



# St. Thomas

## TIDINGS

AUGUST 2007

YEAR 2007 ISSUE 2



### In Search of a Priest

“This is going to be a spiritual process,” said Barry Kramer. “It may sound like a lot of nitty-gritty—and it is—but selecting your new priest should be a spiritual process.”

Barry will act as the diocesan consultant to the committee that will search for a new priest for St. Thomas. As he stated this week, “The process is complicated. It’s good to have a coach, someone who can answer questions when you can’t get to the bishop or canon.”

Parishioners serving on the search committee, in addition to Vestry representative Joann Collins, are Dave Zurbrick, Jim Haaga, Tom Bailey, Kerstin Davis, Lynn McLure, and Diana Donovan. They met with Rev. Kramer for the first time on Thursday, August 9, and selected Jim Haaga as chair. Their first task is to survey the church on how it perceives its situation and its goals.

Rev. Kramer served from 1993 until 1996 as the very first priest-in-charge at St. Thomas. He also “wrote the book” on the rector search process used by the Diocese of Western North Carolina.

“Since we’re not a large parish, it shouldn’t take long to gather information,” Kramer said. “But we do have to determine what direction we’re going in. Who are we now? Who do we want to be? What kinds of things do we want to be doing?”

Of three search options (which can be found in the Rector Search Manual for the Diocese for WNC at [www.diocesewnc.org](http://www.diocesewnc.org)) the Vestry chose option two, which calls for middle ground in terms of survey detail. Although the manual states that option two assesses the feelings only of the Vestry and search committee, the St. Thomas survey will use feedback from the whole congregation. The present plan is to distribute and collect written surveys at the potluck on Sunday, August 26. *If you cannot attend, please contact a search committee member about how to submit your comments.*

“The survey is full of questions that will help the church to look at where it is,” Barry Kramer said. “It’s an assessment of the current life of the church.” For a preview of the questions, check pages 28 to 31 of the online Search Manual. Parts of the diocesan questionnaire may be tweaked to represent the needs of our church.

Once collated, survey results will go to Jim Pritchett, *continued on p. 3*

### ST. THOMAS VESTRY HIRES A ‘GEM’ OF A SECRETARY

Debra Martinez, comes from the school of hard rocks, strong locks and study blocks. She is a child of Indiana who grew up in Florida and fell in love with the mountains while visiting her great-grandma in Tennessee. She is a gem cutter, a former police officer and prison guard, and a 2007 top-of-her-class graduate of Mayland Community College, where she got—not one, but two—associate’s degrees. One is in criminal justice, the other in office systems technology.

Debra’s current challenge is to balance her full-time job at Gem Mountain, in Spruce Pine, with the bulletin, correspondence, and other needs of St. Thomas.

“My only real office experience has been in the work-study program at Mayland and in doing the books for my own business,” Debra said. “I’m looking forward to working with St. Thomas.”

Debra has coped with many life changes. Her first big *continued on p. 3*

Dear Friends,

Besides all the articles about activities that we hear about week to week, we’re beginning to catch up on profiles of each other. In upcoming issues we will have profiles of English-speaking and Spanish-speaking folk who come to worship with us when they can.

If you want to put in an article or prayer request next issue, please contact Carol Thomas or me. —Diana Donovan

Rector Search

1

Debra

# St. Thomas

## TIDINGS

AUGUST 2007

### LORD, HELP PAVE OUR WAY

Lord, help us to extend our helpfulness  
in reaching out to others in dire need.  
Through biblical study and hearing thy word,  
help us to glorify thee with Christian good deed.

Help us to advertise ourselves, O Lord,  
that others may know our way.  
And when knowing that ours is the right way,  
help us to praise thy name each day.

Help us in attracting our young ones, O Lord,  
through teaching thy stories, good deeds, and song.  
Help us with facilities for nurturing their growth,  
and guiding them toward thee, as their lives move along.

Guide us in our land investment for a new church,  
that all may witness our future story—  
displaying to all our growth intent,  
that they may join us in proclaiming your glory.

