
St. Thomas Memorial Church

Thomas Tract October 2026

New Consecration Sunday is coming:

For many years, the vestry has endorsed the idea that stewardship (what we do with what God has given us) is not about the church paying its bills but rather is a spiritual issue between each believer and God. It can be a way for believers to grow spiritually and to support the church's mission and ministry with a percentage of their income.



One of the reasons the vestry favors the New Consecration Sunday stewardship model is that it does not present giving as like being in a social club where one might pay dues. Instead, it presents the belief that Christian giving is something believers do as part of being disciples of Jesus. It is, at its very heart, a matter of spiritual development rather than the need of the church to receive. Moreover, this model of stewardship encourages believers to consider whether God is calling them to give proportionally and regularly.

On the New Consecration Sunday, which this year will be November 8, we will be asking ourselves to make financial estimates of giving to our church's mission, outreach, worship and educational ministries here in Pittsburgh and around the world. Every member who decides to complete an Estimate of Giving card will offer it before the altar that Sunday as an act of worship. Even if you do not wish to complete a card, we still urge you to attend on that Sunday and we assure you that no one will coerce you to return a card.

We promise that we will not do any home solicitations after the New Consecration Sunday except to send Estimate of Giving Cards to people who could not be present on November 8. On that Sunday, our guest preacher, The Rev. Brandon Cooper, Assistant Rector at Christ Church, North Hills, will offer a brief instruction on returning completed cards on that day as an act of worship.

Over this month, we will encourage participation in New Consecration Sunday events and members of the church will speak briefly about why stewardship is a spiritual issue for them. Since we will make no follow-up visits to ask people to complete cards, we will make every effort to speak openly and plainly about this faith issue, and to urge everyone to attend the New Consecration Sunday worship and celebratory lunch which will follow. Thank you for your support and participation in Consecration Sunday events.

In Christ,

Julie King
Senior Warden of St. Thomas Church

St. Thomas' Seminarian, Samuel Manirakiza, Gives An Update

I am sending you a little update about how things are going here at Virginia Theological Seminary, along with a few recent pictures of me and my family.



I have now started my second year of the Master of Divinity program here at Virginia Theological Seminary . This semester, I am taking classes in New Testament Interpretation, Anglican Thought, The History of the Episcopal Church in the USA, Introduction to Homiletics, and Liturgical Music.

While classes are an important part of my studies, there is much more to my seminary life than what happens in the classroom. Worship is an important part of my daily life here at the seminary. I have had

opportunities to lead the Daily Office and serve as a lector in chapel, and I continue to sing in the seminary choir.

A major part of my second year is Contextual Ministry. This is a part of my seminary studies where I am placed in a local parish to learn and gain hands-on experience in ministry while continuing my classes at the seminary. My placement is at Grace Episcopal Church in Alexandria, Virginia, which is only a few miles from the seminary. I have already begun serving there and will be involved in different areas of parish ministry, including worship, preaching, pastoral care, and other ministries. I will preach my first sermon there this Coming Sunday, October 4. Contextual Ministry gives me the opportunity to connect what I am learning at seminary with the everyday work of ministry in a parish.

I have also attached a few recent pictures of me and my family. Please feel free to use whichever pictures work best for the Thomas Tract.

Thank you for continuing to keep us in your prayers and for supporting me during my seminary journey.

Peace,

Samuel Manirakiza, B.A. (he/him)
Master of Divinity '28
Postulant, Diocese of Pittsburgh
Virginia Theological Seminary



Samuel with his wife, Patiente, baby Michael, Blessing (bottom left), and Shammah (bottom right).



Samuel in front of the Bishop Payne Library at Virginia Theological Seminary.

St. Thomas Vestry Updates

by Sr. Warden Julie King

We are pleased to announce that the Rev. Deacon Nicole "Nikki" Starr (at right) has been assigned to St. Thomas as our new Curate beginning Oct. 1. She will be serving along with Canon Shoucair and be available to use on a part time basis, similar to Fr. Guy Brown's schedule as a second year Curate. I know we will give her a warm welcome, so be sure to say hello to her when you see her.

In other news: After much prayer, the vestry is excited to announce that a Search Committee for our new rector has been chosen. Ted Denlinger will act as the chair of the committee. Shelley Cammissa, Pam Derby, Mitzi Fidler, R.J. King, Henry Luck and Richard Williams have agreed to serve. I know that you will pray for them as they embark on this journey.

One of the first tasks for the committee will be compiling a parish profile which will include findings from the prayer groups and the completion of a survey. I do encourage **EVERYONE** to participate in the survey when it comes out. We want all of our parishioners' voices to be heard as the committee begins the search process.



Fellowship Dinner Back on the Calendar



Back by popular requests, our Monthly Parish Fellowship Dinners will resume Friday, October 23, 2026 from 6-8 pm.

