



Triumph *Newsletter*

DECEMBER 2023

Faithful: Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph

Join us this Advent and Christmas season for our worship Series: Faithful: Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph. From his beginnings as a humble carpenter to his all-important role as the earthly father of Jesus Christ, Joseph's place in the nativity story is sometimes overlooked but contains valuable lessons for us all. Using Adam Hamilton's book, we will reflect on Christmas through the eyes of Joseph, and we will explore how Joseph's story is much like our own. Exchange your doubt for courage this Advent and Christmas season!



Week 1: December 3rd	"A Carpenter Named Joseph"	
Week 2: December 10th	"Whose Child is This?"	
Week 3: December 17th	"Raising a Child Not Your Own"	Christmas Cantata
Week 4: December 24th	"The Journey to Bethlehem"	Christmas Eve

Church Wide Advent Study

Adults are invited to join our church wide advent study "Faithful: Christmas through the Eyes of Joseph". There are several ways you can participate: Join Pastor Matt's study on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 – 8:00 pm beginning Wed, Nov 29 for four weeks of communion, worship, and a simple meal prepared by Frank and the kitchen ministry team; on Sunday mornings, Paula Renfro will be leading the study at 9:30 in Room 309; at 10 am Earl Amstutz and Pat Dodson will lead the study in Room 300/302.

The Youth and Children's classes will also be participating in this study, so families can discuss the lessons together.

Christmastide at St Thomas:



Manassas is celebrating their 76th Christmas Parade with this year's theme "Christmas in Toyland" and St Thomas will be a part of the celebration, so please come out and support the Praise Band on **Sat, Dec 2 at 10 am**, as they take us down the holiday road.

Ladies, our annual Christmas Party will be held upstairs in Room 300 on Sat, Dec 2 at 1 pm. We will gather for a potluck lunch, followed by a fun gift exchange and fellowship. Bring a dish to share and a wrapped gift (\$15 to \$20 value). This is always a wonderful event and a great way to start the Christmas season! All ladies of the church—and your friends—are welcome!

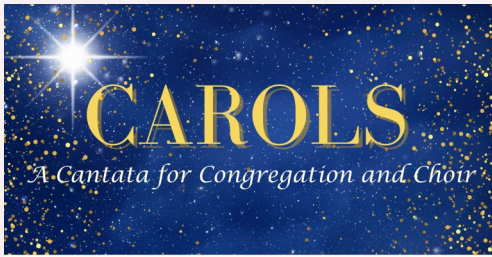
This evening of meaningful Christmas fun and nostalgia kicks off the Advent season on Sun, Dec 3 beginning at 4 pm. Our annual Hanging of the Greens service will take place from 4 - 5 pm with Family Advent night immediately following. There will be activities for everyone with our fresh Advent wreath workshop, dinner, games, ornament making, and cookie decorating. Please sign up on the Events page of the website.

Join us on Sat, Dec 9 from 5-7 pm for a festive evening including a live nativity scene, petting zoo, carols, cookies, cocoa, and lots more fun. This event is free to the community. Register on the Events page of the website. If you would like to enter your cookies in the competition, please sign up on the Events page of the website under the Cookie Competition signup.

Santa is coming to St Thomas for Breakfast on Sun, Dec 17 at 10 - 11 am and 12 - 1 pm in the Fellowship Hall. You can take a family photo with Santa and enjoy a delicious breakfast. Spaces are limited! Please sign up before all spots are gone by visiting the Events page. This Sunday is also special because the Chancel Choir will present their Christmas Cantata at both services.

Celebrate the Season!

You're invited to our Cantata "Carols" performed by our Chancel Choir on **Sun, Dec 17 at both services, 9 & 11 am.** A truly unique offering for the holidays, this one-of-a-kind Cantata puts congregational participation front and center in this musical worship service.



Christmas Cantata

Sun, Dec 17 | 9 am & 11 am

Longest Night Service

Thu, Dec 21 | 7 pm
Childcare Available Upon Request



This service is a time for us to acknowledge and remember the concerns and losses in our lives; and to find hope in the coming of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Childcare is available upon request.

