

# The Friends of Old St. Thomas at Ivy Mills

Volume 3, No. 1

NEWSLETTER

Spring, 1996

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## Church Improvements

One of the main goals of The Friends of Old St. Thomas is to complete restoration of the old church before 2002, the 150th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone by St. John Neumann. In the interim, it is necessary for FOST to maintain the building and make essential repairs. We hope you have noticed recent improvements. During 1995, the exterior and interior of the two sacristies were painted and the exterior front steps repaired. In addition, FOST contracted for repairs to woodwork damaged by carpenter bees and termite extermination.

We want to thank Matt Glessner who for his Eagle Scout project coordinated a group of volunteers including Tom Ellis and Troop #154 and with the advice of stone mason, Frank Marcello, fixed the driveway walls leading up to the church.

Special thanks to Michael Timmons, Tom Fisher, Larry O'Brien, Pat McFadden, John Stephano and members of the Knights of Columbus for their help with various jobs and projects; the Ward family who helped on grounds cleanup day by bagging leaves and removing brush that obscured sections of the stone wall on Valleybrook Road. Thanks also to Jan Bradley and the faithful cleaners who take care of the old church weekly.

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## Restoration

In order for FOST to go forward and seek funding for the restoration of the old church, it was necessary to develop a comprehensive restoration plan. We were most fortunate to have Mary Werner DeNadai, AIA, of John Milner Associates, Chadds Ford compile an itemized report outlining the scope of work and detailing preliminary recommendations regarding the planned restoration of the old church. We are grateful to John Milner Associates who provided the service gratis.

## In Memorium M. Frances Ward

The Friends of Old St. Thomas were deeply saddened by the death of Fran Ward this past October. Fran, a life long member of this parish, was a charter member of FOST. She was involved in every aspect of our organization. Fran had an abiding love for this parish and its history. Through the years Fran collected a great deal of information, photographs and memorabilia regarding the old church. She was always eager to share her knowledge and collection with the community. While doing research involving veterans interred in our cemetery, Fran discovered older cemetery records were not always accurate. She developed and implemented a program which includes researching existing records, recording information from tombstones, measuring graves, studying plot plans and photographing existing grave sites. Her goal was to have a permanent record of the history of the church yard available for future reference. We will always be indebted to Fran for all her work on behalf of FOST.

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## Coming Up...Cemetery Remembrance Day Sunday, April 14, 1995

The cemetery is an artifact of our history. Its gravestones chronicle past times. Our departed parishioners never really leave us; they are always a part of our spiritual community. They left us a legacy of faith which continues today. We honor them by including them in our prayers. The Friends of Old St. Thomas invite you to attend a remembrance service on Sunday, April 14. Join us at 2:00 p.m. in the old church for Benediction, song and prayer. At the end of the service participants will be given a flower to put on the grave of their loved one. We will conclude with refreshments in the social hall. Rain date for this event is April 21.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE PAST YEAR

### Historic Churches Tour and Dedication of FOST Memorial Plaque Sunday, April 23, 1995

Five local churches participated in the Historic Churches Tour. This was an opportunity for our community neighbors to visit various houses of worship. St. Thomas was the host church and after the tour refreshments were served in the social hall. The other churches included St. John's Episcopal, Concord Friends Meeting, Elam United Methodist and Siloam United Methodist Church.

In conjunction with the tour, Fr. Williams dedicated the FOST Memorial Plaque. The plaque recognizes significant donations to the Friends of Old St. Thomas. Donors include: Evans Foundation, The Chuck Scheib Memorial and Sherwin Williams Company. Recent additions are the Rev. Francis X. Griffin Memorial from the St. Thomas Adult Choir and the M. Frances Ward Memorial.

Also on display for the tour was the "The Old St. Thomas "Honor and Memorial Gift Book" which contains the names of those who have been enrolled through the FOST honor and memorial program. New altar cloths, a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Scheib, in memory of their son, were used for the first time on this day.

