



Triumph *Newsletter*

APRIL 2023

Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday, April 2, 9 & 11:00 AM

The congregation is in for a treat on Palm Sunday as the Chancel Choir shares “Scenes from the Passion” through Scripture readings and song. This beautiful Holy Week Cantata brings in familiar Easter hymns and blends them with newly composed music for the season.

Children are also invited at the 11 AM service to help lead the Palm Processional during the opening song set. This is a great Sunday to invite a friend with you to worship.

Maundy Thursday, April 6, 7:30 PM

Grace UMC has graciously invited the congregations of St. Thomas and Haymarket Church to join them for this holy service as we experience the story of the Last Supper through music, preaching, and Holy Communion. Please plan to meet us at Grace UMC, located at 9750 Wellington Road, Manassas, where we will be blessed with music from the combined choirs of Grace and St. Thomas.

Good Friday, April 7, 7:00 PM

This holy service will help us remember the sacrifice Christ made on the cross and will weave music, selected readings, and a sermon about the nature of service as a way to live out our baptism. Come and prepare more fully for Easter morning by hearing the sacred story once more.

Fasting on this most holy of days is a long-standing tradition in the Christian community and is encouraged if you feel led by the Spirit.

Easter Sunday, April 9

7:00 AM Sunrise Service, Near the Columbarium.

In the spirit of hospitality we are asking you to not only bring a chair for your use, but also bring one to share with any visitors we have join us for this blessing to our community.

7:30 AM Easter Breakfast in Fellowship Hall

9:00 AM Traditional Celebration Service

11:00 AM Contemporary Celebration Service

Our Easter Offering

This year's Easter offering will help support the mission work coordinated through our Mission Council, with the following principles guiding their work together:

- 50% supports local mission in our community
- 25% supports national mission projects
- 15% supports international missionaries and mission work,
- 10% supports miscellaneous efforts such as new projects or empowering more young people to serve in mission who would not otherwise be able to do so.

Throughout much of the history of the church, Lent has represented a time of self-denial and examination, a time to ponder what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. As we prepare our hearts for the resurrection of our Lord, may your Easter offering reflect what it means to you to be his disciple.

Post Easter Sermon Series: Why?

Why? It's a simple word, but a deep question everyone wrestles with at some point in their lives. When bad things happen, our prayers seem unanswered, and God seems far away, we cry out, "Why?" In this series of messages, we will look to the Scriptures and specifically, Job, and his experience of coming through horrific tragedies to help us understand how God is at work in our lives and our world.



New Online Directory Becoming Available



Beginning Monday, April 3, 2023, we will invite the congregation to begin using our online church database, Realm. If you remember, this initiative was one of the remaining items in our strategic priorities for Administration & Infrastructure: *"Ongoing maintenance of the membership database (Realm) to include making an online, password-protected directory available to all leaders and members."*

We have been conducting a test pilot phase with our staff and key leaders over the past few months. They have already been using this tool and have found it easy to do so.

We are aware that many churches in our community are already using an on-line directory to better support their members. We believe this online resource will **enhance ministry** and **ensure more timely updates** to your individual profiles. Please continue reading to learn more about this new way to communicate with other church members and keep your own church profile up-to-date!

Realm primarily serves the administrative needs of our church, but it also offers some exciting opportunities to support the way you are involved at St Thomas. Not only will this improve work life for our

ministry staff, it will make it easier for our church family to connect with each other, keep up with what is going on, and grow as a connected community of Christ followers.

There are three things you should know before we highlight what you can do with Realm:

1. We're updating the administrative tools our staff uses to run the daily operations of the church.
2. We're adding more ways to communicate and connect as a church while leaving current methods in place.
3. You determine how much you want to make this part of your experience with our church, but we encourage you to participate.

With Realm You Can Do the Following:

Update Your Profile: Everyone in our church gets a unique profile. Your profile contains everything you want people in our church to know about you. Your profile also enables you to track your giving, update your contact information, change family details, add family photos and so much more. By keeping your information current, you are helping our staff, small group and ministry leaders and church community.

