

Annual Report

St. Thomas Church

2009



**Annual Parish Meeting
January 24, 2010
St. Thomas Church
Menasha**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Election of Clerk for Annual Meeting
- III. Opening Prayer – Bishop Jacobus
- IV. Clerk’s Report for 2009 Annual Meeting (distributed earlier) – questions, additions, corrections
- V. Resolution to delay election of Diocesan Convention Delegates and Alternates
- VI. Explanation of Vestry continuing for another year – Cam Ross
- VII. Presentation of 2010 Budget approved by Vestry – Cam Ross
- VIII. Reports of Ministry Groups (distributed earlier) – questions, comments
 - Property – Larry Langohr
 - Welcome and Hospitality – Jeanna Werbeckes/Gordon Stillings
 - Communications – Matthew Payne
 - Outreach and Mission – Mary Evenson
 - Youth Development – Jon Phillip
 - Adult Development – Walter Scott
 - Worship – Tom Zaborski
 - Pastoral Care – Ron Pagel
- IX. Additional Business
- X. Adjournment

The Vestry of 2009

Office		Term Ends
Senior Warden:	Cam Ross	January 2011
Junior Warden:	Cal Schultz	January 2011
Vestry:	Mary Evenson	January 2011
	Walter Scott	January 2011
	Tom Zaborski	January 2011
	Ron Pagel	January 2012
	Jon Phillip	January 2012
	Gordon Stillings	January 2012
	Larry Langohr	January 2013
	Matthew Payne	January 2013
	Jeanna Werbeckes	January 2013
Treasurer:	Russ Ritschke	
Clerk:	MaryBee Engelman	

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING, FEBRUARY 1, 2009

- I. **Opening Prayer:** Fr. Ed called the meeting to order at 9:00am with Prayer
- II. **Election of Clerk & Treasurer:** Fr. Ed nominated MaryBee Engelman. There were no other nominations. Fr. Ed moved the nomination be closed. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Fr. Ed nominated Russ Ritschke as Treasurer. There were no other nominations. Fr. Ed moved the nomination be closed. Motion was seconded, and passed unanimously.
- III. **Clerk's Report for the Annual Meeting of 2008:** The Clerk's Report of 2008 was accepted and approved unanimously.
- IV. **Appointment of Tellers:** Nancy Slaasted, Sandie Umland, Sue Steinhilber, and Mike Land volunteered and were appointed Tellers for counting ballots; unanimous approval passed for these individuals to perform this task.
- V. **Election of Wardens, Vestry and Delegates to Diocesan Convention:** Cam Ross, as Sr. Warden and Cal Schultz, as Jr. Warden were nominated, moved, seconded and approved by unanimous vote. Larry Langohr, Matthew Payne, Dan Siracusa, Jeanna Werbeckes – gave their testimonies. Voting commenced. Tellers tallied ballots with the following results: Larry Langohr, Matthew Payne, and Jeanna Werbeckes are voted to serve on Vestry. Delegates voted for Diocesan Convention are: Mike Land, Cam Ross, Gordon Stillings, Tom Zaborski, Larry Langohr, Karen Staege, Jeanna Werbeckes. With the consent of the congregation, no alternate delegates were nominated at this time due to the fact that individuals' future plans had not yet been solidified. Motion was passed, seconded and approved that alternate delegates would be invited and nominated by the Vestry closer to the date of Diocesan Convention.

Fr. Ed gave special recognition and thanks to the staff, Dale Staege and Anne Peterson.
- VI. **2009 Plans to Prepare for New Rector:**
Fr. Ed spoke to the congregation and listed the goals he intends to complete prior to the installation of a new rector. He encouraged volunteers to help him accomplish these goals.
 - He encouraged a Spiritual gifts workshop that he would oversee with the use of the Assessment Tools
 - He encouraged the revitalization of Stephens Ministry. There are 5 hospitals and many shut-ins and help is needed in this area
 - Scheduling for space usage at St. Thomas will be computerized
 - Written job descriptions including two volunteer members will be required
 - Direct Deposit will be investigated.
 - A meter on the copy machine if not already present will be looked into
 - The Altar Guild will be receiving guidance and support from Fr. Ed
 - There will be a new interactive website to include all sermons and teachings
 - There will be an instant notification system (phone/e-mail/text) for things such as prayer requests, deaths, or other sudden news). These will address specific groups in the parish
 - There will be an itemized inventory system put in place
- VII. **Budget** - The deficit was briefly explained. The \$19,962 deficit will be monitored very closely. Fr. Ed shared that he believes the deficit appears to be looking more like \$11,000 - \$12,000 as opposed to the \$19,962. Monies had to be borrowed from funds to meet expenses.

Other Items Remarks – Fr. Ed & Cam Ross

- The Anglican Communion Network has essentially gone away.

- The Eau Claire Diocese and Fond du Lac Diocese have resolved to pursue junctioning. There is a joint resolution to talk officially about this at General Convention.
- Outreach will be dependent upon what we bring in.
- Fellowship Camp budget was addressed. It was suggested that the cost of camp be communicated to the congregation as soon as possible in order for people to begin saving.
- Endowment Fund – It was suggested that this be used as a hedge. Congratulations were offered to Bill Dickens for how well this fund has performed in light of the current economy.

- VIII **Outreach Mission:** Distributed earlier
- IX. **Welcome Hospitality:** Distributed earlier
- X. **Youth Development:** Distributed earlier
- XI. **Adult Development:** Distributed earlier
- XII. **Worship:** Distributed earlier
- XIII. **Pastoral Care:** Distributed earlier

Meeting Closed in Prayer and Adjourned: 11:00am

Fr. Ed Smith – Interim Rector

When we began this interim year, I outlined the tasks before us -- tasks typical of any interim period to be performed by the Interim Rector and the Vestry. They were:

1. Coming to terms with the history of St. Thomas and its relationship with previous clergy.
2. Discovering St. Thomas's special identity, what it dreams of being and doing, apart from previous clergy leadership.
3. Dealing with shifts in leadership roles that naturally evolve in times of transition, allowing new leaders to come to the fore constructively.
4. Renewing and reworking relationships with the Diocese of Fond du Lac, so that each may be a more effective resource and support to the other.
5. Building commitment to the leadership of the new Rector in order to be prepared to move into the future with openness to new possibilities.

