2019 PARISH PROFILE

St. Thomas’ Whitemarsh
An Episcopal Church in Fort Washington, PA
WITH JOY, HOPE AND PRAYERS WE COME TOGETHER—

Vestry, Prayer Team, Profile Committee, Rector Search Committee and members of St. Thomas’ Church Whitemarsh—to share here a picture of who we are: where we have been, who we are today and what we believe we can become. Our process shines a light on our abiding love and pride for St. Thomas’; its history and accomplishments, its many strengths and the challenges we have before us. We share these with you so that we may discover and be found by a new rector whose vision and example will guide our spiritual growth, strengthen our community and support our efforts to make a difference in the world.
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VISION
Our vision for St. Thomas’ Whitemarsh is to respond fully to the Great Commandment: “to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself.”

MISSION
Our mission is to grow in the knowledge and love of God and to equip ourselves, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to serve in the name of Christ wherever we find ourselves.
GRACED WITH A GIFT of PLACE
St. Thomas’ Church Whitemarsh has always been far more than a 48-acre hilltop populated with iconic buildings, educational hubs, a historic cemetery, centers of outreach, playgrounds, a labyrinth, lush landscaping and stretches of open land.

It is a blessed, beloved sanctuary, stewarded by faithful people. This holy hill and the inspiration and resources that emanate from it draws people from near and far of all ages, perspectives, sexual orientation and financial means.

Graced with this unique gift of place, we are emboldened to transform our own relationships with God and to extend God’s love to those in need. The beauty and spirit found on our large campus is our unique gift to share. We believe our campus to be an extraordinary strength which, at the same time, offers unrealized opportunities.
CAMPUS MAP
St. Thomas' Church Whitemarsh

1 Church
2 Parish Hall
   • MacColl Auditorium
   • Kitchen
   • Youth Space—Upper Room
3 Emily Norris Carey Learning Center
   • McCausland Chapel
   • Thayer Family Lounge
   • Beck Room
   • Hutchinson
   • Sunday Childcare—Lower Level
4 St. Thomas' Preschool
5 Ellen Sheaff School House

6 Barn
7 Church Hill Hall
   • Parish Offices
   • Rittenhouse Room
   • Moyer Library
8 Whitemarsh Learning Center
9 Haas Hall
   • Choir Room
   • Restrooms
10 Labyrinth
11 Community Gardens

Private Residences
12 Groton House
13 Cottage
14 Corner House
SURROUNDING AREA

Fort Washington is located in Whitemarsh Township, PA, a suburb of Philadelphia. It is a community with a unique blend of open space, residential neighborhoods, and a wealth of shopping and dining opportunities. Home to Fort Washington State Park, comprising 493 acres, it took its name from the temporary fort built by George Washington’s troops in the fall of 1777.

There are many housing options in the areas surrounding Fort Washington, from townhome communities to single family homes. The area is served by several highly rated school districts, and numerous independent schools, making Fort Washington a desirable place to live and work.

Fort Washington is conveniently located—40 minutes from Center City Philadelphia, where Fortune 500 companies such as Comcast and Aramark are headquartered. Philadelphia also offers incredible historic and cultural landmarks, such as Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Philadelphia Zoo, the oldest zoo in the United States. In addition, New York and Washington, DC are easily accessible by car or train.
HISTORY

William Penn, the founder of the colony of Pennsylvania, granted land for a small log church to be built on this hill. It was built between 1693 and 1698, becoming the first church in Montgomery County.

This original church was replaced in 1710 by a “goodly stone structure” that lasted over a century, surviving even a British onslaught following the Battle of Germantown in 1777.

On its completion in 1818, a third church was consecrated by the pre-eminent Bishop William White, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, and named St. Thomas in honor of both the Apostle Thomas and the Rev. Thomas Clayton, the church’s first visiting minister from 1698–99. The fourth and current church was consecrated in 1881, having been expanded twice in response to the needs of a growing congregation.

A Parish Hall, dating from 1957, serves as the home of St. Thomas’ Preschool, and provides the space for a variety of spiritual formation opportunities to meet the needs of today’s congregation eager to grow in our faith. A chapel was added to this building in 2018 creating the possibility to offer Family Table worship on Sunday morning for parents with young children.

