The Christian life is a life of tension between the prayer for *My will* to be done or *Thy will* to be done. This tension is a lifelong struggle, not a one-time conflict. Being a Christian is a process, not a point; a marathon, not a sprint; an epic film, not a snap shot. Yet, we inhabit a culture that insists upon immediacy, quick fixes, and instant everything. When it comes to growing in Christ we MUST be committed to the long haul, and not get discouraged and quit when it doesn’t happen instantly. God’s way insists upon slow, steady persistence and eventual change. God views our lives as narratives, not as individual scenes. In other words, we are not defined by one event or one decision, but rather our lives are taken as a whole, a narrative, a lifetime of decisions and events. It is astonishing to read about the patience of God in relation to significant figures of the Bible. We see how they wrestled with the tension of God’s will versus their wills, and in all cases, we see God’s patience and their persistence. Abraham is not defined by one faulty decision to lie about his relationship to Sarai, Jacob is not confined to his earlier primary characteristic of being a deceiver, and Peter is not forever bound to his threefold denial of Christ. In all of these cases, and many more, God graciously and patiently allows lives to unfold, and what God is looking for is not momentary perfection but rather long-term progress and persistence. As Christians we should never stop growing, and growth inevitably involves times of failure, especially the failure to pray and live, “not my will, but thy will be done.” As we grow in our faith we learn how to live consistently in and under the will of God. God graciously realizes that growth takes time. This is why forgiveness is God’s response to our sins and failures. God can and wants to work with us when we are willing to learn and grow even in light of and in spite of our mistakes. However, God cannot work with people who are unwilling to learn and grow, which explains why St. Gregory of Nyssa (c. 4th century) defined sin simply as our refusal to grow. Keep praying and growing, stagnation is not an option.

Peace,
Fr. John
THrift Shop
Find a shower of delightful April gifts, apparel and so much more at our Thrift Shop this month. And don’t miss out on the designer clothing in the very chic boutique. We’d love to receive your good-quality donations of kids’ clothing & toys, knick-knacks, household items, and jewelry. Come any Wednesday between 9 – 11 am to volunteer on a WORK DAY to help with light-duty tasks. Open to the public Thurs. & Fri. 9 – 3 and Sat. 9 – Noon. Phone the shop – 589-0641.

sunday Loose Plate
Our April 23rd Loose Plate Collection is designated for the Rector’s Discretionary Fund. Memo checks: “Rector’s Discretionary Fund” and place in the offering plate. Your donations enable Fr. John to assist those with financial difficulties.

Library
St. Thomas’ Library is open on the honor system any time the office is open. Please take the time to visit - located in the old Conference Room.

Prayer chain
St. Thomas’ Prayer Chain is ready to pray for any ongoing needs. Need prayers? Call Nancy Conley at 483-2947, cell (352) 350-4184, or leave a prayer request with the office.

Jesus’ Miracles Study
Bess Short is leading a 26-week study of the healing miracles of Jesus each Sunday at 9:15 am in our church Library.

Craft Group
The Craft Group meets in Wisdom Hall every Wednesday morning at 10 am – rain or shine – to create wonderful hand-made items. All are welcome to join the group, no prior crafting skills are required! And out check their sale gift table in the Parish Hall - all hand-made and seasonally-themed!

Adult Sunday School
Join Fr. John’s Adult Sunday Class; “Thinking Aloud, Allowed”, held each Sunday in our Parish Hall at 9:15 am.

Wednesday fitness Classes
Bess Short offers a half-hour Beginners fitness class on Wednesdays at Noon in our Parish Hall. Bess also leads an intermediate class at 12:30 pm each Wednesday to help you improve your daily lifestyle. All are Welcome!

Want to usher? we need you! Call the Office 352-357-4358.
**To receive a copy of the church directory, email us at stthomasec@earthlink.net

Children’s Chapel
This month, Children’s Chapel will be offered on April 2, 9, and 30 for our younger children attending the 10:30 am service (none on Easter Sunday). On April 23rd, we invite children to participate in various parts of the service on Family Worship Sunday.