And, Lord, keep our spirits lifted high  
by keeping thy beacon of hope on us each day,  
guiding us always in our doing of thy righteous will,  
toward all goals of St. Thomas, Lord, help pave our way.  
—Bruce Holmes Estes  
(written 9-27-95)

### GROUNDS UPDATE

We had a wonderful turnout for our most recent two gardening days. Working between the much-needed rains, we accomplished near miracles by completing the fertilizing and weeding of the whole front garden. Buddy Leavitt and Joe Liggio sprayed all the poison ivy and moved rock to surround various garden beds; Jim Haaga weed-whacked the tall stuff; Jack Kaeck, Jodee Storrs, Diantha Stevenson, Carol and Tom Bailey, and Margie Haaga doled out the Osmocote pellets to our hungry plants. Their labors are much appreciated. The plants are now nourished until October, when your help will again be solicited to repeat this performance.

Our fine grounds watering team composed of Dave Zurbrick, Jack Kaeck, Tom Niehaus, Tom Bailey, and Diantha Stevenson will keep our trees and shrubs watered during the month of August and September. In spite of drought and truly dreadful soil, our new plantings are surviving, thanks to the care of these parish members. We're very thankful that they have made it through this first year, and are hopeful that they will make it through the coming year in equally good shape.

Please know that your gardening help is truly, truly appreciated.

—Peg Emerson

### Order of St. Luke Meets at St. Thomas

This is an update on our chapter of the Order of Saint Luke the Physician (OSL). The Living Faith Chapter was formed in June 2005 with members from Madison, Mitchell, and Yancey counties.

OSL is an ecumenical group whose purpose is to reclaim the healing ministry that was part of the early church but that has, to some extent, been set aside in recent centuries. According to the OSL handbook, "All humanity is the creation of a loving God who wills for everyone wholeness, health of the total person, body, soul, and spirit." The focus of OSL is healing prayer with the laying on of hands.

St. Thomas offers healing prayer each Sunday at the back of the church during Communion. Folks ask for prayer for themselves or, often, for someone else. Prayers are offered and hugs exchanged.

The Living Faith Chapter of OSL is a wonderful ecumenical group composed of Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, a few Buddhists, and others from our area. It meets on the 3rd Thursday in February, May, August, and November. OSL's upcoming meeting will be on Thursday, August 16th, at 7:00 P.M. at St. Thomas. The program will discuss using healing ministry in the prisons. As at all OSL meetings, everyone is welcome, whether a member of OSL or not. The meetings usually include a speaker on some aspect of the healing ministry. Then there is a healing service with prayer and music, followed by a time of fellowship and refreshments.

In addition to the quarterly meetings, during 2007, OSL has been holding enrichment sessions for those interested in different aspects of healing others. A group from St. Thomas, some of whom are OSL members and some not, have been attending.

To become a member of OSL, one must complete a training course that usually lasts from three to six months. The course includes a study of Jesus' 26 healings as described in the Gospels and in the OSL workbook. There is also a requirement to read three books on healing prayer, chosen from an OSL list.

If you want more information about the monthly sessions, the quarterly meetings, joining the St. Thomas healing prayer team, or membership in OSL, please speak with Maryallen Estes or Jim Haaga or me. I'm very proud that we at St. Thomas are sharing our worship/meeting space with OSL's Living Faith Chapter.

—Margie Haaga

Growing

2

Healing

# St. Thomas

## TIDINGS

AUGUST 2007

from the Vestry . . .

### . . . Priest Search Committee Named

The search has begun for a priest to guide, nurture, and grow St. Thomas. Vestry member Joann Collins accepted the mandate to select six men and women from the congregation to form a search committee. That task is complete, and the group met on August 9 to begin the discernment process.

“There are three ways to go about selecting a priest,” said Senior Warden Neal Culver. “We have selected a method that requires us to have a consultant and an interim priest—neither of whom can be a candidate for the permanent position.”

St. Thomas’s founding priest, Barry Kramer, has accepted the job as consultant. (See the article on the rector search process, page 1.) The consultant helps guide the Vestry and search committee in ascertaining what kind of person would be the best match for the church, depending on its sense of direction.

“I’m pleased that we’ve got the search committee approved and our consultant selected,” Neal said. “I think we might be ready to make a decision on our new rector in about six months.”

### . . . Interim Priest Hired

Bob Reese, who was interim priest at St. John’s in Silva, has agreed to be interim priest at St. Thomas during the search. Bob’s wife, Jeannette, is a deacon and will assist him. Their first service will be August 19.

An interim priest is charged with pastoring and guiding the church during its transition—not just delivering sermons.

### New Vestry Member

John Davis has agreed to serve out the Vestry term of Marianne Dagenhart, who resigned when she moved out of town. John will be the Vestry’s representative on the building and grounds committee.