A large portion of an adjoining farm was acquired in 1953. The barn on this section of our property is home to our Second Saturday Sales a vital ministry enthusiastically supported by parishioners and the surrounding community.
Come to this table, you who have much faith and you who would like to have more; you who have been here often and you who have not been for a long time; you who have tried to follow Jesus, and you who have failed; Come. It is Christ who invites us to meet Him there. The Gifts of God for the People of God.
ST. THOMAS’ IS COMMITTED TO OFFERING RICH WORSHIP EXPERIENCES FOR ALL AGES.

8:00 am Eucharist is held in the main church, in accordance with Rite I and is completely spoken without music.

10:00 am Eucharist, also in the main church, is held in accordance with Rite II of the 1979 Prayer Book and is occasionally drawn from Enriching Our Worship or Common Worship (UK). The liturgy is traditional, but not overly formal. Hymns and service music are supported by the Parish Choir, Choristers and organ music. Our worship services are supported by parishioners who take on roles as vergers, acolytes, chalice bearer’s, lay readers and ushers. In addition, our worship is augmented by the talents of dedicated altar and flower guilds.

10:30 am Eucharist (“Family Table”) is held in McCausland Chapel—an abbreviated Eucharist approved by our bishop. It is primarily intended for families with young children, and includes creative and tangible prayers, movement, music, and visual art. Adults and children take on various leadership roles each week.

Wednesday 10:00 am Eucharist is held in the Cheston Chapel in accordance with Rite I.

Throughout the year special services filled with music are offered: Evensongs, All Saints Remembrance, and Lessons and Carols. During Advent, daily Morning Prayer and a Service for Comfort and Healing are also offered.
MUSIC

Music informs and elevates our worship experience, moving us in unexpected ways. We are blessed by the leadership of our Music Minister who brings a diverse range of styles, from works accompanied by the organ or piano, to instrumental offerings to acapella works. As a congregation, we participate in praising God in the singing of hymns, psalms and responses. Supported by the organs, together with our choir, the congregation is well equipped to sing praise to God. Indeed, the choir regularly moves about the building during our services to better support congregational singing.

Our Family Table service is supported by a professional musician and music carefully chosen to be age-appropriate and theologically rich.

CHOIRS

The Chorister Program consists of singers, aged 8 and up, and is affiliated with the Royal School of Church Music program. The Parish Choir sings every week at the 10:00 am service, at special worship services, and in concerts in the community.

CARILLON

High in the tower of St. Thomas’ is the carillon, consisting of four octaves of bronze bells. The carillon signals the beginning of 10:00 am worship and is often played after the service as parishioners depart. The free carillon concert series draws an appreciative audience from the area to enjoy a summer evening under the trees.
ADULT SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Our worship experience is supported by a variety of opportunities for adult spiritual formation. We have a long tradition of Sunday Faith Forums after the 10:00 am service featuring engaging topics presented by clergy, parishioners and outside speakers. A year-long international C.S. Lewis speaker series was organized and hosted last year, attracting scholars from across the country and England.

Throughout the year, lay leaders play a vital role in small group discussions and Bible study groups. Our tradition of women’s retreats inspired our first men’s weekend retreat this past May. Our labyrinth events offer unique opportunities for intentional walking prayer.

Each of these offerings helps us to grow in the knowledge and love of God; and to learn about ourselves and the needs of the community around us.
CHILDREN AND YOUTH SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Our Children, Youth, and Family Ministries create an inviting community for all families with children: infants, children (pre-K through 5th grade) and youth (6th through 12th grades). During the 10:00 and 10:30 am services we offer childcare for our youngest members 2 and under. Our older children are regular participants in both the Rite II and the Family Table services as worshipers, readers, and acolytes. In addition they have opportunities to participate in Barn Sales and in our annual Pac-a-Thon, Harvest Fest, and Be-an-Angel events, developing meaningful relationships with adults and with one another.

SUNDAY FORMATION HOUR

Each Sunday our younger children participate in Godly Play. At the same time, our youth attend Breakfast + Bible, a video-based curriculum.

CONFIRMATION

Beginning in 8th grade, youth have the opportunity to reaffirm their Baptismal Covenant by attending our bi-weekly Confirmation Class, participating in study, service projects, and field trips.

YOUTH GROUP

Our Youth Ministry draws teenagers from at least 15 different public and private schools, and also home-schooled teens. Leadership and fellowship opportunities are offered through our long-standing summer “Mission Possible” trips, Vacation Bible School, and Youth Vestry Representatives. Our teenagers are also invited to Sunday evening “hang-outs” on campus, Deanery activities, and “Dinner Church” with other Diocesan youth.
ST. THOMAS’ PRESCHOOL

Our Preschool is a thriving school for 125 children, aged two through five. Operating for nearly 70 years, the school offers early-childhood education and Christian formation in the Episcopal tradition, with pastoral support for both children and parents. The school’s philosophy centers on learning through purposeful play, by way of an age-appropriate curriculum, and weekly chapel for all. Summer brings a fun-filled eight-week camp experience for over 80 children, who enjoy programs that make full use of our 48-acre campus.

