



St. Thomas of Canterbury
EPISCOPAL CHURCH



2025
ANNUAL
REPORT

Almighty God, we pray that You will
bless our work in mission and
ministry in the world. Help us pray
fervently, labor diligently and give
liberally to make known the power
of your love given through your
Son Jesus Christ. Let us not forget
the lessons from the past nor fear
the challenges of the future. Anoint
us with your grace and shine in our
hearts as we reflect your light
throughout the world.

Amen.

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The Financial Report is presented as a separate insert.

Agenda for Annual Meeting

OPENING PRAYER

ANNOUNCEMENT OF A QUORUM

APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY

TREASURER'S REPORT

RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING VESTRY MEMBERS

ELECTION OF WARDENS & VESTRY MEMBERS

ELECTION OF CONVENTION DEPUTIES

RECTOR'S ADDRESS

CLOSING PRAYER

ADJOURN

Rector's Report

Dear ones,

As I look back on the past year at St. Thomas of Canterbury, it's impossible not to feel a deep sense of gratitude and joy. This has been a year filled with growth, renewed energy, and countless good things for and through our parish. Together, we have embraced new opportunities, stepped up in ways big and small to care for our parish, and strengthened our mission to be Christ's body in our world.



Last year when I wrote this report I indicated that 2025 would be a year of holy experimentation, careful listening, and ongoing reflection as we eagerly anticipated how God might work in and through us. We talked about tending the soil in the garden that is our parish while we waited to see what takes root. Looking back on the past year, I can confidently say we have done just that and are seeing the fruit of faithful discernment.

In 2025 we welcomed 11 new households into our parish, which, to put this in perspective, is 13% of the number of folks who show up for Sunday worship. Again and again, I hear that visitors are drawn to the warmth of our community, the depth of our worship, and our of acceptance and embrace of all persons. Worship attendance has also increased, including a remarkable crowd of over 175 for our Christmas services. With our new capacity to live stream our Sunday services, I believe more folks will be able to discover the hidden gem that is St. Thomas of Canterbury and the hope of Christ that shines forth from this place.

Formation opportunities have flourished with new feast day celebrations, parishioner led show-and-tells, and seasonal small group studies. Many of you participated and helped us experiment with a new worship service, our Gathered and Sent Eucharist, that provides a new way to gather and pray together. This fall and winter we explored new ways to engage with scripture, hosted a Bible petting zoo, and took time in Advent to take on a practice of scripture meditation. There is a real hunger in our community to grow and learn together.

I have been delighted by the response to opportunities to be in relationship with and support each other as the church. We have built up and strengthened our community through chili cook-offs, the Lazy Book Club, the Peanut Butter and Jelly Club, choral ministry, and other parish events. You continue to show up for each other in big ways such as providing meals in hardship, offering rides, and checking in on homebound parishioners. It is a gift to be a part of a community that cares for its people in such generous and thoughtful ways.

While there is much to celebrate from this past year, I am especially proud of the work our Vestry has taken on and the community they have built along the way. Three years ago we restructured how our Vestry conducts their work, shifting away from a model that focused on sustaining current ministries and shifting to a model that pushes us to discern the work God is calling us to in this particular moment. As a result, the 2025 Vestry adopted four ambitious goals for our parish, and I have been amazed at all that has been completed in advancing these goals this past year. You can read more about these goals and the accomplishments on page seven, but know that this would not have been possible without your Vestry stepping up to the plate. If you have served on the Vestry in the past, I encourage you to come observe one of our Vestry meetings as the culture has dramatically shifted. Our work is focused and intentional, and there is much laughter along the way. The leadership you have elected has been diligent in their work of caring for the parish as we discern where God is leading us.

Finally, as I look back on 2025, I have found myself repeatedly surprised by God's grace and abundance--much of which has been expressed in and through you. Thank you for the trust you have afforded me that have enabled me and other leaders of our parish to dream, play, and experiment. It is a risk to try new things like Vestry restructures, new worship services, and the idea of replacing our chairs with pews, and I am grateful for your support as we have navigated these new waters. I am constantly touched by your generosity in the ways you give of your time, resources, skills, and insights. Projects like tending to the weeds on our fence line, funding a new organ, cooking pancakes on Shrove Tuesday are fueled by your generosity. Thank you.

