

Saint Thomas Church



The Rector's Chronicle

Summer 2016

My dear friends,

'Let there be light'

Sometime during Eastertide, a number of people noticed a strange phenomenon; the North aisle wall of our church was glowing! Red and blue, almost incandescent colors, reminiscent of the *Aurora Borealis* or 'Northern Lights' often seen in Scandinavia and Iceland. But this was not some freak electrical activity in the atmosphere – it was the sunlight streaming through a newly restored stained glass window! Think of how good they will look when the outside scaffolding is removed. The windows on the South side of the Church have been covered up since my arrival and, prior to that, were very, very dirty. Indeed, when the Priests' Sacristy windows were replaced recently we realized, for the first time, that there was lots of beautiful hand-crafted *clear* glass in them.

At the time of writing, nearly all of the windows are installed, including the great rose window, but they will not be seen in all their restored glory until the fall. Then, we will need to find a way of celebrating this art treasure that tells the story of our faith from the scriptures and through the ages. We are also exploring ways of interpreting the glass for our many, many visitors and parishioners.



We also have the chance to see some of the windows that were so dirty or damaged that they were easy to miss. Please take the opportunity of looking at the

window on the Great Staircase, for example; it is exquisite. May I pay tribute to the hard and methodical work of former warden Bill Wright whose vision and determination has meant that these treasures of New York are preserved for future generations.



Speaking of dirt...

The Church has been two-thirds covered with scaffolding since October 2014 and this has given us a rare opportunity to examine the stonework of our beautiful church in great detail. It has become

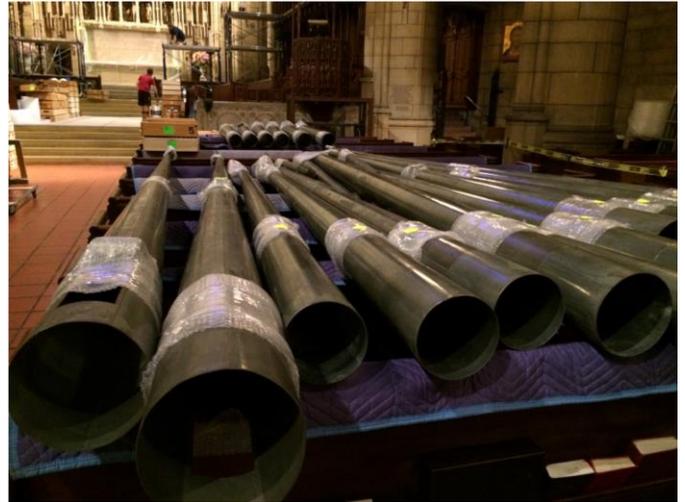
apparent that there is quite a lot of weathering to stone in the upper extremities of the building and we have discovered cracks and mortar joints that need repair. At the same time we realized that the church would need to be cleaned in a few years time in order to halt further damage. I am very pleased to tell you that, through excellent budget control, and prudent setting aside of funds for contingencies some years ago as the windows' project began, we are now able to clean the *whole* of the outside of our church without the need to dip into our reserves or make an appeal. This, in part, is due to the fact that we already have scaffolding in place and you will have noticed that we are currently extending the scaffolding to cover the rest of the Church. Cleaning of the stone has started at the very top of the tower and we have discovered more repairs that need to be done. Had we not made this decision, we would be storing up problems for the future and it would have been very, very costly to fix. I must pay tribute to Barbara Pettus, our Director of Administration and Finance, and Angel Estrada,



our Facilities Manager, who have painstakingly ensured that the Church building will be safe and secure for many years to come and at an economical cost.

The Organ project makes a dramatic entrance...or should that be exit?

On Sunday, June 12, the Arents Memorial Organ was played for the last time. It was a delight to meet grandchildren and great grandchildren of George Arents who came to the last recital on the instrument. The organ, quite literally, had 'worn out' over the past 60 years. In June the existing organ is being dismantled. The finest of the Aeolian-Skinner pipes are being saved for the new Dobson instrument and most of the others are being sent to new homes where they will be re-used. During the first week of dismantling, the organ looked like a huge giant octopus from a 1950's science-fiction movie, as all its insides poured out and slowly covered the pews.



Scaffolding will be erected for a short while as we take advantage of having the space and the time to clean and restore some of the woodwork of the chancel and clean the great reredos. This may mean that the pulpit is out of use for a few Sundays and the preacher may need to use the lectern.

Farewells this summer...

