

Triumph *Newsletter*

DECEMBER 2020



Living Nativity

Over the past few weeks, staff and lay leaders have been prayerfully considering how to move forward in December with all the events we typically offer the community safely and faithfully. We arrived at a final plan that rolls three regularly scheduled events into one “Living Nativity Experience” this year --

1. Breakfast with Santa
2. Drive thru Nativity
3. Children's and Youth Christmas program

Relying on our values and our mission, we have had many robust conversations and feel the spirit moving. We have tried to prayerfully think about the best way to reach out beyond our walls, keep volunteers and community safe because of the pandemic, give our own people an opportunity to serve and sing for the first time in a long time, and help our young people learn and engage with the key elements of the Nativity story. We believe that while this is a different event – it accomplishes all of these purposes and allows us to continue to nurture both

inside and outside the church during this abnormal time.

So, what will the Living Nativity look like this year?

St. Thomas is doing a scaled down living nativity event this year on Saturday, December 19 (rain date Dec. 20). The event runs from 5:30-7:00 pm — and we are hoping for many neighbors to be blessed by this event and also learn about our Christmas Day services and Christmas Day Dinner. A small gift will be given that includes an invitation to both of these events. We are specifically hoping this event connects with some of the key demographic groups that are in our community — families with multiple generations, older singles and couples (silver sophisticates), fast-track couples with young children, and many of the immigrant neighbors that hail from a variety of backgrounds.

For those who have previously experienced this long-standing tradition, here is what will be different this year. Instead of our typical 14 scenes, we will build the three most essential scenes. The scenes are the manger, the wise men and a combination of the angel in the sky and the shepherd scene, with a fence

Cont'd on page 3



The flow of the Advent season plays out like a movie. We get a hint of the highlights of the Christmas story in Advent, where we are invited to stay tuned to what is to come. Through the life and actions of John the Baptist, the scene and life of Jesus Christ is set up, as we are drawn in to remember the meaning of baptism and our own wilderness experience. The suspense heightens as we witness in the lives of Mary and Elizabeth that nothing is impossible for God. All this builds up to the climax of the Christmas story, where the Christ child is born, but not in a way that we expect! The plot twists and we are invited to wonder how we are called to participate in the story!

**Week 1 December 6 with Holy Communion
(Stay tuned... stay awake)**

Movie: It IS a Wonderful Life
Scripture: Luke 21:5 – 36

**Week 2 December 13
(John the Doppelganger)**

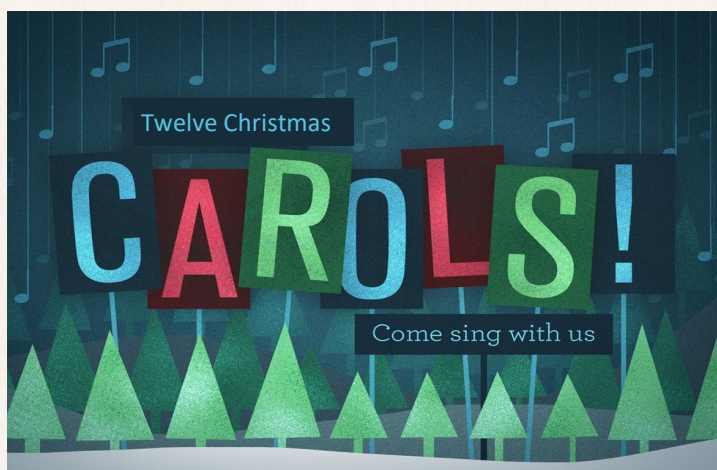
Movie: A Charlie Brown Christmas
Scripture: Luke 3:1 – 6

**Week 3 December 20 (Plot Twist)
Cantata Music Sunday**

Movie: The Grinch that Stole Christmas
Scripture: Luke 3:7 – 15

**Week 4: December 24 / Christmas Eve
(The Main Event)**

Movie: A Christmas Story
Scripture: Luke 2:1 – 20 / Isaiah 9:2 – 7



One Special Service December 27

Livestreamed at 10 AM

Scripture: Luke 2:22 –40

Join us for one special service livestreamed on Sunday, Dec. 27 at 10 AM via Facebook or our website. Wear your pajamas, gather around the hearth and tree, and join your church family as we sing 12 of the most beloved Christmas Carols of the season!