I also outlined the specific tasks of the Interim Rector, which included:

6. Work with the Vestry and other lay leaders to maintain in so far as possible a regular schedule of worship services and preaching, education, pastoral care and pastoral offices (weddings, funerals, baptisms), calling upon the sick and shut-ins, visiting newcomers, and on-going administration of St. Thomas.
7. Supervise all parish staff in the exercise of their responsibilities and ministries, for which they will be accountable to the Interim Rector.
8. Function as Chair of the Vestry, and support the Vestry in its responsibilities.
9. Help the congregation deal with all unresolved issues arising from the Rector's departure.
10. Deal with internal conflicts and help heal any divisions within the parish.
11. Help the Vestry, lay leaders and staff make such changes as may be needed to align parish life and administration with generally accepted standards in the Diocese.

There were also several actions I promised the Vestry would be accomplished. Those included development of staff job description and operating policies.

I believe the tasks, both of the Vestry and Interim Rector were accomplished. Father Wilson Roane led the parish in a very successful "time line" exercise which highlighted problems and achievements of clergy and people during our remembered history.

Discovering our special identity was accomplished through development of an accurate and admirable parish profile. The work of Anne Peterson and the Search Committee in this task deserves special mention.

There have been only minor shifts in parish leadership during the interim period. I look upon this as a positive, rather than a negative. Those in leadership positions demonstrated a revived commitment to our parish vision and mission.

We have renewed our relationship with the Diocese and our Bishop. We have undergone two financial reviews and are complying with the suggestions made, which were not major changes.

Commitment to our new Rector and his leadership are at a level seldom achieved at many parishes undergoing change. An atmosphere of confident anticipation prevails, together with a strong sense that our search has been successful. We have called the right man for St. Thomas.

I believe the specific tasks of the Interim Rector have been accomplished, also, though the final judgment is not mine to make. We have maintained a regular schedule of worship services. The only adjustment necessary was to temporarily drop the Tuesday morning service. Fr. Johnston graciously agreed to cover the Wednesday service. Both he and Fr. John Peterson assisted with Sunday services as needed, for which I am most grateful.

The staff continued to meet regularly as before and to work together to make the transition as smooth as possible. They deserve much credit for all we were able to achieve, especially with regard to containing expenses while continuing service to the parish.

I chaired Vestry meetings with the cooperation of Cam Ross, Senior Warden. We maintained a close working relationship, attempting to anticipate the needs of the parish.

We dealt with the departure of Fr. Ian and successfully moved on. In this, I thank each of you for your acceptance of my spiritual leadership during the interim.

There were no major conflicts or divisions which needed attention. It is part of our nature as a parish to address concerns before they become major. I suspect that is a feature which attracted many of our excellent candidates.

As mentioned previously, we have complied with diocesan financial reviews and reporting requirements. Few changes were necessary to make us full partners with the Diocese.

Job descriptions have been updated and shared with the staff. I regret that not all the policies I intended to develop have been finalized. The pastoral duties of a parish the size of St. Thomas occupied much of my time. Being available to members and others who sought counsel and pastoral aid took more time than I have originally thought they would.

I wish to thank the Vestry for their confidence in my ability to serve as Interim Rector. This has been a wonderful experience for me, and I hope it has been the same for the people of St. Thomas.

Operations Reports

Cam Ross - Senior Warden

I have spent days trying to get my thoughts together on 2009 at St Thomas. At first I thought: "The year went by very fast – good, let's get on with the new!" This year has gone by very quickly. Along with many of you I am looking forward to the New Year and the expectation of a new rector and the new beginnings that will bring. I almost did not want to look back, but as I reflected I remembered –

The uncertainty and fears at the beginning of the year, before we began the search for a new rector. In a remarkable, prayer led process we selected a search team, they came together as a very powerful team, carried out a search process, came up with some very fine candidates indeed and helped the Vestry to select a new rector. By the end of the year a sense of fulfillment and new expectation replaced the fears from the start of the year. The search team did a great job and on behalf of the parish I extend our thanks to Anne Peterson, Nancy Dombeck, Ron Hanseter, Mike Land, Beth Pagel, Rob Prehn and Keri Walker.

God provided.

The financial "crunch" that hit us in 2008 and the financial worries for 2009. Well it has not been an easy year financially and we are still not out of the woods but we are in pretty good shape given the economy and other uncertainties we face. Contributions came in pretty much as we needed them and under Fr. Ed's leadership many expenses were reduced or eliminated. We made it through 11 months of the year before we needed to borrow any funds. Some of the borrowing was for capital items, some to ensure that we meet current obligations. We have work to do in 2010 to get squared away financially, but we will.

God provided.

The never ending list of work required to maintain our church facilities. There are some very large projects in our future, but in the meantime a contingent of parishioners has accomplished a great deal to meet current needs. Many thanks to Dale and Karlo for much of this work. And thanks to Fr. Bill for beginning a capital campaign.

God provided.

Some great times together within the parish, busy Sunday coffee hours, spring and fall gatherings, thriving study groups, visioning a church timeline, AWANA, mission trips and mission work --

God provided.

Vestry meetings. We had more meetings than usual in 2009. Some long, some short, some fun, and some serious but always open, honest and prayerful. I have really enjoyed working with all of the Vestry members and thank them all for their time, effort and talents.

God provided.

Fr. Ed. How lucky we have been to have him as our interim rector this year.

God provided.

There are many more events and people to remember and thank, you can learn about some in the other 2009 reports. I look forward to a great 2010, but I do have some great memories from 2009. Thank you God.

Search Team – Anne Peterson

The Search Process began with the appointment of a Search Team whose task it was to oversee the extensive planning, research, and interviewing that is needed to find a new Rector. The team members were Nancy Dombeck, Ron Hanseter, Mike Land, Beth Pagel, Rob Prehn, Keri Walker (secretary) and Anne Peterson. A parish survey was conducted in April using a tool called a CAT scan (Church Assessment Tool) which told us our top priorities are to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people in particular new families with children, to develop the spiritual generosity of the people and to develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances. We discovered we are pretty happy with and thus do not want much energy put toward the amount of international mission work we do, the size of our building and the music in our worship services. The survey showed we are a conservative congregation, yet adaptable so we are ready to make the changes necessary to meet our goals and that we are looking for in a Rector who is a biblical person of God with good preaching and leadership skills, is compassionate and a people person.