The school benefits from a staff of 21, active trustee Board, and supportive parent group. Our Director recently celebrated 10 years of service, and we have many faculty with over 20 years of service.

The Preschool is well-known in the broader community. Many local “alumni”—parishioners and non-parishioners alike—fondly remember their own and their children’s years at the school.

More information may be found at http://www.stthomaspreschoolpa.com
MINISTRIES

Putting faith into action is central to our Parish life and at St. Thomas’ we offer many ways to serve the Church and the wider community. With a bounty of time, talents and treasure and a depth of commitment, St. Thomas’ parishioners serve with purpose, engage with others and have fun.

OUTREACH

Many dedicated volunteers, including many non-parishioners, provide hands-on and/or financial support to over 15 organizations in three strategic areas: children, families, and education; hunger and housing; and global programs.

Our hands-on outreach work has included:

- Hosting a camp each summer at St. Thomas’ for at-risk children
- cooking and serving meals to the homebound or homeless
- mentoring and tutoring youth
- building water systems in remote villages in Honduras
- mentoring abused or abandoned girls at Our Little Roses home in Honduras
- inviting families to Harvest Fest and the Christmas Party for fun and fellowship

Outreach is funded primarily through revenue generated from thrift sales at our Barn. On “Second Saturday Sale” days from May through November, the Barn is packed with “gently used” inventory donated by parishioners and the community. These festive sales regularly attract large numbers of people to our campus providing unique opportunities for fellowship. Previously used items find new homes. And funds are provided to support our partner organizations.
**WELCOMING**

The Welcoming Commission has recently adopted a new welcome and membership process—*Invite–Welcome–Connect.* We have created a simplified campus map, scheduled *Coffee with Clergy* to connect parishioners from our 8:00, 10:00, and Family Table worship services who might not otherwise have the opportunity to socialize with one another; planned *Newcomer Dinners* to be offered regularly; and designed *St. Thomas’ 101* sessions to help newcomers learn more about the life and ministry of the church.

**HOSPITALITY**

The Hospitality Commission nourishes our parishioners with wonderful food and refreshments at functions throughout the year. These include all-parish brunches, picnics, a pancake supper, special Easter and Christmas events, after-Church faith forums and summer iced tea on the lawn. The dozen members of this Commission delight in meal planning and cooking, and enjoy great camaraderie as they prepare their offerings, all in all a great recipe.

**PASTORAL CARE**

St. Thomas’ clergy, in close collaboration with our dedicated lay ministers, provide care to parishioners in times of joy, sorrow, illness, trial, transition or other need. Clergy are on call for pastoral emergencies and maintain a Parish prayer list with names read at all Sunday and weekday services. Clergy and trained Eucharistic lay ministers take communion to the homebound and those in healthcare facilities.

In addition, we manifest Christ’s loving presence through:

- **Altar Flower Delivery:** With a personalized card, delivered to homes after church on Sunday
- **Card Ministry:** Handwritten, personal messages of love or encouragement
- **Confidential Prayer Chain:** Daily prayers offered for parishioners’ needs or concerns
- **Feeding Hands Meal Ministry:** Home-cooked meals, delivered in times of need
- **Prayer Shawl Ministry:** Hand-knit, blessed, and offered; tangible reminders of Christ’s presence
- **Stephen Ministry:** Confidential, empathic conversations with trained volunteers
STEWARDSHIP

Over the years, St. Thomas’ has learned to embrace stewardship as the faithful management of all the gifts God has entrusted to our care.

A large group of knowledgeable and dedicated leaders care deeply about the faithful management of our grounds, buildings, cemetery, endowment funds, and operating budget.

As a community of active volunteers, we give generously of our time and talent to participate in a wide variety of ministry opportunities.

As financial givers, we completed a successful capital campaign in 2015 that allowed us to add classrooms for our Preschool program and to add a chapel and meeting rooms for the church.

Our annual pledge drive, however, has lost some of its energy. To get back on track, Richard Felton, the Executive Director of The Episcopal Network for Stewardship, was engaged to assist us in creating a lay-led, clergy-supported program emphasizing a “culture of generosity”. In October, we began our “Journey to Generosity” pledge campaign. Parishioners have responded promptly and enthusiastically with an encouraging number of increased pledges.