Track Your Giving: Review your giving history, check your pledge progress and print your giving statement. Access to your giving is always available and kept secure in an easy to use online environment. (IMPORTANT: Other Realm users cannot see your giving – this information is only available to you)

A Note About Privacy

Your Information is Your Information. You have complete control over who can see your contact and personal information. Contact information is never public or searchable on the internet. Any information you elect to make visible to our church family is always protected behind a login. Authorized staff will always have access to your profile information. You

and certain authorized staff may update your profile information. For safety reasons, sharing contact and personal information for children under 18 is limited. Parents determine whether to display their child's name in the church directory or not and children under 13 will not be able to sign in.

By default, the viewing of your contact and personal information is limited to members of groups you are in, group leaders, and staff members. In an effort to connect with our church members and utilize Realm as a church directory, **we encourage you to make your information visible to the entire church**. When selecting your privacy settings we'd like to invite you to select the "Anyone In the Church" option; however, we understand if you'd like more privacy. To customize what can be seen by other Realm users of our church, you may select the "Custom Privacy" option.

On Monday, April 3, anyone with an email in the database will be able to access Realm by following the link in the invitation email that will be sent out directly from Realm to you. We also invite you to download the Realm Connect app on your phone, available in your phone's app store. An instruction guide about how to access your Realm profile and update your privacy settings is available on our church website:

<https://www.stthomasumc.org/forms>.

If you need any help or have any questions or concerns. Samantha Bouquet, our Administrative Director is available at church, Monday – Friday, during business hours. Thank you!

Church Council Corner

By Hunter Lenz

As I sit down to write this tome, I am struck by how quickly this year is progressing. Perhaps the year truly is flying by, or maybe that's just all the wind we experienced throughout March. Much like the inevitable ebbing of time, St Thomas UMC isn't remaining still. Through our actions, we are moving in our community to demonstrate our love of Jesus to all we encounter. Much like a skilled point guard in basketball, your Church Council is directing and assisting in order to accomplish our mission of reaching, nourishing and serving ALL in our community to the glory of God.

I hope you all have thawed out and taken the opportunity to read the Lenten Devotionals, crafted by various members of our congregation. A big thank you to all who have participated, and to our Lay Leaders and Communications Committee for making this a big success. In the chance you missed an entry, please visit our website and check out the Blog link under our Resources tab.

The Missions Committee, chaired by Zuzana Steen, plowed through the gusty winds of March to continue to provide for our neighbors in need. Our Food Pantry serves approximately 200 families on Saturdays and 100 on Wednesdays. Additionally the Clothing Closet, spurred on by Renee Kinnear, helps out up to 70 individuals during this time. And the kitchen team is continually making wonderful Tuesday Night Dinners for hungry congregants, all

while providing meals to area first responders.

Much like seeing the blooming of flowers after a cold winter, the work by our Children and Youth Ministries, chaired by Vicki Schoch and Perry Bailey, along with Kristi Swanson & Pastor Arum, continues to brighten the lives of the sprouting lives here at St Thomas UMC. Thanks to all who contributed materials to help prepare for the Easter Egg Hunt on April 8th. Hopefully we will see lots of you out there for this tremendous event. And before we know it, Vacation Bible School will be here. Please see the top of our website for sign-ups, and keep your eyes peeled to find out more ways to help with this important program.



There's so much going on in the life of St Thomas UMC right now, it wouldn't be possible to capture it all in writing. Luckily for me, this isn't required. All I ask is for you to look around and witness the wonderful works transpiring in our midst. Your Church Council hopes you find inspiration to return this love by jumping into one or more of our ministries. There are plenty of opportunities for all of us to engage with our St Thomas community in the coming weeks and months. We are an Easter people- this is our time to rejoice, repent and renew our Covenant Life with one another. Let's go forth and work together to honor God.