On May 3rd, we participated in a Timeline facilitated by Fr. Wilson Roane. The timeline was a fun and interesting time where we learned more about previous Rectors and ourselves. We have a long history of strong leadership, excellent pastoral care and good preaching. We are a fun-loving bunch who care about each other and our children.

During April and May, the team was busy working on our Parish Profile, which told prospective candidates about our history, spiritual life, ministries and community. It was in booklet form, on our website and a DVD was made. In mid May, an ad was placed in the Living Church and our CDO profile was completed and filed with the Church Deployment Office. In June we began accepting applications from priests and nominations from parishioners. We accepted applications through mid August and then we sent initial contact letters to the candidates, which included 5 questions they were to respond to in order to help us get to know them better. In late August, we narrowed the list from 20 to 11 and set up telephone/skype interviews. These interviews were conducted in the first three weeks of September and then the list was narrowed to 6.

During the first three weekends of October, the team traveled all over the country and visited candidates in their home parishes. The search team narrowed the list to 3 and presented these candidates to the Vestry. At the end of October and the first few weeks of November, these three candidates visited St. Thomas. After much prayer and discernment, the vestry called a new Rector to St. Thomas. Fr. Ralph Osborne accepted the call and will travel to Wisconsin the first week of February and will be in the office the second week and will celebrate his first service with us on February 14th.

This process would not have gone so smoothly without all of you and the undergirding of prayer that you gave. You all were vital to the process. One of the greatest blessings of participating in a Search process is to be able to see God's presence and active participation and to experience so clearly His faithfulness and care. We kept telling people, we did not have to look for God and wonder where He was. He was all over the process, guiding and directing. What an awesome and loving God we have! The Search Team gives thanks and praise to God for guiding us throughout this process and we give thanks to all of you for your faithfulness in praying for us. We are abundantly blessed. Please continue to pray for Fr. Ralph's new ministry with us and for his current parishes who are now embarking on the process we have just completed.

Larry Langohr - Property

This past year Cal Schultz and I oversaw the property area of Saint Thomas. Our jobs were made easier thanks to the efforts of Dale Staeger, Matthew Peterson, Chris Walker, Art Freiberg, and Karlo Swenson. Thank you all for your significant contributions as well as everyone who helped with the grass cutting this summer.

Our major projects included the copper covering of our smaller steeple in the main sanctuary, replacing the carpeting and non-slip tread ways in the back hallway with donated funds, construction of a new storage shed, various painting projects, and cleaning out of the church attic. A church rummage sale was then held with the surplus artifacts. Much of our attention has been and will continue to be directed to critical repairs and maintenance of our aging facility. Please remember Father Bill's efforts to establish a capital improvements fund in your present and future giving.

Russ Ritschke – Treasurer

The budget for 2009 was prepared with a deficit of approximately \$20,000. The actual deficit for 2009 was approximately \$40,000. The actual deficit includes \$22,000 for the cost of repairing that small steeple. Without this extraordinary expense the actual deficit would be very close to the 2009 budget. The deficit for 2009 was covered by borrowing on the line of credit St. Thomas has established at Associated Bank. As of December 31, 2009 the line of credit balance is \$59,500.

The budget for 2010 has a deficit of \$37,440. This budget does not include any provision for repayment of the 2009 loan. This is a daunting year financially for St. Thomas. But we are hopeful that with your prayers and the blessing of a new rector, St. Thomas will prosper in its ministry.

Bill Dickens - St. Thomas Endowment

At the end of 2009, St. Thomas had endowment assets of \$1,264,000. These assets have resulted from gifts of many people over a number of decades.

Schaper, Benz & Wise Investment Counsel, Inc. is our investment advisor. Associated Bank, N.A. acts as trustee and custodian of the endowment assets. These assets can be invested in the following way: 40-60% stocks, 30-60% bonds, and 0-10% cash. At the end of 2008, the St. Thomas endowment had only 40% of its funds allocated to the stock market. At the end of 2009, 60% of the endowment was in stocks. Our investment manager took advantage of the market downturn by adding to stocks over the course of the year. The endowment will always be diversified by holding a mix of stocks, bonds, and cash. This provides a balance of current income and growth of assets long term to maintain purchasing power.

In 2009, the combined value of the accounts was up 23.9%. The benchmark investment portfolio (50% S&P 500 Index, 45% Salomon Brothers Broad Bond index, and 5% 90-day U.S. Treasury Bill) was up 15.5%. Since Schaper, Benz & Wise began managing our accounts in 2002, our endowment assets have returned 55.0% vs. 39.8% for the benchmark portfolio.

In 2009, the total income generated, fees, and net income to the church are provided in the table below:

	Total Income	Fees Charged Against Income	Net Income
General Operations	\$33,267	\$6,005.50	\$27,261.50
Clergy Education	<u>\$3,343</u>	<u>\$629.50</u>	<u>\$2,713.50</u>
Total	\$36,610	\$6,635	\$29,975

In 2010, continued low absolute yields for bonds and cash are expected. Companies may start to increase their dividends slightly, which would be a positive contributor to income. We will attempt to increase net income by about \$10,000 this year via two separate actions. One, our investment manager will be changing the asset mix to include higher dividend-paying stocks and higher quality corporate bonds with coupons of 5% or greater. Two, we are exploring the possibility of charging half of the fees against principal instead of charging all the fees against income, which was the case in 2009.

Schaper, Benz & Wise and Associated Bank have both done a good job for us.

