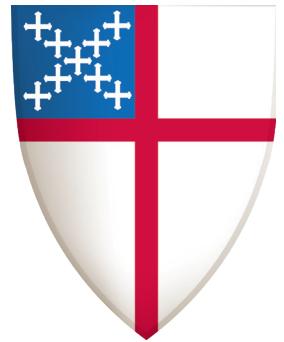


The NewSpirit

Being a Light to the World: Worship • Youth • Discipleship
St. Thomas Episcopal Church Battle Creek, Michigan
Fall 2022



The Scale of Transition

Wrapping up a 14-year tenure

by Father Brian Coleman

After a busy summer which included a long-delayed (due to COVID travel restrictions) vacation to the Galápagos Islands, serving as a deputy to General Convention in Baltimore, accompanying the choir on their very successful tour to Bath and Bristol in England, and even a brief stint in Northern Michigan helping John move to Manistee where he has been hired as Professor of Psychology at West Shore Community College, I am ready to hunker down and focus on the task of wrapping up my 14-year tenure as your rector. I will be with you until the end of the year at which time I will begin the transition from full-time parish ministry which has been my vocation for nearly a quarter of a century.

As I contemplate the scale of the change that faces us as a result of this impending transition I sometimes feel as though I am standing at the edge of a cliff: my heart jumps in my chest, I feel queasy and light-headed, and a little bit exhilarated at the risk and the potential. Change is scary, but also life-giving and essential for

growth and development. Change also inherently involves loss. We cannot accept what our future holds without giving up the present reality. I've often said that it is only in letting go that our hands become free to accept the gift that God is ready to give us. These days I find

up new ministries in the future, but nothing as consuming or fulfilling as I have experienced thus far, I suspect. Other losses include the loss of relationships with parishioners, colleagues and neighbors; the loss of our house, the Rectory, which we have worked



myself having to live up to my words.

The greatest loss that I have to endure is the end of my full-time ministry with you. I have happily and proudly served as a parish priest for 25 years, and I cannot imagine my life apart from that vocation. No doubt I will be taking

so hard to make a home for us and our dogs; even the loss of familiar routines and favorite stomping grounds will come as a blow. As much as I am conscious of the losses, I also trust in the good that awaits us on the other side. There will be new relationships, new endeavors, and renewed faith in God's goodness and providence

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*Transition
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as we come to the realization (in hindsight) that everything has worked out for the best.

So, the transition is underway, and in the next four months, which I suspect will fly by very quickly, I am committed to making sure that I leave St. Thomas in a healthy and wholesome way, covering all the bases, tying up loose ends and promoting a smooth transition in the ministries that we have shared.

I will welcome opportunities to listen to you and your hopes and fears about the future. I hope that we be able to share stories about the past. I will look for moments of grace when we might experience healing and forgiveness for sins and offenses. I am eager to accept invitations to coffee, lunch or dinner, especially since I will be camping out in the rectory for the rest of this year without John and most of our furniture. I hope that the rest of this year will be a long and good good-bye, affording us the time and space to treasure what has been and to imagine what is yet to come.



MORE THAN ENOUGH

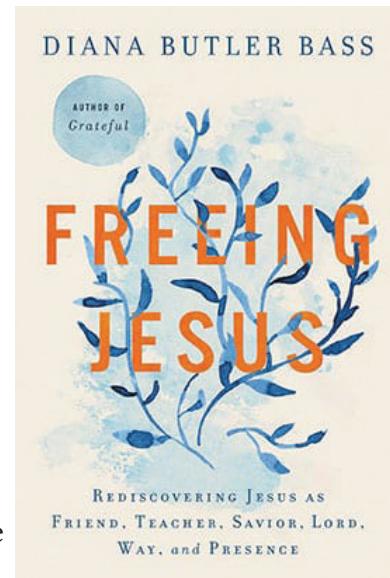
Freeing Jesus Book Discussion

Wednesdays in September and October

Starting on Wednesday, September 21, at 5:30 p.m. Fr. Brian will lead a book discussion group using

Diana Butler Bass's recent book, Freeing Jesus. Discussions will take place on Wednesdays in the Lounge through October.

In Bass's most recent book Freeing Jesus, published March 30, 2021, she explains that her experience of Jesus has changed over the years, viewing him in different ways at different times. And that, though she is still a Christian, she isn't the same kind of Christian she used to be, or that they many think she is. Freeing Jesus explores the many



images of Jesus we encounter and embrace through a lifetime—and how we make theology from the text of our lives in conversation with scripture and tradition. Freeing Jesus invites us to liberate Jesus and free ourselves when it comes to the ever-compelling and yet often-elusive figure at the center of Christian faith.

The book is available from bookshops and online. It can also be purchased through her website: dianabutlerbass.com/books/freeing-jesus/. It is also available as an audiobook, read by the author through [audible.com](https://www.audible.com).

The Stewardship Campaign

The Stewardship and Fundraising Commission of the Vestry is beginning to plan our Annual Giving Campaign to ask parishioners to make a financial commitment to support the ministry of St. Thomas Church in 2023. As we emerge from a period of disruption and isolation in our congregation, caused by the ongoing global pandemic, we have felt the pain and frustration of distance, of diminished resources, and of our inability to connect in the ways to which we are

accustomed. However, as we take inventory of our spiritual resources, the strength of our community, and our capacity for generosity, we realize that there is now, and always has been, More Than Enough. This will be the theme of our campaign which will include weekly meditation guides included in the Sunday bulletin, a chance to gather in small groups and share our hopes and dreams for the future, and a pledge packet mailed to each family with a narrative budget, pledge information and pledge card. Watch for more to come in the months ahead.