



MAY 2025

A Vision for the Future

I'm excited about where God is leading our congregation! This month, we'll begin exploring a new vision for the future of St. Thomas. On the first two Sundays in May, we'll continue building our prayer chain in the Narthex/Lobby by inviting you to reflect on this prompt: "I want my church to be..." This will mark the beginning of our visioning process, as we seek to hear from both you and the Holy Spirit.

In the coming summer and fall months, we'll hold small group discussions and gatherings—similar to the "Hopes and Dreams" sessions we had when I first arrived in 2023—to listen and discern together.

You may be wondering, "Why do we need a new vision? Aren't we doing just fine?" The truth is, the church should always be actively discerning where God is calling us. Churches that remain rooted in hope are those that continue moving forward—listening for God's voice, seeking direction, and taking action. While it's important to preserve our core values, beliefs, and traditions, we must also be attentive to where Jesus is moving in our world today.

A church that doesn't seek God's purpose may find itself stuck in yesterday's light—missing the glorious sunrise of what's ahead. That's why it's essential for us to prayerfully discern our future and embrace our calling as ambassadors for Christ and the Gospel.

Let's vision together—and discover where God is leading us next!

In Christ,
Pastor Matt



Safety and Security at St. Thomas

St. Thomas UMC has been blessed to be a relatively safe campus for our church activities and worship services for many years. However, places of worship across America and in Prince William Co. [Park Valley Church in Haymarket] have been potential targets. In the last few years, there have been a number of violent incidents at places of worship throughout the nation. These occurrences can create a sense of fear and uncertainty.

While there are no known threats to St. Thomas, the Safety Committee continues to review and adopt strategies that enhance the safety and security of our campus. We look at measures that will help to mitigate threats. In this regard, one such measure the Safety Committee has been discussing with the Church Council is having an off-duty police officer at the church on Sunday mornings. Several churches in western Prince William County have a similar program in place today.

As a result of this discussion, on April 24, the Church Council approved an 8-week Police Officer Pilot Program for Sunday mornings at St. Thomas UMC. A police officer present on Sunday mornings provides;

- A First Responder presence in the event of a threat or other emergency
- Contact and Collaboration with other responding police officers
- Experience and training to a crisis situation
- For the safety of the congregation and brings reassurance
- An additional measure of support to the Church safety program
- A connection between our Church family and First Responders

The Safety Committee will be holding informational sessions on Sunday mornings with the congregation about the police officer program. The location of the sessions will be announced in woeship. In addition, the Safety Committee will be available to address questions and concerns from our St. Thomas family during the pilot program. We anticipate starting the pilot program in the very near future. This information is being provided now to advise you about the forthcoming pilot program. As we move forward we will keep you informed.

Following the completion of the Pilot Program, we will pause the program, and conduct extensive listening sessions with the Congregation to seek feedback on whether the Sunday morning police officer program should be continued. Survey tools will be used as well. Once we have collected feedback, the Church Council will discuss the Police Officer program and make a determination if the program will continue this year and/or into 2026. The estimated cost of the pilot program is \$2,000.

Questions regarding the Police Officer Pilot Program can be directed to Barry Barnard, Chair, or other members of the Safety Committee (Cliff Farrar, Gary Gilham, Hunter Lenz, Don Rickerson, and Joe Steen)

We welcome comments or suggestions!



OWLS MINISTRY

OLDER WISER LIVELIER SENIOR MINISTRY

The OWLS April outing was at BJ's Brewhouse in Gainesville on April 25. We have gathered at BJ's several times and the food and service has always been a big hit. This time was not exception. Everyone enjoyed the food and fellowship. Our servers were very attentive and friendly. This is why BJ's is on our yearly repeat list.



*****NOTICE*** Change of date for our May lunch gathering.** Marian and Lynn will both be out of town on the 4th Friday, our usual gathering time, so we



are changing the date. We will be meeting at Bonfish Grill in Gainesville on Friday, May 30. This is the 5th Friday in May. Bonefish Grill is located at 7611 Somerset Crossing Dr. Gainesville. Please RSVP via Connect Card or by calling the church office (Marian and Lynn will be out of town until May 25) no later than May 27. We will need to give Bonefish a final count on May 28. We hope to see everyone there for a delicious meal and lots of fun and fellowship.