Welcome/Hospitality – Gordon Stillings and Jeanna Werbeckes

Social events in 2009 included a farewell lunch for Fr. Ian and Polly, a Shrove Tuesday pancake supper, the Parish picnic, and a Fall Festival held at the Kellett Cabin. We also assisted in a fundraising concert for Double Portion in December. Thanks to all who helped us and participated in these wonderful events. Thank you to Joan Paterson and Jenny Krautsch for their hours of work making Fellowship Camp a success. Thank you to Kristen Pierron for coordinating Coffee Hour and to all of you who have volunteered in this ministry of fellowship. Thanks also to those involved in the following important ministries of Senior Luncheons, Helping Hands (preparing meals for new mom's or those who were ill), Martha's Guild (funeral luncheons), and the Welcome Ministry Team who greet people on Sunday mornings and make sure there is follow-up to newcomers.

Communications – Matthew Payne

The area of Communications is new for the Vestry in 2009. The focus of this area is to improve communication to, for, and about the people of St. Thomas Church. The goals this year turned out to be greater than the results (partially because of limitations caused by health issues), however plans are still in place to expand activity in 2010 with development of a Communications Team.

The major task accomplished in 2009 and on-going was reviving the stthomaswi.com website. The site design was brought up-to-date and site content was made current and accurate. Communication flow was established between the church office and webmaster and the website revival was communicated to members of the congregation through announcements, bulletins and the Lamplighter. Sermons, documents of interest and even a recording of Christmas anthems were made available.

For the period since the website was updated, the last 7 months of 2009, an average of 400 unique visitors visited twice each month (this excludes search engine bots), viewing 5 pages with each visit. Tuesday was the most popular day to visit. Those who entered the site from another website did so 191 times from the Church Deployment Office website (probably folks looking for the Rector position), 126 times from the Diocese of Fond du Lac website and 53 times through Facebook.

The website was an important piece of the Search Team process, serving as springboard for a parish survey, keeping members up to date about the process and sharing about St. Thomas to those interested in serving as its next Rector. In addition, there was development of a St. Thomas presence on the social site facebook.com and the beginnings of accessible images through flickr.com.

Some of the regular communication activities of the congregation were also performed such as placing of Easter and Christmas ads in local papers, and updating information for the Fox Valley Answer Book and Yellow Pages ads.

Goals that didn't come to fruition in 2009 but should in 2010 are the performance of a communication audit to develop a communication strategy for St. Thomas and the taking of pictures for a new pictorial directory.

Communication is in the middle of our mission at St. Thomas: it is extremely difficult to "make Christ known" if we don't have effective tools or processes in place to share the Gospel. Hebrews (10:24-25) reminds us to "consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" as well as "encourage one another." Through the means of communication in its variety of forms, I hope we are able to do exactly that.



Outreach and Mission Team – Mary Evenson

The Missions and Outreach Committee continued to be busy in 2009. Primarily we have helped in coordinating and fundraising for our mission partners. The activities of the Mission Outreach Committee are not supported by pledge income. We receive the loose plate offering on our Mission Sundays throughout the year and we receive the proceeds of the birthday box offerings. We also receive offerings from the Lenten "Love Box" devotional series. We use these funds to support the activities of our Mission Partners. We equally divide the money that we receive among our Mission Partners CAC Ukraine, Double Portion, Jericho Ministries, Mothers Mercy Home, Alan & Rachel Hill (Peru), Ian & Polly Montgomery (Peru), and Sarah Ito (InterVarsity at Lawrence U). Our Committee meetings are a chance for the representatives of our Mission Partners to discuss issues impacting mission activities and to share experiences. Coming in 2010 a group from St. Thomas will be attending the "New Wineskins" mission conference in April, the Lenten "Love Box" devotional will give our mission partners a chance to share their daily experiences in a walk through Lent daily devotion, and we will continue to have regular Mission Sundays to raise support for our Mission Partners.

Double Portion Soup Kitchen and Pantry

God can use something ordinary, like meals being prepared, to do extraordinary things. In 2009 Double Portion served 18,096 meals, a 29% increase over last year. Even with a suffering economy and people's needs increasing, donations have been increasing. Sustained by God's blessings and operated to give glory to God, Double Portion's 2009 budget for food and necessary expenditures was \$27,100, an 8.4% increase over 2008. A God-centered board of managing stewards has refined operations to feed 29% more on the 8.4% increase in budget without sacrificing meal quality.

While St. Thomas sustains DP through providing the facility and utilities, among other things, major sources of income and food are the J.J. Keller Foundation and companies including: Appleton Post-Crescent, Kimberly-Clark, Bemis Corporation, Real Estate Foundation Fund and Faith United Methodist Church. DP gratefully receives a quarterly cash donation from Calvary Bible Church. "Hearing the Son Rise", Christian band, presented a successful benefit concert which raised money and stocked the pantry. And, DP couldn't operate without the generous donations of many individual people.

The monetary donations have been augmented by donations of fully prepared meals by St. Patrick's Catholic Church and Calvary Bible Church on a monthly basis and the FOCAS Christian Men's Fishing Group fish fry. Sources of food and paper product donations include Panera Bread, Manderfield's Bakery, Great Lakes Roofing, Janssen's Upholstery, Atlanta Bread Company, Cellu Tissue and individual summer gardeners.

Food drives are the major source of food for the pantry. These include the Neenah Menasha Postal Carriers, Boy Scouts, Bio-Life Plasma Services, Curves of Appleton, Fox Valley Christian Academy, Seton Middle School, Hoover Elementary School and food from St. Joe's and Christ the Rock food pantries. Every donation is received with gratitude. To whom much is given, much is required. Donors answered the call.

The cooking, serving, clean up and pantry stocking are done by a team of 75 spirit-filled volunteers for an average of 116 meals per serving day. While volunteers are mainly from St. Thomas, Calvary Bible, St. Patrick's and Christ the Rock, many organizations have participated including: Alliance Church, BioLife Plasma Services, Frito-Lay, Zuppa Chicks, Crossing, Friendship Place and students from area schools. A notable development is that most new volunteers are workers currently laid off from their careers. While waiting for new jobs, they are volunteering at DP.

Also of note in 2009: participation in Christ the Rock's Reaching Farther Mission Fair, membership in the Fox Valley Hunger Coalition, listings in "211" and Fox Valley Gold Pages, streamlining menu selection and product ordering, upgrading to equipment and organization of the kitchen and pantry, a new freezer, web site, contribution for various facility expenses, and Karlo's food preparation kitchen inventions.