Friends, I am so very grateful for each and every one of you! Thank you for being the church in this place and time. As we step into 2026, let us continue to be a church marked by joy, love, generosity, and openness to the Spirit's leading.

Here's to a joyful and transformative year ahead!

Melesa+

The Rev. Melesa McEwan Skoglund

Warden's Report

In 2025 your Vestry worked with members of the congregation to enhance STOC's presence in the community and within our parish.

For our parish, we started with the Pancake Dinner on Shrove Tuesday. There was a well-attended Parish Picnic on Pentecost (loved seeing all the red you wore). Many people enjoyed October's Chili Cook-off; congratulations to Vicki Kutz, our 2025 winner for best chili. This year, on January 6th, we added Pizza Epiphany followed by eucharist. The Peanut Butter & Jelly Club is a lively group of parishioners that meet on the second Monday of each month, at 3:00, 2:30 for set-up.

Several members join Erika Stoving, every quarter, serving dinner to the patrons at the Milwaukee Rescue Mission. STOC has not used the dishware in the kitchen for many years. Parishioners boxed them up to be donated to Habitat for Humanity's Restore. Many thanks to Barb and Tom Labisch for boxing up the remainder of the dishes and delivering them. The Library and the Children's room were cleaned out. Something new is the Lazy Book Club. Parishioners shared their time and talent at the Show and Tells after the 10:00 mass.

Our sound system was updated with added video capabilities. The 10:00 mass is live streamed on YouTube. Many thanks to Andy Rieder-Van Hout, who works on the video system for live streaming. This is another opportunity for 4 more people to be involved in this, to take turns at the video station. Our new organ is being built as I write this. We are a little bit hopeful that it will be installed by Easter (April 5th).

Within our Greendale community we continue to participate in the Cross Walk and ecumenical Good Friday service at St. Alphonsus. The Community Gardens are available to parishioners and Greendale residents. Our parking lot is used for staging the Children's Parade for Greendale's July 4th parade. Come and enjoy the bands and floats in the parade. We attended Franklin's and Greenfield's National Night Out events to make STOC more visible. We had a Trunk or Treat event in our parking lot during Greendale's Trick or Trick hours. A wonderful diversity of kids and adults in costumes.

This year we look forward to changing our lawn from grass to pollinator-friendly white clover. Hoping to see our new organ in a few months. A committee continues planning for the installation of a prayer labyrinth. And continuing the St. Thomas of Canterbury tradition of being a welcoming space for all.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve you this past year.

Cindy Purpero, Senior Warden

Kathy Angeli, Junior Warden

2025 Parish Goals Report

Each year when the Vestry, our elected leadership body, gathers for an annual work day in February we spend a significant amount of time creating goals for the year ahead. These goals reflect where the Vestry directed its focus and energy in 2025.

Goal #1. Explore options, hold parish conversations, and implement plans surrounding how we steward and use our buildings and grounds.

- A parish meeting was held in March 2025 to discuss the possibility of replacing our pews with chairs to increase the amount of accessible gathering space in the church. This was widely accepted, and we will move forward with this project in 2026.
- We received a diocesan grant to convert our sod lawn to clover which will occur in spring 2026.
- Under-utilized spaces were cleaned out including the kitchen, nursery, sacristy, and library.

Goal #2. Address aging systems that support Sunday worship.

- An organ replacement committee was formed and made a recommendation to the Vestry. A generous donor came forward to donate the full cost of a new electric organ that will be installed in spring 2026.
- Equipment was purchased and installed to improve our existing sound system while equipping us with the ability to live-stream services.

Goal #3. Explore and experiment with new opportunities for worship and formation.

- A discernment team was formed and held four alternative worship services.
- Ascension and Epiphany feast day dinners and Eucharists were held.
- Show-and-Tell events and three Lazy Book Clubs were held through the year.
- Children's formation expanded to twice a month in spring, and was put on pause in fall due to lack of demand for children's formation in this season.

