

Vicar

The Rev. Sharon Sheffield

Bishop's Committee

Allen Stout, *Bishop's Warden*
Shelley Arnold, *People's Warden*
Andrea Utzman, *Clerk*
Lynne Richmond, *Minutes Secretary*
Lance Brooks, *Treasurer*
John Mitchell, *Bookkeeper*

Jane Gordon-Topper
Camelia Jolly
Jeremy Richmond
Sue Williams

Minister of Music & Organist

Editor of Canterbury Tales
William Henderson

**Associate Organist
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CANTERBURY TALES

JUNE 2023



TRINITY SUNDAY
JUNE 4

Mass in the Grass

Reminder

On June 4 we will have our normal 8:00 service at St. Thomas.
The 10:15 service will be our joint “Mass in the Grass” at El Dorado Park.

Be sure to wear comfortable clothes and bring something to sit on.

SEE YOU THERE!



JUNE 18

As is our custom, we will have a special prayer in honor of the day, and small treats for all men who come to church in person. This is a great day to invite a friend or relative who might be looking for a church community.

SEE YOU IN CHURCH!

BISHOP'S WARDEN REPORT

As we move from the Easter season (and Spring) into the post-Pentecost “ordinary time” (and Summer), we are continuing with the P2P (Path to Parish) process of fixing our infrastructure, reviving our congregational fellowship, and growing our online and physical congregations.

As for our infrastructure, we are continuing to evaluate the status of our roofs. After conferring with David Heatherly and our People's Warden, Shelley Arnold, we might not need to resurface the entire roofing of the church. There are definitely some parts that will need work, and it will not be cheap, but we might be able to hold off on a more radical repair until a later time (so fundraising for this project is still necessary). We will continue with our capital campaign for this, and with an eye toward repairing the heating and air conditioning systems in Huntington Hall (which are completely inoperable).

Shelley and others are doing a lot to rebuild our fellowship. There is a fundraising aspect to this, but the primary motive is to provide opportunities for us to come together and share our lives of faith with each other. To explore our faith, and to have fun. Shelley's “Raise the Roof” campaign certainly has a budgetary aspect, but it also meant to bring us together for these other reasons. Please check out the proposed events, and propose others that you think will be of interest to our congregation.

Finally, we need to continue to build our online presence, through the streaming of our services, and through continuing to build our website. With the latter in mind, please let us know what you think of the website, and how we can improve it.

One final note: **Important**: I want to encourage anyone who has questions about the schedule, the buildings, upcoming events, etc. to reach out to myself, Shelley, or another member of the Bishop's Committee for answers. Of course, you can also reach out to Mother Sharon, especially for pastoral concerns (we can define these in an upcoming issue, if needed). When Sharon is on her day off (Fridays), or on vacation, it is particularly important to let her have her leisure time. So on those days in particular, please use the Bishop's Committee as your first resource for most non-pastoral questions. My phone number is (714) 381-5910. I can be reached by phone call or text, or I can be reached by email at astout1176@gmail.com.

Allen Stout
Bishop's Warden

PEOPLE'S WARDEN REPORT

Shelley Arnold

On May 20, 2023, I got up on our roof with Allen Stout and David Heatherly to try to locate the places where water is leaking into the building below. We think we've found the sources of the leaks.

Pictures will soon be posted in the Hallway so that you can see what we found.

YOU ASKED, WE ANSWERED!

The Bishop's Committee has been asked if it's possible for Bishop's Committee minutes and financials to be posted so that everyone knows what's being discussed. Of course, it is! You can find minutes and financials posted on the bulletin board by the office door. And of course, everyone is welcome to attend the Bishop's Committee meetings to hear about everything first-hand.

Meetings are normally the second Sunday of the month beginning at 11:45am.

STEWARDSHIP...IN THE SPRING?



Stewardship is a topic that most folks only think about in the Fall when we start looking at what we want to share of our time, talents, and treasures for the next year.

Stewardship is something we do year round. It doesn't always involve money. We are able to share with our St. Thomas Family through our time and talents. This year we are hosting various "Raise the Roof" activities. The day before Mother's Day we had the "Coronation Tea" hosted by Shelley Arnold and Jane Gordon-Topper. A lovely event that was representative of both Time and Talents. In the Fall we will be enjoying the music of Kevin Wood, the Parish Administrator at St. Gregory's. He will be sharing his talent with us. In August Dave and Rosemary Sissons will be opening their backyard for a barbecue. When the weather cools down I plan to host a "Chili Cookoff" on the back patio. There will also be a Silent Auction. The event is in the early planning stages. Invitations will be extended to the Long Beach parishes and to the churches in Deanery 8, as well as to our own family and friends to be Chili Chefs for the day. Please spread the word to your family and friends that are interested in sharing their cooking skills.

