

Triumph Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2020

VOLUME 2

Dear Church Family,

Please join Pastor Abi, the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) and me in both congratulating Leslie on the announcement of her retirement and thanking her for the twenty-five years of dedicated and caring service she brought to our St Thomas church family and the greater Manassas community. Each of us holds dear those times in our lives when Leslie provided comfort and support. We are blessed for her service and friendship. We are also very happy and pleased that Leslie will be able to spend more time with her grown children, Brent and Alise, and their families.

The SPRC will work with church staff and church members to plan a celebration and send-off for Leslie to follow Sunday service on April 19, including a love offering. Information on how to help will be provided in the near future.

While no staff member will ever replace Leslie's service to our church family, Pastor Abi and the SPRC are working with the District

Superintendent to identify an Associate Pastor who will join the St Thomas staff July 1, 2020 during the regular appointment cycle. We will provide you with updates as more information about this process becomes available. I ask for your prayers for all involved in this time of transition for Leslie and our church.



Grace and peace,

Bill Bixby, Chair
Staff Parish Relations Committee

Rev. Abi Foerster

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ear St. Thomas Family,

I enter your homes this evening with a deeply emotional word from my heart, one that I believe most of you have been expecting. My time to retire from your service has come. As I have prayed, in these recent years, I completely trusted God's Spirit would us to see, clearly, when we needed to make my way into life's next chapter. I feel Larry right beside me as I begin the process of making this transition.



Our children, Brent and Alise, are now in their late 30's. Having grown up at St Thomas, they have now lived in Los Angeles and Albuquerque, respectively, for many years. While we tried to visit annually, we have not lived near them since they finished high school. They have made it known that it is time for me to join their lives and families. Not only is it my heart's desire but it is practical in every respect. I can only imagine gathering often around a family table and attending every school and church event of our ten-year old grandson.

While this is a time of tremendous anticipation, I have also entered a new season of loss. With each passing day now, I am reliving the life-giving years you have afforded me, years we have spent serving God beside one another. Your children kept me young for many years in ministry with them. I believe they taught me just about everything I needed to know. And now, they are bringing *their own* children. Our St. Thomas journey together has been one of endearing years, celebrating births, marriages and milestones. Growing in worship and discipleship. Joining hand in hand loving and serving our community. Supporting each other in difficult times. Remembering all too many loves lost in death. Praising God for His church and the life it breathes into us, both now and eternally.



God's plans are always perfect. Though the details be hidden from our eyes, we know He never ceases working wondrously on our behalf. My last Sunday as your Assistant Minister will be April 19, 2020. Shortly thereafter, I will be relocating to New Mexico. Our family has been, I have been, the recipient of your unbounding love and grace. I know that you will generously extend these gifts to the next person who becomes part of your ministry family. Even as I humbly ask for your prayers for the months ahead, I long to adequately express my unflinching gratitude to you, and to God, for these fulfilling, extraordinary years. You will forever be remembered.



Faithfully and Gratefully Yours,

Leslie Oakes

News from the Kitchen

We had a nice turnout for our first dinner of the year on January 14th. Even though the weather didn't feel like winter we know the winter months can be a little tricky weather wise so please check the church website or call the church office if you want to make sure Tuesday dinner is on. Likewise, if you are unable to attend on a Sunday you can sign up for dinner on the website or call the church office on Monday.

Our February menus are as follows:

February 4

Meatloaf
Roasted Redskins
Fresh Bread
Vegetable
Coconut Cream Pie
Kid's Entrée: Hot Dog

February 11

Salad
Chicken Parmesan
Pasta with Noodles
Fresh Bread
Broccoli
Red Velvet Cupcakes and Strawberry Ice Cream
Kid's Entrée: Chicken Nuggets

February 18

Taco Bar
Big Alaska Bar
Kid's Entrée: Same as Adult Meal

February 25 Pancakes & Ashes Event

Pancakes
Scrambled Eggs & Sausage
Fruit
Kid's Entrée: Same as Adult Meal

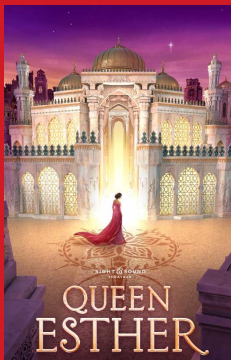
Information on General Conference Resources

As the UMC prepares for General Conference in Minneapolis, May 5 –15, you will find news articles and other helpful information on our church website, under "Resources" to help you stay informed about how the church is navigating the way forward around disagreements related to same-sex marriage, the ordination of LGBTQ+ persons, and ministry as a denomination.

