

The Fall Sunday Forums

September 20 – “...for I Give Water in the Wilderness, Rivers in the Desert....”

Come watch a power-point slide show and hear our Vicar Whitney Altopp and St. Thomas' Youth Group members and advisors share their experiences from this summer's Mission Possible Trip to Leupp, Arizona, where 21 of our teenagers worked on the Navajo Reservation and at nearby Sun Valley Indian School for a week in June.

September 27 – Living Spiritually in the Real World

Have you ever felt a gap between Sunday and Monday, between what you hear in church on Sunday and what you face on Monday morning. Our Rector Marek Zabriskie will speak about living spiritually in the real world and dealing with challenges as work, living our faith at home and in the community, seeing the sacrament of God in each person around us and discovering meaning in the midst of loss and ordinary events.

October 4 – Operation Home and Healing: Helping Veterans Returning from War

Steve Treat, CEO of the Council of Relations, joins parishioner **Bonnie McCausland** to discuss a new outreach that was featured on CBS News. The McCauslands and their son Chris, a Marine who spent four months in Iraq, are working with the Council of Relations, to provide regional counseling services for veterans returning from war and their families. Many veterans are traumatized as they face huge levels of stress, suicide and post traumatic stress syndrome, which affects one in five soldiers returning from war.

October 11 – What will be has Not Yet been Revealed.

The Rev. Corky Carlisle, a nationally known speaker in the Episcopal Church will be our speaker. He drew great praise last year when he visited us in May. Come, listen and learn from a wonderful communicator with a great compassionate heart.

October 18 – General Convention: What You Need to Know

Parishioner Ginger Goodrich, a deputy to her third General Convention of the Episcopal Church, will share her experiences gleaned from this year's triennial General Convention of the Episcopal Church which met in Anaheim, California in July, and how and why this matters significantly to our church. Come listen, learn and ask your questions.

October 25 – Town Hall Meeting

What challenges and opportunities are facing our church? Where are we headed? How do we plan to get there? What exciting things lie in our future? Our Vestry, clergy and staff will lead this Town Hall Meeting and respond to your questions.

November 1 – All Saints' Sunday – All Parish Breakfast in Place of a Forum

November 8 – An Author Speaks Out

Award-winning print and broadcast journalist and best-selling author David Aikman joins us from Washington, D.C. to discuss his books and insights about America. Aikman, a former journalist for *TIME Magazine*, has interviewed world figures such as Mother Teresa, Manuel Noriega, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Boris Yeltsin and Billy Graham.

November 15 – How can We Maintain and Beautify Our Sacred Campus

St. Thomas' has created a new Landscaping Commission chaired by parishioner Leslie Purple to beautify our 42 acre campus. Parishioner Bill Potts will join her to help discuss the upkeep and challenges of maintaining a 15 acre cemetery, where many of us have loved ones interred and where many of us plan to be buried. St. Thomas' was founded in 1698 on a one acre tract of land that was formerly an ancient Leni Lenape burial ground. Our grounds are beautiful and sacred. How can we enhance and care for them?

November 22 – How can We Care for and Restore Our Historic Buildings

Parishioners Tim Russell, John Simensen, Steve Bitterman and Lyn Simensen will talk to us about plans for restoring and caring for the eight buildings that create the St. Thomas' Church campus and facilitate our common life, mission and ministry. St. Thomas' is blessed with one of the most magnificent church campuses in America, but maintaining these buildings is a complex task. How should our Vestry prioritize the restoration work?

November 29 – Advent Wreath Making in MacColl Auditorium

December 6 – The Journey from Loss to Life and Tragedy to Hope

Laurada Byers, President and CEO of the Byerschool Foundation, will speak about the tragic loss of her husband Russell, who was killed by a gunman at the Wawa Store in Chestnut Hill on December 4th, 1999. How did she overcome tragic loss, rebuild her life and rediscover hope? Mrs. Byers will also speak about turning her loss into something positive and she founded the Russell Byer Charter School in Philadelphia to help children and teenagers like the one who killed her husband find hope and turn away from crime.

December 13 – Be an Angel Christmas Party – No Forum this Sunday

December 20 – An Author Speaks Out

Parishioner John DeDakis is perhaps best known to many in our parish as the husband of our Minister of Music Cindy DeDakis. In John's professional life, he is an editor of Emmy-Award winning *The Situation Room* with CNN's Wolf Blitzer. John is also an emerging new author and will speak about his first mystery/suspense novel *Fast Track* and the art of writing and telling stories.

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