

THE FRIENDS OF OLD SAINT THOMAS
at Ivy Mills

Volume 6, No. 1

Spring, 1999

NEWSLETTER

The New Millennium

Historic preservation has become a worldwide major focus as we approach the new millennium. The United States has become involved by designating World Heritage Sites. Last year the only U.S. site was here in Pennsylvania. The entire county of Lancaster, PA joined a list that includes the Great Wall of China, the Acropolis, the City of Dubrovnik in Croatia and a collection of totem poles of western Canadian tribes

Here in the U.S. the focus can be seen at both the national and local levels. There are more Federal tax credit bills, state tax abatement programs, even city revolving funds that purchase endangered buildings until a sensitive buyer can be found. Locally, Concord Township enacted an Historic Preservation Ordinance which lists 207 properties in the Historic Resources Inventory and three historic districts, one of which is the Ivy Mills district.

The Friends of Old St. Thomas hopes that the preservation of the entire St. Thomas, Ivy Mills, historic complex will continue into the new millennium so that future generations will have a visible historic connection to their past. FOST recognizes that progress is desirable and necessary, but puts historic preservation and understanding alongside it. We are keenly aware that the importance of historic preservation has been part of western culture since medieval times, when happily for us today, popes and other leaders saved countless Roman structures. Later, even Napoleon, aggressive military man that he was, spoke in the strongest terms against destroying a people's heritage. Saint Thomas' parish heritage is no less fundamental or important.

When speaking with parishioners about St. Thomas, the words often used to describe the parish are caring, a sense of community, a parish with a rich tradition of helping others. Mary DeNadai, Vice President of John Milner Architects, in a speech to the Delaware County Historical Society quoted James Kunstler from his book, *The Geography of Nowhere*. Kunstler stresses the importance of community. He writes that people are happiest in "physical surroundings worth caring about". He attributes charm with what makes surroundings worth caring about when he says charm "is dependent on connectedness, on continuities, on the relation of one thing to another..".

When we look around the St. Thomas Historic Complex we understand fully what Kunstler means. The buildings of a by-gone era exemplify the faith and lifestyle of our predecessors; the continuity from one generation to the next, from 1729 to 1999; the knowledge of where we are today because we can see where we have been; the special peace that is felt when walking around the historic properties and walking in the steps of St. John Neumann and our other faith family members.

Please support the mission of FOST, become a member, support historic preservation of the entire St. Thomas complex as a parishioner or non-parishioner. Give

historic preservation locally and nationally your complete support into the new millennium.

Thank You!

Our thanks to Bob and Joe Civitella of Civitella Contracting, Inc., for the new gutters and gutter guard on the old church. Their generous donation of time and materials enabled the Friends to keep costs under \$1000. Thanks to Phil and Adam Popiel for taking care of the lights and timers in the old church and for responding to many last minute calls that required immediate attention for weddings and funerals. We want to acknowledge the great job John Carey did in replacing floorboards around the organ in the choir loft. John has done many small projects for us and always for minimal cost.

"A Walk Back In Time"

"St. Thomas at Ivy Mills Historic Properties Tour" took place on Sunday, April 18. This in depth tour gave parishioners and history lovers the opportunity to peruse "an intact Victorian Gothic complex" eligible for the National Registry. Due to interest FOST is considering having another tour in the Fall.

All who attended were given the opportunity to complete a "millennium" history about themselves and their families. These special papers will be put in a time capsule and will be a part of the permanent archives of the Friends. There will be other opportunities for parishioners to include their family history for the record. A hundred years from now this will be a wonderful way for future generations to know about you!

Purchases Benefit FOST

The Friends notecards will be available through the parish office. Eight "Old Church in Winter" cards are packaged as a set for \$8.00. Make checks payable to the Friends of Old St. Thomas.

FOST member, Joe Dragon continues to take orders for the framed and matted color photo of the "Old Church in Winter". You can contact Joe at 459-3533.

No Parking, No Parking, No Parking!

On April 11th the Sunday Bulletin contained an article about the dry lay stone wall in front of the church being hit. It has been hit again, this time by a bus. Please **DO NOT PARK IN THE DRIVEWAY NEXT TO THE CHURCH**. Our major concern is that a car parked in the driveway will force a car or bus into the building.

Letters

We recently received this letter from a resident of Northern New Jersey. She expresses the thoughts many of our parishioners hold regarding the importance of maintaining and preserving our old church. It is gratifying to hear Old Saint Thomas Church is such a meaningful place of worship to those who visit from other areas.