Living Nativity (continued from page 1)

- as there will be animals again this year. We hope to populate most actor roles with children and youth this year — but may need to incorporate a few key adult volunteers too. All volunteers will be masked and follow covid-safe protocols.

If you have a child who is interested in participating, please contact Caleb or Pastor Arum through the church office. We are also in need of people to light the luminaries at the designated time. Please contact Renee Kinnear through the church office if you would like to help with that task. Live caroling will also be offered by members from the Chancel and JNS Choirs and will be led by Dominick Izzo.

Another new development is an additional scene — separate from the main manger scene — based on the painting "Every Knee Shall Bow" by Gaye Francis Willard. We have received permission from the artist (she "would be honored") to use her artwork on the cover of our program. Here, Santa will pay homage to the baby Jesus in a crib. The intent is to provide something this year that offers the community an

opportunity to remember the true reason for the season.

Even the poster boy for the cultural excess at this time of year knows what is truly important during the Christmas season.

So, mark your calendars and

invite friends and neighbors to this year's Living Nativity event. As always, it is our gift to the community!



"Every Knee Shall Bow"

by Gaye Francis Willard

Christmas Eve Services

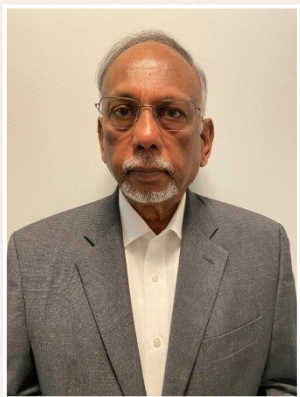
7 pm Contemporary Candlelight & Communion

9 pm Traditional Candlelight & Communion

Join us on stthomasumc.org/livestream or
facebook.com/StThomasUMC

Staff - Parish Relations Committee News

By Bill Bixby, SPRC Chair



The Staff Parish Relations Committee is pleased to announce that Harry Elanko (pictured left) will be joining the Staff of St. Thomas UMC as our new Finance Director effective November 30. This position on staff aligns with our

strategic priority in Administration and Infrastructure as outlined in our church's 2020-22 strategic plan. This position will provide us with a second daytime staff member to work in partnership with our Administrative Director, Samantha Bouquet and our core volunteers to support the needs of our staff, ministry teams, members, and the community.

The SPRC conducted a thorough and competitive process and had several competitive candidates. Harry stood out above the rest for several reasons. Harry is an 8th generation Christian originally from India and a long-standing United Methodist. He is currently a member of Bruen Chapel UMC in Fairfax and brings with him over 20+ years of experience in finance, accounting, payroll, administration, and business operations. A good deal of his experience is in serving the local church.

We also extend our deepest gratitude to Lori Perez, CAP who for the past several years has faithfully provided accounting services as an independent contractor for our church. Lori will continue to work through December 2020. We are indebted to her for her knowledge, skill, and stewardship that she brought to her work to support our church.

Please join the SPRC in thanking Lori for her service and in welcoming Harry to our church family.

Music Ministry

By Dominick Izzo, Music Director

Music ministry at Saint Thomas, while appearing different, is busier than ever! Since March, we have begun to shift our rehearsals to a virtual format, pre recording musical offerings, and bringing in singers and instrumentalists on a limited basis to follow our COVID guidelines. On Sunday, December 20th, The music ministry team is proud to bring you a special music Sunday in the form of a virtual cantata. The virtual cantata, which will play at both services, will feature all of our music staff and ensembles; from bells to our praise band. Be sure to tune in for worship and enjoy singing along to your favorite carols of the season.

We will also have "carol sing" on the following Sunday, December 27th. Make sure to read our Eblasts with information on how you and your family can be involved with this wonderful service in the coming weeks.

Music ministry also welcomes a new music intern to our ministry team.

Hello! My name is Nancy McClain. I am a recent graduate of George Mason University where I majored in vocal performance. I have trained in both classical and jazz voice, but I have



a passion for many different genres of music. I have grown up in the church (as my father is a Methodist minister) and enjoy singing pieces in the tradition of the Methodist Church. I hope to be able to help the choir in bringing you all joy through music. Thank you for having me and welcoming me to your church family. I look forward to singing for you all!

Welcome Nancy to our St Thomas family!