Our June outing will go back to being the 4th Friday, June 27



KITCHEN MINISTRY

ST. THOMAS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

News from the Kitchen

Thank you for continuing your support of our Tuesday dinners. We do enjoy seeing you each week and interacting with you.

Our last Tuesday Night Dinner will be May 27th before we take our summer break. We look forward to serving you each week until then.

Our first May menu is as follows:

May 6 - El Salvador Fundraiser

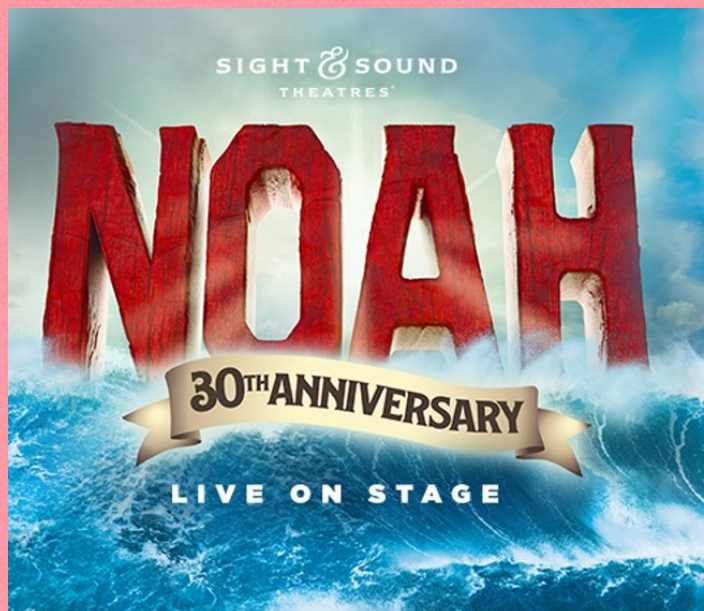
Breaded Pork Cutlets
Potato Salad
Green Beans
Fruit Bubble Cake

I would like to express my gratitude to the marvelous kitchen team: Bill Buchanan, Joe Buchanan, Deb Crawford, David Delozier, Cliff Farrar, Bob Glausser, Gwen Glausser, Buddy Kilby, Janie Russell, Connie Santee, Crissy Stone. You have gone above and beyond this year with your help. I am so very blessed by each one of you.

Janel Weed & The Kitchen Ministry Team



United
Women
in Faith



With a catastrophic storm on its way, Noah is given a monumental task: build a boat big enough to save his family from a flood that will cover the entire earth. As Noah endeavors to live faithfully in the midst of an increasingly chaotic world, can he trust that God's promises run deeper than the rising waters around him?

Join us on Saturday, Nov 1 for a trip to Lancaster, PA to see this landmark production as live animals fill the stage and aisles. Set sail inside the enormous ark as this extraordinary story comes to life in this special 30th anniversary season!

Cost for the trip is \$150 - including bus transportation, tickets for Noah and lunch at Bird-in-Hand Restaurant. Contact Pat Dodson to sign up.



Annual Spring Tea

Please join the United Women in Faith at our Annual Spring Tea on Sunday, May 18 from 2:00 to 4:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. All ladies in the church are invited for an afternoon of treats and fellowship. RSVP on the Connect Card in the bulletin or contact Pat Dodson at andyandpatd@yahoo.com.

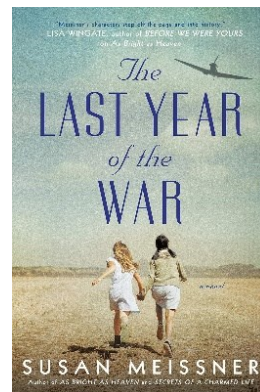
Walking Group

We will meet on **May 3, Saturday, 9am** at the parking lot for the Stone Bridge on Rt. 29. See you there Rain or Shine!



Ladies Book Club

Join us on **Fri, May 9 at 10:30 am** in room 306 to discuss "The Last Year of the War" by Susan Meissner. From the acclaimed author of *Secrets of a Charmed Life* and *As Bright as Heaven* comes a novel about a German American teenager whose life changes forever when her immigrant family is sent to an internment camp during World War II.