JOIN US FOR CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR! CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES | DEC 24

10 AM CHILDREN'S PAGEANT

7 PM CONTEMPORARY SERVICE

Praise Band | Candlelight | Communion

9 PM TRADITIONAL SERVICE

Handbells | Chancel Choir | Candlelight | Communion



Christmas Eve Morning Worship Service - 10 am

Children's Christmas Pageant

Christmas Eve Contemporary Service - 7 pm

Praise Band, Candlelight & Communion

Christmas Eve Traditional Service - 9 pm

Handbell & Chancel Choirs, Candlelight & Communion



JOIN US FOR CHRISTMAS DINNER

— Free —
Mon, Dec 25 | 11am -3 pm

DINE IN OR
CURBSIDE
PICK-UP

Our Christmas Day Dinner is Mon, Dec 25 from 11 am – 3 pm and promises to be a wonderful time and a delicious meal for everyone! This dinner is our gift to the community and is free for all. We also deliver meals to the first responders on duty on Christmas Day. A Signup Board is available to give you the opportunity to contribute food or non-food items for the dinner. We want all of Manassas to be blessed by this culinary delight from Frank and company!



Seekers of His Star

One Service | Dec 31 | 10 am

Join us on New Year's Eve for one worship service as we hear about the Magi in Pastor Matt's message "Seekers of His Star".

News from the Kitchen

We would like to ask your help in getting the word out about our FREE Christmas Day Dinner. Please let your family, friends, and neighbors know that they can come to church to pick up their dinners curbside on Christmas Day from 11:00am-3:00pm. We will offer limited inside seating from 11:00am-3:00pm WITH A RESERVATION made by Dec. 24th. Please call the church office 703-368-5161 to make your reservation.

We could use your help with the Christmas Day Dinner, how you may ask? If you have not taken a card from the board in the Narthex please consider donating an item or two or donating money for us to purchase some of the larger items not listed on the board. You can also use this signup link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508084CACA922A1FE3-46408868-christmas>

If you are able to help prepare the dinner please sign up on the board. The in-person help sheets will be up by Dec. 15 Thank you for your help, we so appreciate it!

We will have 2 Tuesday Night Dinners in December and then put all our efforts into preparing for the Christmas Day Dinner before enjoying some time off between Christmas and New Year's week. Tuesday Night Dinners will return on January 2, 2024.

We had a huge turnout for our Thanksgiving feast! How wonderful to have the Fellowship Hall full. We do have some new people joining us on Tuesdays from time to time and may we ask that you make them feel welcomed? Please invite them to join you at your table.

Thanks for signing up online or calling the church office before noon on Mondays. This helps us greatly in preparing the right amount of food.

Cookie of the Month: Gingerbread Cookies

Our December menus are:

Dec. 5

Garden Salad

Baked Ziti

Fried Okra

Parmesan Bread Stick

Dessert: Almond Joy Cake

Kid's Meal: Same as adult meal

Dec. 12

Christmas Feast

Baked Ham

Roasted Redskin Potatoes

Corn Soufflé

Cinnamon Apples

Banana Bread

Dessert: Bread Pudding w/ Vanilla Sauce

Kid's Meal: Same as Adults

Dec. 19

No Tuesday Night Dinner

Dec. 25

Christmas Day Dinner serving 11:00am-3:00pm

Dec. 26

No Tuesday Night Dinner

Have a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Thank you all for the remembrances on my birthday. I enjoyed reading the cards, eating a bite (or two) of my birthday cookie cake, and what a magnificent choir you all were!!! Dom is eagerly awaiting all of you to sign up & join the choir in Sunday mornings! It was wonderful to spend my evening with all of you!