### Giving to the Diocese

An annual contribution of \$8,850 will be given to the Diocese of Western North Carolina by St. Thomas this year—representing 13 percent of the congregation’s annual pledges. Last year, the congregation returned 12 percent of its pledged money to the diocese to help fund its operations.

### Sound the Retreat

The Vestry and committee chairs will gather on September 8 in a one-day retreat to plan for the coming year.

—Carol Thomas

DEBRA MARTINEZ. *continued from p. 1*

career decision came when she was eight. “Mom was into rocks,” Debra said. “I went to a gem and minerals show and a guy with a ‘cab’ machine showed me how to lay a stencil down on a gem slab and cut away. I was hooked.” Her mom and dad did gem work for craft shows and came to Estatoe to open Dick’s Gems and Gifts, where Debra worked for years, learning first how to set gems and then how to cut the facets responsible for a gem’s beauty and sparkle. Her mom still runs Dick’s, and Debra has her own cutting shop in the back.

Looking for more challenge, and more income, Debra went to work in 1997 as a dispatcher for the Burnsville Police Department. She ended up a patrol officer. “I didn’t try to arrest too many people,” she laughs. “I sent them away and told them to ‘do better’ next time.”

When a job opened up at Mountain View Corrections Institute a couple of years later, Debra became a corrections officer. “I worked the housing units, outside gatehouse, and perimeter patrol. Then I was assigned to the unit where they have male, medium-custody prisoners. You have to be on your toes all the time there. The mental stress was tremendous.”

After almost five years at the prison, Debra had a mini-stroke and left. However, she was not to hold back for long. She went to Mayland and did so well in her studies that she was singled out for being an “outstanding graduate” and for academic excellence. She went to the state capital to get her award.

She works long hours at Gem Mountain, getting orders packaged for mailing to customers. After hours, and on weekends, she takes rose and smoky quartz, garnets, and emeralds—“anything but diamonds”—back to her shop for cutting. Debra will take care of St. Thomas’s needs in her “off” hours.

—Carol Thomas

RECTOR SEARCH. *continued from p. 1*

canon to the bishop and the diocese’s deployment officer. The diocese will then suggest the names of priest candidates who might be a good fit. Our congregation and Vestry can also submit names to consider.

In many cases, the questionnaire has led to such good insight into a church’s history and perceived role that churches later put that information into a brochure offered to prospective members.

Kramer said he expects St. Thomas’s interim priest to schedule a parish dinner to lead the congregation through the process of reviewing the church’s history, its status, and its future plans. “That will come early in the process and help speed things up,” he said.

Joann Collins said that the Vestry wants to proceed as quickly as practical. “I know we need time to dream,” she said. “We need to slow down and look at where we are and determine the focus for our ministry. I would ask the entire congregation to pray for clarity as we go through this process.”

—Carol Thomas

Update on Enid Smith

The deacon at St. Thomas in the 1990s and later the deacon at Trinity Episcopal in Spruce Pine, Enid is in the nursing unit of her retirement community in Black Mountain. She is in her late eighties, and legally blind. Jackie and Rachel Murray took her into their home temporarily, and cared for her until a room with proper care facilities could be found. Enid's son is expected from Illinois this week. Let us keep Enid in our prayers and thank Jackie and Rachel for their care of Enid.

—Tom Niehaus

Update on Augusta

Our former priest, Augusta Anderson, is doing fine and enjoying some time as a full-time mom. She awaits the birth of the Andersons' fourth child, around September 5. Her husband, Steve, will notify the Vestry when the baby is born. In the meantime, please continue to hold the Andersons in your prayers.

—Carol Thomas

PRAYER REQUEST

*I would like to thank you for your continued prayers for my brother, Gene Pitra, who has non-Hodgkins lymphoma. This week, August 5-9, he will be undergoing very aggressive chemotherapy, which will hopefully prepare him for a stem-cell transplant. My sister Mary has been declared a match for him, and will be his stem-cell donor. Please continue to pray for him, and for my sister Mary.*

—God bless, Pat Sharkey

How is Kevin?