Drive-In Movie Dec 5: *Rise of the Guardians*

Let's build up the festive spirit by kicking off the Christmas season with a Drive-In Movie Night! On Saturday, December 5 at 6:00pm, come join us for a showing of *Rise of the Guardians* (Animated, PG)!

We are excited to offer this COVID-Safe family event for our community. A sign-up link is available on the Events page of the church website (StThomasUMC.org/reach/events) or you can call the office to reserve your spot. For questions contact Pastor Arum at arum.kim@stthomasumc.org.



Rising Stars at Sunbeam Children's Center



We celebrated our annual Thanksgiving Feast a little differently this year—like so many ministries at St. Thomas. The children enjoyed a hot lunch served by their teachers in their classrooms. It was still an exciting time for the children and staff. The children enjoyed their special luncheon and the lesson that corresponded with the meal. We enjoyed discussions about why we "Give Thanks" and for what we are "Thankful."

During the month of December, SCC families and staff will help the food pantry by filling ADVENT bags for families in our local community that are in need for the holiday. This is one of the mission projects we do each year to support families in our area and to teach children at a very young age that you are never too young to lend a helping hand. The SCC staff still lends a helping hand there each Wednesday. Here's what some of them are saying:

- *"It is a blessing to meet the people that volunteer in the food pantry and to get to know them as individuals. Everyone is very nice and truly enjoy giving back not just during the holidays but throughout the year." (Ellen Carranza, SCC Teacher's Aid and Assistant for the Toddlers)*
- *"I never realized the amount of effort it took to run and organize the food pantry. It was so rewarding to see how the people worked together to help others. Some volunteers even brought their children to teach them at an early age how important it is to help those in our community that are in need." (Elke Morgan, SCC Toddler Lead Teacher)*

Later this month the children will record several holiday songs they've been practicing the last couple of months. Tune in to the Family Caroling Sing-a-Long on December 27th at 10:00 am to see our rising stars!

United Methodist Women



Thank you for supporting our Virtual CHRISTMAS Bazaar in November! This month, we are having the last of our three virtual bazaars. This one will be a Virtual ORNAMENTS Bazaar. To see the available items, go to <https://photos.app.goo.gl/zzLBnDnbDkxdhBS26> beginning Dec 6th. Orders will be accepted through Dec 12th. Click on the photos to enlarge and read the information. To place an order, email item number from photo to Chair.STUMW@gmail.com We will respond with a pickup receipt.



Curbside pickup will be from 4:30 – 5:30 pm on Dec 15th by the carport at the Parsonage House. Please have exact change for cash payments or checks made out to **STUMW**. We will bring your order to your car.



Peanut Brittle: is available for order, \$7/pound. This makes a great last-minute gift! The last pickup date is Dec 15th. Curbside pickup at the church parsonage house 4:30-5:30 (same day as Bazaar pickup). To place your order go to: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0C4FADAB2CA3F85-purchase1> This link is also available on the church website, Virtual Christmas Bazaar page

RADA Cutlery Products: are available for sale through the UMW. Since we can't take orders in person, you can order online by going to: <https://radafundraising.com?rfsn=4803461.2b654e>

All proceeds go to local and international missions.

Virtual Christmas Party

There is still time to attend the Virtual Christmas Party! Even though it will be a bit different, join us for fellowship, fun, gifts and, of course, food! The party will be **Friday, Dec 4 at 7pm.**

There's still time to sign-up. As part of the festivities, we're planning a Gift and Cookie Exchange, so to participate bring a wrapped gift and up to 3 dozen cookies or treats to the church on **Wednesday, Dec 2**. Someone will be here from 9am to 5pm. Gifts should be \$15 to \$20 value and for the Cookie Exchange - bring 1, 2, or 3 dozen depending on how many you want back! Homemade cookies or bars are great, but festive store bought is also great - whatever works for you. We're not trying to add to your stress-level!

We'll give you the Zoom access information and on Thursday evening, Dec 3, a pair of UMW elves will deliver your gift and cookies. Then decorate your space, wear your favorite Christmas sweater and earrings, settle in with your dinner or dessert and join us Friday evening, Dec 4 at 7pm on Zoom.



20th Annual Christmas Day Dinner



For the past 19 years St. Thomas UMC has provided a traditional Christmas Day Dinner for hundreds and hundreds of families. This year, our 20th year, we are dreaming BIG and excitedly preparing to serve 2,000 people on Christmas Day!! Meals will be served curbside for pick up.