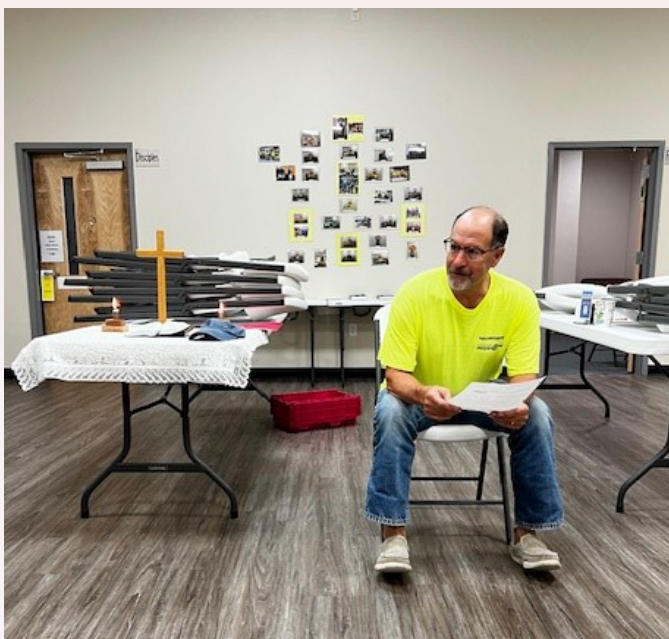
Thank you! Janel



START Mission Trip - October 2023

By Cliff Farrar

On Sunday, October 8, sixteen people left their homes bound for New Bern, NC to do a weeklong mission trip with Baptists on Mission. Many people came from St. Thomas UMC, but some came from other areas. The most distant team member came from Ohio and is a former member of St. Thomas. We arrived in New Bern around dinner time and got settled in to our bunks and accommodations.



On Monday morning, we met with Mark and Joy Pickett, our hosts for the week. After welcoming our team, Mark set about giving us some background information on the family we would be serving for the week. He advised that this family had been helped after the storm (Hurricane Florence) and he tries to keep up with people who have received assistance from Baptists on Mission. When he checked on Steve and Kathy (the homeowners), he found their home had received significant damage from a house fire and was currently uninhabitable. Steve and Kathy were sleeping in their car beside their burned out house. Apparently, an electrical issue had sparked the fire. Steve had been seriously burned during the fire

and had received treatment in the burn unit of a hospital. In the next days, Steve and Kathy met with Mark to discuss whether Baptists on Mission would be able to help them recover from the fire. Mark reports they were overwhelmed; unsure of where to go and what to do to get their lives back together after the fire. He says they had pretty much lost hope that they could live as they did before the fire and neither of them were in a good frame of mind at this meeting.

Mark decided that Baptists on Mission would try to help them with repairs to the home. Mark reports that he told Steve and Kathy that he did not know where the money for building materials would come from, but he would trust in the Lord that adequate funding would be found. Mark was able to secure temporary housing for them by arranging for a travel trailer to be set up beside their damaged home. Mark then set about coming up with a plan to get the home put back in livable condition. An engineer was consulted to determine if the home could be rebuilt and the conclusion was that it could be done, but would require plenty of labor, materials, as well as coordination with the county building inspector's office.