Church Council Adopts DPT Recommendations

Following a briefing by the Discernment Planning Team (DPT), the Church Council unanimously adopted all of the DPT recommendations at its March 23, 2023 meeting. The Church Council established the DPT in May 2022 in response to the Global Methodist Church launching amid controversy within the UMC related to the marriage and ordination of LGBTQ persons. Their purpose as an ad hoc committee is to help determine the best way for St. Thomas to do its discernment work together. The recommendations are listed below and grew out of the LGBTQ discernment framework adopted by the Council in November 2022 and the subsequent feedback given by members of the congregation throughout the process, which began in January of this year.

One of the recommendations is to conduct an Unofficial Straw Poll. The results of the straw poll will help inform Church Council decisions about next steps. **The unofficial straw poll will be conducted from 8:00 AM on Thursday, April 13 – 11:59 PM on Monday, April 17.** The straw poll will be distributed through email and available on the church website. However, if you would like a paper ballot please contact the main office. **The Church Council will hold a special called meeting on Wednesday, April 19 at 7:00 PM to discuss the results of the straw poll and make a final decision about whether or not to begin the disaffiliation process.**

Discernment Planning Team Recommendations

1. Wrap up the discernment process as swiftly as possible.
2. Use the season of Lent and Easter Sunday as a time of more intentional prayer, fasting and worship to encourage members to remain deeply in love with God and one another.
3. Conduct an **unofficial** straw poll to determine whether St. Thomas should remain a United Methodist Church or disaffiliate from the denomination. The results of this straw poll would help to inform Church Council decisions about next steps before the end of April.
4. Communicate with the Church Community through the newsletter, bulletin, and pulpit about the straw poll and its intended use. Send the poll via email to those subscribed on our Constant Contact lists and have it “live” on our website (like we do for the Lent Devotional & Pastor Abi E-Note). Conduct the straw poll from 8:00 AM on Thursday, April 13 – 11:59 PM on Monday, April 17. Offer a paper poll option by request only.
5. Hold a called Church Council meeting on Wednesday, April 19 to discuss the results of the straw poll and make a final decision about whether or not to begin the disaffiliation process.
6. Share process and outcomes with the church using all the communication channels available.

Staff Parish Relations Committee Update



The Staff Parish Relations Committee is pleased to announce that Becca Runkles will be joining the St. Thomas staff as the Local Relief Coordinator effective April 1st.

Becca will be working with the Food Pantry and Clothing Closet in the mornings and will coordinate Local Relief in the afternoon. She will be responsible for clear communications between staff and volunteers, recruiting and scheduling volunteers, record keeping, working with clients, and other duties. Despite our current inability to fill some vacancies because of financial concerns, this position is mainly covered by ARPA grants. Part of Becca's job will include pursuing additional grants to continue to support local ministries.

Becca has recently worked as a 911 dispatcher and is also pursuing a degree in Religion from Liberty University. As her courses are online, she'll be able to continue with school while working for St. Thomas. She's a member of Ebenezer UMC in Stafford where she volunteers with the high school youth group and is also on the Committee on Lay Leadership. Becca also helps lead a neighborhood micro

church at a local retirement community. She will attend Annual Conference as a district lay delegate. Becca has a previous connection to our church as her family attended St. Thomas when Becca was a preschooler and she's a graduate of our "Little Elves Preschool" when it was here, headed by Linda Pickeral.





Sunbeam Children's Center

This month we would like to praise one of our Sunbeam staff, Brayden Colding. Our very own Brayden was chosen to participate in the All Virginia Chorus. Brayden had a perfect score of 200 and was the #1 Bass for his audition on February 11, 2023. His next step is going to Richmond, Virginia for All Virginia Chorus on April 29th. Congratulations on a job well done and for being you!

A special thank you to Clifford and everyone else that supported Sunbeam by stopping by our Scholastic Book Fair during family night. What a fun time it was for everyone!

