

THE FRIENDS OF OLD ST. THOMAS
at Ivy Mills

Volume 9, No. 1

Spring, 2002

NEWSLETTER

Maintenance and Restoration Projects Move Ahead

Several projects have been underway in the historic district. **Reconstruction of the old church steps** has been completed by master mason, Michael Palita, helped by a stalwart group of volunteers. Excavation and research confirmed that the three-sided design was used as far back as the 1870s, and that configuration is continued in the newly installed steps.

A new, solid concrete foundation supports the risers formed from the stones of the original ice house that once stood to the south of the old rectory. The treads are Pennsylvania Blue Stone from Scranton, PA. The landing has been enlarged and paved with 'antique' brick to carry the design to the brick vestibule.

The hand railings will be lengthened and raised. Temporary planters have been set at the corners to protect the steps from wayward vehicles. Sandstone steps from the 1940s (discovered during the demolition process) will be used as steps at the south end of the rectory porch.

The **electrical system in the old church** has been upgraded, entirely with volunteer labor, and includes a new control panel, new wiring and switches. **The boiler was repaired. Pew repair and stabilization** has been completed.

Exterior painting on the old church and rectory is underway. **The vestibule roof and flashing were repaired. The horse-shed was re-stained**, and a gutter is to be installed on the back eave.

Volunteer work on **the front rooms of the old rectory** has uncovered two fireplaces and wide pine flooring. The old cabinetry has been removed, restoring the rooms to original size. The powder room has been repaired. Work on ceilings, floors, walls and the electrical system is on-going.

This past year FOST has spent approximately **\$22,000** on maintenance and repairs primarily on the old church, all but depleting our reserves.

About Funding

As mentioned above, FOST has spent a large sum of money for necessary repairs. Funding for these projects is generated from donations given by parishioners and others.

In the late 1980s, predictions indicated western Delaware County was on the cusp of unprecedented development. Our parish membership was rapidly increasing, and meeting the needs of a growing parish would be a great challenge and a great expense. A new church was built in 1991, and in 1997 a new rectory/parish center provided much needed office and meeting space. School expansion was necessary, and in 2000 the parish undertook the enormous task of building a new education center. As they should be, coordinating the capital campaign fund and completing expansion projects are financial priorities for the parish.

Although sympathetic to the maintenance needs of the buildings and grounds in the historic district, the parish simply could not afford to allocate funds for this area. **FOST**

was formed in 1991 to assume the financial burden of maintaining the old church and promote the history of our parish. Upkeep of the outbuildings was added in order to keep the history as accurate and complete as possible. The Friends have developed alternate methods for raising money so as not to interfere with established parish fund-raising activities

If our mission is to be successful we need the financial and spiritual support of our fellow parishioners. **How can you help? Pray** for the greater glory of God to be evident through the work of FOST. **Join FOST.** A family membership is only \$10 a year, and will go a long way in helping us achieve our goals. **Support our fund-raising activities. Volunteer** your time and talent. **Enroll a living or deceased relative or friend** in the Honor/Memorial Program.

Another reason to join and donate: significant support by parish members and friends through memberships and donations is essential to our receiving foundation or other outside support. With the investment of such a sizable amount of our own funds in recent projects, we will be able to more vigorously and credibly pursue outside funding from now on. **Please use the form overleaf** to join and/or donate now!

Written in Stone: 150 Years of Old St. Thomas Church
Be Part of the Celebration!

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of the old church by St. John Neumann. This is a time to reflect on the impact our Catholic heritage has had not only in our parish, but the community at large. Although the parish founding antedates 1729, it was a great accomplishment for our earlier parishioners to erect a church so that the parish could grow and flourish for generations to come. For 150 years this unpretentious but inspirational edifice has served untold numbers as a place for worship and spiritual solace. The church that welcomed and embraced the faithful 150 years ago continues to do so today.

For this special anniversary year FOST has planned a variety of events, financed by special donations from local businesses and friends. More information will follow, but for now, save these dates: on August 17/18, after all Masses, join us for Celebration Cake at the horse shed and tours of the historic district. Art and photography contests will begin then and end in May. On September 29, special ceremonies will recall St. John Neumann's visit here. In October, November, and February respectively, "William Penn" (aka William C. Kashatus), Fr. Michael J. McNally, and John C. Rumm will speak on various aspects of "Ivy Mills and Religious Freedom in Pennsylvania: Preserving the Story." An historical religious music concert by the Villanova Singers on March 30, and a tour of pertinent local historical sites on April 27 are also planned. A wrap-up event in May, when the art contest prizes will be awarded, will conclude the program.

