



## Dr. Paul Thomas

### Director of Music and Organist at The Chapel of the Cross

In December 2008, Dr. Paul Lindsley Thomas was appointed the third director of music and organist in the history of The Chapel of the Cross, a Reformed Episcopal Church located at 4333 Cole Avenue two blocks south of Knox Street. He plans to continue many of The Chapel of the Cross musical traditions — such as Easter and Christmas Lessons and Carols services, bagpiper on Rogation Sunday and the popular patriotic concert “A Musical Fourth” on the Fourth of July — as well as introduce new ones — such as trumpeters during Easter Day services, a sing-along Messiah, a Children's Choir School, and his own compositions.

A native of New York City, Dr. Thomas began his musical studies at the age of four under the tutelage of his mother Virginia Carrington Thomas, who was herself a pupil of Charles Marie Widor and Lynwood Farnam. He was a boy chorister at The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine where he played his first public organ recital at the age of 14, and where he studied with Dr. Norman Coke-Jephcott, then organist and choirmaster of the Cathedral. He continued his organ study with Clarence Watters at Trinity College, Hartford, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. He earned his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in organ at Yale University School of Music where he graduated first of his class, winning first prizes in composition, scholarship, and organ playing. Upon completion of the examination as Fellow of the American Guild of Organists, Dr. Thomas received the highest grade in the entire country for that year (1958). He also earned his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from North Texas State University in 1979. Other organ teachers have included Frank Bozyan and Luther Noss at Yale, Helen Hewitt and Dale Peters at North Texas, and Rolanda Falcinelli at the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France. Study in improvisation has been with Jean Langlais. Teachers in composition include Dr. Coke-Jephcott, Quincy Porter, Sam Adler, and Nadia Boulanger.

Dr. Thomas served as organist and choirmaster of St. George's Church in Rumson, New Jersey, from 1950 to 1955. On leave from St. George in 1954, he studied organ and composition at the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France. In 1955, Paul married Joyce Robertshaw of Rumson and spent the next three years at Yale with Joyce and their infant son Craig working on a master's degree and serving as organist and choirmaster at Saint James Episcopal Church, West Hartford. Upon graduation from Yale, he became organist of Wesleyan University, director of the Apollo Glee Club at Yale, and taught organ at the Hartford Conservatory.

In 1960, Dr. Thomas was appointed director of music and organist at St. Michael and All Angels Church in Dallas, which later became the largest Episcopal parish in the United States. He and Joyce developed an active music program that included seven choirs with more than 200 members. In addition to five choral Holy Communion services every Sunday and special services, monthly musical events included concerts by the Oratorio Choir and members of the Dallas Symphony, organ concerts with some of the leading American and European organists and occasional music drama productions of a religious nature, including Dr. Thomas's opera titled “Everyman.” The St. Michael Boys Choir sang with the Dallas Symphony conducted by Robert Shaw and also appeared with Burt Reynolds in the movie “Semi-Tough.” Other high points were the St. Michael Oratorio Choir's appearance with the Dallas Symphony and several European tours. In 1996 the Stemmons Foundation of Dallas gave Dr. Thomas an unsolicited award to cover the expense of recording his compositions performed by the Oratorio Choir, the Dallas Symphony, and the Texas Brass. Prior to Dr. Thomas's retirement from St. Michael in 1997, the new music wing was named the Joyce and Paul Thomas Music Wing. In 2009 St. Michael honored his 37 years of service to the church by naming its new choral facility the Paul and Joyce Thomas Music Hall.

A member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), Dr. Thomas has choral and organ compositions published by Oxford University Press, H.W. Gray of Warner Brothers, Morning Star, and Concordia. He has served as Dean of the Dallas Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, as general Chairman of the 1972 American Guild of Organists National Convention in Dallas, and was elected a member of the AGO National Council on which he served from 1972-1975.

Dr. Thomas was honored to be appointed a Canon of Church Music by the Right Reverend A. Donald Davies, Bishop of Dallas in September 1980. He has been listed in *Who's Who in American Music* (1983) and is listed in *American Keyboard Artists* (1989). Dr. Thomas served as composer-in-residence at St. Michael and All Angel Church and was chairman of the Liturgy and Music Commission for the Diocese of Dallas until 1998.

He served as music director and organist at Trinity Church, Dallas, for 11 years prior to coming to The Chapel of the Cross.