Reclaiming our commitment to year-round stewardship is a major priority for the next chapter of our life together as St. Thomas’ Church.
TRANSITION: OUR TIME TO LEARN AND GROW

The partnership with RenewalWorks in 2018 provided an important first step in preparing us for this time of transition. We learned that as a parish we are spiritually hungry, longing for ways to grow our faith, and drawn to inspiring clergy and lay leaders who are authentic in their own spiritual journeys. We recognized that we are deeply committed to serving others but we don’t always connect our actions to our beliefs.

Given this information, we were ready to learn more. In June 2019, parishioners participated in small group discussions about our strengths, challenges, and hopes for our next Rector. The Vestry planned a Saturday retreat to focus on the future. Each of the Commissions wrote thoughtful descriptions of their ministry areas for this profile. We conducted an online survey to which 221 parishioners responded.

All of this has allowed us to focus with greater clarity on our hopes for the future.
HOPES AND DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE
LOVING GOD AND LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS AS OURSELVES, WE WILL BE A COMMUNITY ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN

• Demonstrating forgiveness, reconciliation, respect and love
  Because we are united in one vision and mission

• Inviting and welcoming all who are seeking a spiritual home
  Because we offer authentic worship and life-giving relationships

• Nurturing a culture of generosity
  Because we believe in the abundance of God’s love

• Following our own pathways to spiritual growth
  Because we provide formation in a variety of ways for all ages

• Equipping ourselves to serve in the name of Christ
  Because we value and support our community’s gifts for ministry
OUR NEXT RECTOR

First and foremost, St. Thomas’ seeks a true spiritual leader, one whose own deep and abiding faith and example will inspire us to continue on our own spiritual journeys and guide us to live fully into our vision and mission.

We hope to be engaged and challenged in our faith by a preacher whose sermons, while anchored in Scripture, motivate us to seek God in new and modern ways.

We consider compassion, authenticity, candor and humor to be essential attributes. We hope for a Rector who will support and cultivate our sense of community, welcoming and bringing together parishioners of all ages and walks of life.

We look for a leader who will empower our congregation to meet the opportunities and challenges before us. A collaborative leader who can help us accept the changes that are needed in order for us to grow.

We seek a good listener who is interested, open-minded, eager to learn and decisive. We hope for a Rector who understands what it takes to lead a large and complex institution, appreciating and respecting our history and heritage.

Our parish needs a confident and faithful steward who is financially savvy, comfortable talking about finances and willing to join lay leadership in creating a culture of generosity.

This is our prayer.

You will learn more from this video prepared with you in mind. Click here to see our 13 minute video.
WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU
APPENDIX: FINANCIAL SUMMARY

As you will see on the attached financial statement, St Thomas Whitemarsh has operated on a break-even basis, generating a small surplus of income over expenses for the last four years. In addition to Stewardship gifts, the Church also receives income from both the Preschool and Cemetery which are operated as separate entities, under Church oversight. Both entities are well managed and make a meaningful contribution to the financial health of the Church. The Outreach budget is not included in the Church’s operating budget because all funds are raised from outside sources, primarily through monthly Barn sales and other special events. The Outreach Commission distributes most of these funds to organizations based on their giving guidelines. A portion of these funds are retained to cover Outreach related expenses and Barn maintenance.

The Church enjoys broad financial support from parishioners and historically realizes approximately 95% of the amount pledged during the annual Stewardship campaign. This percentage has declined slightly over the last 10 years. A greater concern is a decline in the number and amount of pledges received. While this is not an unexpected consequence of the departure of a Rector, many churches within the Diocese have experienced similar declines. Ranked by normal operating income, St. Thomas’ Whitemarsh is the largest parish in the Deanery and the fourth largest among the 130+ parishes in the Diocese.