*St. Thomas folks ask me that at church, in the grocery store, at the Fitness Center, and even over at Penland. My son knows that you have been praying for him and he has told me that he has felt sustained by the prayers of people in many corners of the country. The answer is that he is doing very well. The donor is fully recovered and happy that her kidney is giving Kevin a new lease on life. He will have to have another surgery this winter to remove the other kidney, which is also as large as a football. He will be taking anti-rejection and immuno-suppressant drugs for the rest of his life. He also has to be vigilant about protecting himself from infection and disease. But those are small prices to pay. The most critical period for him is the first three months. So keep him in your prayers even when he is no longer on the Sunday list. Thank you.*

*Kevin is a man of deep faith. During the 11 months he was on the National Transplant list, he never wavered in his conviction that when the time was right, there would be a kidney. He is 52 years old and has three daughters, ages 20, 18, and 9. He is the head of the theater department at Notre Dame University. In addition, as a freelance dance lighting designer, he has served as lighting director for the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago. If you saw either Save the Last Dance for Me or Company, then you have seen his lighting design and maybe even his name in the credits.*

—Donna Jean Dreyer

### Parkway Playhouse Dinners

All three of the four dinners have gone beautifully and each subsequent dinner has been filled with more diners than one before. Although such nights out are nothing new to folks living in larger cities, Burnsville diners rarely enjoy an opportunity for a relaxing, gourmet dinner in a beautifully decorated space, so close to home. A perfect night out followed by a play! We have had many repeat customers, and also lots of new faces at each dinner, and that is certainly a "good thing."

The welcoming spirit that these events have created in the community is invaluable to St. Thomas, and we now have a reputation to live up to! I don't think that will be too much of a challenge for us, as a welcoming spirit is one of St. Thomas's biggest attributes.

As of the third dinner, in addition to offering relaxation and building good will toward Episcopalians, we have netted \$1,811! This is much-needed money to furnish the Children's Chapel—as Charlie Stover has named our downstairs space.

Whether you helped in the kitchen, served tables, set up or broke down the tables, made desserts, or supported us by purchasing tickets or by "talking it up" with your friends and neighbors, thank you for helping us far

exceed our most ambitious expectations for this big undertaking of our "little church in the mountains."

—Pat Sharkey



## ST. THOMAS LOSES A GOOD FRIEND

Delia Courtney died at Deerfield Episcopal Retirement Community on July 29. Delia and her husband, Marshall, have been members, enthusiastic cheerleaders, and extraordinarily generous supporters of our parish since its early days. Marshall and their three children, Kathy, Marc, and Julia, as well as spouses and grandchildren, survive. Kathy created the beautiful stained-glass window in our new church home.

Many from St. Thomas attended Delia's memorial service at St. Giles Chapel at Deerfield on August 2, including the Niehauses, the Zurbricks, the Emersons, Patty Curtis, Augusta Anderson, Bill Thomsen, the Collinses, Charlie Stover, Neal Culver, Maryallen Estes, and Alice Johnson. It was a lovely service, pure Delia. It was short and to the point, from the 1928 prayerbook, which she knew by heart from her girlhood days at Margaret Hall (Episcopal School in Versailles, Kentucky).

Delia was interred in the St. Giles Memorial Garden in a committal service followed by a reception and time to talk with the family at the Chapel Commons at St. Giles.

Gifts in memory of Delia may be made to St. Thomas Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 591, Burnsville, NC 28714; St. Giles Chapel, 1617 Hendersonville Road, Asheville, NC 28803; and Care Partners Hospice Foundation, P.O. Box 5779, Asheville, NC 28803.

You may view Delia's obituary, leave an online guestbook message, or view the online guestbook by clicking on Delia's name in the list at the web page: [http://obit.grocefuneralhome.com/obit\\_list.cgi](http://obit.grocefuneralhome.com/obit_list.cgi).

—Peg Emerson

# St. Thomas TIDINGS

AUGUST 2007



*Delia (second from right) and her family at Deerfield*

Delia Courtney

5

Prayer

### Prayer Shawl Ministry

Have you noticed the prayer shawls being presented to church members, from time to time, and being used at church? The St. Thomas Prayer Shawl Ministry arose from a workshop at the 2006 Diocesan Ministry and Mission Conference. Prayer Shawl Ministry is an outgrowth of a women's leadership conference at the Hartford, Connecticut, Seminary in 1998. Over time, scarves were added as an option for men who prefer them to shawls. There are traditional patterns for prayer shawls and scarves, but there is more to the prayer covering than meets the human eye.

What makes these shawls special is that the knitter prays for the recipient of the shawl while knitting it. The reasons for knitting one covering may be different from the reasons for knitting another one, but all reflect the sharing of God's love and care for all people.

These shawls are never sold; they are always a gift of love and time. You don't have to be a knitter to participate. Donations of yarn or money for more supplies are gratefully accepted but are never required in order to receive or request a shawl. Prayer shawls can be worn anytime, anywhere.