In its seventh year of operation, Double Portion is filling a practical human need to build a relationship of the heart and spread the hope of the gospel while not judging others. We are made up of three groups: guests, volunteers and donors, with one God over all. In 2010 our goal is to serve, open doors to salvation and ask God to bless the giver, giving and gifts.

Double Portion serves lunch every Monday, Wednesday (except the third of each month) and Thursday at 11:30 AM in the St. Thomas parish hall and distributes non-perishable foods and health care items from the pantry.

Churches are Changing/Ukraine (CAC/Ukraine) – by Jim and Peg Dickson

It has been a difficult year for the ministry and the Ukraine. A top European Commission official said of the Ukraine: "Corruption, red tape, administrative obstacles of every kind - these are only things that serve the interests of those (oligarchs and politicians) who control the economy. AIDS is rampant; there is an ongoing energy shortage, and unemployment exceeds 20%.

In this environment the Ukraine Team formed Bible studies in churches; taught youth groups in a

vocational school on AIDS, abortions, and sex; helped organize summer camps; formed a home church; and organized a November workshop on "Simple Churches" with 50 participants from a dozen cities in Ukraine and Moldova.

Plans for 2010 include development of a Simple Church ministry, a summer camp for new Christians, and training believers in a "There is a Way Out" ministry. The latter is focused on 1-1 evangelism to reach those discouraged and feeling hopeless.

Please pray for:

1. Selfless leaders to emerge in the national elections this January
2. Growth in the number of home/Simple Churches
3. Growth of the "There is a Way Out" ministry
4. Openness to a local system of ministry accountability

Jericho Ministries – Betsy Hake

a. This year's milestones and challenges in your ministry:

- i. This year we give glory to God for the children He has brought to us who are now part of our Jericho family. We started with 5 children in our Children at High Risk (De Alto Riesgo or DAR) program and now have 20 in total for which we are caring and have legal custody. Their ages range from 2 years to 18 years and our prayer is that these children, by the power of Christ, will be able to lead lives that glorify God, thus breaking the generational chains of prostitution, sexual abuse, and various addictions that have plagued their families. We are committed to their physical, emotional and spiritual development until their own mothers can care for them in a godly way or until they are able to live for Christ on their own. Eleven of the children live out in our rehab center in the country and 9 live with 4 different staff members here in town. Jericho is responsible for their education through our school.
- ii. Apart from the 20 children mentioned above, Jericho has also been able to provide an education this year for 18 other children who are also socially at risk but who are able to live with their families. Jericho Christian School provides a solid Christian education that these children would normally not have access to.
- iii. On the property at the rehab center this year, we have been able to put in two successive crops as well as a garden that the children maintain. The children have benefitted from the produce from the vegetable gardens, fruit trees, and the crop of beans and watermelons. We also were able to fence in an area on the property for sheep since some neighbors have promised to give us five sheep. Some progress has been made in the landscaping which is maintained by one of our staff members and the children (they each have their own flower garden to maintain).
- iv. Another area for which we give praise to God is for the opportunities to share what I call "The Healing Adventure". By God's grace we were able to share about God's healing power and minister healing in over 25 different churches and gatherings. From tiny remote villages in Honduras to a Hispanic church in Brooklyn, from an inner city school in Pittsburgh, PA to the President of DePauw University, people heard the story of God's healing power. I praise God for these many opportunities to share about His desire to glorify Himself through our suffering and the power of His Word.
- v. One of the biggest challenges has been to wait upon God for His perfect timing to bring in the women who will be a part of the Jericho Family at the rehab center. I cannot tell you how many times the enemy has tried to accuse me of failure. The center is up and running but it is not filled with women but rather with little ones and not so little ones all of whom have experienced tremendous challenges in their young lives including devastating sexual abuse, drug use, death of a parent, abandonment, living in squalor, all related to very poor

choices that their parents have made. So the challenge has been to believe God, that in His time and in His way, He will bring in the women and to focus on giving the best possible care to those He has brought to us.

- b.** Your ministry goals and anticipated challenges for the coming year.
 - i. We would like to increase the number of Jericho House students to at least 50 this coming year and have at least 5 women with their children out at the Villa.
 - ii. Another goal is to have all our staff well trained in the use of the Word and in seeking God through Prayer. Our goal is that each staff member will get up early to seek God through His Word and through prayer on a daily basis so that they can minister to the women and children in His strength.
 - iii. We would like to increase our evangelism outreaches to at least four outreaches per month including outreaches involving the children.
 - iv. We have advanced a bit in our goal to develop the Villa property (roads, crops, gardens, landscaping, proper water drainage, etc) We were not able to build the road from the entrance of the Villa up to the rehab center last year due to a lack of funds. Our goal is to start construction on the road once the rains stop in January 2010.
 - v. Another related goal is to build a chicken coop so that we can have our own eggs and a barn for the sheep. The young girls in our program have become avid knitters and our goal is to produce our own wool to be hand dyed and spun for their knitting projects.
- c.** Any special projects, ministry or other resource needs we should be aware of for the coming year?
 - i. The same as last year plus a new vision we call The House of Jewels!
 - ii. Our first priority as far as projects go is to build a rock/cement road up to the rehab center and to build a trench behind the center to correct the water problems we have been experiencing.
 - iii. We have been praying about opening a café/bakery at the Jericho House (it would be called “K’ Fe” since Fe means “faith’ in Spanish) in town where the baked goods that the rescued women make can be sold. This would involve some remodeling of the building.
 - iv. We would also like to build the chapel out on the Jericho Villa property if God provides for that this year.
 - v. The House of Jewels - we would like to buy a home in the city to be used for ministry to young girls who go to our school in town but are at high risk for entering prostitution due to their home environments.
 - vi. I would also like to write and publish the story of how God healed me that it might be used by God to help others.
 - vii. These goals are ongoing and may or may not be realized this year, depending upon how God provides. We like to dream big knowing that perhaps it might not all be realized in the timing we’d like.
- d.** We always need short term teams to help with construction out at the Villa...there is never a lack of work out there...painting, planting, making pathways for a prayer walk, assisting with construction etc. We also need teams who can help with teaching the women and children special skills (i.e. the making of greeting cards, baking, making soap, canning etc.) These teams could also help us to reach out to the community through evangelistic events and VBS. We also need someone to help us get set up to sell the products our women make on the web.