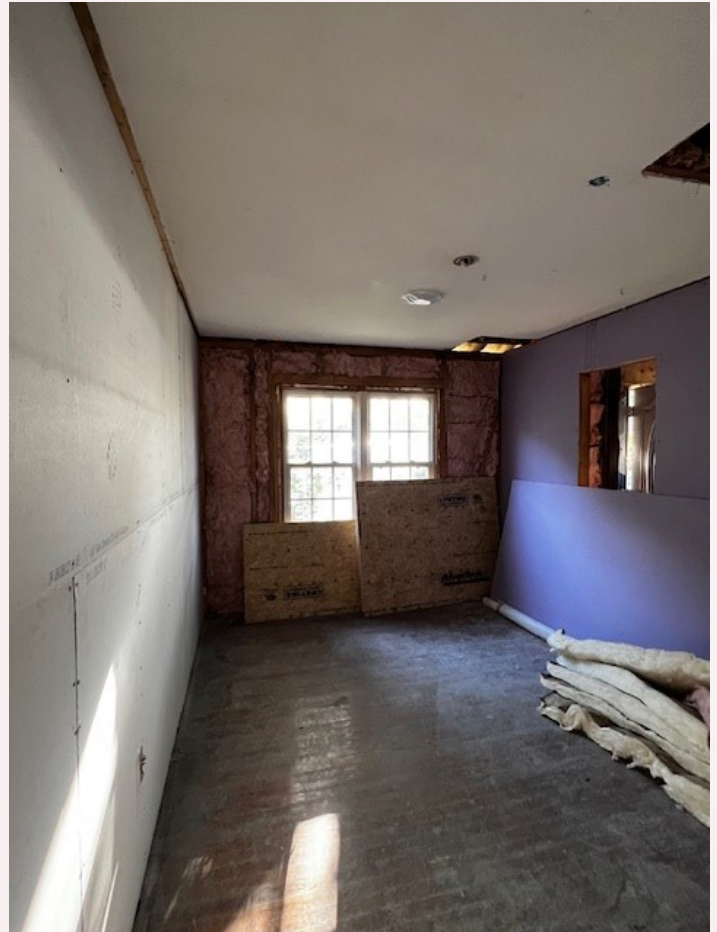


At the time, Mark had two teams scheduled to come to New Bern, the first being the NC Friends (Quakers). They are excellent carpenters and framed out many houses our team worked on during previous mission trips in both North Carolina and Virginia. After they completed their week's



work removing debris and framing the house, our team was scheduled to come in to take up where they left off. We completed the roof, integrating the new shingles with the existing ones which remained undamaged. The entire interior had been gutted down to the studs, including removal of all wiring in the house and all plumbing above the level of the crawl space. We roughed in a new electrical system in the house and insulated the walls and part of the ceiling. Additionally, a local volunteer worked with us on roughing in the new plumbing system. We also made some structural additions to the framing so there would be solid wood to secure the kitchen cabinets as well as other items. After an inspection by the local Building Inspector, we were allowed to

close in many of the walls with drywall and continue with insulation in other areas. We began to install the ceiling around the edge of the rooms so that the air conditioning ducts could be installed. By the end of the week, we had made very significant progress toward the goal of getting Steve and Kathy back in their home. We had a good test of the roof with a significant rain in the middle of the week and we found no leaks in the roof after the rain.



Throughout the week, we interacted with Steve and Kathy and became more comfortable with each other as the week progressed. On Friday evening, we invited them to come to the recovery center to share a meal with us. They were a very entertaining couple and we all enjoyed sharing some time with them. They were very animated in their conversation and appeared to be really enjoying the attention we were giving them.

After they departed for the night, Mark contrasted

their demeanor that evening with their demeanor when he first met with them where they seemed to have lost hope. They were initially very reserved with little hope things would get better for them. After two teams had made great progress on their home, their attitude had changed completely. We had given them hope that things would get better. That is our primary goal during these mission trips. The construction work is very important, but the real goal of our work is to restore hope to people who are devastated by disaster.



As many of you know, we raised funds before we left on this trip. A large part of this fund raising was a Tuesday Night Dinner two weeks before we departed. This fundraising event resulted in approximately \$3,500.00 after expenses to be used for building material purchases during our trip. We thank the entire Kitchen Ministry team for their help during this event which was a significant part of our fundraising effort.

In addition to this amount, many of our team members made significant donations to this fund. In the end, we left for New Bern, with \$5,146.00 to use for building materials and other expenses incurred by the team. This does not include the cost of food, transportation, or lodging for the trip,

which were borne by each member of the team.

Before we completed our week in New Bern, I talked to Mark about the funding situation for the entire project, particularly after his statement that he was unsure of how it would be funded to its completion. He had applied for a grant through Lowe's in New Bern and was awarded a \$2,500.00 grant for building materials. I asked him where that left him for total funding and he replied that he only had one more major expense that he didn't know how he was going to fund. That major expense was the kitchen cabinets and the estimate for materials was \$4,700.00. It looked like the Lord had again provided because I was able to tell him that St. Thomas was able to fund these items.



Cabinets purchased with our donation were installed by a later work crew

I see the Lord's hand in this entire project. When we did our fundraising, I had no idea of the actual amount which would be needed to complete the project. The amount of money we received was almost EXACTLY the amount we would later learn would be needed. Coincidence? I think not! When we needed certain skills, there was someone who had those skills. When we needed to work longer hours to complete the roof because of predicted rain, we put the last nail in the roof as the sun was going down and it began to rain on our way back to the recovery center. It rained hard that night and

there were no leaks when we arrived the next morning. Even though it was raining that morning, all the work we had to do that day was inside work. Everything seemed to fit together perfectly.

Although I would love to take credit for things working out so well, it was obviously the Lord and his divine intervention over the whole project that made everything work out well. It was certainly due to more than just skillful planning or coincidence! God is good!!

We would like to thank the congregation for their tremendous support of our team; both financially and prayerfully. Your prayers were felt during the entire week and we saw them being answered each day. Many thanks to all of you.

We welcome anyone who would like to be a part of this amazing mission effort. All skill levels are welcome. All we ask is that you have a willing servant's heart. If you feel that you lack the skills to join us, we will help you find a task that you can complete and contribute to the overall effort in a significant way. Please consider joining us.

If you have questions about this mission, please contact Cliff Farrar at fcliff@hotmail.com.



Christmas Mission Reminders

A Senior Christmas

Please bring your Senior gifts in by Sunday, December 10th. If at all possible, wrap them in a gift bag. It is easier for seniors to open. Gifts will be delivered on the 12th and given out on Christmas Eve. Thank you all very much for participating and giving the Seniors at Manassas Health and Rehab a Merry Christmas!

Advent Bags

When your Advent Bags are filled, place them under the Christmas Tree in the Narthex by Thursday, Dec. 14, The Food Pantry will distribute them to families on Saturday, Dec, 16

Mission Offering

Offerings collected during the Christmas Eve services - 10 am Children's Christmas Pageant, 7 pm Contemporary Service, and 9 pm Traditional Service - will go to support the Missions of St. Thomas.

United Women in Faith

Christmas Party

Ladies, please join us for our annual Christmas Party on Saturday, Dec 2 at 1pm. We will gather upstairs in room 300 for a potluck lunch, followed by a fun gift exchange and fellowship. Bring a dish to share and a wrapped gift (\$15 to \$20 value). This is always a wonderful event and a great way to start the Christmas season! All ladies of the church, and your friends, are welcome!

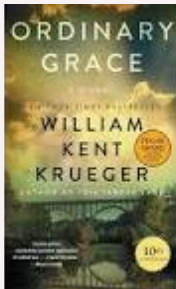
Dorcas Circle

Ladies, we would like to have your company for fellowship and study on the second Tuesday of each month, at 1pm. This month, on December 12th, at 1 pm, we are meeting at the Olive Garden Restaurant on Sudley Rd. in Manassas for our Christmas Lunch and Party. Each of us will bring a wrapped \$20.00 Gift Card, from any store of your choosing, for our gift exchange game. Each of us will be purchasing our own lunch. If you have any questions or need a ride, please call Joyce Hale at 703-754-8881, or Jean Callahan at 703-501-9399.

Ladies Book Circle

Do you like to read? Do you like to talk about the books you have read? Mysteries, historical fiction, coming of age, literary, humor, non-fiction, character studies, ...just good books? Come join us!