After eleven and a half years as Theologian-in-Residence, **Father Austin** answered the call to be Canon Theologian of the Diocese of Dallas and to be 'in residence' at the Church of the Incarnation in Dallas itself. We are delighted for Fr. Austin but are extremely sad to see him leave. His new post will afford him more time to serve the wider Church, to write and to teach. I am sure that we will see Fr. Austin back in the next few years; he has become a good friend, as well as pastor, to many of you and has served the parish in an exemplary fashion for nearly twelve years. At the Vestry meeting on June 15, we paid tribute to his loyal and faithful ministry among us. So many have received so much from his wisdom, his gentle and careful teaching and his kindly counsel and advice.



Douglas Robbe celebrated his 70th birthday on June 5 and surprised many of us who thought he was much younger! Douglas is retiring as Secretary to the Rector after over 30 years of service to the Church of the Advent in Boston and Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue. He has been a remarkable mine of information but we are delighted that he will remain a parishioner and, when he is not in Maine during the summer months, will continue to worship with us here.

...and arrivals

At the time of writing, **Daniel Hyde** has just been granted his visa by the United States Embassy in London. He will arrive in New York on August 1. Dan's first Sunday with us will be **September 11** during which we will have a ceremony to install him and there will be a special coffee hour. During that service we will also have a short commemoration and remembrance for the 15th anniversary of 9/11.

Amy Cheresnowski is the successor to Douglas Robbe and begins her work on July 25. Many of you already met her at Douglas' retirement coffee hour on June 5, and she also attended the Seniors' Tea in the Rectory on June 8. Amy comes from Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, is highly qualified and has a master's degree in non-profit leadership from Fordham University. **Social Events**

The Parish dinner to celebrate the 90th birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth II was sold out and a great success. The Seniors have had several lunches and a tea at the Rectory at which *Three for Tea* sang and entertained; we thank Midge Woolsey, Laurel Scarozza and Katie Salmon from the music department for their hard work and good humor.

Stephen Buzard has also answered a call – to be Director of Music at St. James Cathedral (Episcopal) in Chicago. Following the tragic death of John Scott almost a year ago, he and Ben Sheen have risen to the challenge of leading our music, and we have all been delighted with the result. Stephen and Lieve were married last summer and will make their home in Chicago; Stephen's family live in Illinois so this is a kind of 'homecoming' for him. We wish him well as he takes on this important roll. There will be a special coffee hour to say farewell to Stephen and Lieve on **Sunday, August 28.**



Future Social Events

On **September 30** we will be having a **Caribbean Themed Evening** with some wonderful food prepared by a number of our parishioners and staff. Curried Goat, Jerk Chicken, Traditional Patties, Rice n Peas and many other delights are in store for us. The event will be held in Andrew Hall and tickets are limited. Tickets will be on sale in August. Parishioners are invited to dress accordingly and gentlemen are encouraged to find those brightly colored Caribbean shirts that are often bought on holiday and hidden in wardrobes – now is the time to get them out!

Our now annual **Quiz Night** will be held at the Choir School on Friday, November 4. Tickets will be on sale in the fall. The event sold out last year in advance so begin forming your teams now – teams of up to eight people are welcome. If you want to come but do not have a team, we will place you with one.

Adult Education

I am very pleased to announce the formation of a new Adult Education Committee that will be chaired by **Professor Jeremy Waldron**. The Committee has a strong membership from the parish as well as the Deans of the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale and the General Theological Seminary. There will be no Sunday classes over the summer but the Friday Bible Study will meet (except on July 1). The committee will be meeting in the summer and details of future classes will be announced in the fall.

If you are not already part of the theology email group, please send your details to ACheresnowski@SaintThomasChurch.org and mark the subject line “theology email group.”

Holy Week 2017 will be led by **Archbishop Rowan Williams**. We are delighted to have a former Archbishop who is an internationally acclaimed theologian and poet to inspire us.

You will be pleased to know that Dean McGowan’s addresses on the “Seven Last Words from the Cross” which he delivered at Saint Thomas on Good Friday this year are to be published. When we have further details we will let you know.

Young Adults Group

If you are 18-30, you will soon receive an email about the Young Adults Group which will next meet in August. If you are not in that email group, please send your details to ACheresnowski@SaintThomasChurch.org and mark the subject line “Young Adults Group”

Have a good summer

Just after Choir School Graduation weekend, I attended the Association of Anglican Musicians 50th anniversary conference in Stamford. I preached at the opening liturgy in St John’s Church with its very fine organ and, that same evening, our choir gave a wonderful concert at Christ Church, Greenwich, to a packed church. They rightly received a standing ovation. It was also a delight to see the English composer and friend of our parish, Philip Moore, who was very moved by the choir’s singing of two of his compositions.

Whether you get away this summer or remain in New York, the daily round of worship will continue here and the Gentlemen of the Choir or a visiting choir will sing each Sunday at 11am. If you know anyone who needs a visit over the coming weeks or who is taken into hospital, please let us know.

May the love and the joy of the Lord Jesus Christ surround you and your loved ones,

Affectionately,

Your priest,