To date, 14 prayer shawls—and five scarves for the gentlemen—have been crafted and presented to members of the St. Thomas family. Three more are in the works.

If you would like to receive a prayer shawl or scarf, or would like to be part of this ministry, contact Diantha Stevenson. You may call her at home, at 682-3188.

—Diantha Stevenson

### Prayer Chain Ministry

A prayer chain involves a group of people who have developed the practice of daily prayer. Prayers are offered for individuals—known and unknown to an individual—for healing, comfort, or thanksgiving. At present there are nine members in St. Thomas's Prayer Chain.

Anyone wishing to have prayers may call the prayer chain leader. The St. Thomas Prayer Chain leader calls, or emails, all individuals on the prayer chain.

If you would like to be a member of the St. Thomas Prayer Chain, or if you want prayers offered for yourself or someone you know about, notify Diantha Stevenson, our Prayer Chain leader. She can be reached at home, at 682-3188.

—Diantha Stevenson

## CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP LISTENING PROJECT

As announced earlier this year, St. Thomas is a sponsor of the Christian Stewardship Listening Project (CSLP), along with the First Presbyterian Church. The project is an effort to promote environmental awareness and conversation in rural churches. Too often, issues of environmental

protection have become politically polarized arguments, with rigid lines drawn that leave no possibility for movement. The CSLP will use a well-tested format developed by Herb Walters. The Listening Project will send trained interview teams to pre-selected ministers and lay leaders in Yancey County churches during the upcoming winter months to hear their views on creation care and environmental stewardship. At the end of the process, there will be a day of conversation at High Pastures retreat center between all the interviewees. The hope is that a larger inter-church effort can be launched.

On Sunday, September 9, Herb Walters will be at St. Thomas during the coffee hour to give a short presentation and call for volunteers for the interviewing process. The time commitment for volunteers will not be great. It will consist of one training day at High Pastures; then each team, consisting of one interviewer and one recorder, will conduct two or three interviews.

This is a great opportunity for St. Thomas to be part of a project that can be replicated all over the country to revolutionize attitudes of rural people toward the land, water, and air that they use. There are currently programs suitable for urban church use but none for the rural church. And in the South, especially, rural churches tend to create and support cultural norms. The steering committee for the project includes Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, Quaker, and nondenominational representatives. Lynn McLure is the representative from St. Thomas. Contact her with your questions.

—Lynn McLure

# St. Thomas

AUGUST 2007

# TIDINGS

Listening Project

6

Stewardship

## STEWARDSHIP THOUGHTS

On June 2, the Rt. Rev. Cate Waynick of the Diocese of Indianapolis came to WNC to speak on stewardship as an organizing theological principle for our lives. What we do with all that we have, all of the time, defines who we are, says Bishop Cate.

Pat and Robbie Robertson, Diana Donovan, and Joann Collins listened to an expanded definition of stewardship for which we have been created. "It's a job we can't quit!" says Cate. Her message is based on God's generosity, which is abundant and unconditional. God's kind of giving is our model, the image into which we are called to grow. The more our stewardship reflects God's generosity, the more joy we will have. True generosity stems from the point of view of abundance and gratitude. Too often we are anxious about not having enough and we live as if we are living in scarcity. Yet Jesus came so that we might have more abundant life and, paradoxically, the more we give, the more abundant will our lives be.

—Joann Collins, Stewardship Chair

## Expanded Definitions of Stewardship

In every facet of life, we steward it—we care for aspects of creation in church life, business life, family life, and in political life, Bishop Cate Waynick reminded us. Remembering how our God loves us unconditionally, and how our God loves what is best for us, we need to steward bountiful grace in our human communities in sacramental ways.

One way to do this is *sacrificial*: we put ourselves aside and give up judging others (that's God's job) and focus on what we as individuals are called to do in order to contribute to the human communities in which we interact. This is best done from a place of *worship*: we center on our relationship with God, who will remind us how lucky we are to have various ways to give. God will also remind us that our human communities need *all* of us, in order for them to be loving, *sharing* communities. Together we are whole in ways that, individually, we find impossible—What I lack, you can supply; what you lack, someone else will supply. I find it awesome, now and then, to stop and appreciate all that this means, and how similar it is to sharing the *Eucharist*.

