

# Thomas Tract April 2026

Rector's Message - by Fr. Jeff Murph

Over the story of human history, it is surprising how little people have changed. Certainly, governments and societies are different in important ways. For example, 2000 years ago, there was not really an example of a democracy with a social net, where everyone is considered equal. Yet, the same kinds of destructive behaviors and decisions people make today were being made then; addictions, greed, ruthless ambition, exploiting others. At the same time, of course, even then people loved one another and sacrificed for the ones they loved. But then and today, there have been the same deep divisions in human society; between rich and poor, between different ethnicities, between the supporters of one leader or another. That is something that the New Testament claims is changed in Jesus Christ. The classic divisions St. Paul wrote about between the Greeks and the Jews, or between slaves and free people, or even between men and woman (Galatians 3:28) are broken down. Paul argues, *“For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility...that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross”* (Ephesians 2:14-16).



If we Christians are to put the New Commandment (*“that you love one another as I have loved you”* (John 13:34-35) into practice, then that means we Christians love one another EVEN if we are different from one another, or have different opinions from one another. The reason is that Jesus has loved us enough to die for us even when we were his enemies. After all, God created all human beings in his image and Jesus died to save the whole world—even those who do not know him yet. So when we become members of Jesus’ family (our new identity when we get baptized) then we do not get to choose our brothers or sisters (God does that); indeed, we are simply to love them.

This, of course, is another one of those hard things about Christianity (related to another one being the command to forgive one another, even our enemies). It is a whole lot easier to simply hang out with people who are like us or who think the same way we do. Indeed, there are churches where that type of uniformity is rather common but that is not true of the church as a whole.

Just like forgiving people who hurt us, the only way we can truly love one another (even the ones you strongly disagree with) is to ask the Holy Spirit to give you a heart of love for them. If we do that then unexpected things begin to happen: we may actually become interested in understanding WHY they think the things we disagree with, we may see them as more than the labels so many people slap on one another if we see them as someone Jesus dearly loves.

And if we actually are successful in loving one another then we become a sign to a world that never seems able to climb out of its broken behaviors and divisions. But, after all, changing the world is what the cross and resurrection of Jesus are all about.



## [Thank you for your help!](#)

A huge thank you from the St. Thomas staff to all of the men and women who volunteered in so many ways during this Lent and Holy week. Thank you to the Altar Guild for their continuing hard work in making the church look beautiful and liturgically correct for all the many services. Thank you to those who volunteered for the extra services by reading, ushering, reading a part of the

Passion Gospel, etc., to those who worked to set up, serve, and clean up after the District 2 Lenten Preaching series dinner, those who folded countless palm crosses, and to the Flower Guild, who are working to have the church look beautiful for Easter Day. Thank you to the St. Thomas choir, whose music enriches the services, and to the parents of acolytes for getting them to the extra services, and those parents helping with the Easter egg hunt. There are so many moving parts during this season, and it could not come together without the efforts of everyone getting involved, whether in large or small ways, visible or behind the scenes. If anyone was left out, it was not intentional.

## [Easter Egg Hunt](#)

There will be an Easter Egg hunt for children ages 12 and under in the front yard area of the church (outside the Parish Hall doors) immediately following the 10:30 service. Please bring a basket or bag to hold all of the goodies collected. Parents are encouraged to help supervise and help the smallest participants during the hunt. For questions or more information, please contact Jessica Fischer at [JLFischer316@gmail.com](mailto:JLFischer316@gmail.com).



## [Newcomer's Course Starting Soon](#)

Fr. Murph will hold a newcomer's / basic Christianity class starting the Sunday after Easter (April 12). The class will be held during the usual Adult Education class at 9:30 am between the two services. It is open to everyone, but particularly for adults who are new to St. Thomas and/or the Episcopal Church. If you are interested in learning more about the church and/or if you are interested in being Received or Confirmed by the Bishop during her visit to St.

Thomas in June, please attend the classes and speak with Fr. Murph.

## [First Holy Hike of 2026](#)

St. Thomas will hold its first Holy Hike of the year on April 11. The Hike will be led by Fr. Guy Brown, who is asking anyone interested in participating to meet at the church at 8:30 am before heading to Boyce Park. For those who don't know what a Holy Hikes are, they are hikes held at local parks in which there is a service of sorts along the



trail. Readings are read, prayers are prayed, and a Holy Eucharist is celebrated. Walks are typically 1-2 miles and are of varying degrees of difficulty - usually easy or moderate. Everyone is invited to participate in this time of prayer, exercise, and fellowship. For questions or more information, speak with Fr. Brown.

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## Upcoming Events/Services

- March 30-April 1 (M-W) - Holy Eucharist celebrated at 6 pm
- April 2 - Maundy Thursday Service at 7:30 pm
- April 3 - Good Friday Service at 7:30 pm
- April 4 - Easter Vigil Service at 7:30 pm
- April 5 - Easter Day Services at 8 am and 10:30 am. An Easter egg hunt for children 12 and under will be held outside on the lawn following the 10:30 service.
- April 11 - Holy Hike at Boyce Park (see article above)
- April 12 - Newcomers/basic Christianity course during the 9:30 am Ault Education time (see article above).



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## Courses/meetings being offered



### St. Thomas regular events include:

- Bible Study - Tuesday mornings at 11 am.
  - Healing Service - Wednesday mornings at 10:00
  - Adult Education - Sunday mornings at 9:30
  - Men's Ministry and Women's Group meetings - as determined
- ### Beloved Community Initiative's upcoming events include:
- a Prayer and Share meeting on April 15 at 7 p.m. (link found at <https://www.episcopalpgh.org/prayer-share/>)
  - Sacred Ground Small Groups - the schedule can be found at: [https://www.episcopalpgh.org/sacred-ground-schedule-](https://www.episcopalpgh.org/sacred-ground-schedule-released/)

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- St. Thomas to host a Sacred Ground Level 2 Class starting Apr. 16 and running through May 21. Dinner is provided for in-person participants. Zoom options are also available. To register, visit: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe6uxXr1QHL16uv8CkQXzN-9vJpZlmsLHry-JKTy5yJzk1jIjQ/viewform?pli=1> or speak with Shahnaz Alam-Denlinger.
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RIVERVIEW COMMUNITY

# EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

ALL ARE WELCOME

OAKMONT COUNTRY CLUB  
7 AM



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## April Birthdays

3 - Veronica Hunter  
4 - Jessica Fischer

## April Anniversaries

16 - Jack & Coleen Middlemas  
18 - Dan & Barbra Urban

5 - Lachlan McClelland  
8 - Amanda Aber  
8 - Dana Rattenbury  
8 - Vanessa Trecki  
12 - Joseph Dailey  
14 - Patiente Irakoze  
15 - Brandon Hunter  
15 - Jim Kelly  
18 - April Fusaro  
21 - Kaitlin Marcus  
25 - Megan Cass  
26 - D.J. Hayes  
25 - Brenigan McClelland  
27 - Phyllis Kurzawa  
27 - Sam Mysels  
28 - Darla Stilley

\*\* 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!

30 - Jim & Tracy Fitzroy  
30 - Mark & Katie Mazzaresse



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



St. Thomas Memorial Church | 378 Delaware Ave. | Oakmont, PA 15139 US

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