Goal #4. Explore and implement ideas for how we can increase our sanctifying presence in our communities beyond the walls of the church.

- A team was formed that enthusiastically led us to participate in two National Night Out events, increase our hospitality at Greendale's Fourth of July Parade, and host a Trunk-or-Treat.
- The Green Corners Clergy group began conversation about a relationship with Common Ground.
- Facebook Ads were utilized to promote Easter services.

MEMBERS OF THE 2025 VESTRY

Cindy Purpero, Senior Warden

Kathy Angeli, Junior Warden

Ron Thorson (treasurer)

Jim Beuscher
Marie Brzezinski

Terry Greiten
Sue McKnight

Diane Piontek
Andrew Rieder-Van Hout

Deacon's Report



As I reflect on this past year here at St. Thomas of Canterbury, my heart is full of joy and thankfulness for all the wonderful things that have happened within the life of our church during 2025. It is a true blessing for me to serve as deacon here at STOC and be a part of all the growth and faithfulness of this parish family, and we are a family. I have witnessed others reaching out to those in our parish in need, whether it be a meal or a ride to church or an appointment with no questions asked, or perhaps just a visit or phone call letting them know that they are a part of this family and are prayed for and remembered at all times, even if they cannot be with us physically. People check in with each other before or after services to see how they are doing because they were missed last week due to illness or unexpected events or just to catch up. New people walk into our parish on a Sunday morning and are genuinely welcomed and want to return to see what we are all about. It is heartwarming and does my soul good to be a part of this amazing community of faith. In Matthew 18:20, Jesus says these words "For where 2 or 3 are gathered in my name, there I am with you." Every Sunday we gather here to worship at STOC and there are certainly more than 2 or 3 and those numbers are growing! Christ is here among us, and his love and presence are evident as we love and support each other and our community as Jesus did and still does. We continue to be a beacon of that light and love inside and outside of our doors. Incredible things are happening here at STOC, and I am so excited to be a part of it!

January 6, 2026, I celebrated my second anniversary of ordination to the diaconate and the second year to serve as your deacon. A lot has happened over the course of the year. There has been significant growth in our parish in a vast array of ways. We have had new households join the parish, we have accomplished so much in attaining our goals set forth for our parish by the vestry at the beginning of the year. I was fortunate to work with some talented and passionate parish members on one of those goals wherein we tried to find ways to be a sanctifying presence not only for our parish, but for the community. I attended some events in other communities known as National Night Out with other volunteers to be a presence to let those communities know that we are here, our doors are open and we care. Our team organized the October Trunk or Treat event allowing for safe trick or treating for our neighbors and communities. We continue to put our heads together praying together, brainstorming and finding ways to be the presence of the light and love of Christ in Greendale and our surrounding communities.

Behind the scenes on Sundays, I put together the prayers of the people and make sure that we have acolytes scheduled to help enhance our Sunday worship. I am so grateful for their help in this ministry. They are few in number but dedicated and always willing to step in and help. My deepest thanks to Heather Owen, Mary Schmitz, Violet Kluessendorf, Kaylene Schulz, and Dana Fritz. You are a gift and a blessing to me and to STOC.

This past year, I also took on a new challenge. I stepped in as vestry clerk to fill a need at the time. It was definitely a learning experience and one I am grateful for as it gave me insight as to how our governing body keeps STOC growing, running smoothly, attending to the needs of our parish and making sure that our wonderful priest, Mother Melesa has the support that she needs. These are dedicated people and I am eternally grateful for their dedication and friendship as well as giving me a chance to spread my wings in unknown territory and support me along the way.

I have had the privilege and honor to prepare and give a sermon several times over this past year. This parish has allowed me to be humble and vulnerable in ways I never thought I could. I have gotten feedback in suggestions, words of wisdom and at times a thank you. I have also been able to lead in the service of the Reserved Sacrament in the absence of Mother Melesa or a supply priest. This has been a gift to me, allowing me to not only grow as a deacon, but as an individual and a child of God. I have had the privilege of serving as a deacon in celebration of life services of parishioners we lost in this past year. I have visited parishioners who have not been able to attend services due to illness or other reasons, whether in the hospital or their homes. Sometimes with communion, sometimes just to talk or sit in silence.