Bishop Waynick reminded us never to get discouraged. We should never forget that God always gives us abilities and resources for finding solutions to problems. These resources are found especially in God's presence and God's image—in our human communities and elsewhere on this earth. For example, we can solve energy shortages by looking at new energy sources, stewarding sources we use, and designing new systems to share energy worldwide.

Once part of our habitual outlook on life, these expanded views of stewarding grace and trust in sacramental ways will help shape our pledge process, another part of stewardship.

—Diana Donovan

# St. Thomas

## TIDINGS

AUGUST 2007

### Profile: Lutie and Neal Culver

Lutie and Neal Culver were both born in Knoxville, Tennessee. They lived a mile apart but did not meet until they had a blind date the year Neal graduated from high school. They married when Neal finished college at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Lutie left college after her junior year, when she married Neal.

They moved to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, where Neal was stationed with the U.S. Army Artillery. When he was deployed to Korea, Lutie returned to Knoxville to await the birth of their first son. When Neal returned from military service, he, Lutie, and baby Bob moved to Philadelphia, where Neal received an MBA from the Wharton School of Finance.

The Culvers then moved to San Francisco, where Neal worked for the Bank of America and then for a venture capital company. Their other two children—Jimmy and Missy—were born in San Francisco.

In 1971 the family returned to Knoxville where Neal entered the banking business with his father. Then in 1980 he and a partner founded a securities brokerage. In the early 2000s Neal sold his share of the business to his partner, retired, and moved to Burnsville.

Lutie Culver spent her high school years in a boarding school in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. The students were required to attend church, so she chose the Episcopal Church because it was very pretty and next door to her school. She became an Episcopalian. She and Neal were married in an Episcopal parish in Knoxville. Neal converted to the Episcopal Church before they were married. He had been raised in the First Baptist Church in Knoxville, where his father was a deacon.

Lutie and Neal regularly attended church, as did their children, and Neal served a term as Senior Warden at St. John's Church in Knoxville.

Lutie was a stay-at-home mom involved in many community volunteer projects. As her children started to grow up, she decided to become a nurse, obtained a master's degree, and worked as a nurse practitioner in a high-risk perinatal unit. She worked the night shift and got out of the habit of attending church regularly.

After the Culvers moved to Burnsville, Neal quickly became active at St. Thomas. Lutie spent a lot of time in Knoxville caring for her elderly mother. Church had become a less important part of her life. But her interest was peaked when the adult Sunday school had a class on Marcus Borg's *Heart of Christianity*. It caught Lutie where she was on her spiritual journey. She was looking for community, and found it in the friendly people of St. Thomas. Her sense of humor and love of children have endeared her to the parish members.

As Senior Warden at a time when we have no rector, Neal serves with good humor and serious intent.

—Julie Niehaus



### ENVIRO-TIPS from the Environmental Stewardship Committee

#### ☆ SAVING WATER

When cleaning fruits and vegetables use a dishpan to save the water, and then use it to water house or outdoor plants. It is amazing how much water can be saved if we are more conscious of our actions.

#### ☆ SAVING GASOLINE

Car maintenance: Keep your tires inflated to the recommended pressure in your owner's manual. Underinflated tires by as little as five pounds can cut your gas mileage by 2 percent. With gas prices at \$2.60+ per gallon, every little bit helps—not only your wallet, but it also reduces our dependence on foreign oil.

☆ ☆ *On Sunday September 9th, after church, we will be checking tire pressures for free in the parking lot! We hope to be assisted by our teen and preteen members in this project. Please join us.* ☆ ☆

—Jim & Margie Haaga

# St. Thomas

## TIDINGS

AUGUST 2007

### RECIPIENTS OF SACRAMENTS AT THE BISHOP'S VISIT ON JUNE 17, 2007

#### BAPTISMS

Jamie Lemus, Lilian Felicitas Villars Kline, and Evelyn Cadalise Kline

#### FIRST COMMUNION

Elvira Sanchez; Edwin and Evelyn Lemus; Antonio and Janet Sanchez; and Brenda, Juana, Tony, and Margarita Madrigal

#### CONFIRMATION

Carmen Guerrero, Alice Poltrock, and Jessica Stone

#### RE-AFFIRMING THE FAITH

Lynn McLure

#### RECEIVED INTO MEMBERSHIP

Laura Hoskins

### Profile: Adriana Silva

and Edwin, Evelyn, and Jamie Lemus

St. Thomas seeks to minister to those in the Yancey County area whose needs are not met but can be at least partially met through the efforts of our church family. The ESL (English as a second language) ministry that we recently offered to Spanish-speaking mothers needing transportation and childcare during their English classes was one outreach effort that filled such a need. Adriana Silva is the mother who came most consistently, and the class did help her to improve her English.

