

*St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
9575 Big Island Highway  
P.O. Box 695  
Bedford, VA 24523*

**LEN  
2024**



February 1, 2024

Dear Faithful Members, Friends, and Supporters of St. Thomas:

Spring cleaning comes early this year. Not the kind that puts our houses in clean order, but the kind that puts our Christian lives in order. Not the kind that takes a broom and dust pan, but the kind that takes instead, reflection, prayer, fasting, confession, and repentance. This latter kind of Spring cleaning takes place during the church season of **Lent**.

During this church season, we have almost six weeks to do Spring cleaning of our mind, body, and soul. Call it spiritual preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection on Easter. Considerate it a time to reflect on what needs to change in our lives if we are to become better Christians. This year, 2024, Lent begins on February 14, Ash Wednesday, and lasts for 40 days, not counting Sundays.

Jesus spent 40 days wandering in the wilderness while fasting and being tempted by the devil before beginning His public ministry. We, have an opportunity now to show our humility before God as we too, wander over the course of 40 days trying to discern who we are, and to whom and to what we give our allegiance.

Our 40 days of preparation, spiritual reckoning, or our "Spring cleaning", enables us to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday. It is the second time we have had a period of preparation in only a few months' time. During Advent, we prepared for the Birth of Jesus, and now we are preparing for His Resurrection.

All of us need to think about how we will prepare during the season of Lent. Perhaps by receiving ashes placed on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday, perhaps praying the Lord's Prayer each day wherein we confess our sins and ask for forgiveness, or perhaps giving up a favorite thing. Whatever we choose to do, may we all make a commitment to become better Christians. Today's world needs all the Christian help it can get. And it begins with us. Remember that Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which this year is on Valentine's Day. Consider the Love that could arise in that unique coinciding of special days. "Love never fails."

Pray that we all have a constructive Spring cleaning this Lenten Season. May God be with us during our 40-day journey. Pray that we will be refreshed to take on life with renewed energy and faith to be Christian in all we do.

Please join us and our Celebrant, the Reverend Cathy Montgomery, on **Easter Sunday, March 31st at 9:00 A.M.** when we will once again, gratefully acknowledge and celebrate that **CHRIST IS RISEN, ALLELUIA.**

Yours in Christ,

St. Thomas Vestry