hard-working staff and volunteers who were able to prepare a beautiful and fitting funeral service in just four days for a great man. May he rest in peace.

Restorative Justice

On Sunday, July 1, members of the Beck Institute for Religion and Poverty from Fordham University met with around twenty parishioners to discuss their work with restorative justice and parishes. The Church worldwide has a long history of working with prisoners and those released from prison, following the words of Jesus from Matthew 24, and many churches have used groups to help rehabilitate former inmates back into society and giving them a sense of worth and an opportunity to reflect on their past in a constructive way. If you

would like to participate in these initial discussions with the Beck Institute, please contact parishioner Winnie Young, Professor of Social Work at Fordham by using this email address: welcome@SaintThomasChurch.org

Congratulations

to the Abolins sisters, Ruta and Brigita for an amazing 35 years of service to Saint Thomas Church as members of the Usher Corps and Altar Guild. Ruta and Brigita arrived at Saint Thomas in 1969 when Dr. Morris was rector. The Ushers and the Altar Guild had a gathering recently to honor their long service during which they were presented with a beautiful silver chalice in their honor to be used in the Chantry at weekday masses; the chalice was bought with funds raised by their friends in both guilds and is a fitting tribute to their hard work and dedication.



Search for a new Organist and Director of Music

As you are all aware, Daniel Hyde has accepted the call to return to his alma mater, King’s College, Cambridge, as Director of Music. Although bitter-sweet news for us, we rejoice with Daniel in this prestigious appointment where he will feel very at home and take on the helm after one of the longest-serving Directors of Music, Stephen Clebury, who was his own teacher and mentor.

The search for Daniel’s successor has begun and the advertisement has now appeared on our website. This is an exciting time for us at Saint Thomas Church and the new Director of Music will not only participate in the strategic planning

process but, with the Vestry and staff, be responsible for its implementation over the coming years.

Miller-Scott Organ Dedication



(photo: Ira Lippke)

On Sunday, October 7, which is, appropriately, the Feast of the Anniversary of the Dedication of the Church, we shall dedicate the new organ at the I Iam Solemn Eucharist when it will be played liturgically for the first time. During the coffee hour, there will be an informal demonstration of the organ for all interested members of the congregation. At 4pm, the day comes to a close with a Solemn Evensong and Te Deum at which Bishop John O'Hara, our dear friend and musician from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese will preach. If you were present at the historic evensong with the Sistine Chapel Choir, you will know that we are in for a treat when he ascends to the pulpit.

There is an extract from the 2018-19 concert series brochure on the back page of the *Chronicle*.

18-30s Ministry

On Friday, August 17 the young adults of the parish are making a trip to Yankee Stadium to see the Yankees play the Blue Jays then, on Saturday, September 22, they will be visiting the Storm King Art Center in the Hudson Valley. If you would like to be included on the 18-30s email list, please contact the leadership group using this email address: YoungAdults@SaintThomasChurch.org

New Vestments



In January we dedicated a beautiful new altar frontal and set of High Mass vestments given as a memorial to the parish by Elizabeth Burr and the Harvey family. They were designed by David d'Ambly to work with the beautiful 1950's tapestry and you will see the set being used over the summer. Please do have a good look at them – they are exquisite.

Finally,

Alison and I have moved into the new rectory on 52nd Street. It is sad to leave 550 Park Avenue with all its happy memories; Alison and I look forward to hosting an 'open house' in the new Rectory in the fall, once we have unpacked the largest collection of boxes we have ever seen!

Affectionately,

Carl

Your priest and pastor.

Fall|Winter 2018 SEASON OVERVIEW

OCTOBER 5, 2018 | FRIDAY at 7 pm

GRAND ORGAN I

THE IRENE D. AND WILLIAM R. MILLER
CHANCEL ORGAN IN MEMORY OF
JOHN SCOTT **DEDICATION RECITAL**

Daniel Hyde, *organ*

OCTOBER 18, 2018 | THURSDAY at 7:30 pm

AT A SOLEMN MUSICK

Works by Parry, Janáček, Poulenc, Bernstein, and Barber

The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys

with Orchestra of St. Luke's

Benjamin Sheen, *organ*; Sara Cutler, *harp*; Hyesang Park, *soprano*

Daniel Hyde, *conductor*

DECEMBER 4 & 6, 2018 | TUESDAY & THURSDAY at 7:30 pm

G.F. HANDEL **MESSIAH**

The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys

with New York Baroque Incorporated

Wen Yang, *artistic director*

Elizabeth Weisberg, *soprano*; Meg Bragle, *mezzo-soprano*

Thomas Cooley, *tenor*; Alexander Dobson, *bass*

Daniel Hyde, *conductor*

DECEMBER 13, 2018 | THURSDAY at 5:30 pm

BENJAMIN BRITTEN
A CEREMONY OF CAROLS

The Boys of the Saint Thomas Choir

Sara Cutler, *harp*

Daniel Hyde, *conductor*

FOR TICKETS

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concerts@saintthomaschurch.org](mailto:concerts@saintthomaschurch.org)

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