Recently, Eloise Kaeck drove me up to Adriana's home in her four-wheel drive Subaru, through a pouring rain, up a badly eroded, too-steeply engineered mountain road above Baker's Creek. There I spoke with Adriana—in both English and Spanish, thanks to translations from Eloise and from Adriana's fifth-grade son, Edwin. Now and then we took breaks to include Edwin and his two sisters in the conversation. Evelyn is nine and Jamie is two years old. All three children were among those who received sacraments at St. Thomas in June.

Adriana is an outgoing young woman who grew up in Morelia, a historic university city of about 900,000 inhabitants, the capital of Michoacán, Mexico. Morelia is about three and a half hours northwest of Mexico City. ([http://64.233.179.104/translate\\_c?hl=en&u=http://www.visitmorelia.com/&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dmorelia%2Bmichoacan%26hl%3Den](http://64.233.179.104/translate_c?hl=en&u=http://www.visitmorelia.com/&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dmorelia%2Bmichoacan%26hl%3Den)) There Adriana worked in a government office, using her training in accounting. She says that she liked her job there because it required her to visit other offices and interact with people as well as use her office skills. She had childcare there, and also help from her mother and sister, both of whom still live in Morelia. Her husband, Jorge, lost his government job as part of an overall job cutback in the economy, however, so he came to the States in search of work.

Not long after he came to Yancey County, Centro de Enlace's former director visited Morelia and encouraged Adriana to follow Jorge to the United States. The plan was to reunite the family, learn English, and work to help the family to prosper. So this young mother, pregnant with her third child, boarded the first of several buses that would bring her to Burnsville.

That journey has led to a rich mix of happiness and sadness. She has not yet found work. Adriana doesn't have a driver's license. The marriage is under tremendous stress. Despite difficulties here in the States, just returning to Mexico is no simple option. Having



St. Thomas, June 2007; above: Adriana Silva and Jamie Lemus; below: Edwin and Evelyn Lemus



given up her job in Morelia, Adriana is not likely to get another, as jobs are scarce since the cutbacks and she would be at the end of the line of job seekers.

Adriana is making the best life she can here, for herself and for her children. She uses email and telephone to stay in touch with her family still in Mexico. Her English is limited but good—tons better than my German, which I've been studying

*continued on p. 9*

# St. Thomas

## TIDINGS

AUGUST 2007

ADRIANA SILVA. *continued from p. 8*

off and on for several years! She is looking for opportunities to improve her English, and for ways to use her business skills.

Adriana has made friends with some of the Mexicans in Yancey County, but her background does not mix easily with that of the majority of Mexican women here, who are from the countryside in Mexico. This lack of social commonality, along with the difficulty of getting to the children's after-school activities, has made adjusting to life in the States a challenge for Adriana. She is grateful that she was able to greatly improve her English through St. Thomas's ESL program. Other ESL classes that she tried kept repeating simple phrases for basic transactions because of new arrivals in each session. The St. Thomas ESL classes helped her build language skills, week to week.

Like many young mothers, Adriana interacts mostly with people and groups who help her raise her family. Edwin and his sister Evelyn have gone to Burnsville Elementary, and Adriana has met with teachers there. She is a little nervous about the children's probable transfer to Bald Creek, now that they've moved to the Baker's Creek area. Edwin says he loves to play football (what we call soccer), and Adriana attends practices and games when she has transportation.

Christian church groups are a natural center for helping to bring order and hope into disruptive situations of families like Adriana's. They offer help and fellowship and worship opportunities to our Christian brothers and sisters while enriching their relationships with our same divine Father. At this point in her life, Adriana likes the freedom of choice of churches in Yancey County, and she chooses aspects of different churches for different family needs. Shoal Creek Baptist has been helpful and friendly, as has West Burnsville Baptist. Edwin says he likes the kids at West Burnsville Baptist because they are friendly with him instead of teasing him, as some peers do. The Spanish mass at Sacred Heart Catholic church is a blessing, but Adriana and some others would prefer more than one from which to choose. Our Episcopal similarities to Catholic ritual, together with our open theological attitudes, are attractive and outweigh theological differences. And now that Edwin has received First Communion, and is reaching the age of Confirmation, Adriana hopes there might be another class for him and others like him. Vestry, and Ministry and Missions, are looking at ways to balance different needs and expectations. Please pray as we seek solutions.