Each year, you, the members and friends of St. Thomas, have provided the ingredients needed to prepare this giant meal for so many families. Once again we are asking you to help provide some of the ingredients for our Christmas Day Dinner.

Our sign up board is in the Narthex for anyone who wishes to take cards from there. We also have an online sign up for ingredients. The link is:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080F45A9A62CAA8-christmas>

Please use one or the other. When you bring your items to church please place the non-perishable ones in the designated box in the Narthex. We will also have a small refrigerator in the Narthex for the perishable items. Please put them there. Thanks so much for helping us feed as many people as we can on Christmas Day 2020.

There will also be opportunities for you to help prepare the meal, set up, serve and clean up. That information will be posted on the board as well as on our online sign up early in December. We will be taking extra safety precautions as we prepare and serve this meal.

The Annual Christmas Day Dinner is free to any and all families and individuals. We invite all of you to come, invite your relatives, friends, and neighbors. If you know of someone in need of a meal please contact Janel Weed at jbgirl211@yahoo.com or call 703-507-9075. We will be serving dinner from 11:00am -3:00pm.

Have a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

News from the Kitchen

The Thanksgiving Feast was a great success - we served 242 people!

We look forward to seeing so many of you on Tuesdays. Even though we don't get to chat long, it is such a joy to catch up while we hand out your dinners. Please let your neighbors/friends know about our Tuesday dinners; we would welcome the chance to serve them.

We will have 3 meals on Tuesdays in December and then enjoy some time off between Christmas and New Year's week. Tuesday Night Dinners will return on January 5, 2021.

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. Our December menus are:

Dec. 1

Caesar Salad / Tortellini Alfredo with Shrimp
Roasted Vegetables / Bubble Bread
Orange Cake
Kid's Meal: Grilled Cheese
Cookie of the Week: Egg Nog

Dec. 8

Sweet Chili / Baked Potato with Butter/Sour Cream
Cornbread with Bacon Jam
Raspberry Bar
Kid's Meal: Cheese Quesadillas
Cookie of the Week: Vanilla and Chocolate Biscotti

Dec. 15

Christmas Feast
Kid's Meal: Spaghetti
Cookie of the Week: Red Velvet

Dec. 22 and Dec. 29

No Tuesday Night Dinner

January 5

Tuesday Dinners will resume

Food Pantry

By Jhenny Michalek, Food Pantry Director

For Thanksgiving, the food pantry was able to bless the community with 640 turkeys. On November 21, we were able to distribute to 375 families. We gave out turkeys, milk, eggs, fixings, even coats.

Every family received the items below. In addition, 203 families also received their regular food pantry distribution.



Thanks to all our wonderful volunteers, donations from church members, the community, and Prince William Food Rescue we helped over 1600 individuals on just that one day.

As grateful as I am that we were able to help all those people, one story comes to mind when I give thanks this year and count my blessings: A good friend of mine, who goes above and beyond to help the homeless in our community, contacted me about a single mother that had fallen on hard times. She had lost her job because of COVID and had gotten behind on her rent. She filed for unemployment but did not receive it. She applied for food stamps, but that process can take months. She reached out to Prince William County for help with rent, but they told her to wait until she had a 5-day eviction notice before applying. Finally, she contacted a non-profit that had a COVID grant but they told her they were out of funds.

Out of sheer desperation, my friend contacted me. I put every resource we have available at OUR church into action. I called the office and spoke with Paula, who oversees our local relief CARES ACT grant funding, to help with rent. I called Jennifer at the food pantry so this mom could get some food for her family, and Cathy has an appointment to help her with Christmas presents. She and my friend had tears of surprise, gratitude, and relief. They were both in shock because she received so much more than either of them had expected, but those big smiling faces turned to dismay when they returned home, and an eviction notice was taped to her door.

The very day she was approved for help with two month's rent, she got home and there was an eviction notice taped to her door. My friend called us and explained what had happened. Again, everyone pitched in to get the check processed, written, and signed for her to hand deliver it to management in time. She was able to stay in her apartment while she continued to look for work.

She now has a new job that she loves, making \$3.00 more an hour than she was before. Her job is near her sister's house, and her sister will babysit for her, while she's at work. All these wonderful blessings because our church family ALL pitched in to help someone in the community. I thank GOD every day for our church family and for being able to reach, nourish, and serve in such an impactful way.