All ladies are welcome even if you haven't read the book.

Dorcas Circle

Our next Dorcas Circle meeting will be **Tuesday, May 13 at 1 pm** in Room 300/302. We invite all interested women to join us for study and fellowship. Invite a friend!



THE PACK

ST. THOMAS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Pack spent a lot of time and energy throughout April preparing for Youth Sunday. They led a fantastic service. We also completed confirmation classes throughout March and April and had the honor of confirming David Burnett, Sabrina Schoch, and Carly Swanson as part of our Youth Sunday service. Congratulations to The Pack on a job well done and to our confirmands on officially establishing their faith.



It is hard to believe, but the school year will be coming to a close soon. The Pack will meet on May 1 for an escape room experience, partnering with the tweens. Our last official meeting will take place on May 18 with a brief lesson, color wars, and a BBQ. Youth who attend should wear old clothing and shoes. The chalk for the color wars is washable, but it doesn't always come out perfectly. This will be the last official Pack Night meeting for the school year.

We are planning graduation Sunday for June 2 and look forward to celebrating our graduates. If there is someone graduating in your life, please share their name, level of diploma/degree, school graduating from, and a photo of the graduate with Kristi Swanson at kristi.swanson@stthomasumc.org. We will honor all graduates during service.

Also on June 2nd, the Pack will meet at the Thornton's home for a pool party to kick off summer. We will have pizza, enjoy the pool, and make plans for service and fun this summer. Keep an eye out for our summer schedule and encourage the teens in your life to get involved!



KING'S KIDS

ST. THOMAS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

April was full of fun and meaningful activities. We had our palm processions and welcomed 31 kids and their families for the egg hunt on Easter. The Throwback series for Sunday school was also a great way to learn about Jesus.

May will be another month of excitement and learning. We will begin in the Recess series from GrowKids Curriculum. For a lot of us, recess is one of our favorite parts of the school day. We get to play dodgeball,



hopscotch, or race our friends around the play area. Recess helps us to stay active so we can grow strong, but it also gives us a chance to grow in our relationships. In this five-week series, kids will discover through the stories in the books of Judges, Ruth, and 1 Samuel the unexpected ways God can help them grow. As they do, they'll learn how God helps us grow stronger, helps us belong, answers our prayers, tells us what is true, and can use anything we give. Children's church will focus on themes from the curriculum and the children's messages from service.

We have a lot of plans for Mother's Day. On May 4 from 10-11am, moms are invited to take a break from their responsibilities and relax for an hour with refreshments, spa sounds and scents, and a gift bag to take home. On Mother's Day, May 11, kids can sign up

to speak during the service as part of our Mother's Day program. We will also sing a song for the moms and the congregation and hand our flowers to the mother figures in our church. Hope to see you there!

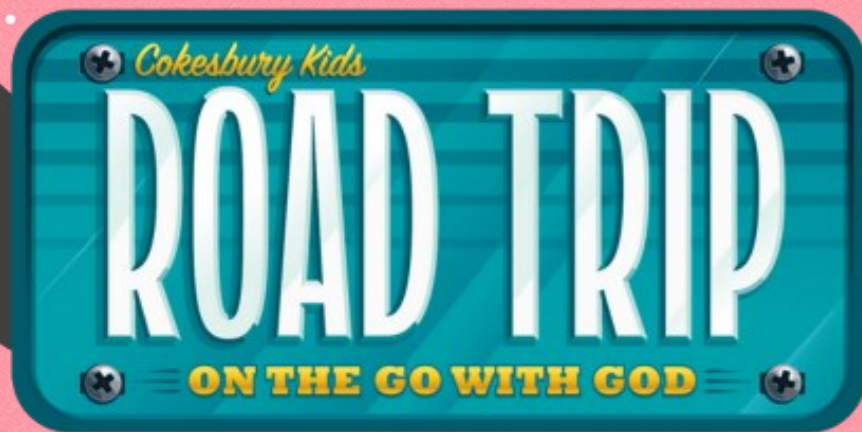
The Tweens will have a busy month planning their April meeting a little later on May 1 when they will do Time Mission, an escape room style experience at Manassas Mall. They will have a



chance to fellowship and get to know some of the youth who will be attending at the same time. The tweens will also have their annual end of the year wrap-up on May 16. We will play a round of mini golf at Magic Putting place and pickup will be at Nathan's Dairy bar where we will all enjoy a kid size ice cream.