Be part of the fun! We need help with various aspects of these programs. See the sign-up form overleaf.

150th Anniversary Memento

We have commissioned a lighted ceramic replica of the old church to mark this anniversary year. The company is well known for their quality and attention to detail. Their client list is impressive, and their product is highly collectible. This limited anniversary edition will be marked with the anniversary dates (1852-2002) and includes a brief history of the church. Each piece is boxed and numbered and makes a wonderful gift.

Check the weekly parish bulletins for additional information regarding the anniversary events and the sale of the church replica.

Christian Legacy Award Winner

The Friends instituted this award to recognize an eighth grade student who demonstrates outstanding commitment to the Christian legacy of faith and service to others, whether at home, school, or community. The goal is to increase awareness of that great legacy, especially in our young people, hence this award to recognize and encourage them. The award is open to all parish eighth grade students regardless of which school they attend.

This year's recipient is Caitlin Judge. Caitlin demonstrates her strong connection to the Christian legacy by her practice of unbidden help with child care, concern for neighbors, courageous attitude, and cheerful presence to all whom she encounters. Her name is added to the permanent plaque that hangs in the social hall.

In 2002 we are planning to extend the award program to include high school students. Please look for the nomination forms early next year.

**THE FRIENDS OF OLD ST. THOMAS
at Ivy Mills
PO Box 19, Chester Heights, PA 19017
MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone # _____ E-Mail _____

New Member Renewal Member

Yearly Membership

Family: \$10.00 _____
Individual: \$ 5.00 _____
Donation: \$ _____

I would be interested in helping with:

150th Anniversary Events _____

FOST Projects _____

Ivy Mills/St. Thomas Guide Program _____

Please mail completed form and your check to the address above. Phone Contact: Trish Glessner 610-459-3151.

All are invited to attend our meetings at 7:30 pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month in the new school conference room.

FOST wishes to acknowledge and thank the following members & donors for their financial support during the calendar year from May, 2001 through April, 2002.

Major Donors

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Archer	Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Lewis, III	The Evans Foundation	1993
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Barron	Mr. & Mrs. John S. McManus	Sherwin-Williams Company	1993-1994
Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Bell	Mr. & Mrs. George McNichol	Estella O'Connor	1996
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Bonner	Mr. & Mrs. Richard F. Murray	Squyres Family	1999
Ms. Josephine Breneman	Ms. Joan Palace	Louis Bodo	2000
Ms. Elizabeth Brooks	Mr. & Mrs. Leon Partyka	Josephine G. Breneman	2001
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Calabro	Sister Andrew Persing, OSF		
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Clardy	Mr. & Mrs. Armand Petrillo		
Ms. Edna Cochran	Ms. Josephine Pettinelli	In Memory of	
Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Comisiak	Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Phillips	Charles Scheib, Jr.	1994
Ms. Florence Cuthbert	Mr. & Mrs. Philip Popiel	Rev. Francis X. Griffin	1995
Ms. Anne Docherty	Dr. Budne Reinke	M. Frances Ward	1995
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Dragon	Ms. Jane Richards	Thomas E. McCue, Jr.	1996
Mr. & Mrs. John Dunay	Mr. & Mrs. Ronald F. Russo	Carolyn Marie Smith	1997
Mr. James Fawcett	St. Thomas Women's Club	Anne Buckley	1998
Ms. Harriet Fitzpatrick	Mr. & Mrs. H. I. Schettler	Helen Lewis & Jas. H. Smith	1999
Mr. & Mrs. James Frazer	Dr. & Mrs. James Shields	J. Taney & Ruth C. Willcox	2000
Mr. Paul German	Mr. & Mrs. Michael Squyres	Edwin B. Hobaugh	2000
Mr. & Mrs. Steven German	Mr. & Mrs. Edward Sulek	George E. Fisher, Jr.	2001
Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Glessner	Ms. Florence Tate	Betty Smith Sulek	2001
Ms. Blanche Hasek	Mr. & Mrs. John J. Thomas	William Forbes Willcox	2002
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Kennedy	Mr. & Mrs. Terry Turner		
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Kramaric	Mrs. Thomas C. Valentine	In Honor of	
Ms. Julie Krauss	Mr. & Mrs. Ted M. Varney	Parents of Mr. & Mrs. Jos. Dragon	2000
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Kolikowki	Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Wiechecki		
Mr. & Mrs. Philip Machonis	Mr. Mark Willcox, Jr., Esq.		
Mrs. Edward Minehan	Mr. Mark Willcox, III		
Ms. Margaret McGarvey	Rev. Richard C. Williams		
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Goodman	The Zirolli Family		

**THE FRIENDS OF OLD ST. THOMAS
at Ivy Mills**

Volume 9, No. 2

Fall, 2002

NEWSLETTER

Wanted: Artists and Photographers!

