

# March 2021 The Story

***All are Welcome  
No Exceptions!***

**St. Thomas Episcopal Church accepts all people and we commit:**

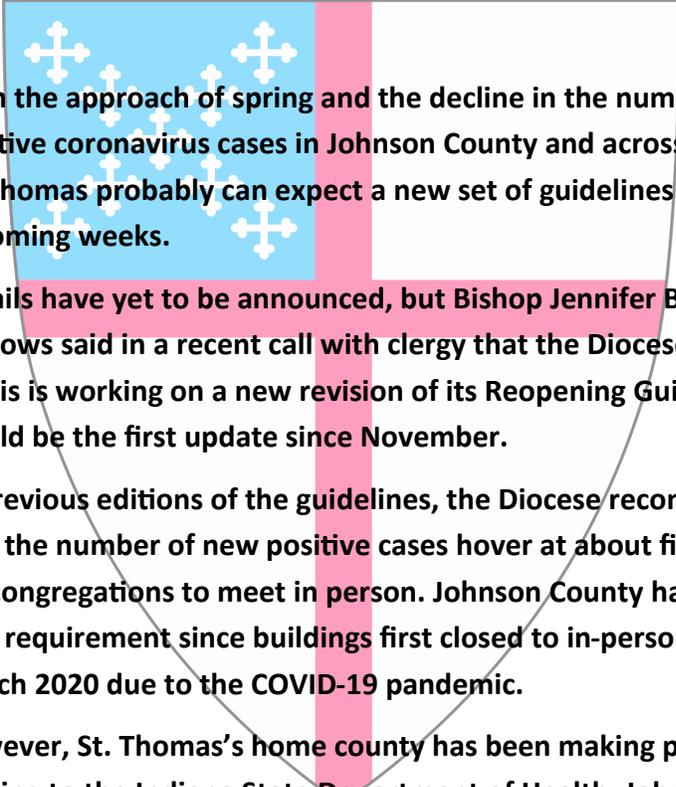
**Celebrate the Eucharist regularly**

**Keep a personal and community discipline of prayer and study**

**Proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ by promoting justice, peace, and love.**

**Nurture God's people as we grow in Christ**

**Live with thanksgiving, wonder, and openness to God's love**



**With the approach of spring and the decline in the number of new positive coronavirus cases in Johnson County and across the state, St. Thomas probably can expect a new set of guidelines for worship in coming weeks.**

**Details have yet to be announced, but Bishop Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows said in a recent call with clergy that the Diocese of Indianapolis is working on a new revision of its Reopening Guidelines. This would be the first update since November.**

**In previous editions of the guidelines, the Diocese recommended that the number of new positive cases hover at about five per day for congregations to meet in person. Johnson County has not met that requirement since buildings first closed to in-person worship in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

**However, St. Thomas's home county has been making progress. According to the Indiana State Department of Health, Johnson County's moving average of new cases was 18 on February 26<sup>th</sup>. This represents a sharp decline over the past three months. By comparison, Johnson's moving average was 79 on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 135 on December 26<sup>th</sup> and 149 on November 26<sup>th</sup>.**

**St. Thomas's Congregational Regathering Committee planned to meet February 28th to discuss plans for Lent and Easter. It's likely that, whether or not local numbers continue to remain higher than the Diocese requires, St. Thomas will again offer some outdoor services with in-person congregations in the Shelter House. Look for more details, including online sign-up, in the near future.**

**--Fr. Whitney Smith**

## **Lenten Adult Forum Continues March 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>**

This month, St. Thomas will continue its Lenten Adult Education Forum series based on Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry's book "Love Is the Way: Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times." The book discusses aspects of love, which Bishop Curry sees as the only way to reconcile and reunite people in divisive times.

The second and third sessions in the three-part series will take place on Zoom, at 11:30 a.m. Saturdays March 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. They will occur during the time normally occupied by our virtual coffee hour. Parishioner Jan Skopecek will send Zoom invitations. Although participants may do so, it won't be necessary to read "Love Is the Way" for our discussions.

The book is organized around 12 questions about love that Bishop Curry has been asked by people he met in churches, at public events, and at airports. Our first session, on Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>, was devoted to the question "What is love?" The second session on March 6<sup>th</sup> will focus on the question "I'm told to love my neighbor, but who is my neighbor?" For those who have the book, that question is discussed in Chapter 7. The final session on March 20<sup>th</sup> will center on "How can love overcome what divides us, and move us forward together?" That question is discussed in Chapter 10.

– Fr. Whitney Smith

## **A Note from the Junior Warden**

Hello, I'm Steven Wahlberg and I will be serving St. Thomas as your Junior Warden. I would like to say thank you for this opportunity to work with you all in helping to maintain our church grounds and building. Many of you have been at work for years in this ministry and much appreciation and thanks go out to you! I definitely will be relying on your expertise in our endeavors to keep St. Thomas running smoothly ahead.