- i. If we receive funds to do remodeling on the Jericho House for the K-Fe, we will need help with the design.
- e. Your spiritual life and growth
 - i. My greatest need remains the same - prayer that I can radically seek Jesus. These past months I have struggled with getting quiet before His feet. While I was ill, I spent all kinds of time with Him and it was so amazing. Now that I'm totally healed, it's harder to spend the time with Him that I want to. The distractions are many. My goal is to spend one hour in the Word and two hours in prayer every day.
- f. Your family/team
 - i. Oh my - Definitely I need prayer for my relationship with Juan Carlos who turned 14 this year. He struggles with anger and self-rejection on many levels and entering adolescence has only increased the anger issues. I need wisdom big-time. Noe, my eldest, on the other hand has entered a stage of life that is just delightful. He is very excited to grow closer to God and shares easily with me about his struggles and dreams. This probably only serves to exacerbate Juan Carlos' situation so I have to be really careful to try and give them equal attention. Then you throw a very demanding 2 year old child into the mix, not to mention Helen (10) and Susana (8). But I know God gave me each of these children so He will give me the grace to attend to their needs and to help them serve one another. Marlyn graduates this December so she needs prayer for God to show her what He wants her to do once she is done with college. I definitely have some ideas for her but they might not exactly be His plans.
- g. Your ministry and professional development
 - i. I would like to take a writing class if God permits.

Partner Mission Link- Revs Alan and Rachel Hill - Lima, Peru

The seminary began in 2000 in Arequipa, Peru under the direction of the Rev. Allen Hill. Since then, over 100 different courses have been offered there, and more than 150 different students have participated. In December of 2004, our first class of seven students graduated, having completed the entire four year program. One has since been ordained to the priesthood, two to the diaconate, two are considering entering the ordination process, one is pursuing further theological training, and the rest have been licensed as lay ministers. These graduates have made a real impact: through their influence, the main parish in Arequipa has grown to become the largest in the diocese; they have begun four different church plants already; and the elementary school, directed by one of our graduates, has grown substantially.

In 2005, Rev. Hill moved to Lima (Peru's capital) in order to expand the seminary by founding a new campus there. The Rev. Ron Robertson took his place as the new director of the Arequipa campus. Classes began in Lima in February of 2006 with 29 students. Presently, there are 26 students in Lima and 14 in Arequipa, for a total enrollment of 40 seminarians.

In Lima, courses are currently held at the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd Monday-Thursday night from 6:00-9:30 pm. Students participate not only in academic courses but also in daily worship services (Evening Prayer and Holy Eucharist), in spiritual discipline workshops, in pastoral reflection workshops, in sessions on inner healing and wholeness, and in regular meetings with a spiritual mentor. They also participate in a rotation of visits to each of the parishes and social outreach ministries of the diocese.

Alan and Rachel are facing the challenges associated with starting any organization, such as a seminary, "from scratch". They need teachers for a seminary in Lima as well as wisdom to balance their responsibilities - when and where to focus. They are investing as much as possible in the local leadership, and ask for prayer for the leaders being raised up that God would bring depth and

maturity to their walk of faith. They have also had some financial challenges this past year resulting in their moving out of their home and into Rachel's parents home. They pray that partners in mission would be touched by God to help at this time of financial crisis for the diocese and the Hill family.

Rev. Ian and Polly Montgomery

Fr. Ian and Polly joined SAMS (South American Missionary Society) after leaving St. Thomas in January 2009. They are serving in Lima, Peru by training clergy and seminarians to evangelize and transform, especially among the poor and in the shanty towns. Recently, Fr. Ian has been asked, along with other seminary faculty, to spend three months being the interim clergy at a mission in Lima South. The Church they will be serving is Jesus el Salvador in the district called Villa el Salvador. It is a gritty community where a wonderful Peruvian pastor – Juan Carlos Marces and his English wife Penny have established a church. They have linked up with Compassion International to do midweek ministry amongst the very needy children. Juan Carlos and his wife are moving to another church, so they now have four clergy and four seminarians to take turns serving the church. Fr. Ian and Polly have been hard at work learning Spanish and recently Fr. Ian celebrated his first service in Spanish. They ask for our continued prayers and support as God continues to lead them in their blossoming ministry in Peru.

Mothers' Mercy Home Partnership Program Board

With the aftermath of the tumultuous presidential election in December 2007 and the recent draught in the Horn of Africa, it has been a difficult year financially for Mothers' Mercy Home, Diocese of Mt. Kenya South. Partnership monies provided a total of \$13,300 to support the 84 children of the Home in the second complete year of the Partnership (April 2008 through March 2009). The cost of food has doubled and nearly 70% of monies sent were needed to buy food. 17% was used to buy diesel fuel for their school bus. *(The first year 60% was used to rent matatus or vans for transport to schools, but with their own bus now there has been a substantial savings.)* The remaining 13 % was used to fund the development of a Five Year Strategic Plan during a three-day workshop involving 30 people in March 2009.

The Medical Center housed in the new dorm was dedicated in February and began seeing patients April 1st. Currently about 100 patients are being seen per day. The availability of this medical service has improved the health of the children and neighbors in the surrounding community.

Nineteen of the children took secondary school exams in November and will be continuing their education in different schools beginning in February 2010. With the additional room provided by the new dorm it was planned to admit 12 new 5 and 6-year-old children in December 2009.

Greetings were sent to each of the 84 children by Partners and AWANA children at Easter and Christmas. We continued to spread the word about MMH at Diocesan Convention, the All Saints Alternative Gift Market and our website: mmhpp.com.

With our three-year agreement ending in March of 2010 we are looking forward to a relational visit by Paula Karanja, coordinator of the Mothers' Union that administers MMH, and two of the children in April 2010. In anticipation of this we held two successful fundraisers, an African Dinner and a Ladies' Spa Night, to provide funds for transportation and related expenses during the visit. The time spent with us will allow all of us at St. Thomas to hear first hand about how God has worked for good through the Partnership Program, give our guests an opportunity to witness and participate in our Christian life here in the Fox Cities, provide opportunities for students from the US and Kenya to learn from each other, and to plan for the next three years of our Partnership.