VBS is just around the corner from June 23-27 and we are planning an epic road trip adventure. If you haven't signed up to attend or volunteer, now is your chance. It will be a great week and we look forward to having you join us. We'll have music, crafts, outdoor rec, snacks at "Duc-ee's", story time, science, and play zone. The program runs from 9am-12:15pm, but after care for the week is available for just \$50 for parents who are unable to pick up at lunchtime.

This summer we will host our Sunday Fundays again, so be on the lookout for the list of dates and activities.



Vacation Bible School

Mon, Jun 23 - Fri, Jun 27

Kindergartens—5th Graders join us in a fun-filled adventure on the open road, taking all the kids (Travelers) on thrilling journeys to exciting destinations. Led by the Navigator and an adventurous pup Scout, kids will learn that God is always with them. Through engaging stories from the Navigators' Guide (the Bible), Travelers will delve into timeless tales of faith from the Old and New Testaments. Get ready for twists, turns, and excitement as they face new challenges and find strength in God's presence on this unforgettable trip!

Road trips are a great way to build strong relationships and create indelible memories. This makes Road Trip VBS not only a fun experience for kids, but also an opportunity for them to strengthen their faith and bond with others in their community. With engaging activities, interactive games, and meaningful lessons, children will have a blast while they grow in their understanding of God's love and promises for everyone.

There are so many ways to be a part of VBS! Whether it's volunteering for the week of, helping to create decorations and prepare activities, or by providing supplies, there's a place for everyone. Scan the QR codes below to learn more or visit the Events page of our website.

If you're interested in helping with decorations be sure to join us on Tuesday, April 1 at 10 am in the fellowship hall. No RSVP needed, just come!

Thank you for making this year's VBS a success!



Registration



Volunteer



Amazon Wishlist



Signup Genius Wishlist



8899 Sudley Road, Manassas, VA 20110

Rev. Matt Sergent, Senior Pastor

stthomasumc.org

703-368-5161

Newsletter Deadline:

15th of the month

Please email all articles to both:

samantha.bouquet@stthomasumc.org

receptionist@stthomasumc.org

Upcoming Events

- | | |
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| May 3 | UWF Walking Group The Stone Bridge at 9am |
| May 9 | Ladies Book Club Room 304 at 10:30am |
| May 13 | Dorcas Circle Room 300/302 at 1pm |
| May 18 | UWF Spring Tea 2pm |
| May 24 | John White Celebration of Life 1pm |
| May 27 | Last Tuesday Night Dinner before Summer Break |
| May 30 | OWLS at Bonefish Grill 1pm |

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<div>May Birthdays</div>				<div>1</div> <div>Don Mootz</div>	<div>2</div> <div>Brenda Mootz Betty Kadel Marcine Roland</div>	
	<div>4</div> <div>Hannah Brookwell David Burnett</div>	<div>5</div> <div>Carron Leslie Sharon Schrack</div>		<div>8</div> <div>Cliff Farrar Lori Harper</div>	<div>9</div>	<div>10</div> <div>Roger Stone</div>
	<div>11</div>	<div>12</div>	<div>13</div> <div>Sharron Anderson</div>		<div>16</div> <div>Brendan Banner</div>	<div>17</div> <div>Kimberly Bisby Mary Danso Lucy Diercks</div>
	<div>18</div>	<div>19</div> <div>Linda Sears</div>	<div>21</div> <div>Marie Davis</div>	<div>22</div>	<div>23</div> <div>Lee Enke Isaac Enchill</div>	<div>24</div> <div>Zuzana Steen</div>
	<div>25</div>	<div>26</div>	<div>27</div> <div>Deb Crawford</div>	<div>28</div> <div>Marilyn Lamb</div>	<div>29</div>	<div>30</div>
					<div>31</div>	