Dear Friends in Christ:

Because my husband and I attend Mass daily, when visiting your area and staying at our favorite Bed & Breakfast - Hammanasset, we attend Mass at your lovely Old Saint Thomas the Apostle Church.

I had just finished exclaiming how wonderful it was that the church is intact and being restored, when unfortunately, so many beautiful churches are being stripped or torn down - when lo & behold I saw your folder - so I decided to put my money where my mouth is.

Thank you so much for keeping this beautiful church. I love all these structures where God is or was glorified!

God Bless -
T.....S.....
Ridgewood, NJ

Visit FOST on the WEB

Be sure to check out FOST on our new website at www.delcohistory.org/fost

5/99

The Friends of Old Saint Thomas at Ivy Mills

MEMBERSHIP

Name.....

Address.....

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

Family: \$10.00 (yearly)

Individual: \$5.00 (yearly)

Donation: \$.....

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

The Friends of Old Saint Thomas wishes to acknowledge and thank the following members and donors for their financial support during the calendar year from May, 1998 through April, 1999.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Archer
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Berlin
Mr. & Mrs. John Brady
Mr. & Mrs. David Breen
Kevin Breen
Josephine Breneman
Mr. & Mrs. John S. J. Brooks
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Bruggerman
Mr. & Mrs. Roy Bryant
Mr. & Mrs. John A. Carlin
Bridget Chamberlain
Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Chmielowski
Reverend Louis T. Ciaudelli
Rosemary D. Coffey
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Mr. & Mrs. Robert Wiechecki, Sr.
Mark Willcox, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Roy H. Willcox
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Worrall
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Zekonis

THE FRIENDS OF OLD ST. THOMAS at Ivy Mills

Volume 6, No. 2

Fall, 1999

NEWSLETTER

Help Wanted

After our new church was dedicated in 1991, the Friends of Old St. Thomas was established. FOST accepted the responsibility of maintaining and preserving the old church and the historic outbuildings. The mission of the Friends also includes the collection and preservation of parish history, the development of educational programs, and a commitment to promote and keep alive the legacy of the oldest parish in the archdiocese.

As awareness of our ministry grows so do the requests for information, genealogy facts, tours, and participation in various historical events. **More volunteers are needed!** FOST has compiled a Volunteer Opportunities Sheet that appears on the reverse side. Please take time to review it and indicate your area of interest. Many of the tasks can be done independently. Your contribution of time or talent is a meaningful way to continue the spirit of generosity that started in our parish 270 years ago.

Father Louis Ciaudelli

The Friends were saddened by the death of Reverend Louis A. Ciaudelli this past July. Father had been a priest for thirty-seven years. He was associate pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle parish from November, 1975 until April, 1980.

Father was aware of the historical recognition this parish deserved. In 1979 he published a history of St. Thomas the Apostle parish in conjunction with the 250th anniversary of the founding of the parish. Many members may remember the special Mass Father celebrated in 1977 in honor of St. John Neumann who had been canonized a saint a month before. The event also recalled that one hundred and twenty five years earlier (1852), St. John Neumann had blessed the cornerstone of our church. To make this day memorable, some parishioners dressed in colonial garb and Father Ciaudelli (like his predecessors) arrived at church on horseback.

Father's last assignment was pastor of Our Lady of Consolation Church in Philadelphia until his retirement in 1998. Father always stayed connected to St. Thomas; he supported the goals of the Friends and he was helpful to us in countless ways. Father's final resting place is in St. Thomas cemetery.

Spirit Award

Christian spirit is the opportunity to honor God and carry out his teachings through our words, deeds and actions. It can be demonstrated in many ways: extending a hand to someone in need, visiting the sick, sharing a talent, working on a community project or simply doing your best.

This year the FOST Spirit Award was given to Matthew Berlin. Matthew has been involved in numerous activities including being a CCD Teacher's Aide for two years. The Friends were pleased to present Matthew with a \$100.00 savings bond and a certificate of merit. His name will

be added to the Spirit Award recognition plaque that is on permanent display in the social hall.

The Friends would like to remind all eighth grade students attending any school (as long as they are members of our parish) that they are eligible to submit an entry for consideration to the Spirit Award panel. The award is given at the end of the school year. Students can be nominated by anyone; a teacher, parent, coach, neighbor or another student. Applications are distributed to St. Thomas School in January and they are also available in the narthex of the church.