Go to the drop down link entitled, United Methodist Resources to learn more.

United Methodist Women

UMW Potluck Brunch on Sat, Feb 29 at 9 am in Rooms 300-306. For women high school age and up. Bring a dish to share. The Flower Gallery's owner, Doug Burroughs, will demonstrate flower arranging.



Queen Esther trip on Sat, Apr 25: Join us for a Bus trip to Sight and Sound in Lancaster, PA. Trip is open to everyone. Tickets are \$140 each and include bus, show ticket, and buffet lunch at the Bird-in-Hand Restaurant. Cash or check payment is required at time of reservation and is non-refundable. We will be leaving the church at 6:45 am and returning around 7 pm.



From the Senior Pastor

2020 is off to a great start! I want to personally thank all of the outgoing leaders who are cycling off their posts from 2019 – especially, Don Rickerson as the chair of Trustees, Renee Kinnear as the chair of Evangelism and Outreach, Pat Brown as our Annual Conference Delegate, Lori Perez as the chair of the Mission Council, and Natalie Martin as the chair of the Sunbeam Children’s Center Board. Each of these dedicated and faithful leaders served St Thomas and helped to advance the cause of Christ in their own way. I am in awe of the quality of leaders that routinely serve and offer their gifts without reservation or complaint. Thank You for being the hands and feet of Christ!

I also want to take a moment to introduce you to your new **Lay Leaders** and to let you know there



are several new ministry teams that will be serving over the course of the next few years as we live into our new Strategic Plan. First, our new Lay Leaders are pictured from left to right as follows: Head Lay Leader, Deb Crawford (2020), along with her two associate Lay Leaders, Gordon Haines (2021) and Pat Brown (2022). Each one is a seasoned leader at St Thomas having served in many different capacities over the years, and more importantly they have the respect of the membership, as well as my support and love. We are truly blessed for their willingness to serve. For Deb, this will be her second year as the Head Lay Leader due to the recent addition of Jhenny Michalek to our staff as the Food Pantry

Director. Jhenny was slated to serve as the 2020 Lay Leader, however, this is conflict of interest now that she is on staff. We are glad she has found the perfect place to use her gifts and leadership and we are looking forward to what God will do through Jhenny as well as the Lay Leaders.

This year, growing out of our new Strategic Plan there will also be several new teams to help us accomplish our mission: 1) the Ignite Team, 2) a Worship Task Force, and 3) a new Building Committee. The **Ignite Team** consists of four people plus the Senior Pastor. This team is the “project managers” of the Strategic Plan and will help to coordinate and communicate the work that is being done over the course of the next three years.

The Ignite Team is also responsible for convening a **Worship Task Force** made up of the Ignite Team members plus other key leaders impacted by Sunday morning worship, fellowship and discipleship activities. The Worship Task Force will help coordinate the work of discernment about the number of worship services we offer on Sunday and during the week, the times they are offered, and how Sunday School and Coffee Hour will dovetail with the primary activity of worshipping together. This team will work with the church as a whole to discern the best options going forward to reach our community. This is a significant decision and it will take the better part of 2020 to make a good decision and help everyone be informed and give input in the process of discernment.

And, finally, the third team is the **Building Committee** that will help bring to fruition the strategic priority of aligning our building and grounds with the mission and values of STUMC. They will report directly to the Trustees and are a small team

of five or six people who will help develop a plan to achieve the following goals:

- Renovate the second floor of the main campus building
- The Old Church Building will become a dedicated Youth Center
- Building a second storage building next to the current one to house the Food Pantry.
- Returning the current storage building entirely for storage.
- Refurbishing the Parsonage so it can be used as a functional home.
- Use the 2nd floor of the Office Building for Congregational Care Ministries.
- Develop a sustainable Maintenance Plan