This month we have our Easter egg hunts for the Preschool and Day Care followed by spring break. The Preschool will be closed for spring break April 3 - 7 and the Day Care will be closed Friday, April 7 in observance of Good Friday.



The 3 & 4 year old classes will wake up their bears from hibernation this month and celebrate by having a picnic.

We continue to accept registration for the 2023-2024 Preschool School year that runs from 9:00-12:15 on their scheduled days. We continue to accept applications from the Day Care all year long.

If you have a love for children and want to make a difference in the lives of young minds, we are accepting applications from early childhood educators for the Kindergarten and 4 year positions for the 2023-2024 school year. If you are interested, please stop by the Sunbeam office and speak to one of our administrators.





This is the first month without 2 members of our team and while we have some people who can help from time to time we don't have every week covered. We are doing our best to fill in the gaps especially when we have times that someone on our team needs to miss due to family commitments or illness. However, there may be a week or two when we serve the inside meals in to go containers because we don't have enough help to use the steam table. (It takes a minimum of 2 people to do that because it requires a lot of clean up.) If you or someone you know would like to volunteer please let Janel know. Her contact is jbgirl211@yahoo.com.

Our last dinner for this season will be June 13.

Our April menus are as follows:

Cookie: of the Month Triple Chocolate Espresso

April 4

Crab Cake & Tartar Sauce

French Fries

Mac-n-Cheese

Dessert: Double Chocolate Cake

Kids: Vegetarian Pizza

April 11

Gyro Sandwich & Tzatziki Sauce

Greek Salad

Zucchini Sticks

Dessert: Tapioca Pudding

Kids: Cheeseburgers

April 18

Turkey Croquettes with Gravy

Roasted Asparagus

Onion Rings

Dessert: Apple Pie

Kids: Chicken Nuggets

April 25

Dinner Crepes

Roasted Redskins

Steamed Broccoli

Corn bread Muffins

Dessert: Angel Cake w/Strawberries

Kids: Hot Dogs

Thank you from The Kitchen Ministry Team!

Old Tyme Hymn Sing and Pot Luck Dinner

Old Tyme Hymn Sing and Pot Luck

Sun, Apr 30 | 4-6pm



Spring is here and it's time for a church family reunion. Please join us on Sunday, April 30, from 4:00 – 6:00, for an old fashion hymn sing followed by a pot luck dinner. It will be a great opportunity to sing some of those hymns you have not heard for a while as well as to fellowship and enjoy a meal with your church family. Bring your favorite dish to share.



OWLS MINISTRY

OLDER WISER LIVELIER SENIOR MINISTRY

The OWLS March outing was Friday, March 24 when 19 of us had a very enjoyable lunch at Great American Steak House. Everyone enjoyed the buffet of delicious foods, going back for seconds, (or thirds!) Just as enjoyable were the desserts, minus the ice cream. It was a disappointment that the ice cream machine was out of order, but we all found other desserts to finish off our meal. As usual, everyone enjoyed the fun, food, and fellowship.

Next month, the OWLS will meet at Hector's, which is located at 12846 Fitzwater Dr. in Nokesville on April 28 at 1:00 PM. Hector's, although predominately Mexican food, has a great menu and is sure to have something that everyone will like. Please plan to join us, and bring a friend. Please RSVP to Marian or Lynn, or sign up on the Connect Card, by April 25 so we can give the restaurant a head count.

United Women in Faith

Mother's Day Carnation Sales

The UMW is happy to continue our tradition of selling carnations to honor or remember those special ladies in your life on Mother's Day, Sun, May 14. Cost is \$3 each. Proceeds support the two Compassion International children we sponsor. You may take your carnations from the altar arrangement after each service on Mother's Day. Beginning April 16, contact Pat Dodson at andyandpatd@yahoo.com to order carnations and make you dedications.

Ladies Spring Tea Sunday, May 7 at 2 pm

We are excited to announce that we will hold our Spring Tea in-person again this year! Join us on Sunday, May 7 from 2:00 to 4:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. All ladies in the church are invited for an afternoon of fellowship. Music will be provided by Steve Thompson. RSVP on the Connect Card in the bulletin (beginning April 16) or contact Pat Dodson at andyandpatd@yahoo.com.



Youth Center Renovation Achieves Major Milestones

So much transpired during February and the beginning of March it's hard to summarize. One major accomplishment was passing both the electrical and plumbing rough-in inspections. Achieving those two inspection milestones allowed the contractors to hang all of the drywall, tape and mud the seams, sand, and apply primer. In parallel, the final painting began with the focus being on the existing cinder block walls. Lastly, on Saturday March 11, a team of about a dozen volunteers brought their hammers and a demo mind set and removed the wood ramp leading to the old front of the building (**Top row below**). With the new ADA compliant entrance, the ramp is no longer required. The efficient team finished before noon and all of the scrap wood was loaded into the dumpster. A special thanks to the volunteers who demo'd the ramp as well as another thanks to the volunteers who constructed the ramp many years ago as it was well built and served the church for a long time.

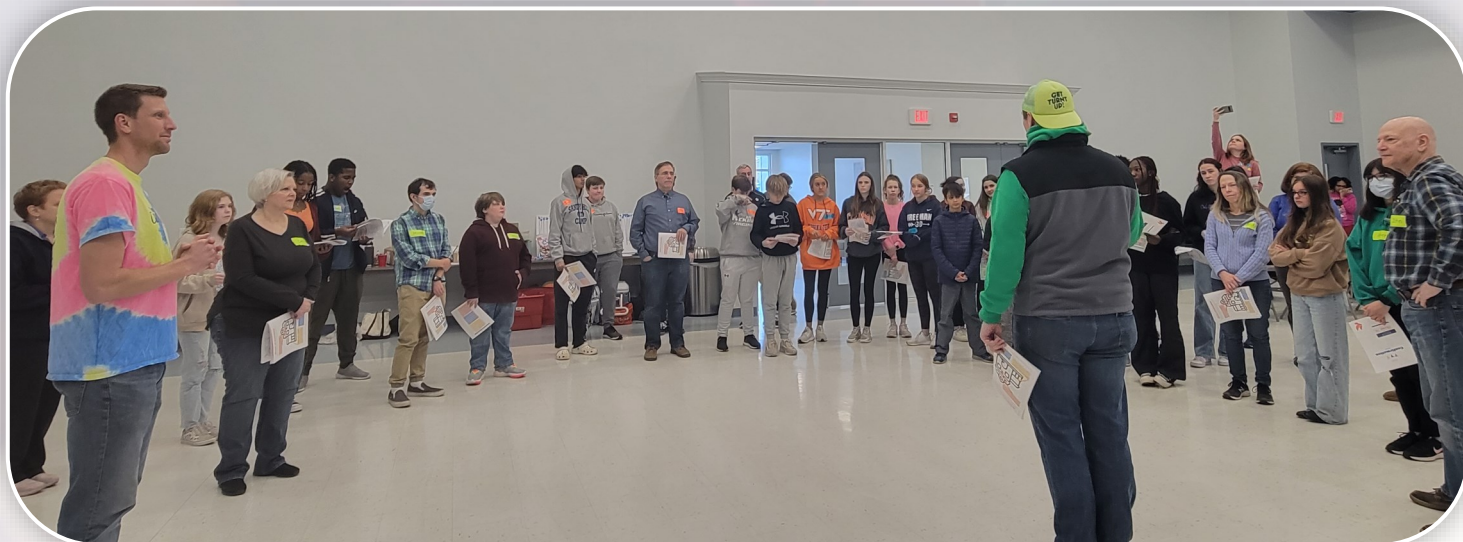


Below Left: Bathroom framing prior to installation of pipes and wires. **Below Right:** Break room upper cabinets installed with the new boiler visible on the right.