We currently plan to meet every 2nd Friday at 10:30 in the morning, upstairs at the church. We will discuss the book we have all read (or started reading, or thought about reading) for that month and share our opinions. All will be welcome even if you haven't finished reading the book. The book we will discuss on December 8th is ORDINARY GRACE by William Kent Krueger, available in hardback, paper, Kindle, used or at your local library. For more information, contact Becky Haase at beckyann555@gmail.com



OWLS

The OWLS had a very delightful lunch at Logan's Roadhouse on Friday, November 17. We had a wonderful turnout of 21 OWLS. It is always fun to get together, catch up and enjoy a delicious lunch. We never seem to have any trouble finding something to talk and laugh about. Next month we will be meeting at Olive Garden on Sudley Rd. This date will be a change from our regular 4th Friday because that would have us so close to Christmas that some of us may be headed out of town or having family visiting us. Therefore, we will meet on the 3rd Friday, December 15. Plan to join us on that date, but don't forget to RSVP via Connect Card or by calling Marian Ludlow (571-315-6881) or Lynn Furlong (703-499-0243) by December 12. We have to confirm our reservations by December 13. We are sure you will have an enjoyable afternoon of good food, good fellowship and lots of fun. Bring a friend!!





The children's ministry had a great November. The Veterans Day Dinner hosted by the Tweens was well-attended and great way to honor the Veterans of our church with 36 people in attendance. We also rolled out our annual Advent Mission Bag collection and Thankfulness Jars for the Christmas Eve offering. We are excited about the Advent Season.



In Sunday School and Children's Church, we will be participating in the Church's intergenerational study, Faithful. This program looks at Christmas from Joseph's perspective and we have plenty of meaningful and exciting activities planned for the kids.

The children's ministry is involved in a lot of activities for December. Be sure to mark your calendars! Our annual Hanging of the Greens event will take place on Sunday, December 3 at 4pm. We will enjoy a service of carols and Christmas festivities, followed by dinner, making fresh Advent wreaths, decorating cookies and lots of other fun. On December 9, we will host a new event, Carols, Cocoa, and Christmas Cookie Competition. It will include a petting zoo, live nativity, games, carols, cocoa, and of course cookies. Please register to attend and to enter cookies in the competition! The 17th will be a big day with the Cantata at both services and Breakfast with Santa. Be sure to register for your breakfast and photo.

On Christmas Eve, we will host the Children's Christmas pageant at 10am. Childcare will not be offered as children of all ages are invited to participate in the program. There will be lots of roles that day which require no practice in advance. After the pageant, the Tweens will stay after and help the kitchen team with Christmas Dinner prep. Kids in 3rd-5th grade are welcome to join us, and families can also stick around to pitch in. They have lots of work to do.

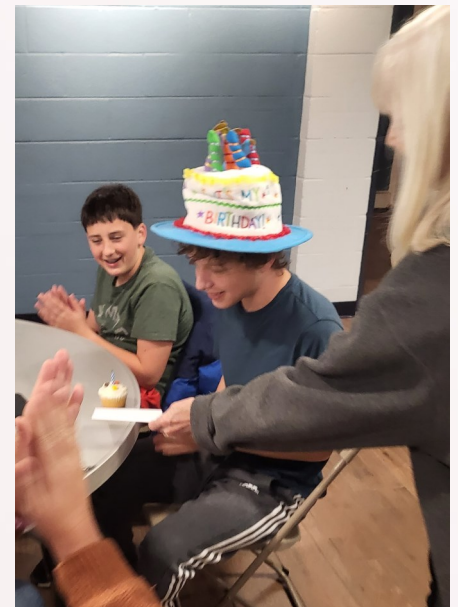
We will also have a 7pm contemporary service and 9pm traditional service in the evening. No childcare will be provided, but kids are welcome in the service and the cry room will be available.