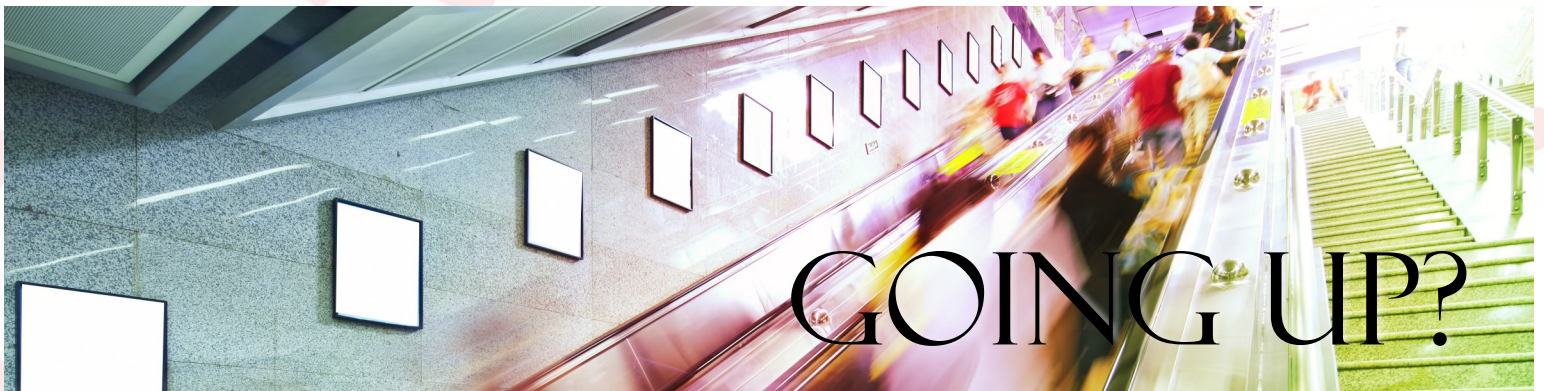
The Nominations and Leadership Development Committee is currently in the process of recruiting this team, but for now the following people have agreed to serve: Don Rickerson, Rick & Cary

McMahon, Will & Diane Ameen, and Jennifer Lewis. More information will be coming soon.

Last but not least, I want to extend the deepest gratitude to Leslie Oakes and echo the sentiment of our SPRC Chair, Bill Bixby, in saying we will miss you! I will personally miss your enthusiasm for the Lord, your tender heart for hurting people, and your faithful leadership as a fellow female clergywoman and colleague. I am so glad you were willing to stay past your official 25-year anniversary date of Feb 2 so that we will be blessed by your leadership through Holy Week, Easter Resurrection and your retirement celebration on Sun, April 19 of this year! To God be the glory!

Grace upon grace,

Pastor Abi



NEW FEBRUARY SERMON SERIES

Going Up? Answers to Questions about the Afterlife

Most of us would say that we are "good people" – we don't commit major crimes, we treat others fairly, we work hard. But is that enough? At the end of our life, will we really go to heaven? What if being good isn't good enough? Heaven is mysterious, but instead of wondering or worrying about what happens after this life, let's explore some answers.

2-Feb	Does Heaven Exist?	Revelation 21:1 - 27
9-Feb	Next Stop the Pearly Gates...Or Not?	2 Peter 3:8 - 13; Revelation 20:11 - 15
16-Feb	Do All Roads Lead to Heaven?	Acts 17:16-34, John 14:6
23-Feb	Does God Grade on a Curve?	Romans 6:6-23, Matthew 7:7

Financial News

By Leonard Fick, Chair

With the beginning of the New Year, this will be a short update on items the Finance Committee has been working on. We presented an amended budget to the Church Council and it was approved by email before the close of 2019. The budget is \$1,154,107 and is based the priorities outlined in our strategic plan. Of course, this is based on projected pledges and support from all of you.

On that note, I would like to thank you for honoring your 2019 pledges and those who also gave second mile gifts. Together, we reached over 110% of what we planned for giving last year. We also received a thank you note from the District Superintendent, Rev. Jeff Mickle, for meeting 100% of our apportionments. Your extra giving helped us meet our increased expenses while also supporting our mission. For the year, we operated at a net loss for Manassas and Haymarket combined of \$72,412, which was under the projected amount of \$75,000 of support we had anticipated for Haymarket. Because of this, we were able to help Haymarket with an advance to assist them with their first payroll in 2020 as they set up a separate and independent Employee Identification Number (EIN), bank account, and financial books.

With the successful soft-launch of Haymarket Church, our apportionment load, insurance, and other related expenses will decrease significantly in 2020. I believe our budget is a sound plan and look forward to the ways God will move through our ministry this year. Thank you again to all of you.

Lenten Devotionals Due Feb 9

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which is Wed, Feb 26 this year. If you are interested in penning a daily devotional, please let us know in worship on your Connect Card and the editorial team will be in contact with you about pertinent details and format. There is an information sheet on the Welcome Table in the Narthex. Your devotional article will be due by Sun, Feb 9 so there is enough time to prepare the complete Devotional for our congregation. Thank you in advance!



Join us for a pancake supper on February 25th starting at 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. After dinner all are invited to participate in some special activities to start off the season of Lent. We invite you to stay and participate in the Fellowship Hall and then attend worship in the Sanctuary at 6:30 pm. Childcare is provided starting at 6:00 pm in Room 107.

Ash Wednesday Service

At noon on Wed, Feb 26 there will be a worship service in the Sanctuary with a light lunch (soup & salad) in Fellowship Hall immediately following worship. Perfect for those on lunch break.



MARDI GRAS BALL

2•22•2020

The Outreach and Evangelism team plans to emphasize the “reach” part of our church’s mission statement this year. We have many great events coming throughout the year to let our community know we are an open and welcoming church! We hope you will join in the fun.

To kick off the year, we are hosting a Mardi Gras Masquerade Ball in Fellowship Hall, on Sat, Feb 22, from 6 to 9 pm. This fun event will be open to everyone in our community. There will be food and refreshments available, so if Jambalaya and Po Boy sandwiches sound good to you, I’m sure our chef Frank will not disappoint! There will also be live music from our Praise Band.

We are encouraging all our members to please tell your neighbors, bring family and friends, and co-workers. Come out and enjoy the evening! There will be a cover charge of \$5 per person, free for children under 12 years old. We will publish more information in the coming weeks.

Please stay tuned for more events upcoming, and if you want to help, please feel free to contact, Outreach and Evangelism Committee Chair, Mervin Lyle, by email merv6150@gmail.com or at the 9:40 service.



Valentines and Teddy Bears for Loch Lomond Elementary

For twenty years Operation Bear Hug has been serving patients at the Hospital and Manassas Rehab Center. This year we are broadening the reach of our bear ministry! Through your ongoing contributions to the Mission Fund, on February 14th your Mission Committee will give Valentines to EVERY student at our partnership School, Loch Lomond Elementary. We will also give EVERY child in grades Kindergarten through Third grade a teddy bear. All this to tell the children that God loves them and St Thomas does, too!

The Missions Committee will be buying the Valentines and the Bears, but we still need a little help. On Wed, Feb 5, we will tag the Teddy Bears with a note and prep them for delivery. Could you spare an hour between 7-9 PM that evening to help?



Then, on Sun, Feb 9 we will have Valentines in the Fellowship Hall awaiting someone to sign them! We'll supply some suggested wording if you need inspiration. Could you sign a few valentines between services?



Help us give a true gift to the children at Loch Lomond and let them know that God LOVES them and so does St Thomas.

Food Pantry Update by Jhenny Michalek

The food pantry is seeing lots of great changes in 2020. We have a great new team that's excited about reaching, nourishing, and serving our community. Our volunteers have helped so



many families over the years and this year promises to bring more of the same. Thank you to all those who donate. Every donation, whether it's cereal, soap, money, or valuable time, keeps the food pantry running. We have incredible husband and wife teams, church goers, non-church goers, younger, older; a whole array of volunteers. One of our new volunteers is taking a semester off from school to raise money to go on a mission trip to the Himalayas helping with environmental conservation in one of the small villages called Ghandruk. I invite you to come out and volunteer one Saturday with us and get to know some of our extraordinary volunteers.





Student Ministry

THE PACK AM: SUNDAYS AT 9:40

AM: Join us as we journey together through "The Thread," where we'll discover the thread of the Gospel through the big picture story of the Bible.

The Thread
Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

The Pack AM
Sundays at 9:40am
Room 305

All teens 6th-12th Grade are welcome to join us! During this time you can expect Bible Study and faith discussion.

New Curriculum in 2020! youthministry360

UPCOMING PACK MEETINGS: Tues, 5:30 -7:30pm

Teens 6th-12th Grade are always welcome! We'll start with dinner in the Fellowship Hall and then head to the Den for games and faith discussion

February 4: Pack Meeting

February 18: Pack Meeting

SPECIAL EVENT - Pancakes and Ashes

Tues, Feb 25, 5:30 to 7:00pm

Join us in the Fellowship Hall for dinner and activities, followed by worship in the Sanctuary at 6:30 pm to help prepare our hearts for Lent.

King's Kids

KIDS CARE 2 for Tweens!

