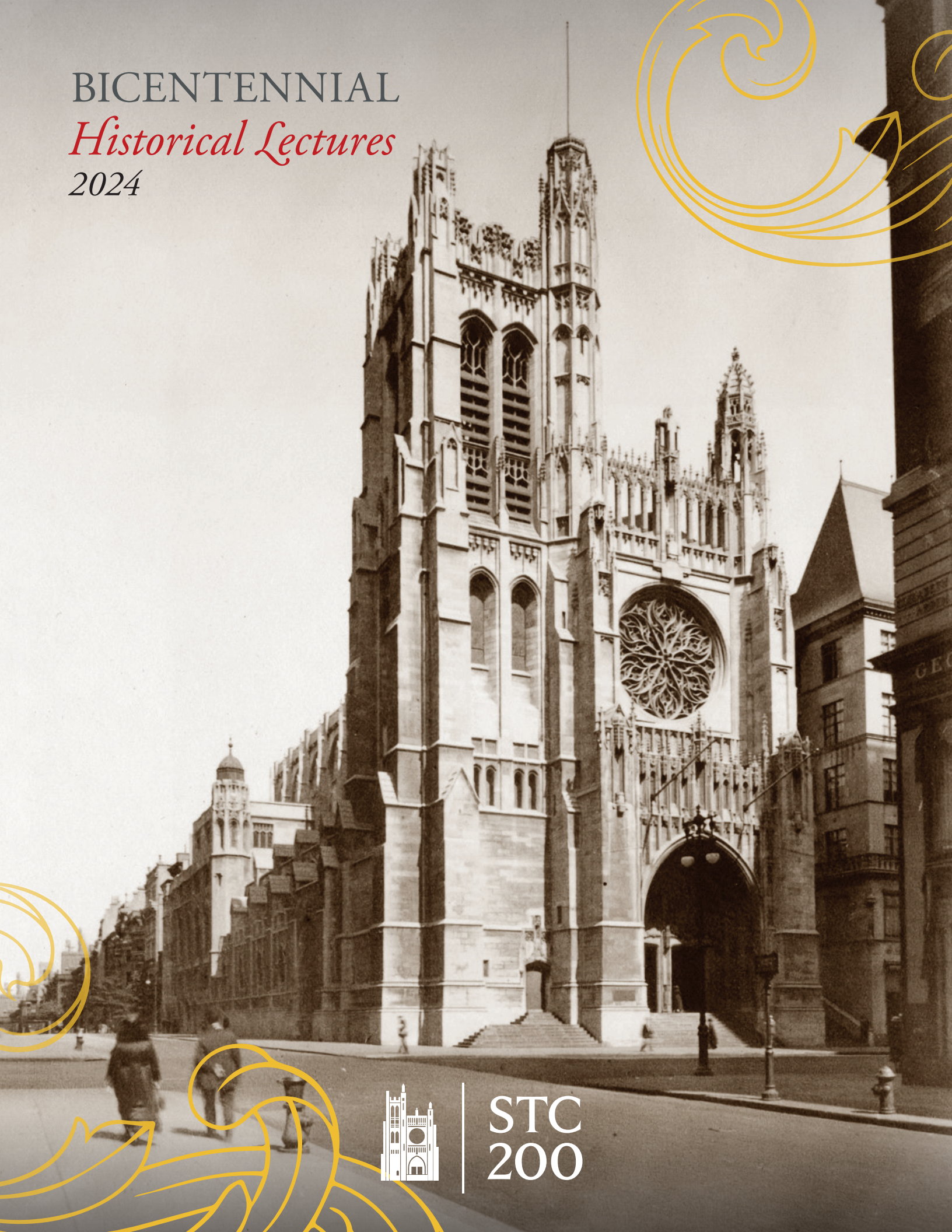


BICENTENNIAL
Historical Lectures
2024



STC
200



THE REV. DR. LUIGI GIOIA
Theologian in Residence

**THE LECTURES
WILL TAKE PLACE
BOTH IN PERSON
AND ONLINE.**

Video recordings
of the lectures will
also be available.

A NEW EXCITING YEAR AWAITS US

We celebrate the Bicentennial of our community which began when, on October 12, 1823, members of three Episcopal parishes in Lower Manhattan (Grace Church, Trinity Church, and St George's Church) assembled to found a new Episcopal church in New York City.