Artists and photographers often see our surroundings from different angles and perspectives. Their talent often inspires us to view things in a different light and gives us a deeper understanding of particular elements. FOST is sponsoring an art and photography contest and the chosen theme is **"The Celebration of Old Saint Thomas."**

Submissions may be in the form of art and photography related to the parish, its buildings (exterior or interior), the grounds, or historical interpretation of the early years of the parish.

The contest is for amateurs only. No professionals may submit entries. One entry per person in applicable divisions will be accepted. Artists and photographers maintain the copyright to their works but authorize FOST to use entries for promotional, display, reproduction or fund raising activities with appropriate, non-monetary credit given to artists and photographers.

ART CONTEST: Four divisions for students grades K-12. Students may choose any media (pen, pencil, crayons, oil, watercolor, pastel, etc.) and materials, but artwork must be on a flat surface (two dimensional). Size of submission should be 11 x 14 inches up to 18 x 24 inches.

Prize Categories: (K-2) – (3-5) – (6-9) – (10-12)

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST: Four divisions for ALL ages, children through adult.

Photographs may be black and white or color. The maximum submission size is 8 x 10 inches.

Prize Categories: Black and White: Age 25 and under and Age 26 and Older.

Color: Age 25 and under and Age 26 and Older.

Send entries along with a separate sheet of paper with your name, address, phone number and contest category to:

**The Friends of Old Saint Thomas
PO Box 19, Chester Heights, PA 19017**

****ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 1, 2003****

"Written In Stone"

150th Anniversary of the Old Church

The 150th anniversary celebration continues into spring so be sure to mark your calendar if you plan to attend these special events. The old rectory has proven to be a comfortable, informal setting for the lecture series. Join us on **February 11, 2002** (snow date is February 18) when Claire Valente, Ph.D. speaks on the topic, **"Looking Back, Going Forward: History, Faith and Community."** The program starts at 7:30 pm and concludes with light refreshments. All are welcome.

Music has always been an integral part of church liturgy. On **March 30, 2003**, the **Villanova Singers and Villanova Chamber Choir** will present a concert featuring **Church Music Through the Centuries**. Come and enjoy the ensemble as they recapture the musical traditions so many of

us have come to enjoy. **The concert takes place in the old church at 2:00 pm.**

There are many historical sites in this section of the county. On **April 27, 2003** The Friends will sponsor a tour of local sites from 1 to 5 pm. We will realize the geographic importance of **"Three Miles, Three Faiths: Founding Sites of Religious Toleration in Concord."**

On **May 18th** the anniversary celebration will conclude with a luncheon. Art and photography prizes will be awarded at this affair. All are invited. Additional information will be forthcoming.

Ceramic Replica: A Worthwhile Purchase

The lighted ceramic replica of the old church was commissioned to mark the 150th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone for the original church by St. John Neumann in 1852. This memento will be available throughout the anniversary year while supplies last. A digital print is available for you to view in the social hall or you can locate it on line at www.delcohistory.org/fost

Do you know someone who was married in the old church? Did any of your family members receive the sacraments there? Do you have friends or relatives who may have moved from the parish? Is there a baby who will be baptized at St. Thomas or a child who will soon make his/her First Communion in our parish? This lovely church replica would be an ideal gift and a meaningful memento.

It is our hope this endeavor will be a financial success. We suggest you consider the positive outcome your purchase will have in assisting FOST to continue their commitment to maintain and preserve the old church. Next up for repairs to the old church are some essential structural projects, such as chimney liner replacement and moisture control. Everyone wants new carpeting, but structural needs, alas, must come first.