This is an aerial view of the line on Nov. 21 at 8:30 am. We had sections with 2 lines, even split into 3 lines in front of the main entrance, and the line continued to Plantation Lane.



St. Thomas UMC,

I'd like to express my sincere gratitude
for the generous financial help. I sincerely
appreciate such a giving spirit during this
unprecedented time.

Thank you again
Jelanna

**A Thank You note we received from another
client we were able to help through your
contributions to Local Relief.**



Volunteer for the Living Nativity

Our traditional Living Nativity will look a bit different this year, but will still be an important outreach to our community. This year we have reconfigured it a bit to incorporate our Breakfast with Santa and the Kids' Christmas Service that we normally do. The Living Nativity will be Saturday December 19 from 5:30-7pm. We have narrowed the large nativity down to three scenes and volunteers will participate in two 45 minute shifts. We are asking kids 3rd Grade and older as well as teens and adults to participate in making this event happen. Volunteers will be socially distant and we are limiting the participants to 25 people per shift.

Our Living Nativity helps our kids engage with and learn the Christmas story through acting. In addition to the three nativity scenes, the event will also feature music, live animals, St. Nicholas, and elves! There are roles for shepherds, Mary, and Joseph, so I hope children and youth will sign up to participate! Contact Caleb Mathews or Pastor Arum to participate. Adult volunteers can contact Renee Kinnear through the church office.

2020 Mission Moments

By Cathy Campbell, Mission Council Chair

It's been an exciting year for Mission at STUMC! One missionary retired (the Clarks) but we have added three more. We support the Gieschens in Atlanta who are field reps for Okinawa Christian School, the Hammacks in Richmond for Global Frontier Missions, and Kathy Virunurm, director of CRU at George Mason University. We have added Rachael and Nolo Garcia in Guatemala, Helping Children Worldwide in Sierra Leone that includes the Child Integration Center and Mercy Hospital, and Prosperity House in Manassas. The Mission Council sent \$4,800 for scholarships to a school in El Salvador. Our shoe drive collected about 1350 pairs of shoes and we are sponsoring a child in Sierra Leone with money earned. The shoes went to people in Africa to teach them a trade and to help start-up businesses. Shoeboxes are being prepared for Operation Christmas Child. Great things are going on because of your mission dollars.



Our **Food Pantry** is working overtime to feed the influx of people due to the pandemic, serving approximately 6000 families through the end of November. We also provide food to Grace Life Church every week for their food distribution. Through your donations, we were able to purchase 3 greatly needed freezers. After receiving two grants from the City of Manassas, we purchased a refrigerated truck and enhanced operations through the end of the year.

In February, we **collected 230 bears** that were properly hugged and sent to NOVANT hospital for all patients on Valentine's Day, also providing them with our church information. In the same spirit, we also provided Valentines and bears to Loch Lomond Elementary School.



Until mid-March, Volunteers went to **Loch Lomond Elementary School** every week to help students and staff with their work. We were able to provide a stroller for a family in need and give one thousand dollars to purchase hot spots and headphones for students to use during the virtual learning classes. Wow!

The **DC Homeless Mission** served **263 people** thru March when we had to stop because of COVID.

Instead, clothing from this mission has been shifted to our new Community Clothes Closet. This clothing is given out to the people at the food pantry and is very well received. We are providing coats for those in need and the no-sew scarves from the Mission

Extravaganza. A few food staples were packed with the health kits we used for the DC Homeless and were handed out to the homeless in Manassas.



Un-trim A Tree and A Senior Christmas will occur through December 9. Please sign up on the website. We will be providing gifts to those children identified by Social Services and to the permanent residents of Manassas Health and Rehab. Toys will also be distributed to walk-ins looking for help during the Christmas season. The DAR is helping with this. The Mission Council provided money to our Kitchen Ministry to provide turkeys for our annual Christmas dinner.

The **“Keep the Change”** campaign was started to give church members a chance to provide lunch/dinner to our first responders. We have provided meals to the police department and two fire houses in Manassas, and one in Manassas Park, a local Patient First and to staff at Manassas Health and Rehab.

We had **three mission trips this year** to North Carolina to help with hurricane relief, organized by our START team.