### Penn Heritage Day September 30, 1995

William Penn's "Holy Experiment" permitted residents of Pennsylvania to be "free" concerning their choice of religious worship. This was a departure from the stringent rules observed in many other parts of the colonies. On September 30, the Religious Society of Friends' Meetings of Chester and Delaware counties sponsored "Penn Heritage Day". This was a tour of eleven significant historical sites which impacted on the lives of early settlers in this area. The Willcox Mill (now in ruins) at Ivy Mill and Pole Cat Roads was one of the first mills to produce paper. The owner, Thomas Willcox, was a Roman Catholic. The Willcox mansion, located across the street from the paper mill is the first recorded site at which the Catholic Mass was said legally and publicly in Pennsylvania in the 1720's. Members of FOST were invited to provide visitors with

information about the history of St. Thomas parish.

FOST conducts church tours from time to time as well. We have recently given tours for the Newlin Mill Docents, a Maryland women's club, and St. Thomas Cub Scout Pack #154, third grade Bear Den.

### FOST Appreciation Dinner November 5, 1995

This past November, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Mulqueen graciously hosted the FOST Appreciation dinner. This was the second year the event was held in the Mulqueen's home. The dinner was an opportunity to socialize, thank members for their support and acknowledge all those who contributed to the success of FOST. Our thanks to Peg and Jay Mulqueen for a wonderful evening.

### FOST Craft Classes

FOST sponsors seasonal craft classes. The proceeds from the classes enable FOST to meet annual basic expenses such as postage, stationery and other miscellaneous costs. This past year the workshops included:

April 6.....Easter Garden Gate

October 5.....Fall Scarecrow

November 30.....Christmas Angel

We are gratified by the positive response to this type of fundraiser and will continue to offer future craft classes. Our next class, "Decorative Baskets" will be held on March 21, 1996. Suggestions regarding projects and scheduling are always welcome. Please contact Kathy McNichol at (610) 558-0182.

## YOU CAN HELP

### Old St. Thomas Church

The old church is open daily for Mass or a visit. Take a few minutes from the hectic pace of your day to renew your spirit in this quiet, beautiful haven.

We are committed to preserving Old St. Thomas Church and hope you will assist in this worthy endeavor. We appreciate and thank the many parishioners and friends who currently support FOST. We invite every family to join The Friends of Old St. Thomas Church. A family membership is only \$10.00 a year and individual memberships are \$5.00 a

year.

Participate in our "Memorial and Honor Gift Program". This is a thoughtful way to remember a living or deceased relative or friend. Our brochure found at the the entrance to both the old and new church, explains this program in detail.

Attend our fundraising events, make a donation or participate in the Food Certificate program. Use #1400 and 2% of your total purchase will benefit The Friends of Old St. Thomas. Please remember FOST and its mission in your prayers.

**An Invitation**

You are most welcome to attend our meetings. We meet the second Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the school annex. If you can't attend meetings, don't let that stop you from becoming an active member! Much of our work is done independently. We have many diversified volunteer opportunities including the following:

**Curriculum Development:** Develop an elementary level (grades 1 through 8) program

for use in school incorporating parish and local history.

**Newsletter Editor:** Need writing and editing skills; prepare newsletter for publication (2 issues per year).

**Grant Writing:** Be familiar with format for grant applications, need writing and editing skills

**Church Cleaners:** Approximately 2 hours per month at your convenience and/or major cleaning for Christmas and Easter.

**Bid Coordinator:** Knowledge of construction or building trades helpful. Help set up appointments for estimates and help oversee work being done to make sure specifications are being met.

If you are interested in any of the listed positions or if you have a special talent or field of expertise, please call Trish Glessner at (610) 459-3151.

**The Friends of Old St. Thomas  
P.O. Box 19  
Chester Heights, PA 19017**

**FOST MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Make your check payable to FOST. Put application and check in envelope marked FOST and drop in collection basket or mail to FOST at above address.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Family Membership: \$10.00 per year \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Membership: \$ 5.00 per year \_\_\_\_\_

Donation \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please check here if you wish further information.