Order forms are available in the narthex of the church. The cost of the ceramic piece is \$27.00 or 2 for \$50.00. Please include your check with the order form. **Delivery is expected in early 2003.**

**"One is Nearer to God in the Garden Than Anywhere Else
On Earth"**

FOST is forming a gardening committee and looking for volunteers to attend to the various outside seasonal chores necessary to maintain the beauty of the area surrounding the old church. Ideally, each member would only need to devote a few hours each month, working at your convenience. Tasks include raking, twig removal, light weeding, trimming bushes, planting and watering. All necessary tools will be provided by FOST. If you are interested, please call Bette Popiel at 610-358-4835.

Youth of the Parish: Looking For a Service Project?

From time to time, FOST has projects in the historical area that are conducive to Scout service projects or youth service hours required for school, CCD or other organizations. Large and small jobs are available. Please consider FOST and your parish as the recipient of your service work. For additional information, contact Bette Popiel at 610-358-4835.

Just for Kids

For the anniversary celebration on September 29, FOST assembled an exhibit that traced the history of the parish from the 1720's through 2002. The following week students from St. Thomas School had the opportunity to visit the display in the old rectory that included rarely seen artifacts. One of the most interesting pieces was a handmade wooden tabernacle thought to have come from the chapel in the Willcox home and later moved to the newly built St. Thomas the Apostle Church in 1856. There were old newspaper articles, photographs, and written information that chronicled the story of our parish from its founding in 1729. Marianne and Mike Squyres were on hand to give tours of the old church, outbuildings and grounds and to answer kids' questions.

A group of Cub Scouts from Havertown chose to visit the Willcox homestead and the St. Thomas historic campus on October 12th. Guides were available to explain the history of our parish and the origins of the buildings at both sites. The Cubs were enthusiastic guests.

The Friends recently donated books to the St. Thomas school library on three American saints...Mother Cabrini, Mother Elizabeth Seton, and St. John Neumann. Activity books were also included to go along with the stories.

The Christian Heritage Award nominations get underway in early 2003. This award recognizes an eighth grade student who has taken the initiative to do acts of kindness in the community, at home or in school. This year we will expand the program to include high school students. The winner of the award is presented with a \$100 savings bond, a certificate of merit, and the student's name is inscribed on the honor plaque that hangs in the social hall.

A Tradition Revived

Starting around 1840, and lasting several years, it was customary for the seminarians from the city to spend part of the summer vacation at the Willcox home. The tradition of visiting the Ivy Mills homestead was revived on October 20, when thirteen seminarians, along with Father Michael McNally, toured the old church and the historic campus, absorbing the rich history of our parish. The group then proceeded to explore the Ivy Mills historic district. The day concluded with a dinner in the homestead prepared by FOST volunteers. We are appreciative of the favorable responses we received from the young men and Father McNally. Many thanks to our guides who did an excellent job!

Father McNally is Professor of Church History at the Pontifical Theological Institute at St. Charles Seminary. Widely published, he has authored many books and articles on American Catholic history. Father spoke at the second lecture of the "Written in Stone" program on "Catholic Life in Maryland and Pennsylvania, 1634-1860." He discussed the

political and religious background in England, and then described the experience of Catholics here, whose deep faith was by necessity only intermittently served by a priest ministering to Catholics at mission stations.

Work, Work, Work

We can say with certainty, the work never ends. Volunteers continue to labor in the old rectory; much of the work is not evident to the eye, but extensive re-wiring continues. The two main rooms on the first floor are usable, and the Friends now conduct their meetings in the former office. The railings for the old church are being reconfigured to be at the proper height. We always have a need for volunteers. Why not call Trish Glessner at 610-459-3151 to see how you can help?

Christmas Thoughts

During the Christmas season many of us think of dear relatives and friends we want to remember in a special way. May we suggest enrolling a living or deceased person in the St. Thomas Honor and Memorial Program? For a donation of \$10.00 or more, you may enroll the name of a living or deceased relative or friend in the program. Their name will be inscribed in the St. Thomas Honor and Memorial Book that is part of our permanent archives and is displayed at special events. The Friends will send a notification card to the designated recipient. Donors receive an acknowledgment receipt. Your donation will help FOST continue their mission to care for our historic buildings and grounds and promote the history of our parish. Names will be published in our next newsletter.

The Friends of Old Saint Thomas Memorial and Honor Gift Program

Please enroll: _____

_____ Living _____ Deceased

Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____ to the Friends of Old St. Thomas.

Please send receipt to donor:

Name _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Please send notification card to:

Name _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Please mail form and your check to:

**The Friends of Old St. Thomas at Ivy Mills
PO Box 19, Chester Heights, PA 19017**

Thank you! Your donation is greatly appreciated.