At the end of 2009 56 of the children had Partners. Thanks be to God for all He has done this year for the children through our generous donors!

Ecumenical Day Care and Support Women Project

The Mothers' Mercy Home Partnership Program Board continues to support this project in Kenya by selling jewelry, purses, sandals and other African items at various venues. This year we displayed the items on 11 different days at the St. Thomas Mission Marketplace, Riverfront Art & Farm Market in Appleton, the Menasha Farmer's Market, The Diocesan Convention, All Saints Alternative Market and the Appleton YMCA Christmas Sale. With sales and additional donations we were able to wire Ester Wanjohi, Project Director, \$1157.50. This project, begun in 2003 in Ngong Hills, Nairobi, provides quality of life and holistic care for women and their families infected and affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Our money will be used to provide counseling, nutrition, behavior change, emotional support, home based care and micro enterprise. Esther reports that by summer of 2009 83 dairy goats had been placed with families living with AIDS. This year as an Alternative Gift we offered the opportunity to purchase goats for the project. We are happy to report that an additional \$600 was sent for the purchase of four goats. Agnes, who had previously received a goat, reports, "When I got this goat I was in a very hopeless situation. The goat brought life to me. I am always busy on the farm with my goat. The milk has been enough for me and my seven kids and one granddaughter. I feel more healthier, more happier. Long live the Ecumenical Project." By continuing to sell the African products and promoting the Alternative Gift Goat Project we are serving our sisters in Christ, African women (and their children) affected by AIDS.

Sarah Ito - *Serving with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA at Lawrence University*

Thus far the 09-10 academic year has been one of those "prayers answered" times of ministry: returning students inviting friends to come experience our fellowship, first-year students feeling excited and welcome, more and larger dorm Bible studies than I've seen yet, and leaders feeling strong calls to righteousness and constant prayer. Also, for the first time in years, we have a well-attended men's group, coordinated by one of our student leaders. Some of these men have been seeking me out for a woman's perspective on life, spiritual growth and how to relate well to women. Two of my ladies have started a spiritual disciplines group with a special emphasis on prayer. They are just beginning to tackle outward disciplines such as simplicity and keeping the Sabbath. This is a big deal for Lawrence students and something I have never seen such interest in until now. The students have also made an effort to increase the fellowship's service-related activities, and my hope is that next year we may be able to send a group on a spring break service project to Milwaukee or Chicago. It is a blessing to see and experience this time of new growth and increased possibilities.

As for my ministry time, I am still on reduced hours (10/week), and I spend the majority of it with the women's ministry (individual mentorship and coordination of our Friday night meetings), in prayer, and in training/discipleship for some of the fellowship's key leaders, including a few men. I do not plan to increase my hours in the foreseeable future, due both to family constraints and lack of funding for any increase. My funding is stable for now, but I have lost a few significant donors since the financial crisis last fall, and I will need to add some donors before June in order to end the year well. I'm especially praying for more recent alumni to join my monthly financial support team. I express my deep gratitude to all at St. Thomas who have blessed me and the Lawrence ministry with their love, prayers and financial support.

Youth Development – Jon Phillip

Whitney Kilpatrick – Children's Ministry

(Grades PreK – K) Sunday School class is available for 3, 4 and 5 year olds (PreK and Kindergarten). We are grateful to Joanne Siracusa who has begun her 3rd year teaching our youngest kids. The children receive Bible teachings in many different ways through prayers, stories, arts and crafts.

Youth Education (Grades 1-6) - The previous year the Sunday School program completed the sixth and last year in the Cornerstones curriculum. During 2009, we cycled back to year one. Cornerstones

Publishing allowed us to download a newer version of these updated lesson plans. This Sunday School program is a thematic series in which the children are grouped into two classes (1st, 2nd & 3rd) and (4th, 5th and 6th). The various learning methods include: Creation Station (craft area), Eat Your Way Through The Bible (kitchen), Camp Bibleland (storytelling/nomadic lifestyle), Moved By The Spirit (Bible game area), God's Dorm Room (making the Bible story relevant to the issues of today) and the Sonlight Studio (puppetry). We have been blessed by the dedication of our Shepherds, Jennifer Stielow, Mark Pollard and Joan Paterson who bring continuity from week to week. We also have many rotational teachers, each volunteering for three weeks, who bring the teachings to life using their diverse gifts. In this way we are able to reach the children through one of the many teaching methods that the lessons are presented. The variety the curriculum offers has been well received by the children and adults. We are truly thankful for everyone's support and are always on the lookout for new teachers!

First Communion Classes - No First Communion Classes were held in 2009. A class will be available in the spring of 2010.

AWANA - In the fall of 2009, we began our 10th year of our Wednesday evening children's ministry. The weekly club meetings continue to be a time filled with energy, fellowship and spiritual growth for many children, both within and from outside the St. Thomas congregation. Each week we divide our time into 4 segments: devotions (Bible teaching), handbook time (scripture learning and memorization), game time and music. Children (Kindergarten through 6th grade) may join AWANA any time throughout the year.

The AWANA ministry is made up of a dedicated team of volunteers. Club meets on Wednesday nights at 6:30 PM from mid-September through the end of April. We average between 20 and 25 children per Wednesday night with frequent guests joining us.

AWANA is an outreach ministry for the children of St. Thomas and our friends and neighbors in the surrounding community. Clubbers receive great Bible teaching, memorize scripture, enjoy games and Christian fellowship.

Nursery - Our nursery is open Sunday mornings during both services and during the Sunday school hour for children age 0 through 4 years old. Jennifer Hujet and Cindy Schafer are there to provide a safe and fun area for the children to play. In addition, the nursery is also open and staffed Wednesday evenings from 6:15 – 8:15 to meet the needs of parents involved in the many Wednesday evening ministries.

Aran Walter - Youth Minister

A dozen years. My family and I have been privileged to be a part of this faith community for 12 years. We have had the pleasure of being loved by you all and the greater pleasure of giving back that love to you.

Who wants a dozen more? We're ready!!