Newlin Grist Mill's Fall Harvest Festival

The Newlin Grist Mill committee invited Friends of Old St. Thomas to participate in their first "Fall Harvest Festival" on Saturday, October 2nd. The festival not only consisted of Mill demonstrations, tours, colonial crafts, wagon rides and music but also the representatives of local historic organizations. The Friends were stationed at the Plants and Pumpkins wagon. While helping with the sale of these items, members of FOST were able to hand out brochures and talk to folks about their mission. Our thanks to the Newlin committee: Dabs Woodfin, Grace Raack and Karen Moore for inviting us to participate in this event and for the donation given to our ministry.

FOST Social

Invitations have been sent to current members to join the Friends in December at the historic Willcox Homestead. This beautiful house which is presently being restored to its former grandeur is a part of Saint Thomas the Apostle's heritage. We are grateful to Mark Willcox for inviting us to return during this holiday season.

The Millennium

If you would like to write a brief history about yourself or your family, recount how you came to settle in this community, or share a parish experience, please contact us. The Friends have special millennium paper (acid free, archival quality) available. Completed papers will be put in a "time capsule" that will be part of the permanent archives of the Friends. Call Trish Glessner at 610-459-3151 for details.

Financial Support

FOST must be self-supporting, therefore, fund raising is an important aspect of what we do. Presently, our main sources of income are derived through memberships, honor and memorial donations and a yearly church collection. Craft classes are held to raise operating funds. We need the support of all parishioners so please join FOST today. Individual Memberships are \$5.00 per year and Family Memberships are \$10.00 yearly. Please mail your check to FOST, PO Box 19, Chester Heights, PA 19017.

**Please drop your completed form in the collection basket or mail to:
The Friends of Old St. Thomas, PO Box 19, Chester Heights, PA 19017**

Name _____
Address _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

FOST has many volunteer opportunities. Please check your area of interest/expertise (if it is not listed, please include at bottom of page or if necessary use another sheet of paper). If you have any questions or need additional information, please call Trish Glessner at 610-459-3151.

Maintenance

- _____ Responsible for cleaning schedule, notifying cleaners of dates, times, etc.
- _____ Volunteer to clean old church approximately one hour per month.
- _____ Help with church cleaning at Easter or Christmas
- _____ Gardeners for weeding, planting of flowers, pruning.
- _____ Participate in seasonal outdoor cleanups around the old church complex.

Grants and Funding

- _____ Grant Research
- _____ Proposal Writing
- _____ Attend seminars regarding grants and funding, report back.
- _____ Archivist (archival records experience needed) to establish FOST archives

Research

- _____ Do historical research in various locations, Diocesan Archives, Historical Societies, Libraries.
- _____ Willing to represent FOST as contact person with other historical groups. Attend historical conferences. Report back.
- _____ Oral History Coordinator...need someone who has had experience in this field to establish and train others in the correct format for interviewing. Set up interviews. Plan for transcribing tapes.

Clerical

- _____ Phone contact: make calls for FOST.
- _____ FOST Membership Contact...provides information, mails correspondence, tracks membership.
- _____ Honor and Memorial Program: Handles the clerical aspects of this program.
- _____ Wedding Scheduler sends letter regarding use of old church. Makes sure that church is scheduled to be cleaned before wedding.
- _____ Mails FOST gift. Responds to phone inquiries.

Publicity/Publications

- _____ Publicity...handle publicity for FOST. Develop/write and submit articles for church bulletin, etc.
- _____ Newsletter Editor and writers for twice yearly newsletter.
- _____ Spirit Award. Handle paper work and take charge of program that is already in place.

*****CHAIRPERSONS*****

- _____ FUNDRAISING: Develop and coordinate fundraising activities.
- _____ EVENT PLANNER: Plan and coordinate all FOST events.
- _____ EDUCATION: Develops and implements educational programs for school children, adult programs. These should include local and regional history, Catholic and parish history.
- _____ MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR: Recruits members and develops creative ways to increase FOST membership.

Other

- _____ On site Estimate Liaison. Need someone who would be available to meet with jobbers who are giving estimates. This person would contact contractors, set up appointments, submit estimates to FOST and make sure work is completed as agreed.
- _____ Craft workshop helpers...help making up kits, set up and clean up, help with instruction.
- _____ Photographers to document on a yearly basis the entire St. Thomas Church complex. (Videographers also needed to do same).
- _____ Photograph FOST events, activities.

All are welcome to attend our meetings. They are held at 7:30 pm on the second Thursday of the month. Check the parish bulletin for location.

Your suggestions: