

Triumph *Newsletter*

FEBRUARY 2024

Dear Friends,

Wow, where has the time gone? It seems just yesterday we were celebrating Christmas, Epiphany, and the New Year. Now it is time for us to journey to Jerusalem and the cross. Lent begins on Valentine's Day, which is also Ash Wednesday this year. During Lent, Jesus calls us to follow him; and, since his way is by the way of the cross, we cannot go with Jesus unless we too go the way of the cross. We may not always know, as we walk with Jesus, specifically what that may require of us. But, we know that Jesus will lead the way and will be with us to help us face whatever may come. On the way with Jesus, we will learn, as did his early disciples, more about ourselves in the light of who he is; and, we will experience the joy of his love and find deeper meaning, purpose and joy for our lives.

This Lent and Easter season, I encourage you to join us for the many opportunities we have. We will be offering a Worship Series called "Forward in Faith" that focuses on our call to follow Jesus as he sets his sights towards Jerusalem and the cross. This worship series will include a 5-week Wednesday evening Communion Service, followed by a simple dinner and further discussion on the scripture text and sermon from the previous Sunday. For more details and to sign up, visit our Events page beginning February 1st. We hope you will join us as we move "Forward in Faith" together this Lenten and Easter Season!

Grace and peace, Pastor Matt Sergent



Experience Lent and Holy Week at St Thomas

Shrove Tuesday, February 13th

- Pancake Supper | 5pm - 6pm; Men's Group will serve a traditional Pancake Supper Don't forget to sign up for this special Tuesday Night Dinner.
- Lent for Littles | 5pm - 6pm; The Tweens will host children's activities in the Narthex.

Ash Wednesday, February 14th

- Ashes to Go | 8:00am to 9:30am
- Worship Service | 7:00 pm.

Sunday Lenten Season Worship | "Forward in Faith" Worship Series February 18th through March 17th.

Wednesday Evening Communion, Dinner, and Lenten Discussion on "Forward in Faith" Worship Series February 21st through March 20th from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm.

Dinner and Choir Cantata, Saturday, March 23rd | Dinner 6:00, Cantata 7:00

Palm Sunday, March 24th | 9:00 am Traditional Worship, 11:00 am Contemporary Worship.

Holy Thursday, March 28th | Communion Service, at 7:00 pm

Good Friday, March 29th | Tenebrae Service at 7:00 pm , The Seven Last Words of Christ.

Easter Sunday. March 31st

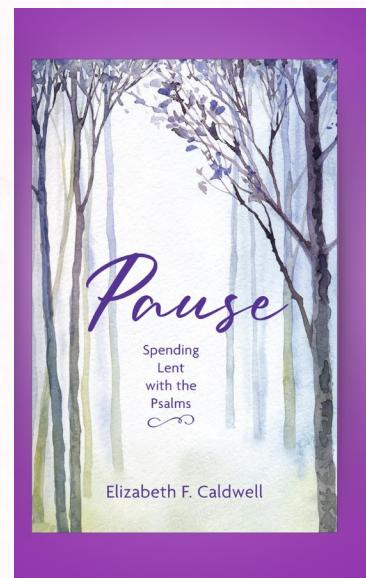
- Easter Sunrise Service | 7:00 am outside, weather permitting.
- Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall following Easter Sunrise Service, served by the Men's Group until 9am.
- Traditional Easter Worship, 9:00 am, Contemporary Easter Worship, 11:00 am.
- Easter Egg Hunt | At both services, Children will be dismissed with the Children's Ministry team after the Children's Message to enjoy an Easter Egg Hunt on the playground. Photos with the Easter Bunny will take place in the Fellowship Hall from 10-11am, so there will be no Sunday School.



Adult Discipleship

Sunday Lenten Study

The season of Lent encourages Christians to consider a different pace; one of slowing down, noticing, pausing. This short-term class for Lent will be based on the book "Pause: Spending Lent with the Psalms" by Elizabeth Caldwell. This book invites us to deeply engage with one psalm each week during Lent and Holy Week. Each psalm is paired with a theme and a suggested prayer practice to help us reflect on the psalm and theme. The book is available in paperback from Cokesbury for \$13.99 or the ebook version can be purchased from Kindle for \$11.99 or Barnes & Noble for \$11.49. Since this study is based on Psalms, it is not absolutely necessary to purchase a book and it will be easy to jump back into the discussion if you miss a Sunday. The class will meet at 10am on Sundays starting Feb. 4 and continuing through Palm Sunday. Holly Banner and Pat Brown are leading this class.



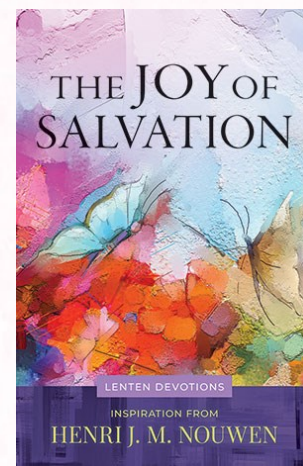
Weekday Lenten Study

This Lenten study will further explore Pastor Matt's Worship series, "Forward in Faith". These Wednesday evening sessions will include a Communion Service, followed by a simple dinner and further discussion on the scripture text and sermon from the previous Sunday. Join us Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00pm, beginning Feb 21.

Lenten Devotional

This year's Lenten Devotional is "The Joy of Salvation". Henri Nouwen, one of the most beloved spiritual thinkers of the 20th century, wrote tenderly about the joy that ultimately comes to us through the knowledge that we are saved by Christ and his cross. Excerpts from Nouwen's inspiring insights are paired with original reflections and prayers in this booklet for each day of Lent as we come to experience more fully the eternal blessings of God born of extreme sacrifice.

You may pick up a copy of this devotional at the church beginning Sunday, February 4th. If you would like to receive a copy in the mail, please call the church office.



Easter Flowers

We will be selling Easter flowers on Sun, Jan 28 and Sun, Feb 5 in the Fellowship Hall. Online sales will run from Jan 26 thru Feb 11 on the Events page of our website. We're offering tulips, daffodils, and Easter lilies for \$8 per pot, geraniums for \$12 per hanging basket, and hydrangeas for \$20 per pot. We will use the flowers to decorate for Easter Sunday and then you can take them home to include in your garden. Please see Lori Harper with any questions.



Thanks for Your Support of Our El Salvador Mission

On January 13, 2024, our team of 13 returned from a mission trip to Ahuachapan in El Salvador. The team was a combination of members from St. Thomas UMC and Haymarket Church in addition to several relatives and friends.



Since 2012, our two churches have developed relationships and equipped and sent more than 12 teams to Ahuachapan in El Salvador to do construction work, feeding program, or to run a Vacation Bible School or medical clinic in partnership with the Methodist Church community there. At the same time, our teams brought with them funds raised by the team members here in the U.S. in partnership with our two congregations in Manassas and Haymarket.

The funds and the volunteer work done in Ahuachapan by our teams have helped support the above mentioned mission projects. One of them has been construction of a Methodist school in Ahuachapan that has grown from 18 students in 2014 to 583 in 2024. It holds kids from preschool through high school and is one of the best performing schools in the country. And most of all, it is for the glory of God, it is safe and free of gangs and it is free for families who cannot afford to pay tuition.

In the words of a couple of St. Thomas members who volunteered in El Salvador in January 2024, *“My time this year in El Salvador was different than the last. With all of my family and having worked on the school instead of doing VBS, the experience filled my spirit in different ways. I got to connect more with the construction workers even with our limited English/Spanish skills. I was able to see our physical progress at the end of the week and loved to hear about the impact of St. Thomas’s work over the decade in Ahuachapán.”* Milan Steen (18), second time participant on the El Salvador Mission team.

“I was blessed to be able to see the impact of our mission teams’ past accomplishments in the city of Ahuachapan, El Salvador. God is using us to help spread His love and do His work for those in need.” Pavel Steen (19), first time participant on the El Salvador Mission team.



Members and friends of St. Thomas and Haymarket congregations have been directly or indirectly involved with this God’s work of relationship building with the community in Ahuachapan and the impact there.

For the time being, we are focusing on supporting the school growth as well as a construction of a new college for nurses so terribly needed in that region.

If you are interested in joining our team on a mission trip to El Salvador in November 2024 or January 2025, want to volunteer with us here in Virginia, would like to sponsor any of the projects or children in the Methodist school, or if you just want to hire our team to help with some tasks around your house and then donate funds to the El Salvador Mission, please contact Zuzana Steen, zuzioe1@yahoo.com.

And no matter what, we always covet your prayers for the Mission, our teams and for our sisters and brothers in El Salvador and for their school growth and continued impact.

Praise be to God for each one of you!

Submitted by Zuzana Steen who returned from her fifth mission trip to El Salvador. Zuzana also currently serves as the chair of St. Thomas Missions Council.