Such a significant anniversary is a great opportunity to get acquainted with the history of our community in relation to the effervescent religious and social context of New York City during the past two centuries. We will gain a deeper understanding of the role Saint Thomas has played with many other churches to make New York City a unique laboratory for the successful adaptation of Christianity to the modern secular city.

The **BICENTENNIAL HISTORICAL LECTURES** will focus on key moments and inspiring figures of the history of Saint Thomas, on the role played by women, and on the historical social outreach of our community.



**STC
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SCAN TO REGISTER

All lectures take place at 10 a.m. in the Parish House
(with the exception of February 3 with Prof. Jon Meacham).

www.saintthomaschurch.org/lecture-registration

JANUARY 7|10 a.m.

1905: THE BURNING OF SAINT THOMAS AND THE CRISIS OF RELIGION IN MODERN MANHATTAN



PROF. JON BUTLER

Howard R. Lamar Emeritus
Professor of American Studies,
History & Religious Studies,
Yale University



The fire that destroyed Saint Thomas Church in August 1905 (which tragically repeated the 1851 burning of Saint Thomas's original sanctuary) plunged the congregation into a double crisis. One concerned rebuilding. *The New York Times* headlined the challenge: "Saint Thomas's Church a Fire-Swept Ruin," and described it as resembling "some ancient Gothic ruin with the daylight yawning through the arches and windows." Rebuilding was fraught with issues, no matter

that Saint Thomas was "perhaps the richest congregation in the whole country," as the *Times* put it. But the second, larger question concerned religion itself. For over two decades, New York's Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish leaders worried about religion's fate amidst urban modernity. Would traditional religion shrink in the face of urban anonymity, unending immigration, multiplying pluralism, modern rationalism, the rise of science, and faceless bureaucratization? Indeed, had these forces already produced the "disenchantment of the world" as the German sociologist Max Weber opined? Yet across the next decades and up to World War II, Saint Thomas not only rebuilt, but new sanctuaries appeared, congregations multiplied, urban outreach flourished, religious publishing flourished, and a raft of theologians turned Manhattan into a 20th century spiritual hothouse and the most vibrant religious center in all of America.

FEBRUARY 3 | 11 a.m.