—Diana Donovan

#### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

St. Thomas's Habitat work team (open to any and all over 16 years old, whatever skill level) will do building work on the Habitat house in Spruce Pine on Saturday Oct. 6. We worked on the Yancey home in June, and just worked in Spruce Pine August 11. Please call Jim Haaga if you are interested in the October 6 workday. These will generally be repeated one Saturday every quarter. For other details on our local Yancey-Mitchell Habitat affiliate, check the website:

<http://main.nc.us/m-yhabitat/>

—Jim Haaga

#### CONTACTS:

(see Announcements for more detail)

Interim Rector: Bob Reese

Deacons: Bill Thomsen, Jeannette Reese

Senior Warden: Neal Culver

Junior Warden: Charlie Stover

Other Vestry members: Robbie Robertson, Joann Collins, John Davis, Jackie Murray

Treasurer: Tom Bailey

Building Fund Treasurer: Charlie Stover

Secretary: Debra Martinez

Buildings and Grounds: John Davis and John Sterr

Stewardship: Joann Collins

Adult Formation: Lynn McLure and Lutie Culver

Pastoral Care: Alice Johnson

Healing Ministry: Maryallen Estes, Margie Haaga, Jim Haaga, Alice Poltrock

Ministry & Mission: Diana Donovan

-M&M "ear" for Latino needs: Eloise Kaeck

-M&M "ear" for other local needs: Alice Johnson

Hospitality: Nancy Byrd, Jackie Murray

Communication: Rachel Murray

Secretary: Debra Martinez, 682-2508 or [ddmartinez@netscape.com](mailto:ddmartinez@netscape.com)

*St. Thomas Parish Family is a joyful, warm and ever-widening circle of God's people prayerfully committed to serving Jesus in our community and our world. Through prayer, study and intellectual discourse on God's Word we seek Truth. Through Eucharistic fellowship we celebrate the gift of abundant new life. Through mutual care of one another and vigorous service to all of God's people and creation, we proclaim God's love and hope in Jesus.*

# St. Thomas TIDINGS

AUGUST 2007

## *Come to the . . .*

. . . Church survey session on St. Thomas, present and future: Sunday August 26, at potluck following worship. Kerstin Davis and the rector search committee will distribute the diocesan church survey and collect your feedback.



. . . Ministry & Mission committee meeting: Tuesday, September 4, at 5:00 P.M., at church. Please join us.



. . . Christian Stewardship Listening Project presentation: Sunday, September 9, at coffee hour following worship. Herb Walters and Lynn McLure, organizers for St. Thomas.



. . . Tire pressure check, after church, September 9.



. . . September Simple Supper, Wednesday, Sept. 12, at 6 P.M. at church. Bring a salad or soup or bread or a dessert. Geeta McGahey, M.D., will present her experience with Hindu practice.



. . . Outreach presentation: Sunday, September 16, at coffee hour following worship, Dawn Teale will speak on the Shack, and U-Turn Ministry. This teen ministry received the St. Thomas January 2007 monthly local outreach donation.



. . . October Simple Supper, Wednesday, October 10 at 6 P.M.



. . . El Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) cultural exchange. Friday, November 2. Details forthcoming. Diantha Stevenson is the coordinator.

## *Don't forget . . .*



. . . AUGUST 19

First service with our interim priest, Bob Reese.



. . . CARPOOL

If you're attending the August 25 diocesan M&M Conference, and you want to drive or ride in a carpool, contact Diana, 675-5918, diatoday@msn.com.



. . . COFFEE & CHOCOLATE

Fair Trade/Equal Exchange gourmet, organic, shade-grown coffee and organic chocolate bars are for sale at St. Thomas. All proceeds go to the Building Fund to pay off the debt for our new church. Small farmers in third world countries also benefit by getting a fair price for their products, so everyone wins. Coffee is \$7 per bag. Chocolate bars are \$2.50 each. The display is set up at the back of the church. See Margie Haaga if you have questions.



. . . . . CENTERING PRAYER GROUP

Centering Prayer meets every Tuesday at 11:30 A.M. Everyone is welcome—come now and then, or regularly. Contact Joann Collins at 682-5645 or Lynn McLure at 675-5900 with questions.

Reminders

10

Dates



*St. Thomas Episcopal Church*

[www.stthomasonline.org](http://www.stthomasonline.org)

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