Good Friday Offering
The Good Friday Offering will be collected during Holy Week and at our Good Friday Service on April 14th in aid of the Jerusalem Church in the Middle East. Last year, we collected $619 through the generous donations of our parishioners.

Easter Candy
Please bring your wrapped Easter Candy to the Church Office for the Easter Eggs.

Holy Week
Palm Sunday – April 9th – At our 10:30 am service only, we’ll gather in the Parish Hall & process to the church. In the church, the Passion Narrative will be read by members of the congregation (8 & 10:30). Children will enter with palms.

The church will be open for those who wish to come in and pray, although there will be no services on April 10-12.

Maundy Thursday – April 13th – Our HE/Healing Service will be at 10 am. In the evening, we will have a 7 pm Traditional Footwashing Service and Stripping of the Altar, followed by the Watch of the Repose throughout the night.

Good Friday - April 14th - Stations of the Cross is at 11 am. At noon, the Traditional Good Friday Liturgy service with the congregation taking parts in the narrative will take place.

Holy Saturday – Great Vigil of Easter – April 15th at 7 pm ushers in Easter with the lighting of the Paschal Candle.

Easter Sunday – April 16th – Holy Eucharist with Music at 8 & 10:30 am. Brunch in the Parish Hall at 9 am & Egg Hunt @ 9:45 am. Children – bring a basket for the Egg Hunt!

Please sign up
We have sign-up sheets for the Watch of the Repose - a night vigil held in our church Maundy Thursday, April 13th (following the Stripping of the Altar) – through Good Friday morning, by parishioners in one-hours shifts. If you’re able to keep vigil during the night, please sign-up on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall by the hours you will keep watch.

Easter

ECW April News
The ECW meets on Monday, April 3rd at 3 pm in the Parish Hall for: “Faith, Food, Fun & Fellowship”. All women of the Episcopal Church are members of the ECW and are welcome.

A big THANK YOU to all who supported our recent Spaghetti Dinner by working and/or attending. St. Thomas’ ECW approved the following outreach gifts from that $918 profit at our March 6, 2017, meeting: CPC (Church Periodical Club) $100, UTO (United Thank Offering) $100, The Haven $100, The Rev. Stephen Dass (Brazil) $100, and $100 for Easter gifts for the girls at Turning Point Ranch. We also gave $100 to our Diocesan ECW in January. Carol Ann Luche, Treasurer

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
The Pancake Supper fundraiser held on Saturday, February 28th was a huge success, thanks to Fr. John and our vestry members, who hosted the event. In addition to being such a wonderful evening, it was also a financial success, serving over 71 folks throughout the evening!
**MOS**

The MOS (Men Of St. Thomas) group meets this month on Thursday, April 6th at 6 pm in our Parish Hall. Contact Jerry Fields, President - 343-0007 with program ideas or input on future events.

**MOS DINNER/DANCE EVENT**

The MOS is hosting a “Spring Fling” Dinner/Dance on April 29th. There will be a live band, a theme, and plenty of fantastic gift prizes. This special event will begin at 6 pm in our Parish Hall. See the flier following this newsletter.

**EASTER ALTAR FLOWERS**

Easter flowers (Sunday, April 16th) will be purchased with gifts from members of the parish, as memorials & thank offerings. It is our hope that donations received will be generous once more to enable our Altar Guild to cover increasing flower costs. Please fill out an Easter Flower intention sheet (in Sunday bulletins). Print your intention & amount you wish to donate toward Easter flower costs. Mark “Easter Flowers” on your check’s memo and place your check & intention sheet in the Offertory Plate or mail to the Office. Intention Deadline: APRIL 9th - Palm Sunday.

**QUIET DAY**

There will be a Lenten Quiet Day on Saturday, April 8th from 9:45 am – 2 pm led by Deacon Janet Clarke. The theme of the Quiet Day is, “God so Loves the World”. This will be a low key, quiet day, with time for meditations. Silence will be observed between meditations for time to reflect. We will begin with a brief fellowship at 10 am in the Parish Hall. Lunch will be provided. There is a sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall.