What ideas do you have that we could plan for our St. Thomas Family and Friends to enjoy? Please speak with Shelley Arnold or any Bishop's Committee member.

Sue Williams
Stewardship Chair

Raise the Roof Fundraiser News

We had a fabulous Coronation Tea for 22 guests on Saturday, May 13.

Our incredible tea makers.



The Tea Committee.

A view of the Tea Room.



Everyone got a prize.

UPCOMING

"RAISE THE ROOF"

FUNDRAISER EVENTS

BBQ AT ROSEMARY & DAVE'S HOUSE

AUGUST 19

MOTHER SHARON'S **MUSIC** FUNDRAISER

SEPTEMBER 16

SUE WILLIAMS' **CHILI** COOK-OFF

END OF SEPTEMBER/BEGINNING OF OCTOBER

JANE & JOANNE'S **HALLOWEEN** FUN

END OF OCTOBER

Please look for sign-up sheets in the Narthex.



We could use 1 or 2 people who are willing to take the food we collect over to the Broken Loaf once or twice a month. **First United Methodist Church is willing to receive the food Monday-Friday between 9:00am & 1:00pm.**

You just need to call to make sure the secretary is available to open the pantry for you. If this ministry interests you, please let Mother Sharon know.

THE ST. THOMAS ORGAN FUND



The Phase II contract was signed after we purchased a newer keyboard console, which could be rebuilt by the Rosales company for St. Thomas. That console had some “Prepared For” features built in. These were mostly for using stops or ranks of pipes for the pedal keyboard and making them available on the Great or middle keyboard. That gave us new sounds available without spending money

on new pipes. These Prepared For features have stop knobs on the console but work up in the organ chambers had to be done to make those stop knobs work. That contract was completed and has been paid for.

However, there were a couple Prepared For features not in the Phase II contract. One item is the set of Chimes. We have a Chimes stop knob, but our set of chimes is in bad repair and needs to be replaced sometime in the future either with real chimes or a digital set of chimes. Both options are not inexpensive.

Now I'll explain a second Prepared For feature on the console. Currently, the organ chamber on the right side of the Christus Rex has pipes for the Swell or upper keyboard. These pipes include a trumpet, an oboe, and others. This chamber has a set of expression shades to control the sound to the church but for unknown reasons, those shades were installed years ago on the right side of that chamber and open to the Great organ chamber on the far right. So, the sound of the Swell pipes bounces around in that chamber and then goes out to the church. The result is that the sound is somewhat muffled. The Rosales company proposed a plan which would help without spending a lot of money. The sound from the right chamber could be opened to chamber to the left side of the Christus Rex and then a set of existing expression shades in the front of that chamber could be controlled in addition to the one which controls sound towards the right. This would allow additional sound from the Swell pipes into the church. I don't have a price for hooking up an electrical control for those shades from the expression pedal but it's probably about \$3,300. This project could be done after we get an estimate of costs, and if the Bishop's Committee approves the work. And it would wait until we have enough money in the Organ Fund.

You may have questions about the set of recycled organ pipes in the rear of the church which the Rosales company gave our church when they didn't need them for an organ which they were building for a smaller church in Hawaii. That's going to be expensive to move them up into the left chamber and get them installed and wired up. A primary priority for our church is the Capital Campaign Fund, which will fund roof repairs. So, the Phase III project for those pipes in the rear will need to wait.

John Mitchell

A Meditation

Thomas the Apostle, and Doubt

During the Easter season, one of the lectionary readings included the story of “doubting Thomas,” the apostle who demanded proof of Jesus’ resurrection before he would believe it. The story is found in the Gospel of John:

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe” (John 20:24-29).

This is a well-known story, but what are we to make of it? It actually creates a fascinating theological question about the role and value of doubt in the life of faithful Christians. Of note in the story, Jesus does not condemn, nor even criticize, Thomas for his doubt (or more accurately, his skepticism). Yet, there are other verses that seem to set doubt and faith apart as being opposed to each other. The clearest example is perhaps James 1:5-8:

“If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.”

So, is having doubts an enemy of faith, lacking foundation, and being susceptible to double-mindedness and instability, as James says? Or is it a natural function of faith itself, and not something that is automatically condemned by Jesus, as related in the Gospel of John? If I have doubts, is that a matter of weak faith, or a natural process of faith itself?