One of the first things on my radar will be the lawn mowing of the church property. I will be putting together a list of folks who want to be mowers this year. The more we have, the lighter the burden of taking turns mowing during the season. Perhaps we could get teams of two to tackle the job of mowing and trimming, thus making it easier and less time-consuming. Please let me know if you would be interested. My phone number is (720) 220-2920 or email me at [justssjlwahlberg@gmail.com](mailto:justssjlwahlberg@gmail.com).

Many thanks, Steven Wahlberg

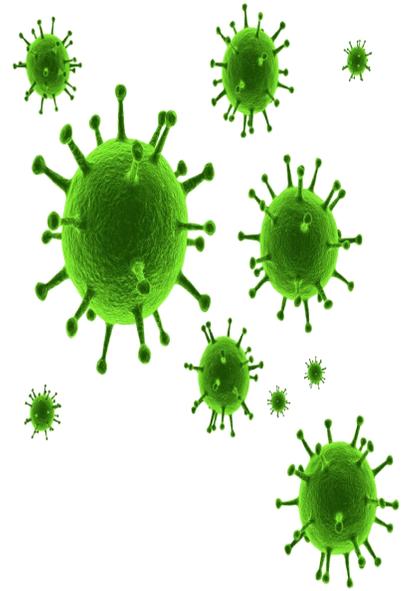
St. Thomas Clinic has been awarded a \$10,000 Community Development Block Grant from the City of Greenwood. The grant will fund purifier attachments designed to improve fresh air flow in the clinic's HVAC's units as part of the Diocese of Indianapolis's recommendations to do so throughout the building when it approved the parish reopening plan last fall.

The award is contingent on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's approval of the grant for Greenwood, as it does annually. The documentation process is in progress, and we anticipate funds to be received in the near future.

The Clinic Director and Fr. Whitney Smith are working on finding additional funding to secure five other air purifier attachments to ensure all HVAC units will have air purifiers within the coming year.

We are grateful to the CDBG administrators for their support and approval of this project. We believe that the project, along with the declining number of new positive COVID-19 cases in Johnson County, will bring us another step closer to getting back into the building and keeping everyone safe and healthy.

-Terresa Branham



Thank  
You

St. Thomas Donates to Episcopal Relief & Development

Many thanks to the St. Thomas parishioners who made contributions to Episcopal Relief & Development in connection with Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday on February 21st, the First Sunday in Lent. Five parishioners gave contributions, and I joined them by making a gift from the Rector's Discretionary Fund. All checks from the parish were sent together to the Episcopal Relief & Development office in New York.

--Fr. Whitney Smith

**important stuff**

## News from the Treasurer

Thank you for continuing your support of St. Thomas.

If you wish to mail your contribution but do not want to send it to the church, you are welcome to mail it to Marti Ramsey's home address.

Marti Ramsey  
2171 Heather Glen Way  
Franklin, IN 46131

If you would like to mail your check to the church, the address is:

St. Thomas Church  
600 Paul Hand Blvd  
Franklin, IN 46131

You may also use the diocesan website: Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis | ([www.indydio.org](http://www.indydio.org)) then click Donate Online (upper right corner)

**Fund:** Give to a Congregation

**Memo:** scroll to find St. Thomas—Franklin

An email is being sent to alert contributors when checks have been deposited. Please contact me if you mail a check and do not receive an email from us within 2 weeks of mailing the contribution. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions! Thank you – Marti Ramsey



*Did you know...*

- \* The Bible is the most shoplifted book in the world
- \* There are 118 ridges on the side of a dime
- \* The longest line in the Bible is Ester 8:9. It's 89 words, 425 letters!
- \* Hot water turns into ice faster than cold water.
- \* The last word in the Bible is Amen.

# March Celebrations

## Birthdays

5 Mike Ramsey

8 Gavin Anderson

9 Eric Tullis

10 Linda Linville

13 Zuma Alexander & Sam Anderson

14 Susie Hooten & Robin Kares

15 Ryan Craft-Rutan

16 Marilyn Alexander

17 Marikay Kapke

23 Kristen Ring

25 Dennis Thompson

29 Cheryl Faust

## Anniversaries

10 Erica and Mike McFarland

18 Karen and Eric Smith





# LENT

## ST. THOMAS VESTRY

### The 25th Vestry of St. Thomas (2021--2023)

- 2021 .....Robin Kares, Joshua Craft-Rutan, Jan Skopecek
- 2022 .....Dave Buchholz, Marikay Kapke
- 2023 .....Rachel Allen, Brandi Ashlock, Cheryl Faust, Steve Wahlberg

### The Staff and Officers of St. Thomas

- Rector.....Fr. Whitney Smith
- Senior Warden ..... Dave Buchholz
- Junior Warden .....Steven Wahlberg
- Clerk ..... Karen Smith
- Treasurer .....Marti Ramsey
- Organist/Choir Director .....Heather Orvek
- Assistant Treasurers .....Robin Kares, Mike Ramsey, Eric Smith

If you have an article for the next newsletter, please submit it to Father Whitney at whitinindy@hotmail.com by the 15th of the month.