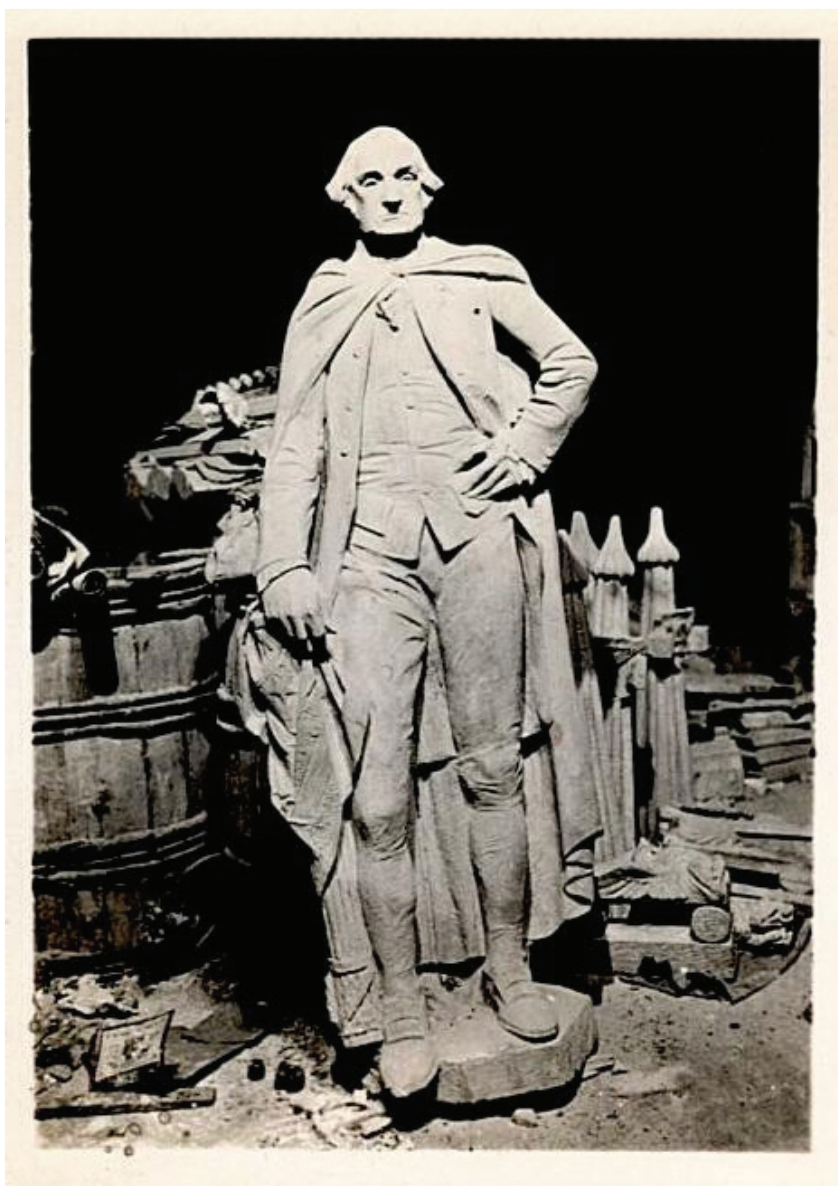


PROF. JON MEACHAM

*Distinguished Visiting Professor
at Vanderbilt University and
a Fellow of the Society of
American Historians. Pulitzer
Prize-winning biographer*

A personal reflection on the role the parish has played in the life of the nation and in the lives of its communicants through decades of tumult, from the Gilded Age through two world wars and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

TO KEEP THE FEAST: SAINT THOMAS CHURCH IN WAR AND PEACE



A statue of General Washington before being installed in the top right corner of the Great Reredos of Saint Thomas Church.

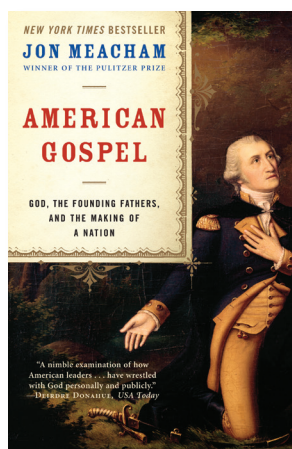
FEBRUARY 4 | 10 a.m.

PROF. JON MEACHAM

A CONVERSATION ON RELIGION AND POLITICS WITH THE AUTHOR OF *AMERICAN GOSPEL*



Night-Fall, St. Thomas' Church, Broadway, New York, c.1835, by George Harvey



Prof. Jon Meacham has written and spoken extensively about religion and politics. Especially in his New York Times Bestseller *American Gospel*. *God, The Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation* he makes it compellingly clear that the nation's best chance of summoning what Lincoln called "the better angels of our nature"

lies in recovering the spirit and sense of the Founding Fathers. At the heart of the American experiment lies the God of what Benjamin Franklin called "public religion," a God who invests all human beings with inalienable rights while protecting private religion from government interference.

FEBRUARY 11 | 10 a.m.



**THE RT. REV. R.
WILLIAM FRANKLIN**

*Union Theological Seminary
(NYC) and Assisting Bishop
of the Diocese of Long Island*

BISHOP JOHN HENRY HOBART AND THE FOUNDING OF SAINT THOMAS CHURCH



John Henry Hobart (1775–1830) was one of the leaders who revived the Episcopal Church, following the first two decades of its independent life after the American Revolution.

An exploration of Bishop Hobart's founding vision of the Episcopal High Church tradition as a form of American Anglicanism suited to the

future of the United States as a nation challenged by division over slavery and the rise of a dominant Protestant evangelical tradition.

FEBRUARY 18 | 10 a.m.

THE RT. REV. R.
WILLIAM FRANKLIN

RALPH ADAMS CRAM AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF SAINT THOMAS CHURCH



Ralph Adams Cram (1863–1942) was a leading architect in New York and Boston best known for his Gothic Revival style churches in those cities and elsewhere in the nation.

A Gothic vision for the modern, industrial city steeped in Episcopalian faith found expression in the fourth Saint Thomas Church. This talk explores Cram's life, theology, and mission as reflected in his great church on Fifth Avenue.