St. Thomas’ benefits from an independent and disciplined Endowment Committee that oversees the performance of the investment managers that manage the Endowment. At the end of 2018 the Endowment was comprised of two Church funds, one Cemetery fund and 20 restricted/designated funds which are all comingled and managed by outside managers. The market value of the Endowment as of December 31, 2019 was approximately $7.1 million. The current annual distribution limit is 3.85% of the trailing three-year average balance.
## ST. THOMAS’ WHITEMARSH
### MULTI-YEAR FINANCIAL RESULTS

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<tr>
<th>CHURCH</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$922,119 58.2%</td>
<td>$985,826 62.1%</td>
<td>$1,050,737 64.1%</td>
<td>$976,545 62.6%</td>
<td>$1,191,255 73.7%</td>
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<td>Other Gifts</td>
<td>$221,995 14.0%</td>
<td>$87,272 55%</td>
<td>$109,433 6.7%</td>
<td>$169,748 10.9%</td>
<td>$239,178 14.8%</td>
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<td>Endowment Income</td>
<td>$133,080 8.4%</td>
<td>$155,448 9.8%</td>
<td>$162,645 9.9%</td>
<td>$144,032 9.2%</td>
<td>$146,432 9.1%</td>
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<td>Special Funds</td>
<td>$307,238 19.4%</td>
<td>$357,730 22.6%</td>
<td>$315,304 19.2%</td>
<td>$225,931 14.5%</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
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<td>$1,586,276 100.0%</td>
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<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>Personnel</td>
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<td>$928,643 58.8%</td>
<td>$942,226 578%</td>
<td>$869,221 56.0%</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
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<td>$243,258 15.4%</td>
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<td>Programs</td>
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<td>Buildings &amp; Maintenance</td>
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<td>$223,699 14.2%</td>
<td>$240,434 14.7%</td>
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<td>$380,344 24.2%</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>$1,579,392 100.0%</td>
<td>$1,630,768 100.0%</td>
<td>$1,551,455 100.0%</td>
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<td><strong>Surplus/Deficit</strong></td>
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<td>$6,884</td>
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### Preschool

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<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
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<td>Tuition Income</td>
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<td>Operating Expenses</td>
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<td>Transfer to Church</td>
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### Cemetery

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<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating Income</td>
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<td>Endowment &amp; Restricted Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating Expenses</td>
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<td>$32,650</td>
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### Outreach

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach Budget</td>
<td>$84,175</td>
<td>$111,833</td>
<td>$122,000</td>
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<td>$132,000</td>
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GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

We have a well-organized governance structure that relies on effective lay volunteer recruitment, engagement and training; shared clergy/lay cooperation and direction; and succession planning.

- **Vestry.** Twelve Vestry members elected at annual meeting from nominations proposed by nominating committee (three Vestry, and three non-Vestry, parishioners and non-voting Rector).

- **Officers.** Rector annually appoints the Rector’s Warden (senior lay leader). Our other Vestry officers—People’s Warden, Accounting Warden and Clerk (corporate secretary)—are elected annually by the Vestry.

- **Vestry Action.** Monthly meetings are chaired by the Rector (a non-voting member). The Vestry acts through a consent agenda for routine matters. It maintains up-to-date by-laws, policies and handbook with Vestry job descriptions and procedures. Only the Vestry is authorized to act (except in emergencies) for the church corporation.

- **Executive Committee.** Members are the Rector, Wardens and one or more at-large Vestry members. The EC plans Vestry meeting agendas and acts as a human resources committee and Rector advisory forum. With the Rector, the EC annually evaluates ministry effectiveness, including the Rector’s goals and performance (the Vestry then approves Rector’s salary and benefits).

- **Commissions.** Ten ministry program and property commissions are chartered by the Vestry. Vestry members serve as liaisons to them. The Vestry appoints Cemetery and Preschool board members too. The Rector appoints commission and Cemetery and Preschool board chairs.

- **Finance Committee.** This Committee is chaired by a non-Vestry member, but it includes the Rector and Accounting Warden. Our annual budget process includes Commission input, Finance Committee review and Vestry approval. This Committee also oversees the annual audit.

- **Endowment Committee.** Our Endowment Committee (the Rector’s Warden and Rector are voting and non-voting members, respectfully) has independent investment oversight responsibility. It determines the endowment income contributed annually to operating and cemetery budgets using a standard three-year average market return formula.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the many parishioners who participated in this effort to create an accurate portrait of St. Thomas’ Church.

We thank our staff who encouraged and supported us every step of the way.

We thank our graphic design partner, Lia Calhoun.

We thank David Kepner (Dream Studios) and Morgan Betz and Carolyn Powers (Red Pup Films) for the video produced in conjunction with this profile.

Finally, we thank every member of the congregation for entrusting us with this responsibility.

Ginger Goodrich, Chair; Liz Butler Rodgers, Marggy Ells, Carl Jameson, John Kepner, David Thayer

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and on earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
ST. THOMAS’ CHURCH, WHITEMARSH

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