Christmas Day Dinner - Update

We thought we'd share a story from Christmas Day Dinner. One of our needs was a refrigerated truck to store food and packaged meals.

Someone stepped forward and offered to pay for it up to a certain amount. We called Penske and asked about renting a truck. The quote we were given was too high and when Frank said it was out of the budget we had they asked what we needed the truck for. Frank explained about our Christmas Day Dinner. They said they would get back with us. When they called back the price they gave was a little lower than the budget we had so we accepted it. When we went to pick up the truck they took off even more money, gave us a bigger truck, and a new truck, and didn't charge us for refueling. We had plenty of room as you can see. We thank God for providing for us in unexpected ways.



Community Clothes Closet



The Community Clothes Closet (CCC) is going into their 4th year of clothing those in need in our community! In 2023 we clothed an average of 80 families each week we were open. We provided clothing to 2074 families and 6942 individuals.

A HUGE thank you to everyone who has donated, volunteered, and prayed for this ministry! We couldn't do this without all of you.

Current needs through March are still winter clothing like sweats and long sleeve shirts, and especially children's clothing and shoes, sizes 5-10 years.

We could use a couple more people to sort or fold clothing during the week, or to drop off items to other organizations that we partner with. We would welcome new people to join us on our distribution days, the 3rd and 4th Saturdays each month, 8am- 11:30am. Spread the word to neighbors and friends!

Please contact Renee Kinnear (kinnear.renee@gmail.com) if you can help a couple hours a month.

Operation Bearhug

Operation Bearhug is once again upon us. Please bring NEW bears to the sanctuary from February 1st thru the 11th. We will be tagging them with our church information and delivering them to Prince William Hospital and to Manassas Health and Rehab.

The bears should be new and the size that would fit into a hospital bed. Seniors prefer the small bears. Bring as many as you like! We have been doing this about 23 years. Let's make this one the best year yet!

Bears will be delivered on the 13th so don't be late. Questions, contact Cathy Campbell at sstechur@yahoo.com or 703-346-6439. The Missions Council thanks you for your participation.



Reimagine Women's Ministry Event

Are you searching for a connection to Women's Ministry? Is there something you are looking for that we don't have here at St. Thomas? Our United Women of Faith are very active, with a variety of activities and events, but we know that many women are not involved with us. We would really love to have your ideas and your help to reimagine our Women's Ministry.



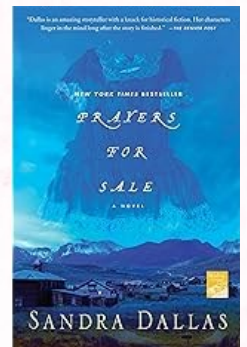
Please join us on Saturday, February 10th 10:00 to 11:30am. We are inviting all women in the church, whether you regularly attend our events, or particularly if you don't! Refreshments provided and Childcare will be available. Since the Food Pantry will be operating, please avoid the service road and enter the parking lot using the Grant Avenue entrance.

Dorcas Circle

The Dorcas Circle meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:00 pm, upstairs at the church in Room 300. Join us for food, fellowship and our continuing study, Women of the Bible. All women are welcome!

Book Club

Our February book is *PRAYERS FOR SALE* by Sandra Dallas. During the years of the Great Depression an old woman, Hennie, and a very young woman, Nit, form a friendship in a nearly deserted mining town in Colorado. Dallas is a prize winning "western" author of books that deal with evolving characters and their stories. We will discuss this book on Feb. 9th at 10:30 am in Room 300. Join us even if you haven't read the book.



AMERICAN DIRT is the book for the March 8th discussion. *AMERICAN DIRT* by Jeanine Cummins tells the story of Lydia and her son Luca who must flee their home in Acapulco when her journalist husband is slain by members of a drug cartel. Lydia and Luca's harrowing journey by car, foot, and train gives a grim picture of the challenges endured by migrants as they seek safety on American dirt. The book caused controversy over its treatment of the migrant story and was also accused of "cultural appropriation." Come and join us for a lively discussion.



Big Welcome to Gary Gilham, Food Pantry Director

Staff Parish Relations Committee is pleased to announce that we have hired a new food pantry director, Gary Gilham. Gary worked with the Red Cross for many years, as well as with several other facilities and has experience in management. Now that he's "retired", he wanted a job that would allow him to help other people. Gary started with the Food Pantry on January 16th during our first snow of the year. And, as we had more snow on January 19th, he's already had an opportunity to be "flexible" with Food Pantry functions, as we coped with the weather. Gary is a current member of St. Thomas. He and his wife, Patty, regularly attend the 9 am Sunday service.