FEBRUARY 25 | 10 a.m.

JOHN ANDREW AND GERRE HANCOCK: THE HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP OF A RECTOR AND AN ORGANIST AND CHOIRMASTER

In an era of great division and change, this lecture explores preaching, worship, and music as means to further Christian harmony and civic peace.



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*Union Theological Seminary
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of the Diocese of Long Island*



Above on the left, the Rector Fr. John Andrew (1931–2014) and below, Gerre Hancock (1934–2012)



MARCH 10 | 10 a.m.



DR. INGE REIST

*Director Emerita of the Center
for the History of Collecting,
The Frick Collection and
Frick Art Reference Library*

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE HISTORY OF SAINT THOMAS

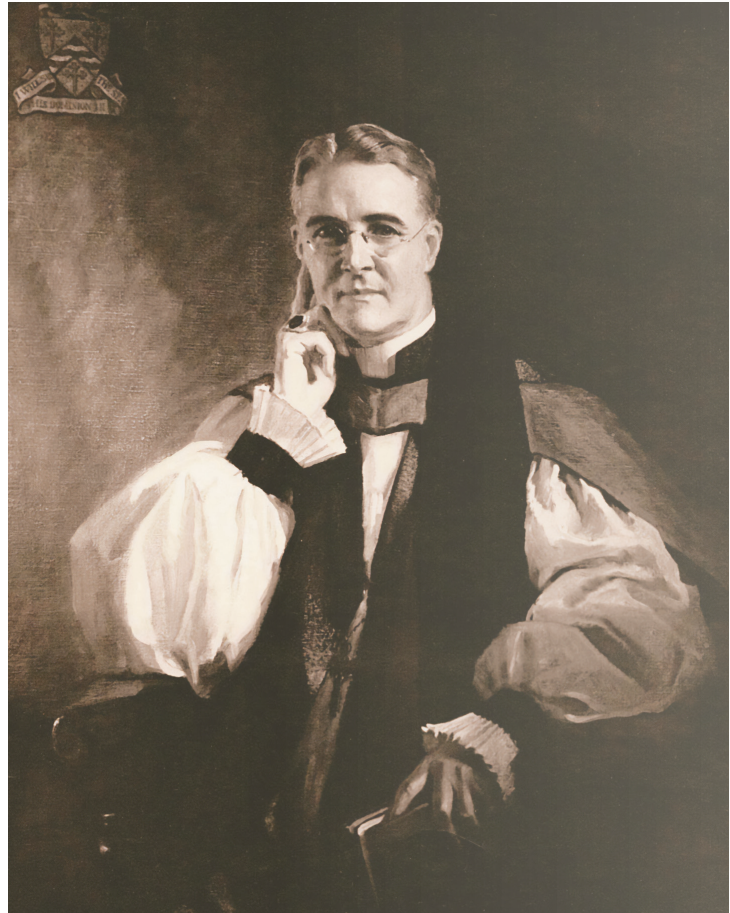
Throughout its history, especially during the early Twentieth century, women played key roles in the parish life of Saint Thomas. The Free Chapels located amidst immigrant communities in east midtown were hives of activity: the Deaconess provided advice and comfort to women, and volunteers taught new arrivals skills that helped bring them into the workforce. At the Halsey Day Nursery (a gift of Mrs. Frederick Halsey) the Helping Hand Association provided day care and

meals for the children of working mothers. During the summer months, as many as 850 children left their city tenements to enjoy the country air at the John Wesley Brown Summer House. This sixty-acre property on Long Island Sound was purchased through the generous funding of Miss Grace Scoville. Since 1973, when the Vestry welcomed its first woman member, the parish has steadily placed women in leading roles, including as Warden and among the clergy.



Childcare at the Halsey Day Nursery

APRIL 7 | 10 a.m.



THE RECTOR ERNEST M. STIRES AND THE SOCIAL GOSPEL



PROF. FRANCIS BLOUIN
*Professor Emeritus the University
of Michigan and Archivist of
Saint Thomas Church*

During his time as Rector of Saint Thomas between 1901 and 1925, Fr. Ernest M. Stires (1866–1951) worked tirelessly to address the inequalities of the emerging industrial age. He embraced the “Social Gospel” movement of the time and established at Saint Thomas numerous missions, charities, groups, and programs all designed to reach across the city to those less fortunate. His philosophy was simple: “it is in giving that we receive.”