Lastly, I have been blessed to help prepare Dana Fritz, our "deacon-in-training" as she moves forward in her diaconate journey to ordination. I believe that not only is she learning from Mother Melesa and myself, but I am learning from her.

This has been a year! I have grown leaps and bounds not only as a deacon, but as an individual. I give thanks for this parish and all you do each and every day in support of STOC and all humanity. You make the world a better place by continually spreading the light and love of Jesus and living out the Gospel.

Now go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit! Alleluia!

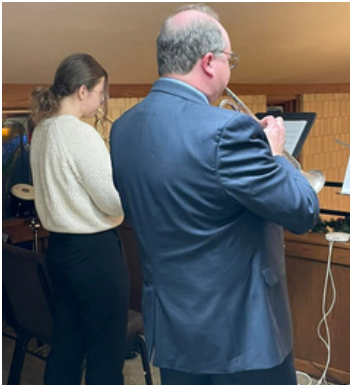
Peace,

Deacon Lisa Chmielewski

Music Ministry Report

Music Ministry at St. Thomas of Canterbury exists to serve and enhance the worship life of the parish. The volunteers and staff of the Music Ministry work cooperatively to integrate diverse and well-performed music into our worship services and to help each member of the congregation worship God more deeply.

St. Thomas of Canterbury is blessed with a multitude of wonderful musicians under the direction of Scott Eakins, Director of Music, who regularly sing and play at our services during the year.



These musicians bring dedication and joy with them to our rehearsals and services and they are vital to the quality of music we enjoy on a weekly basis. There were 106 services this past year in which musicians ministered.

For our choir, each member offered 131 hours of service to the parish through their ministry (not including the time they spent on their own working on their music). This is reflected in approximately 108 anthems and psalms, and countless numbers of hymns and service music – during 34 rehearsals, 39 services and 1 retreat day. We are grateful to Kathy Angeli, Angie Bier, Todd Domenget, Barb Labisch, Joan Lamson, Anne Prestwor, Sheryl Slocum, Paul Stoving, Kat Worzalla, and Tammy Wyman-Wroblewski who help us worship God more deeply and beautifully!

Instrumentalists also ministered at services this past year. We extend our appreciation to Paul Stoving and Maggie Stoving, trumpet, Ericka Stoving, flute, Sheryl Slocum, violin, Angie Bier, piano, and Barb Labisch, guitar who enhanced our music with their instruments.

Thinking of joining the choir or being an instrumentalist? Please be sure to contact Scott Eakins, our music director, who has an empty chair waiting for you!



Altar Guild Report

Come join us! We are a group of parishioners who are members of a ministry that prepares the altar for Eucharist each week. In addition to Holy Communion, we also prepare for weddings, baptisms, funerals and celebrations that require extra planning and preparation such as Christmas and Easter.

The Altar Guild is open to anyone who would like to volunteer their time to make the building a beautiful, peaceful and welcoming parish. If you are interested in joining this ministry please contact any member of the Altar Guild, the church secretary, Chris, or the rector, Mtr. Melesa. You will be paired with someone who will help you learn all the steps to setting up the altar. Everyone is very friendly, patient and helpful.

The members of the Altar Guild are Kathi Beinlich, Marie Brzezinski, Nikki Domenget, Noelle Gehlhaart, Veronica Heaney, Diane Piontek, and Audrey Reineck. Melanie McKay continues to help clean up after the 10am service. Chris Mroz, our parish administrator, helps with our schedule and manages the fresh flowers on the altar. Deacon Lisa and Deacon-in-training Dana help us out at various times. We especially appreciate those who lend a hand during the All Hands On Deck Sundays.

Many thanks go out to those who sponsor fresh flowers for special occasions throughout the year. The fresh flowers make our altar so beautiful. Please know that you are welcome to take the flowers with you after the 10am service. An Altar Guild member can assist you in bagging them up.