SPRC has also hired Jon Weed as an assistant at the

Food Pantry. Jon works about ten hours/week, usually on Thursday mornings and Saturdays. Jon also is a member of St. Thomas.

Rebecca Runkles, our former Youth Director and Food Pantry Director, resigned effective January 13th. She's accepted a job with Prince William County Schools. We will miss Becca but appreciate all she did for St. Thomas and wish her the very best in her new job. Becca is also busy planning for her May wedding, so congratulations and best wishes to her and her fiancé.

In the interim before we are able to find a youth director, several people in the church are volunteering to help with our youth but more support from our congregation is certainly needed.

News from the Kitchen

We took the extra week in January to get everything back and ready for Tuesday Night Dinners. Frank did some DEEP cleaning with the help of Gordon Haines. The oven looks brand new! You should have seen all the parts scattered around the kitchen, the dirt and grime on some of the parts, the magic of "Blast", the rolls of paper towels used, but in the end everything went back just as it should and no extra parts were left over! We thank Gordon for his ability to get right inside the oven to clean!

We also want to celebrate our marvelous Chef Frank this month! His birthday is February 10. Please wish him a "Happy Birthday"

sometime this month. We are ever so grateful for his delicious meals and servant heart.

Thanks for signing up online or calling the office by noon on Mondays.

February menus are as follows:

Cookie of the Month: Oatmeal No Bake

February 6

Corn Chowder
Grilled Ham & Cheese
Mac-n-Cheese

Dessert: Red Velvet Cupcakes/
Cream Cheese Frosting

Kid's Entrée: Hot Dogs

February 13-Shrove Tuesday

Blueberry/Buttermilk Pancakes

Scrambled Eggs

Sausage Patties

Fresh Fruit

Dessert: Shrove Kabobs

Kid's Entrée: Same as Adults

February 20

Turkey a La King

Mashed Potato

Stuffing

Carrots

Dessert: Carrot Cake

Kid's Entrée: Ravioli

February 27

Spaghetti and Meatballs

Caesar Salad

Green Bean Casserole

Parmesan Bread Stick

Dessert: Cannoli

Kid's Entrée: Same as Adults



THE PACK

ST. THOMAS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

January with The PACK has been fantastic! We went ice skating and bowling, and everyone had a wonderful time! We have a great group of students and volunteers who work together to make sure we can do events and gatherings like this.

In February we plan to meet most Sundays, either at the church or in the community. We will communicate with parents as soon as we have a schedule put in place.

You can register for your youth the 2023-2024 year of The PACK using the following QR Code:



We are also looking for another Sunday School teacher, as well as volunteers for PACK Night. Even if you're only able to volunteer once a month, it would be a tremendous help! Our youth ministry is currently entirely volunteer-led, so anyone willing to volunteer to be at events and/or lead an event makes a world of difference. Thank you!

Goodbye Becca and
Best Wishes for your
exciting new future!





The children's ministry welcomed the new year with a Tweens game night including dinner with the youth group and with the preschool Bible and devotional presentation. All of the kids are doing an amazing job learning and sharing God's Word.

For February Sunday School, we will begin the "How To" series of our GrowKids curriculum. The internet helps us learn how to do so many things! From new skate tricks and viral recipes to helpful hacks,



there's a "how-to" for almost everything. But is there a tutorial video for how to follow God? This four-week series is kind of like that — thanks to some tutorials from Jesus! Each week, we'll focus on one of Jesus' teachings from the Sermon on the Mount as we learn "how to" make a difference, love our enemies, share with others, and pray. In-person and virtual options are still available. Children's church will continue to reinforce the lessons and ideas from our curriculum.

We will mark the beginning of Lent with Pancakes and Ashes. Please feel free to stop by the narthex on February 13 from 5-6pm for a Lent activity book/

devotional, a craft, and a game. The Tweens will host this event.

Then, Palm Sunday is on March 24. There will be a palm processional at the beginning of both the 9 and 11 o'clock services. To participate, kids should meet in the narthex 15 minutes before the service start time. Kids participating in Sunday School will be led upstairs to participate in the 11:00 processional. Easter, which falls on March 31 this year, we are in full swing planning for the egg hunt. It will be set up a bit differently this year. Everyone will be invited to join us for the 9 and 11 o'clock services. The children will be dismissed with the children's ministry team after the children's message to enjoy an egg hunt on the playground. Photos with the Easter bunny will take place in the fellowship hall from 10-11am, so there will be no Sunday School.