**CHURCH OFFICE CLOSURE**

St. Thomas’ Church Office will be closed Monday, April 17th.

**PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY**

If you know of anyone for whom you would like to have a prayer shawl, please call Janet Clarke (728-0929). We are in need of those who can knit and would like to be part of this ministry.

**2017 ALTAR FLOWER DONORS**

The flower chart is available on the usher stand by the sacristy. Select any Sunday to donate flowers; they are $60 each week. To ensure that your intention is listed correctly in the bulletin: Fill out a green flower donor sheet located by the chart and place slip in the offertory plate with check or money for the flowers OR send in to the Church Office.

**SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP**

Mike Christensen is our Sunday Fellowship Coordinator, with lite refreshments in the Parish Hall after the 10:30 service. Contributions are needed to help with weekly costs – just a small donation from each person attending will be a huge help! Contact Mike spikes0213@aol.com or phone 352-205-3314 to help.

**ST. THOMAS BOOK STORE**

Easter Gift Exchange

This month is a great time for special gift giving for Easter and springtime. Come check out the Bookstore! for a variety of unique items: Jewelry, angels, books, plaques, key chains, and more - all are reasonably-priced and thoughtful. Almost everything in the shop is religious-inspired, (All profits go to outreach).

Thanks to the generous contributors to the Miles of Pennies jug in the Parish Hall, over ¼ of a mile. So, please continue to drop spare change, and dollar bills into the jug to buy books for children, both here and abroad. Many thanks for your continued support. Betty Carr, CPC Chairman, Book Store

**HEALING – 1st SUNDAYS**

On April 2nd, those wishing prayers or appointing may do so after all have received the Eucharist. All are invited to come to the altar rail, (or please notify one of our ushers and one of our clergy will come to you in your pew).

**FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON**

St. Thomas’ Fellowship Luncheon is every 4th Wednesday at 11:30 am in our Parish Hall, with plenty of food & fellowship. Bring a dish to share; it’s a great way to get to know other people better and have a delicious lunch. This month: April 26th.

**PLEASE LET US KNOW...**

Contact us if you are hospitalized and would like a visit. We rely on your help, or someone on your behalf, to provide us with details. Office Phone: 352-357-4358

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO**

Wayne McSwain 4/02
Connie Wilhelm 4/04
Marjorie Carter 4/04
Cliff Martin 4/05
Logan Haggerty 4/05
Millie Gulston 4/09
Will Townsend 4/11
Martha Herron 4/16
Linda Wilheln 4/17
Jean Swain 4/18
Bernice Nolan 4/21
Jack Geeslin 4/24
Jane Carlson 4/25
Chuckie Clark 4/26
Nance Kauffman 4/26
Charlotte Taylor 4/27
Matt Carlson 4/28
Diane Mullen 4/29

*If you haven’t already done so, please give the church office your email address, birthday, anniversary date, and any contact changes.

**CHILDREN’S NURSERY**

Our church Nursery is open and staffed every Sunday during our 10:30 am church service. The Nursery is conveniently located directly behind our Parish Hall in the Sunday school building.

Please continue to donate Forever Stamps, paper products, or printer ink HP 61XL to St. Thomas. Your donations are a terrific way to keep costs down.

**Miles of Pennies**

“Easter Flowers” is a special gift giving for Easter and springtime. Please continue to donate Forever Stamps, paper products, or printer ink HP 61XL to St. Thomas. Your donations are a terrific way to keep costs down.