At the time however, his basic idea of Christian charity faced a number of challenges:

- Christianity did not always speak in one voice regarding the social crisis.
- The Social Sciences were emerging with an alternative approach to charity.
- Trade unionism argued that charity was not enough.
- In the aftermath of the Russian Revolution ideas that seemed socialist were suspect.
- The persistent tension in America between individualism and collective responsibility.

Then, with the great depression of the 1930s, social problems and inequalities became so immense that basic charity became a principal focus of government policy.

APRIL 21 | 10 a.m.

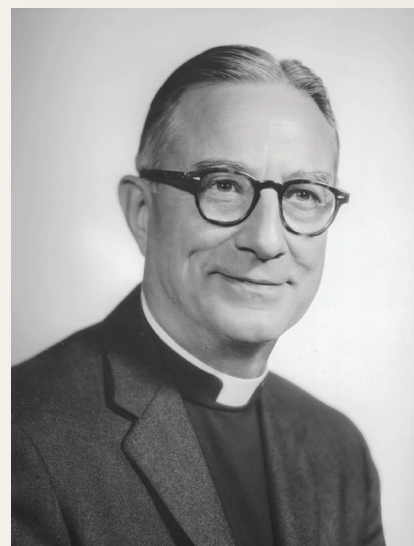


**THE REV. DR. BRANDT
MONTGOMERY**

*Vicar of Saint Mark's
Episcopal Church in
Boonsboro, Maryland*

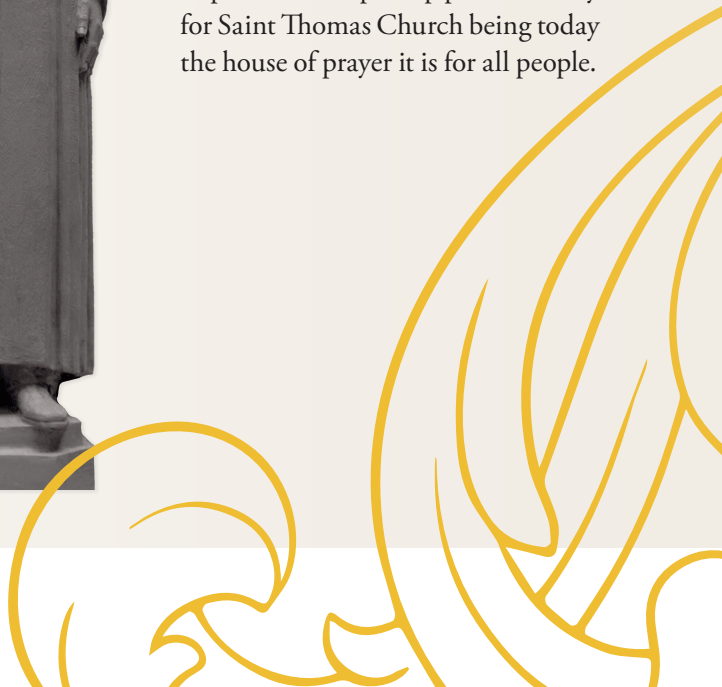
FREDERICK MYERS MORRIS: SAINT THOMAS CHURCH'S CIVIL RIGHTS RECTOR

During his tenure as the tenth Rector of Saint Thomas from 1954 until 1972, Fr. Frederick Myers Morris (1906–1998) showed great concern and support for the Episcopal Church's engagement in the Civil Rights Movement. This talk will offer an in-depth historical report on Morris's civil



Carvings depicting Mary McLeod Bethune (L) and Martin Luther King, Jr. (R) photographed before being installed on the Liberation Tower of Saint Thomas Church circa 1972. The beautiful carvings are the work of the Rochette and Parzini.

rights sympathies, exploring aspects of his background and the theological thought that informed his advocacy for the Civil Rights Movement. Morris's civil rights advocacy and responsible discipleship paved the way for Saint Thomas Church being today the house of prayer it is for all people.





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Historical Lectures 2024

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