Tweens signup: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409054EABAA2CABFC1-47235580-tweens>

TND signup: <https://www.stthomasumc.org/tuesdaynightdinner>

We are also planning for VBS in the summer. This year's theme is "Hero Hotline." Kids will become super heroes at the Hero Hotline Headquarters



where everyone's gifts are valued and every hero has a role to play. Each day at the Hero Hotline Headquarters, superheroes of all ages and abilities answer the call and join the Professor and veteran hero, Super Meer the Meerkat, to provide expert assistance and solutions to Hero Teams everywhere. It will be an amazing week including a movie night on the last day of VBS and a very special program on VBS Sunday, a Father's Day luncheon for some of the heroes in our lives — our father figures! If you would like to join headquarters as a volunteer, please sign up here. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409054EABAA2CABFC1-47364685-vbsvolunteers>

We are looking forward to all the fun and learning ahead. We hope you will join us for all of our upcoming events and activities.

Special recognition for our Preschool Bible and Devotional Kit recipients:

Everly Hall
Logan Harcup
Benjamin White
Breanne White
Isaiah White

Save the date:

Lent for Littles - Feb 13, 5-6pm
Palm Processionals- Mar 24, 9 and 11am
Easter Egg Hunt - Mar 31, 9 and 11am
Photos with the Easter Bunny - Mar 31, 10-11am
VBS - June 10-14
VBS Movie Night - June 14
Father's Day Super Hero Luncheon - June 16





Older, Wiser, Livelier Seniors

The OWLS first lunch in 2024 was on Friday, January 26 when we met at Bella Vita Restaurant in Manassas. Bella Vita is one of our favorite lunch spots, and it showed, with our largest turn out ever. It was fun to see everyone. As usual, we all enjoyed our outing of fun, food and fellowship.

We do have a few things we need to bring to every OWLS' attention. With our numbers growing, and this is a good thing, we may need to become more flexible.

The biggest problem is the planned restaurant may not be able to accommodate our numbers. This may make it necessary to go to a different restaurant or to change to a day of the week that is normally less busy for the restaurant.

To accommodate our numbers, the restaurant may decide to limit our entre choices to 3 or 4 most popular selections or to set up a buffet, making it easier on the servers and the kitchen staff.

We must make a better effort at keeping Marian and Lynn informed about our attendance at these luncheons. We had 38 people who responded for

lunch at Bella Vita. Bella Vita made special arrangements to accommodate our large group. However, with 6 no-shows, one server had 2 people she was taking care of while another server had 10, greatly effecting the tips that the one server made. If we had known the 6 people weren't going to be able to make it, we could have squeezed the last 2 people at another table. We realize things come up and schedules change but please let us know if you can't join us.

Our next outing will be Friday, February 23, when we will meet at Hector's, in Nokesville. Although Hector's is a Mexican restaurant, we are sure everyone can find something that they will enjoy. Please RSVP via Connect Card or by calling Marian (571-315-6881) or Lynn (703-499-0243) no later than Tuesday, February 20. We have already talked with Hector's concerning our numbers and they are confident they can accommodate us. If necessary, we will let everyone know of any changes we need to make.

We hope to see everyone at Hector's. Friends are always welcome.



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

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Feb 4 | Sunday Lenten Study "Pause" begins 10am |
| Feb 9 | Book Club 10:30am |
| Feb 10 | Reimagine Women's Ministry Event 10:00am |
| Feb 13 | Dorcas Circle 1pm |
| Feb 13 | Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 5:00pm
Lent for Littles 5pm - 6pm |
| Feb 14 | Ash Wednesday Worship at 7:00pm
Ashes to Go in the morning 8:00am - 9:30am |
| Feb 19 | Presidents Day OFFICE CLOSED |
| Feb 21 | Communion, Dinner & Lenten Discussion 6:30pm |
| Feb 23 | OWLS - Hector's 1pm |

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	February Birthdays			1 Pavel Steen	2	3 Uriel Enchill
4	5 John Rosko Erica Sergent	6 Ruth Gorgas	7 Lynne Goldfarb	8 Forrest Michalek Samantha Bouquet	9	10 Frank Priest
11 Chris Verosko	12	13 Kyle Johnson	14	15 Jhenny Michalek	16 Cathy Campbell	17 Jan Chambers
18	19 Dave Enke	20 Matt Sergent	21 Laney Schoch	22 Alexa Wilson	23	24
25 Rick McMahon	26 Nam Jung	27 Bruce Urani	28 Miranda Banner	29		