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey Reineck and Nikki Domenget



Faith Formation Report

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

In spring 2025, our Children's Liturgy of the Word was offered twice a month during the 10am service. As we moved into the summer attendance patterns for many of our families changed. As fall approached Children's Ministry leaders and Mtr. Melesa decided that this season it was best to continue to offer opportunities for intergenerational formation and relationships while Children's Liturgy of the Word takes a pause.



YOUTH MINISTRY

The Milwaukee Youth Collab completed a second year of ministry in 2025! This started as a three month trial ministry between St. Thomas of Canterbury, Trinity Wauwatosa, St. Mark's Milwaukee, and St. Paul's Milwaukee. This year included the addition of a regional youth confirmation class which resulted in seven teens being confirmed. In 2026, in addition to the monthly gatherings we will be holding an overnight service trip.



ADULT FORMATION

Adult formation in 2025 included a variety of opportunities that spanned from one time events to weekly discussions to ongoing prayer ministries. Highlights included the following:

- A successful second Annual Exam Retreat Morning in January
- A Slow Walk through Holy Week where we examined the stories and liturgies of Holy Week during the season of Lent
- Two fall small groups totaling 15 individuals who spent six weeks exploring different methods of engaging with scripture
- Weekly Compline and Scripture Meditation during the season of Advent

Thank you to all who participated! It is a joy to gather and learn together.

INTERGENERATIONAL FORMATION

One of the gifts of the Church is that it is one of the few places where individuals can come together to learn, serve and build relationships across generational lines. In the Church we believe that all people, regardless of age, have something to contribute as a member of Christ's body. What an incredible idea! It doesn't matter if you are 6, 46, or 96 - you have something to contribute to the body of Christ!

In fall 2025, we launched our Gathered and Sent Eucharist service, which has been a holy experiment of exploring alternative and intergenerational worship. While we are still learning and adjusting, there has been much learned in these early months. We continued to hold intergenerational formation opportunities such as the Eastertide Feast Fest, Bible Petting Zoo and Advent for All.



Outreach Report

Outreach efforts at St. Thomas continue to be fueled by the generosity and leadership of parishioners! In 2025, we had successful drives for the PB&J Club and Socktober, and saw another year of faithful giving to our monthly Outreach Partners. Do you have an idea or passion for outreach in 2026? If so, please talk to Mtr. Melesa. Our members are the Outreach Committee, and we need your leadership as we continue to serve and care for our neighbors.

CANTERBURY CRAFTERS

Led by parishioner, Barb Miller, the Canterbury Crafters have continued in their ministry of knitting lap robes, blankets and scarves that are blessed and then sent to individuals in hospice care or to individuals experiencing homelessness.



PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY CLUB

Peanut Butter and Jelly Club (PB&J Club) meets on the 2nd Monday of each month, at 3:00 to make sandwiches for The Gathering, a meal program for those who are unable to feed themselves or their family. Sandwich-making is done in the parish hall. We make approximately 300 sandwiches, and they are delivered the following Tuesday morning. Our task, including clean-up, is usually finished by 4:00pm. All are welcome.

MILWAUKEE RESCUE MISSION

St. Thomas of Canterbury has been volunteering at the Milwaukee Rescue Mission (MRM) for the last year. We volunteer quarterly, on the 2nd Saturday in January, April, July, October. We are limited to 5 volunteers at a time. We serve dinner from 3:45pm-6:00pm. Keep an eye out in the weekly e-news, as Chris will send out a link to sign up about a month before. Then about a week or so before I will send out an email with the details. About that time sign up genius will also send out a reminder. If you have any questions, please email Erika Stoving at: stoving@wi.rr.com.

MONTHLY OUTREACH GIVING

The Haiti Partnership	\$1,166	Clergy Discretionary Fund	\$1,333
Milwaukee Rescue Mission	\$980	Milwaukee Street Angels	\$1,137
Repairers of the Breach	\$1,029	ACTS Housing	\$1,221
Our Next Generation	\$830	Guest House of Milwaukee	\$1,351
The Gathering	\$1,105	Pearls for Teen Girls	\$1,196
Sojourner Family Peace Center	\$1,199	The Hospitality Center of Racine	\$1,093

In 2025, \$13,643 was given to our monthly outreach partners!