THE PACK

ST. THOMAS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

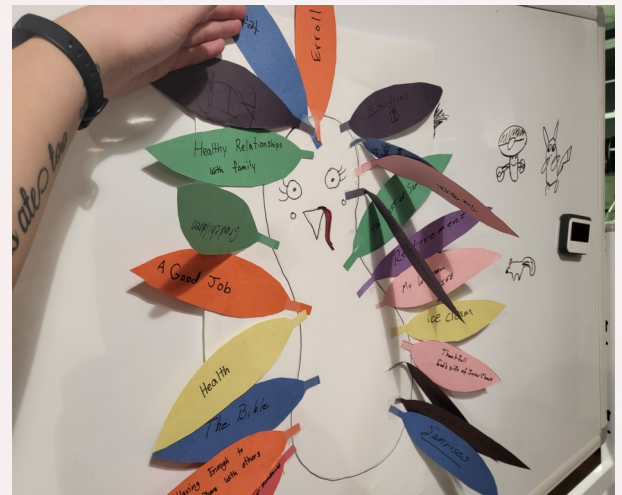
November with The PACK has been exciting! We celebrated Daniel's birthday, had some great small groups, went to The Great Xcape for an escape room, and celebrated Thanksgiving with our annual Friendsgiving event. The escape room was challenging, and everyone had a great time! We split into two groups for two different rooms, and through working together we made it out! The consensus was that everyone wants to do it again, so I think it was a good thing! Our Friendsgiving was fully of joy and thankfulness...and lots of yummy food! What a blessing it was to have our students and one of our adult small groups come together for food and fun. We can't wait to do it again next year!



Happy Birthday, Daniel!



Enjoying a delicious Pot Luck Dinner



Adding feathers to our Turkeys with all the things we are grateful for

In December there are several events going on in the church, and The PACK has the privilege of helping with several of them! We will be helping with and participating in the Family Advent Night on Sunday December 3rd, helping with the Carols, Cocoa, and Cookies Competition on Saturday December 9th, having our annual Christmas party on Sunday December 10th, and assisting with Breakfast With Santa on Sunday December 17th. For the Christmas party we will get together for games and food as we look forward to Christmas and the birth of Jesus. If you're in middle-high school and are interested in attending please contact Rebecca.runkles@stthomasumc.org – we look forward to seeing you there!

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



Sunbeam Children's Center

November was a busy month with the teaching staff preparing for the Thanksgiving Feast, which was a beautiful time of fellowship. Thank you, Pastor Matt, for blessing Sunbeam and their families on that day.



December is always a wonderful month here at Sunbeam and STUMC. The children will make ornaments for the Jesse Tree from the Old Testament and they will celebrate Jesus' birthday. Sunbeam staff and families will fill Advent bags for families in our community and share the love and joy of Christ during the beautiful season.

We still have space in our 3 year old classes if anyone is looking for structured learning environment filled with love for their child. Merry Christmas to all and may the new year be filled with many blessings for all!



Upcoming Events

- Dec 2 Praise Band at the Christmas Parade 10 AM
UWF Christmas Party Potluck 1 PM
- Dec 3 Hanging of the Greens / Family Advent Night 4 PM
- Dec 9 Carols, Cocoa & Cookie Competition 5 PM
- Dec 10 A Senior Christmas Gifts / Advent Bags Deadline
- Dec 12 Dorcas Circle Christmas Lunch - Olive Garden 1 PM
- Dec 17 Christmas Cantata 9 AM and 11 AM
Breakfast with Santa 10 AM and 12 PM
- Dec 21 Longest Night Service 7 PM
- Dec 24 Children's Christmas Pageant 10 AM
Christmas Eve Service 7 PM - Contemporary
Christmas Eve Service 9 PM - Traditional
- Dec 25 Christmas Day Dinner 11 AM - 3 PM
- Dec 25 - 29 Church Office Closed
- Dec 31 Worship Service 10AM

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December Birthdays					1 Peggy Lawlor	2
3 Cary McMahon	4 Monique Buchanan	5 William Groenig	6 Carolyn Glade	7 Bill Bixby	8 Elizabeth Goldfarb	9
10	11 Jenalynn Weed	12	13	14	15	16
17 Mason Sanchez Danielle Harcup	18 Lynda Workman Walter Granados	19	20 Sybil Johnston Leonard Fick Esperanza Enchill Levi Lusk	21 Ginny Bixby Gary Thornton	22	23
24	25 John Verosko	26	27	28 Dommie Izzo	29 Giovanni Schoch Roger Stone	30 Tracy Spencer Martha Jones
31 Lacy Lusk						