**Miles of Pennies**

*Easter Flowers* is a special gift giving for Easter and springtime. Please continue to donate Forever Stamps, paper products, or printer ink HP 61XL to St. Thomas. Your donations are a terrific way to keep costs down.
## April 2017

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>9 am–Noon</th>
<th>Thrift Shop Open</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Healing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3  | 3 pm – ECW Meeting  
    7-8 pm – AA Meditation Group in Wisdom Hall | 9-11 am – Thrift Work Day  
    10 am – Craft Group  
    12 pm – Beginner’s Fitness  
    12:30 pm – Fitness Class  
    7 pm – Choir Rehearsal |
| 4  | 9 am–3 pm | Thrift Shop     |
| 5  | 9 am–3 pm | Thrift Shop     |
| 6  | 9 am–3 pm | Thrift Shop     |
| 7  | 9 am–3 pm | Thrift Shop     |
| 8  | 9:45 am  | 2 pm Quiet Day: “God so loves the world”  
    9 am–Noon | Thrift Shop Open |
| 9  | Palm Sunday |                |
| 10 | Holy Monday |                  |
| 11 | Holy Tuesday |                |
| 12 | Holy Wednesday |            |
| 13 | Maundy Thursday |            |
| 14 | Good Friday  |                |
| 15 | Holy Saturday |            |
| 16 | Easter Sunday |                |
| 17 | Church Office CLOSED  
    7-8 pm – AA Meditation Group in Wisdom Hall | 9-11 am – Thrift Work Day  
    10 am – Craft Group  
    12 pm – Beginner’s Fitness  
    12:30 pm – Fitness Class  
    7 pm – Choir Rehearsal |
| 18 | 7 pm - Vestry | 9 am–3 pm – Thrift Shop  
    10 am – Crafting  
    11 am – Lectionary Class  
    6:30 pm – AA Group  
    7 pm – Footwashing followed by Watch |
| 19 | 9 am–3 pm | Thrift Shop     |
| 20 | 9 am–3 pm | Thrift Shop     |
| 21 | 9 am–3 pm | Thrift Shop     |
| 22 | 9 am–Noon | Thrift Shop Open |
| 23 | Discretionary |                |
| 24 | 7-8 pm – AA Meditation Group in Wisdom Hall | 9-11 am – Thrift Work Day  
    10 am – Craft Group  
    11:30 am Fellowship Luncheon  
    12 pm – Beginner’s Fitness  
    12:30 pm – Fitness Class  
    7 pm – Choir Rehearsal |
| 25 |              | 9 am–3 pm – Thrift Shop  
    10 am – Healing Service  
    11 am – Lectionary Class  
    6:30 pm – AA Group  
    7:30 pm – AA Group |
| 26 |              | 9 am–3 pm – Thrift Shop  
    10 am – Healing Service  
    11 am – Lectionary Class  
    6:30 pm – AA Group  
    7 pm – Choir Rehearsal |
| 27 |              | 9 am–3 pm – Thrift Shop  
    10 am – Healing Service  
    11 am – Lectionary Class  
    6:30 pm – AA Group  
    7 pm – Choir Rehearsal |
| 28 |              | 9 am–3 pm – Thrift Shop  
    10 am – Healing Service  
    11 am – Lectionary Class  
    6:30 pm – AA Group  
    7 pm – Choir Rehearsal |
| 29 |              | 9 am–Noon | Thrift Shop Open |
| 30 | *SUNDAY SCHEDULE | 3 Easter |

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

- Holy Eucharist Services: 8 & 10:30 am
- Fr. John’s Adult Class, “Thinking Aloud, Allowed”, in Parish Hall: 9:15 am – 10 am
- Healing Miracles of Jesus Study in Library: 9:15 am
- Children’s Chapel at 10:30 am Service on April 2, 9, 30 (None on Easter)
- Family Worship on April 23
- Coffee Hour in Parish Hall – 9 am
- Fellowship in Parish Hall – Noon

---

**JESUS CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!**
M.O.S.T. Spring Fling
Men of St. Thomas Episcopal Church
317 S. Mary St. Eustis, Fl. 32726

Dinner, Dance, Music by
"The Second Wind Band", Assorted Prizes
worth over $1000.00. Limited seating

Menu:
Pot Roast, Mash Potatoes, Gravy,
Green Beans, Carrots,
Beverage and Dessert $10.00

Saturday April 29th, 2017
6 - 8:30 p.m.

Tickets for sale after both services,
Church Office 357-4358
Thrift Store 589-0641

any further questions
Call Jerry Fields 343-0007 President
or ask a M.O.S.T member