Next Kids Care 2 gathering is Fri, Feb 14, 6-8pm in the Children's Worship Center. All tweens 3rd-5th grade are invited to join us for dinner, games, fellowship, and a hands on mission project. This month we'll focus on exploring and sharing God's love through Minute 2 Win It games and making valentines. Bring a friend!

Last month we had a great time playing laser tag at Laser Tag Manassas!



“A Taste of St. Thomas” Newcomer’s Event

Would you like to meet other newcomers, learn a little bit more about St Thomas, and enjoy a free brunch on us? Then, this is the perfect event for you! Please join Pastor Abi and Leslie on the 3rd floor in Room 302 on Sun, Feb 16 from 12:15 – 1:15 pm. Children are welcome to join the fun and child care is available too -- whatever works best for your family! RSVP on your Connect Card in worship or stop by the day of the gathering.



20 Years of Operation Bear Hug: Bring Your Bears by Feb 9

Please bring new bears (not too big, not too small!) to the Sanctuary on Sun, Feb 2 and 9. We will dedicate the Bears during worship on Feb 9, then the Bears will be tagged with our church information and delivered to Prince William Hospital and Manassas Health and Rehab. Thank you for your continued support. Any questions, contact Cathy Campbell, 703-369-3220 or sstechur@yahoo.com.



St. Thomas
United Methodist Church

8899 Sudley Road, Manassas,

Rev. Abi Foerster, 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

February Events

- **Feb 1** Groundhog & Pancake Supper (sponsored by the Lions Club)
- **Feb 2** DC Homeless Mission
- **Feb 3** Red Cross Blood Drive
- **Feb 9** SCC Sunday / Bear Dedication
- **Feb 14** Kids Care 2
- **Feb 22** Mardi Gras Ball
- **Feb 23** START Breakfast Fundraiser
- **Feb 25** Pancakes and Ashes
- **Feb 26** Ash Wednesday Worship & Lunch
- **Feb 29** UMW Potluck Brunch

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	February Birthdays					1 Pavel Steen
2 Jonathan Drake	3	4 Traci Birdsell	5 Barbara Kurtz John Rosko Patricia Good	6 Ruth Gorgas Ann McKinney	7 Dylan Fowler Brandon Hayes Lynne Goldfarb	8 Forrest Michalek
9	10 Frank Priest	11 Chris Verosko	12 Pauline Foster	13	14 Jhenny Michalek	15
16 Cathy Campbell Rhea Adams	17	18 Gary Furlong	19 Dave Enke	20	21 Laney Schoch Wendy Norman	22
23	24	25 Rick McMahon	26 Jensen Williams Alisha Alexander	27	28 Miranda Banner	29

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	February Event Calendar					1 Lions Club Ground Hog Supper 3:00pm to 8:00pm
2 5:00pm DC Homeless Mission	3 2:00pm Red Cross Blood Drive 2:00pm Gift Fund Team	4 1:00pm Endowment Comm. 5:30pm The PACK 7:15pm Trustees Stewardship, Congregational Care	5	6 3:00pm Safe Sanctuary Training	7 9:30am Care Givers Support Group 6:30pm Movies Small Group 7:00pm Media Circle	8 11:00am DAR Meeting
9 SCC Sunday Bear Dedication	10	11 1:00pm Dorcas Circle 7:15pm START, Finance, Communications, Children & Youth Council, Evangelism	12	13	14 6:00pm Kids Care 2 6:30pm Movies Small Group	15 Newsletter Deadline 11am Memory Cafe
16	17	18 4:00pm Worship Arts 5:30pm The PACK 7:15pm SPRC	19	20	21 6:30pm Movies Small Group	22 6:00pm Mardi Gras Ball
23 START Breakfast Fundraiser	24	25 5:30pm Pancakes & Ashes 7:15pm Church Council	26 Ash Wednesday Noon Worship & Lunch	27	28 6:30pm Movies Small Group	29 9:00am UMW Potluck Brunch
Weekly Schedule (subject to change due to holidays or other events – check with your coordinator)						
12:15pm JNS Rehearsal	7:30pm St Thom Cats	5:30pm Dinner 6:00pm Kidz Rock Choir 6:30pm Worship 7:15pm Praise Band 8:00pm AA Meeting	10:00am Quilts for Kids 6:45pm Chancel Choir	9:00am Classical Conversations 7:30pm Handbell Choir 8:00pm AA Meeting	9:30am Young Mom's Group	8:00am Ladies Emmaus Group 8:00am Men's Breakfast Group 9:00am Food Pantry