Confirmation Retreat 2023

On Saturday, March 11, this year's Confirmation Class and their mentors participated in the Northern Virginia District Confirmation Retreat. Over 50 students from eight churches (including one church from Richmond) joined this day of learning and fun.





THE PACK
ST. THOMAS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Student Ministry

By Pastor Arum

We traditionally have Youth Sunday on the Sunday after Easter, so this year it will be on April 16. Eighteen students have committed to be a part of Youth Sunday and have practiced for a couple of weeks during PACK Night. Please mark this date on your calendar and look forward to a great worship service that our youth will lead! Additionally, on the fourth Sunday of April, we will clean up, arrange, and if time allows, do some yard work for the Youth Center. The renovation is almost done, and we are preparing for and looking forward to its grand opening!

Here is the schedule for March. Details will be shared through the PACK Weekly emails. If you would like to subscribe to it, please let Pastor Arum know!

April 2 (1st Sun): PACK Night Youth Sunday Additional Practice / START Team Mission Trip

April 9 (2nd Sun): Easter Sunday. Worship with your family! No PACK AM & PACK Night.

April 15 (Sat): Youth Sunday Dress Rehearsal at 10 AM

April 16 (3rd Sun): YOUTH SUNDAY. We will lead both worship services.


April 23 (4th Sun): PACK Night Mission – Youth Center Clean-Up

We have a special request for you. The PACK Night always begins with a shared dinner. We need a couple of more sign-ups to offer dinner to cover the remaining school year. Please scan the following QR code to sign up! You can either home-cook and bring meals or order food such as pizzas or sandwiches. Let's make sure our students are well-fed and ready to engage in fellowship and spiritual growth!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050949aea72ea13-pack1#/>



SCAN ME



**Our Faith as a
Guiding Light**
YOUTH SUNDAY
April 16th

Youth Sunday, April 16

You're invited to Youth Sunday! Our students will lead worship using their God-given talents: offer prayers, sing hymns, play music as a band and with musical instruments, and much more! Show your support for our students on Youth Sunday!

Here is a summary and photos of the activities that took place in March.

On the first Sunday of March, we gathered for a special Lenten activity. We commemorated Jesus at the Last Supper by reading John 13, washing each other's feet, having dinner at one table, talking about the meaning of Jesus' act of washing the disciples' feet, and ending with sharing Holy Communion. It was a special night



that we will probably remember forever. And, of course, at the end, we celebrated the March birthdays. Happy Birthday, Jack & Wyatt!

On the second Sunday of the month, we gathered for FUN at the PACK Night. We played games with simple items like cups, balloons, plastic eggs, toilet paper, and ping-pong balls. The most challenging part for me (Pastor Arum) was blowing up mini balloons filled with one trash bag! On the third and fourth Sundays, we gathered for practice for Youth Sunday. Our youth is the best!



If you have any questions about the Student Ministry and would like to know how to support the Student Ministry, please feel free to contact Pastor Arum at arum.kim@stthomasumc.org or 571-438-3953 (cell).



KING'S KIDS

ST. THOMAS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

By Kristi Swanson

March saw an increase in attendance for all Children's Ministry programs and it was great to share the Word with more children and families! The Egg Hunt is coming up and we can still use some extra hands in many different ways. You can sign up here <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409054eabaa2cabfc1-easter> or reach out to Kristi Swanson to find the role for you.

Easter will be a celebration as it is each year. Sunday School is canceled for the day, but there will be children's messages at the 9:00 and 11:00 services and Children's Church will take place at the same time as usual, but offer special Easter activities for children of all ages.



In March, the Tweens worked hard to prepare for the Egg Hunt and enjoyed snow cones to celebrate their service. For April, we will meet on Saturday morning, April 15 and volunteer at the St. Thomas Food Pantry. We do lots of service projects in Tweens, but this will be a good opportunity for the kids to see that their service benefits actual people.