Community Garden Report



In 2025, we celebrated the faithful ministry of Joan and Mark Lamson and Noelle Gehlhaart, who have faithfully led our Community Garden ministry for over 10 years! In this year of transition, Mtr. Melesa and Chris Mroz oversaw the management of the community garden, and we will be working to raise up new leadership in 2026.

One of the successes of this year was the increase participation of our community gardeners in the ongoing maintenance of the garden area. We held two work days in which gardeners were invited to help weed, loosen soil, replace rotting boards, and tidy the garden space.

While the number of community gardeners decreased in 2025, the plots were still bursting with life and produce! If you would be interested in a garden plot in 2026, or in assisting with the management of the community garden communications please contact the church office.

Buildings & Grounds Report

We are grateful to report that 2025 was not nearly as eventful in the need for Building and Ground Repairs as 2024! Several behind the scenes projects were completed included removal of dying trees, replacing the fans in the church bathrooms, and addressing the invasive plants that grow on our property line.

The ongoing care and maintenance of our buildings and grounds is supported by many members of the parish including those who volunteer for our All Hands In Sundays, and so many who volunteer their expertise to make repairs, organize spaces, clean windows and gutters, and tend gardens. In 2026, we will continue the quarterly All Hands on Deck Sundays following the 10am service to assist with the care and stewardship of our Buildings and Grounds.



Endowment Report

Church endowment funds serve a number of purposes, but they all carry the same objective – to provide a stable funding source for the future mission and ministry of the parish. Endowment provide us with the means to be innovative and responsive to the needs of the time beyond what can be supported in our annual operating budget. St. Thomas of Canterbury has two endowment funds that are long-term assets of the church. They include our original endowment fund established many years ago and the flexible endowment fund created in 2021.

The original St. Thomas of Canterbury Endowment Fund is a donor restricted endowment to be used for capital projects, particularly, but not limited to, those that will enhance the buildings and grounds of St. Thomas or adapt existing buildings to be more user friendly to persons with disabilities. As of year-end 2025, the balance of the fund was \$51,608.

The St. Thomas of Canterbury Flexible Endowment Fund is an endowment fund intended primarily for capital improvements and ministries of the parish. No distributions shall be made until such time as the value of the fund exceeds \$25,000. As of year-end 2025, the balance of the fund was \$25,571.

If you have a will or are in the process of creating one, please consider making a planned gift and naming the STOC Flexible Endowment in your will or trust.

Stewardship Report

Stewardship at St. Thomas of Canterbury continues to be a story of faithfulness, generosity, and provision - both of members of our community and of God! In 2025, several households gave above the amount they pledged or gave when they were not able to commit to a pledge. This enabled us to end a year with the deficit that was \$10,000 less than anticipated. For 2026, we have seen our fourth year of increase to funds pledged with 59 households pledging a total of \$212,985. This includes five new pledging households.

Thank you to Stewardship Committee members Tammy Wyman-Wroblewski, Andrew Rieder-Van Hout, and Ross Worzalla, and to all parishioners for your faithful giving.

2026 Slate of Candidates

WARDENS OF THE VESTRY

Wardens of the Vestry are elected annually with the possibility of serving for three consecutive years. The Senior and Junior Warden work collaboratively to assist the rector in leading the Vestry and managing the parish.

Senior Warden, 1 year term

Cindy Purpero

Junior Warden, 1 year term

Kathy Angeli

MEMBERS OF THE VESTRY

Members of the Vestry are elected annually to three year terms unless stated otherwise. The Vestry is the leadership body of the parish that works with the rector to attend to the mission, finances, and care of the parish.

Vestry Member, 3 year terms

Andrew Bieri

Ken Cerreta

DEPUTIES TO DIOCESAN CONVENTION

Each year members of the parish elect representation from the parish to go to Diocesan Convention with the ability to cast votes. In 2026, St. Thomas will be permitted three deputies to convention in addition to our clergy.

Deputy to Diocesan Convention

Andrew Rieder-Van Hout

Sheryl Slocum

Ron Thorson

Alternate: Kris Reed



St. Thomas of Canterbury
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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