We appreciate your support!

**THE FRIENDS OF OLD SAINT THOMAS**  
at Ivy Mills

Volume 3, No. 2

Fall, 1996

**NEWSLETTER**

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**Membership**

Your support is essential in our effort to raise necessary funds for the maintenance and restoration of Old St. Thomas Church. You can help us achieve our goals by becoming a member of The Friends of Old St. Thomas. A family membership is only \$10.00 a year and individual memberships are \$5.00. A registration form is included in this newsletter. Join today!

New members are most welcome to attend meetings, 7:30 p.m., 2nd Thursdays each month in the school annex. (The November meeting date has been changed to November 21).

**Fund Raising**

Enthusiastic parish participation in FOST's various fund raising activities.....described below.....shows potential major donors that the parish fully supports FOST goals and programs. We thank all who have participated this past year, and hope for continued support in the future.

This past June 16, Father Williams earmarked the **Second Collection** for FOST, for a total of \$1071. We especially appreciate this new source of funds. Receipts will be used for the restoration and preservation of the old church and for the pursuit of grant monies. Most foundations interested in helping fund major restoration efforts require matching funds.

**Food Certificates:** FOST account number is #1400. This is an easy way to support the parish. Two percent of your food certificate purchases benefits Friends' programs.

**The Honor and Memorial Gift** program is a thoughtful way to remember a living or deceased relative or friend. See the FOST brochure for details. (Brochure is available at entryways of both the old and new churches.)

Make a tax-deductible contribution to the **Historic Ivy Mills Church Project**, an independent but closely-related FOST support group. Call Trish Glessner (459-3151) for further information.

**Seasonal craft classes** are another source of revenue for the Friends. The Christmas workshop is scheduled for December 5. For craft information, call Kathy McNichol at 558-0182.

**Third Annual FOST Dinner**

The Friends of Old St. Thomas host an annual appreciation dinner for members and benefactors. This year the dinner will be held on Sunday, November 10 at nearby "Hamanasset" which was the headquarters of the Lima Hunt at the turn of the century.

**Recent Improvements**

The railroad ties that enclosed the flower beds in front of the church were rotting and could not be securely anchored. Members of FOST discussed various replacement options and concluded a "dry-lay" stone retaining wall would enhance the appearance of the front of the church. We think the final result is not only practical, but esthetically pleasing as well. We hope you agree.

The front doors of the old church needed to be refurbished. The doors were stripped, sanded and sealed with four coats of marine varnish. The kick plate was replaced with chestnut wood from trees located on a property on Ivy Mills Road. This repair was essential to prevent further deterioration.

A new screen door was hand made for the side door of the priest's sacristy. This will allow for ventilation and deter "little critters" from accessing the church.

On the same side of the church, the cellar doors leading to the crawl space under the nave of the church were repaired and painted. The frame into which the doors are bolted was replaced and the stone wall that holds the frame was repaired.

Tree specialists were contracted to cut back large branches near the old church and rectory. This is necessary to prevent leaves and debris from collecting in gutters and to provide proper ventilation to roof areas and overhangs. The regular fall cleanup of the grounds is planned.

Last winter's bad weather and strong winds removed a portion of the aluminum siding from the steeple. The need for an extremely high lift apparatus created scheduling problems, but the repair was completed in April by Bob Civitella, whom we thank for his special efforts.

**Many Participate in Cemetery**

**Day of Remembrance**

Our remembrance day service was held on Sunday, April 14, 1996. We were pleased so many people attended this ceremony. Father Williams led the congregation in prayer and Benediction, with music by Fran Hagerty and Annette Steger.

This was a day to reflect on the legacy of faith we have inherited from our departed relatives and friends.