Finally, our **October Mission Extravaganza** yielded 50 no sew blankets (divided between 24 Foster Care Cases and to the residents of Manassas Health and Rehab for Christmas); 70 police appreciation bags were delivered to our Manassas City Police; 104 “Thinking of You” cards were sent to Manassas Health and Rehab residents; 50 no sew scarves were



paired with coats that the Food Pantry bought for their clients; 15 stepping stones were painted for our gardens and 61 pillow case dresses were sent to Little Dresses for Africa. Our youth cleaned up Nelson Park and the Food Pantry gained a few more volunteers for special projects. You were awesome St. Thomas!

A special **THANKS** to all who have supported our mission efforts! Please continue your support by using the

“Christmas Miracle” envelope this Christmas (pictured right).

This offering funds the kind of projects you have read about above. If you want to contribute to the “Christmas Miracle” online, please donate to the General Mission Fund. Remember we get 100% of the Christmas offering. Thank you for all you have done! and continue to do. Merry Christmas to all!

Christmas MIRACLE OFFERING

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whoever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"
Matthew 25:40

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

☐ \$ _____ Cash ☐ \$ _____ Check

WAYS TO GIVE

- ☐ Give by mail. Send your envelope to the church.
- ☐ Give by Text. Enter the church's 10 digit GoTextOne Number (433-940-1182) then text the amount you wish to donate then press "send".
- ☐ Give online. Visit allthetriangle.org/resources/giving.html



Student Ministry

By Pastor Arum



The global pandemic has changed everything, and The PACK was not an exception. This school year The PACK is gathering in a hybrid style: in-person and via Zoom. During The PACK gatherings, the students can hear a message of hope and encouragement, and relax and share a laugh or two with each other.

The PACK AM on Sunday at 10:10 AM via Zoom

We continue our journey of faith together through "The Thread," where we discover the thread of the Gospel through the big picture of the Bible.

The PACK on Tuesday via Zoom or in-person

Time varies depending on the activity for the day. We will hang out, play fun games, and talk about relevant topics that impact our everyday lives.

December 1 (Tue): PACK via Zoom at 4 PM.

December 8 (Tue): **PACK: Bowling Night in person** at Uptown Alley at 5 PM. Bring \$4 for a shoe rental. Invite your friends!

December 15 (Tue): **PACK: Christmas Party in person** at church at 5:30 PM. Build a Christmas Tree with Canned Foods, Ugly Christmas Mask or Sweater contest; a Secret Santa Gift Exchange, and much more!

December 22 (Tue): **NO** PACK in observance of Christmas Day.

December 29 (Tue): **NO** PACK on the fifth Tuesday of the month.

Please note that due to the pandemic, all events are subject to change.

Highlights of our PACK gatherings:



On November 10, The PACK cleaned Nelson Park together. This was a part of our church's October Mission Extravaganza projects.



After cleaning the park, we moved to our church parking lot and played many fun games.

It was a perfect night for outdoor activities! Who knew we could wear T-shirts and shorts in November?

On November 17, The PACK had a Friendsgiving event with members of the Adult Sunday School Classes.



A Scavenger Hunt held at Manassas Battlefield on Saturday, Nov. 21



The spirit of Christmas is upon us!

Instead of trees with tags on them this year, we will be selecting names online. Please go to the Events page under Reach on the website. Look at all of the names for Untrim A Tree (children identified by Social Services) and "A Senior Christmas" (permanent residents of Manassas Health and Rehab). Note the number, click on the sign up page link and sign up. Please bring your wrapped gifts (Seniors prefer gift bags) to the church by **December 9th**. Let's give a Merry Christmas to all!

Send us a Family Picture!

Gather around your crèche (nativity scene) or if you don't have one then the Christmas tree and take a photo with a lit candle or glow stick. These candles and glowsticks are inside the Advent Boxes. If you did not reserve one you can still pick up a set of candles/glowsticks during Tuesday Night Dinner. Then email the photo to us at receptionist@stthomasumc.org by **December 15th**. We'll be incorporating these images into our virtual Christmas Eve Service at 7pm and 9pm, so be sure to worship with us!



Family Photos Wanted!



Honoring Leslie Oakes

As a church, we commissioned this painting as a gift to Leslie on her retirement. This beautiful work of art was created by Debbie Barnard. In order to establish a continuing legacy, cards and prints are available for purchase by the congregation, with proceeds donated to the Food Pantry.

A package of six 4x6 note cards, or one 5x7 note card (suitable for framing) each cost \$10. These are available in the church office. An 8x10 print is also available by special order at a cost of \$20.