Sunday School will have a special lesson on Palm Sunday, take a break on Easter, and then continue with Up In the Air for one final week. After that, we will move on to Make It Or Break it. Whether it's with LEGO bricks, Minecraft, or Roblox, kids (and adults!) love to make things — and sometimes break them. In this four-week series from the very beginning of the Bible, we'll compare God's ability to make good things with our tendency to break them. Through the stories of creation, the fall, Cain and Abel, and the Tower of Babel, we'll see that God makes good things, unbreaks what's been broken, and made us different on purpose, so we should honor God with the things we make. Children's

Church will take place every week, including on Easter, and will reinforce the topics and lessons from Sunday School and children's messages.

After Easter, the Children's Ministry will be focusing on the Summer Program. VBS will take place June 19-23 and registration is available on the website. We are still looking for many VBS volunteers and we ask you to prayerfully consider helping with the program. Our Amazon wishlist is also still up and running. We are updating regularly as planning continues. We will continue with our summer camp program again this year.

**GARDENING, COOKING, BUILDING, MUSIC & ARTS
SUMMER CAMPS
REGISTRATION NOW OPEN**



VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS

If you are interested in enrolling your children in any of the camps listed below, you may register on the website. Please also register to attend our Wacky Wednesday events. All the fun is listed below.

Summer Camps

June 19 - 23 - VBS

June 26 - 30 - Gardening Camp

July 10-15 - Cooking Camp

July 17 - 21 - Carpentry Camp

July 24 - 29 - Music and Art Camp

Wacky Wednesdays

registration link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409054EABAA2CABFC1-wacky>

June 28 - Popsicles and Play

July 12 - Ice Cream and Bubbles

July 26 - Face Paint and Snack Mix

Aug 9 - Movie Night



Help Decorate our Easter Cross with Flowers!

You are encouraged to bring blooms from your garden to decorate a barren wire-covered cross on the church Entrance Plaza on Easter morning, rain or shine. The flowering of the cross represents the transition from Good Friday to Easter, from meditation on Jesus' death to joyful celebration of his resurrection. With our colorful living blossoms, we transform a barren cross, a reminder of Jesus' death, into a symbol of the continuing presence of Christ among us. It also makes a beautiful backdrop for photos, if the weather cooperates.



Upcoming Events

- April 2 Palm Sunday - *Scenes from the Passion* Cantata
- April 6 Maunyn Thursday Service - 7:30 PM at Grace UMC
- April 7 Good Friday Service - 7:00 PM
- April 8 Easter Egg Hunt - 2:00 to 4:00 PM
- April 9 Easter Sunday Sunrise Service, 7:00 AM
- April 11 Dorcas Circle - 1:00 PM
- April 13 Unofficial Straw Poll Begins
- April 15 Tweens Help at Food Pantry
- April 16 Youth Sunday, 9 & 11:00 AM
- April 17 Unofficial Straw Poll Ends
- April 19 Called Church Council Meeting, 7:00 PM
- April 30 Old Tyme Hymn Sing and Potluck Dinner 4:00 PM

8899 Sudley Road, Manassas, VA 20110

Rev. Abi Foerster, Senior Pastor

Rev. Arum Kim, Associate 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
	April Birthdays					1
2	3 Carolyn Clouse Carl Juran	4 Pat Dodson	5	6 Dominic Johnson	7	8 Mary Petrilla Kathy Swancott
9 Anne Young Merv Lyle	10 Jessica Page Alex Mondonado	11 Will Ameen Brodie Sutton Katie Yost	12 Virginia Shin	13 Christopher Adams Heather Jones Logan Kotlus Don Rickerson Connie Santee	14	15 Jonathan Buck Steven Burnett Madalyn Young Chris Tacik
16	17	18 Melissa Hall	19 Rodney Miller	20 Earl Amstutz Daniel Goldfarb	21 David Norman Violet Minnus Jaime Thornton	22 Madison Assor Samirah Jarrett
23 Renee Kinnear	24	25 Jim Flynn	26	27 Ryan Page	28 Robby Fick	29 Pam Ackley Daniel Harcup Kathy Evans
30						