Other references are inconclusive in answering this question. The Old Testament (AKA the Hebrew Bible, or the Tanakh) does not mention doubt at all, except in the

context of “no doubt you are the people...” (Job 12:2). There are two references to doubt in non-canonical Old Testament books that resemble James in their condemnation of doubt (Wisdom of Solomon 12:17, 2 Esdras 16:76). While Paul, in Romans 14:23 also seems to take a negative sense of doubt: “But those who have doubts are condemned if they eat because they do not act from faith, for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.” But this is in the context of differences of opinion about what one can or cannot eat, and other similar disagreements.

If we reflect beyond theology, to the philosophy of knowledge (epistemology), it is fair to ask what faith is when it is beyond doubt. Is there any real knowledge without questioning? Is there questioning without doubt to stimulate it? If I have faith in the absolute absence of doubt, in what do I have faith? And how do I come to that faith? Do I depend on learned others to tell me what to believe and I then believe it without doubt, without questioning? Do I take a set of biblical verses to tell me what to believe? But if so, what am I to believe based on the verses discussed above? The exegesis, or interpretation, of these verses is not straightforward. Some cast doubt in a rather negative sense. Yet, Jesus, in the Gospel, seems to be only mildly concerned with the doubt of the apostle, and of Thomas in particular.

For myself, at least, I hold doubt and faith in tension with each other. My thinking about God, about Jesus, about the Trinity, about Church, and about everything else, is stimulated by my doubts that I truly and fundamentally understand what I am to believe or to do in any particular situation – or in general. To have faith without doubt is to take some “authority’s” or some particular interpretation’s position without question (and just think about the people who have done terrible things based on an unquestioned conviction). On the other hand, to have doubt such that it replaces all faith leaves me cynical and with no path ahead. So, I depend on doubt to stimulate questions, and questions to help me to test my faith, and to help me to define it.

What do you think about doubt and faith? Are they unalterably opposed to each other? What would your faith be like if you had no doubts at all?

It’s something to think about.

Allen Stout



Birthdays

*Andrea Utzman 6/4, Lance Brooks 6/7,
Stacey Bergman 6/9, June Palacio 6/14,
Precious Nwazota 6/24, Cynthia Riley 6/24,
Dave Sissons 6/28*

ANNIVERSARIES

**MICHAEL & ANDREA UTZMAN 6/15,
ALBERT & PAM PEZONE 6/24,
ALLEN STOUT & CAROLE PILGRIM 6/25,
ERIC & JULIANA ALMANZA 6/25,
MIKE & SHARON SHEFFIELD 6/26**



The world, especially the people of the United States, and for peace all over the world and wherever there is oppression or trouble.

Serving in the Armed Forces at home and around the world: members of the U.S. Army: **Adam** and Boston; the U.S. Marine Corps: Sean, Adelangel and Jesse; the U.S. Air Force: Jordan, Joshua and Carlos; the U.S. Navy: **Jonathan**; and the U.S. Coast Guard: **Jennifer** and Corey.

The protection and guidance of Parishioners and Friends: Bertha, Ariana, Alyssa, Ana, Joe, Deb, Erin and her family, Joey and his mothers Beth and Jan, Penny and her family, Chris and his family, Daniel, Sandra, Sue, Josef, Brandon, Michaela, Rosie, Nathan, Jan, Paul, Jason, Analisa, Gayle's doctor, Patricia's children, Shannon, June, and Jim.

The healing of Parishioners and friends: Karen, Liz, Carlene, Samantha, Patrick, Allyson, Bert, Allen, Joanne, Rosie, Jim, Sabrina, Bill, Linda M., Diana, Susanne, Ana, Joe, Rae Ann, Kathy, Lindy, Linda O., Gingi, Becky, Dawna, Michael, Ginger, Deb, Kathy, Lisa, Kathryn, Nancy, Earl, Pat, Chuck, Nick, Asgeir and Rosa, Joshua, Joyce, Donna, Billie, Eric, Beverly, Paige, Joan, June, Toni, Diane, Linda, Rachel, Lynn, Jane, Laura, Tori, Claire, Lance, Susan, Karen, Jared, Marguerite, Scott, Fran, Charlie, Suzanne, Linda, Diana, Lindy, Rosie, Jeff, Audra, Geri, Sue, Lu, Richard, Cindy, Daniel, Kim, Jason, Jennie, Gayle, Lori, Jan, Nancy W., Bruce, Mary, Kim, Janice, Pam, Diane, Patricia, Carolyn, Carmen, Ruben, Barbara, David, Lizz, and support for all families and friends caring for loved ones, especially Tami, the people of Ukraine, India, Vietnam, Peru, Nigeria, Haiti, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Myanmar and all parishioners and friends with health problems.

Homebound and Special Needs: Karen, Samantha and the homeless, the poor and the unemployed, affordable housing for families, the end of COVID-19, Ebola, AIDS, and Cancer in the world, and for those suffering from mental illness.

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