As we enter this season of giving, consider honoring Leslie through the purchase of note cards or a larger print.



Merry Christmas! We are going to have an incredibly sweet month as we combine the Christmas story with Christmas cookies! It is going to be so much fun! While cookie cutters, decorations, and excitement will fill this entire month, the focus will be Jesus—specifically, Jesus is God's Son. We want every preschooler to know that what we are celebrating this time of year is the wonderful truth that God loved the world so much that He gave us His only Son, Jesus. We pray that we will all enter this month with the same wonder the shepherds had as they heard the good news for the very first time—a wonder that will inspire us all to go and tell everyone, everywhere that Jesus is God's Son.



Christmas can be filled with all sorts of emotions. Some people easily experience the joy of the season. Some rest in the hope that God is making all things new. But others struggle to find peace due to life's circumstances. With all that's going on this time of year, we thought it'd be great to go back to the basics and simply celebrate Christmas. The truth is Jesus is the best gift God ever gave. Jesus was proof that God loves us and we can trust God no matter what. Because of Jesus, it's possible for us to have a relationship with God that will last forever. As we remember the Christmas story, we take time to celebrate the greatest gift the world has ever known and rediscover, joy and hope and peace as we rest in the unconditional love of God. **Bottom Line:** Christmas-celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift. **MEMORY VERSE:** "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6, NIV

King's Kids

Our ministry with children seeks to share the faith with the next generation of children from birth through 5th grade.

The primary ministry occurs on Sunday mornings. Check it out...

SUNDAY SCHOOL @ 10:15 am



FOR PRESCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY

KIDS ON ZOOM: : All kids are invited to join us on Zoom for lessons and activities around each week's Bible Story. Ms. Michelle is taking the lead in our Preschool class and Mr. Caleb is working

with our Elementary kids! We'd love to have you join us. Be sure to sign up for our weekly King's Kids E-News to stay up to date and receive Zoom codes each week by contacting our Children's Ministry Director, Caleb Mathews.

Supply bags are available for all kids filled with supplemental resources to our Sunday lessons for anyone to come pick up from the church anytime Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. Just let Caleb know beforehand so we can have it ready for you!

KIDS CARE 2: 345

Our next gathering is Saturday December 19 from 5:30-7pm. We'll be participating in our Living Drive-Thru Nativity! All 3rd-5th Graders are encouraged to sign-up for a role as a shepherd, Mary, or Joseph. Shifts are 45 minutes and participants will be socially distant outdoors. The event will feature three scenes, live animals, Santa, and music! Please register to participate by signing up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508084aa5a723a75-living>

In November we had a great time serving together in our Food Pantry packing bags!



Upcoming Events

- Dec 5 Drive-in Christmas Movie, 6 PM
- Dec 6 Virtual Christmas Ornament Bazaar (Through Dec. 12, Pick-up Dec. 15)
- Dec 9 Deadline to provide all Untrim-A-Tree and A Senior Christmas gifts
- Dec 19 Living Nativity, 5:30 — 7:00 PM
- Dec 20 Special Christmas Music Celebration / 9 AM Traditional & 11 AM Contemporary
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve Services / 7 PM Contemporary & 9 PM Traditional
- Dec 25 Christmas Day Dinner, 11 AM - 2 PM
- Dec 27 Family "12 Days of Christmas Carols" Sing-a-Long Service, 10 AM



St. Thomas
United Methodist Church

8899 Sudley Road, Manassas,
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
		1 Peggy Lawlor	2	3 Cary McMahon	4 Monique Buchanan	5
6 Carolyn Glade	7 Bill Bixby	8 James Mouser Elizabeth Goldfarb	9	10	11 Jacob Wagner Jenalynn Weed	12
13	14 Philip Adams Brandon Hayes	15	16	17 Mason Sanchez Danielle Harcup	18 Cheryl Wagner Lynda Workman	19
20 Sybil Johnston Leonard Fick Sophia Lusk	21 Ginny Bixby	22	23 Paul Petrilla	24	25 John Verosko	26
27 Missie Duffy	28 Dominick Izzo VI	29 Giovanni Schoch Donovan Keyser Bridgette Rudolph	30 Tracy Spencer Robin Gardner Martha Jones	31 Jody Boston Lacy Lusk		