Those new to the parish and unfamiliar with our Fellowship Dinner, below is a description:

Our Parish Fellowship Dinners offer a fun evening of togetherness while enjoying a delicious meal. Each month's host/hostess provides the main course and a beverage. To

round out the menu, others bring either an appetizer, a side dish, an additional beverage, or a dessert. A simple game or contest, related to the season, adds a flavor of fun. Sign-up sheets identify the host/hostess, the main course, and what everyone else is bringing. This is posted on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall.

For this upcoming dinner on October 23, the hosts are Darrell Powell and Richard Williams. The main course will be baked manicotti with meatballs.

Join us a be part of the FUN!

For more information and/or to sign up, please contact Darrell Powell: Text 412-828-0502 or Email DL7JP_2W8@yahoo.com.

by Darrell Powell

What is the Alms Basin?

Every Sunday, there is a wooden plate sitting on a little pedestal that the ushers put in the center of the aisle as people come forward for communion (see photo). At 8:00am Eucharist, people put their offerings in it as they pass. At 10:30am Eucharist, people may drop a gift of cash or a check made out to the church, even though the ushers also pass offering plates through the pews as the choir is singing an anthem. This wooden plate is the alms basin. The cash from 8:00am Eucharist and whatever is put into it at 10:30 Eucharist is given to the Rector's Discretionary Fund, which is mostly used to help those who find themselves in need. Often monies from this Fund go to help pay rent for those who are short, for utility bills for those who cannot afford them, for medical expenses or food or bus passes or other needs of those who do not have enough. Some of the money is also used to help support our Seminarian, Samuel Manirakiza (see article above). Though many in our congregation are blessed financially, not everyone is. And even those who normally have enough can be caught short by unexpected events. In addition, St. Thomas does help those who come asking for help who are not parishioners. So the offerings put into the alms basin go mostly to help those who are in need.



YOU'RE INVITED!

Wisdom & Wellness Symposium

A FREE COMMUNITY EVENT



Navigating the next chapter of life can feel overwhelming—but it doesn't have to be.

Join us for a free, educational morning featuring expert panel discussions on finance/medicare, health & wellness, and options to support aging in place, live Q&A, and trusted local resources to help you make informed decisions for yourself or a loved one. No sales. No pressure. Just real answers.

Enjoy a complimentary continental breakfast, local exhibitors, flu shots, giveaways, and amazing raffle prizes—including a chance to win a \$500 Giant Eagle Gift Card! (must be present to win).



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13 2026

8:30am – 12:30pm

HOLY FAMILY PARISH - ST. IRENAEUS CHURCH

387 Maryland Ave | Oakmont, PA 15139

Event is FREE, but registration is required.
Register using the QR Code or call 801-688-0130.



Courses/meetings being offered & COMING SOON!

St. Thomas regular events include:

- Adult Education - Sunday mornings at 9:30
- Tuesday Bible Study at 11 am in the Guild Room
- Wednesday Healing Service at 10 am in the Thomas House Chapel
- Tuesday and Thursday Evening Prayer 6:30-7:00 pm in the church
- Men's Ministry and Women's Group meetings - as determined

- Women's Fellowship meetings - first Thursday of the month from 7:00-8:30 in Guild Room

COMING SOON:

- Oct. 4 - Blessing of the Animals Service
- Oct. 23 - Monthly Fellowship Dinner 6-8 pm in the Guild Room (see article above)
- Nov. 8 - New Consecration Sunday

October Birthdays

1 - Darrell Hayes
 4 - Pam Derby
 4 - Linda Johnston
 4 - Ron McClelland
 6 - Dolly Shearer
 8 - Carol Miller
 9 - Thomas Fischer
 9 - Jeffrey Murph
 11 - Brian King
 13 - Lisa McClelland
 17 - Frazier DeTar
 17 - David Eber
 18 - Steve Vautrain
 19 - Millie McClelland
 21 - Thomas (Ted) Denlinger
 22 - Beverly Killeen
 22 - Rachael McClelland
 23 - Sam Kelly
 24 - Mary Amanda Dew
 24 - Logan Dexter
 26 - Bob Alcorn
 26 - Maureen Long
 26 - Samuel Manirakiza

October Anniversaries

1 - Noel & Patsy Clive
 10 - Tony & April Fusaro
 11 - Jeff & Meloni Murph
 13 - Guy & Kristin Brown
 14 - John & Kate Westermann
 17 - Shawn & Rachael McClelland
 19 - Barry & Becky Verzinskie
 22 - Bob & Maureen Farmer
 30 - Bill & June Ferguson

** If you aren't already on our Birthday and/or Anniversary list, please contact Laurel Almada at the office (sttomoakmont@gmail.com or 412-828-9680) and she will be happy to add you in!



St. Thomas Memorial Church |
[\[www.st-tom.org\]](http://www.st-tom.org)



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