So much has happened in the decade (plus 2) that we've been a part of your lives. And so much continues to go on. But one thing remains the same . . . our ever increasing desire to partner with the ongoing recreation project that God began at Sinai, proclaimed in Jesus, and continues today as all of us get to live in such a way that brings the Kingdom of God into the here and now.

To that end, as we facilitate a community of students, we try and do all that we can to offer opportunities for 6th–12th graders to gather together in order to practice a Way of Life so that it can be lived for the benefit of those around us and thereby partner with God's restorative mission for the world. We don't do service projects in the local community so that we feel good about what we've done . . . we're practicing what it means to live generously towards others. We don't sing songs together so that we get a good feeling about worshiping God . . . we're practicing what it means to live a life that has God at the very core of our being. We don't play games just to have a good time . . . we're practicing what it means to interact with others in such a way that doesn't create an "us vs. them" mentality.

That's what the church is . . . it's a practice facility. We come together as the Body of Christ not for our own benefit, but so that we can practice a Way of Life together so that it can in turn be lived for the benefit our neighbors. We do this through our rituals, our festivals, our stories, our sacraments, our patterns and seasons of worship, etc. But we do this not so that we "get something out of it". Rather, we practice these things so as to be transformed, in Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the kinds of people God wants us to be in the world – a people who care for the sick, the poor, the widowed, the orphan – a people who arrange their lives around the teachings of Jesus – a people who spread joy, love, grace, peace by the way they live.

We gather together as a community of faith so that we might learn how to live well with God and well with others. Because let's face it, a faith that only focuses on an event that will happen someday, doesn't exactly have a lot of benefit for the really messed up world today.

Thank you for all your prayers, love, support, generosity, encouragement, concerns, challenges, comments, suggestions, and everything else.

Adult Development – Walter Scott

ST. THOMAS MEN'S MINISTRY

The men's ministry at St. Thomas is devoted to equip men to grow in their relationship with the risen Christ - to be salt and light in the environment that they are placed (their family, their place of worship, their neighborhood, and their place of employment) following the wisdom of Proverbs 27:17 "As iron sharpens iron so one man sharpens another." There are several men's Bible studies meeting throughout the Valley and all men are encouraged to find a meeting time and place that works for them. Notable events: At the end of 2009 the Men's Ministry monthly newsletter will have published Volume 12 Issue 12. The annual Men's retreat was held at the Kellett Cabin.

St. Thomas' Men's Ministry core values include:

- EQUIP men to LEAD their families – without a strong family we are open to attack from the enemy
- ENCOURAGE men to SERVE their church – faith without works is dead
- ENGAGE men to INFLUENCE their community – Jesus spent the vast majority of His public ministry in the market place, not in a church – a recent survey showed that 90% of men felt their church did not equip them for ministry in the marketplace – we are called to come off the bench and not only get in the game, but stay in the game
- ENABLE men to IMPACT the world – we can change our environment, one house, one neighborhood and one town at a time

DISCIPLSHIP MINISTRIES AT ST. THOMAS

St Thomas Church has always placed emphasis on the importance of continuous study of the Bible through small groups, during the week as well as on Sundays.

We continue to have many small groups meeting in homes and businesses from Oshkosh to Kaukauna, and even in the "Shire" of Omro. Information on times and places is available in the church office. The majority of the groups are always open, and welcome new members.

Our Sunday small groups take place at 9:00am between services. We welcome those attending the early service to stay on and join us, and those attending the late service to arrive an hour early and join the class.

Courses offered include an ongoing Bible Study-an inductive walk through the books of the Bible, the Gospel of the day, discussion groups centered on Christian books, Prayer and Healing, our Worship Team, and the ever popular Cafe St. Thomas for those not attending a specific course. Various

groups are also studying "The Truth Project." New groups of the "Truth Project" will begin in 2010. Please let us know if you are interested in attending a Truth Project group. A list of most of the ongoing studies is always posted in the Sunday Bulletin. We give thanks to the Lord for the many members of our Congregation who lead these groups. Karen Staege is the chairwoman of Adult Education this year. We thank her for taking this position of leadership.

A great New Year's resolution would be to join a small group-give it a try!

Our minds are sharpened and our convictions are deepened through study and conversation.

Worship Reports – Tom Zaborski

The members of our various worship ministries deserve our thanks for faithfully carrying out their tasks throughout the year. A special thanks goes out to the ministry leaders who oversee them, and to the Worship Team leader, Dale Staege.

The Lectors - The lectors for all our services are recruited, trained and scheduled by Tim Peterson.

Acolytes – The young members of our parish who accept the responsibility of becoming acolytes carry out an important task for our parish. Dan Siracusa who trains and schedules the acolytes also arranges social events for them during the year. This helps to promote strong, long lasting relationships among the members of this ministry.

Our Ushers – Jon Phillip recruits, trains and arranges the schedules of our service ushers.

Altar Guild – The Altar Guild volunteers whose work is coordinated by Debra Sawyer is often not noticed by many as they carry out their task of preparing the altar for services, then clearing it and taking care of the articles used. They also maintain the vestments used by the clergy, lay ministers and acolytes.

Kaleidoscopic Worship – A worship gathering that seeks to help all people or all ages into a faith practice whereby people, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are invited to participate in the global, cosmic, and all encompassing movement of God. Kaleidoscopic Worship is attended by people of all generations and gathers on the last Sunday of each month from 6:00–8:00 p.m. Any one who seeks to learn how to more fully be involved in following the Way of Jesus is invited to gather in community.

Music Ministry – MaryBee Engelman and organist Donna DiBella plan our service music by prayerfully selecting pieces that reflect the readings of that day. They organize and work with the volunteers who glorify God with their voices and instruments.

Pastoral Care Team – Ron Pagel

The Pastoral care ministries of St. Thomas is intended to prayerfully care for the spiritual needs of those in need as an of the St. Tomas ministry staff. The Pastoral care Ministries include:

- Stephens Ministry
- Healing Ministry
- Sunday Morning Prayer Teams
- Visitations Teams
- Biblical Counseling
- Career Mentoring Support

The model for this ministry is how Christ Jesus ministered day-to-day and how He taught His disciples to minister – bathed in prayer and ministering with the indwelling authority and power of the Holy Spirit.