We were blessed with beautiful weather, and many of those attending lingered in the cemeteries before joining us for refreshments in the social hall. There was a great sense of camaraderie as families shared memories of their loved ones. The response led us to schedule a second such day, April 13, next year. Our thanks to Rose Ann Mohn for coordinating this event.

**Research**

The Oral History Project is being coordinated by Mary Archer. We are presently engaged in an effort to interview current or past parishioners. We are interested in any remembrances people may have of their association with the parish community while they were growing up or during their adult years here. If you or someone you know would like to reminisce for the record, please call Mary at (610) 459-5345.

Rose Ann Cassidy Mohn would like to hear from you if you have relatives buried in our cemetery. Rose Ann, Jeanne Berlin and Eagle Scout, Rob Bowers spent many hours compiling a list of the deceased members of our community. They used old records and headstones as their primary source of information. We are aware not all graves are marked and some older records are difficult to read. Please contact Rose Ann (431-7178) if you have inquiries about the cemetery.

An essential part of the history of our parish is knowing about those persons who came before us. FOST is seeking information about departed parishioners buried in our cemetery. We have a family history questionnaire available at the entrances of the old and new churches. The information you provide will be placed in our historical files.

The Country Fair will be celebrating its 100th anniversary next year. We are eager to hear your recollections. We are looking for any articles concerning the fair, old photographs, or memorabilia associated with this event. Contact Trish Glessner (459-3151) if you can help.

**In Memory of Tom McCue**

The Friends of Old St. Thomas thank Millie McCue and family for designating the old church as the recipient for donations made in memory of Tom. Because of the many contributions made to the Honor and Memorial program in memory of Tom, his name was added to the Memorial Plaque that hangs in the rear of the old church.

**Remaining Horse Shed**

We would like to thank Jeanne and Don Berlin for the donation of the storage garage now located at the rear of the school parking lot. The garage will keep the fair equipment secure and dry, freeing the historic horse shed for repair and eventual use for social and educational events. Our thanks to Tom Kennedy and his helpers for moving the garage to its new home. It was quite a feat!

Horse sheds were a common sight at St. Thomas around the turn of the century. Once authorization was given to erect a shed it would be built at the owner's expense. Family names were often affixed to the structure. It was permissible to sell a shed to another parishioner. Father Ciaudelli published a parish history booklet in 1979. This is what he says about the horse sheds; "Gradually so many were built they extended from the left side of the church near the front to the little cemetery behind it, St. Mary's Cemetery." Today only one shed remains. FOST will restore or refurbish it when funds permit.

**Parking**

Sue Timmins created beautiful hand painted slate "No Parking" signs that have been placed in the front flower beds of the old church. The message is quite clear. No one should park in the driveways or fire lanes. Good sense tells us to keep the roadways clear for safe driving and emergency vehicle access at all times. **Please be considerate and cooperate by observing directional and parking signs and using common sense.**

**Genealogical Request**

Connie Roe Miller has asked if anyone in our parish community can supply her with information about her relatives. She tells us James Frederick Roe was born in Concordville, PA in 1882 and died in 1951. Margaret A. Roe was born in Concordville in 1876 and died in 1958. If you remember the Roe family or have data that would be helpful to Connie, please contact Rose Ann Mohn at 431-7178.

**Join the Friends of Old St. Thomas Church**

During the past few years FOST has completed many repairs and improvements to the old church and surrounding grounds. We still have a long way to go to achieve our goal of restoring the old church by the year 2002. Paid memberships are one important way to show potential major donors that parishioners and other friends are active supporters, so your membership is vital to our success.

**The Friends of Old Saint Thomas Church  
1997 Membership Dues**

Name.....

Address.....

City..... State..... Zip.....

Family:        \$10.00        \_\_\_\_\_

Individual:    \$ 5.00        \_\_\_\_\_

Donation:        \_\_\_\_\_

(    )Yes, I am interested in volunteering, please call me.

Phone.....

Please mail completed form and your check to  
**The Friends of Old St. Thomas**  
**P.O. Box 19, Chester Heights, PA 19017**