



Triumph Newsletter

MAY 2021

Can We Ever Go Back to the Way We Were?

The “Lockdown” with a capital L has lifted – and we can return to in-person worship in June (cue Barbara Streisand song as we ponder fond memories of the way things once were and wonder, “Will church ever be the same again?”). The answer is likely that church and life will NEVER completely return to what it once was because we’ve all been shaped by our experiences since the pandemic began. We are different.

Perhaps it would be helpful to ask ourselves as a faith community these important questions – particularly as they relate to worship, “What do we want to keep from the Lockdown? What do we want to leave behind?”

The first obvious answer is that we want to keep our livestream experience going strong as we return to in-person worship. At first, no one on our team had experience with livestreaming worship. A few had read a blog or two and attended a workshop about how to start livestreaming when we were thrown into

the driver’s seat with a cell phone, a few extra microphones, and a spirit of adventure. Now, after a year of livestreaming our worship services together, I can proudly say we have a handful of very competent and technically capable team members. Many of you have shared that your experience at home has been solid and that surprisingly, you actually have enjoyed the comfort of being at home while you worship. So, livestreaming is here to stay.

This in turn means that we must make a commitment to providing a positive experience for those who gather in the Sanctuary and those who gather from their homes. Over the last month, an Ad Hoc Return to Worship Team has been working faithfully behind the scenes to address many of the challenges and opportunities of doing both well. Here are the people serving on the team: Ron Campbell (Trustee Chair), Gordy Haines (Lay Leader), Deb Crawford (Worship Chair), plus staff members, Dominick Izzo, Rodney Miller, and Abi Foerster.

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What are some of the key questions that the team is hoping to answer?

- What is the best space to house the media-tech team?
- What is the best way to address lighting challenges from the stained glass window and other windows?
- How do we help people focus in worship by creating visually aesthetic spaces at the front of the Sanctuary behind the musicians, preacher, and other speakers?
- What is the best way for the team to communicate with one another during worship that doesn't distract the participants?
- How do we include everyone in worship together? How do we best meet the needs of whole families – especially until the nursery and Sunday School resume?

So, let me be the first one to say to you, welcome home this June! We have missed YOU – each and every one of you! Even though our worship experience may never fully return to the way it once was – certainly, our love for one another remains steadfast, and our God is still worthy of praise regardless of any adjustments we may make. So, let us leave behind our fears, our isolation, and any seeds of disunity that the devil has sown these past many months. And, instead, let us embrace a new future with hope and joy and an eagerness to celebrate with the body of Christ, the church, beginning this June!

In the meantime, plan to join us outside for in-person, socially distanced worship on Sunday, May 2 at 6:30 PM in our parking lot. Our youth will be helping to greet, park, and usher the service. Please bring your own lawn chair. Worship will be about a half hour and include prayer, music, and Holy Communion (individually wrapped).

Also, please keep the Ad Hoc Return to Worship Team in your prayers and mark your calendar NOW to join the Town Hall discussion on May 26 (immediately following the Church Conference vote on Haymarket's launch) so that we can share with you our plan and you can ask any questions that might still remain about returning to in-person worship.

Grace upon grace,

Pastor Abi



Special Church Conference, May 26, 7 PM

On Wednesday, April 21, a joint virtual meeting was held with our Haymarket Campus to discuss the "launch plan" for this campus. We hope that our 2nd campus will become Haymarket UMC on July 1 as they launch as a fully independent United Methodist Church, no longer part of St. Thomas UMC. In order to make this change official, our next step is to hold an official vote to confirm this choice at a specially called Church Conference. All members of St. Thomas UMC from both campuses are eligible to vote on this matter. **The vote will be held on May 26 at 7 PM via Zoom.** If you are interested in voting or otherwise participating in the meeting on May 26, please contact Samantha Bouquet at samantha.bouquet@stthomasumc.org and she will send you the Zoom link and password.



Then, immediately following the Special Church Conference, members of St. Thomas are invited to a Town Hall meeting on Zoom at **8 PM** to learn more about our return to in-person worship during the month of June – what you can anticipate will be the same and what will be different!

Living a Life Filled With Gratitude

Veronica McGuin, Director, Sunbeam Children's Center



This isn't the April we wanted. We wanted to go to church on Easter Sunday. We wanted a weekend trip with friends, we wanted to go to the beach, we wanted to see family that we haven't

seen in perhaps over a year, or take a trip to see the spring flowers. I don't just like April, I love it!

This April, like last April, isn't what we wanted. This April we've been handed: daily reports of disease and death. An economy that's in free fall. Anxiety and panic filling people's hearts and minds. A year of isolation, unknowns and cancellations but most of all a year of living in fear. We fear for our family and self. We fear for the health of health care workers and first responders, friends, and coworkers. We fear this microscopic, COVID-19 culprit that stalks our streets like a thief.

We have adjusted our expectations. April as we wanted will not happen but I see light over the horizon. I have faith it will continue to get better but for now it's time for another deep breath, a steady resolve and a few decisions. I want to share three emotional tools that have kept me going this past year.

Gratitude, collect your blessings. Catalog God's kindnesses. Assemble your reasons for gratitude and recite them. "Always be joyful," the Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Thessalonians. "Pray continually, and give thanks whatever happens. That is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus." I am thankful for all I have each and every day; my

family, my husband, the love of my life and all of the staff and families of Sunbeam Children's Center.

Gratitude is always an option. Matthew Henry said it all when he wrote this in his diary. "Let me be thankful, first because I was never robbed before; second, because, although they took my purse they did not take my life, third, because although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed."

Give thought to gratitude. Be kind to others. Be the family member who offers to take out the trash or work in the yard. Be the colleague who reaches out to check on a coworker. Be the neighbor who mows the grass of the elderly couple, brings them a hot meal or spends time with them and listens to the many stories they have to tell. You will be better because of it!

It's time to serve others and it's time for determination. I'm not giving into fear, I'm not caving into despair. With God by my side and yours, we can face tomorrow and have strength to face the days to come.

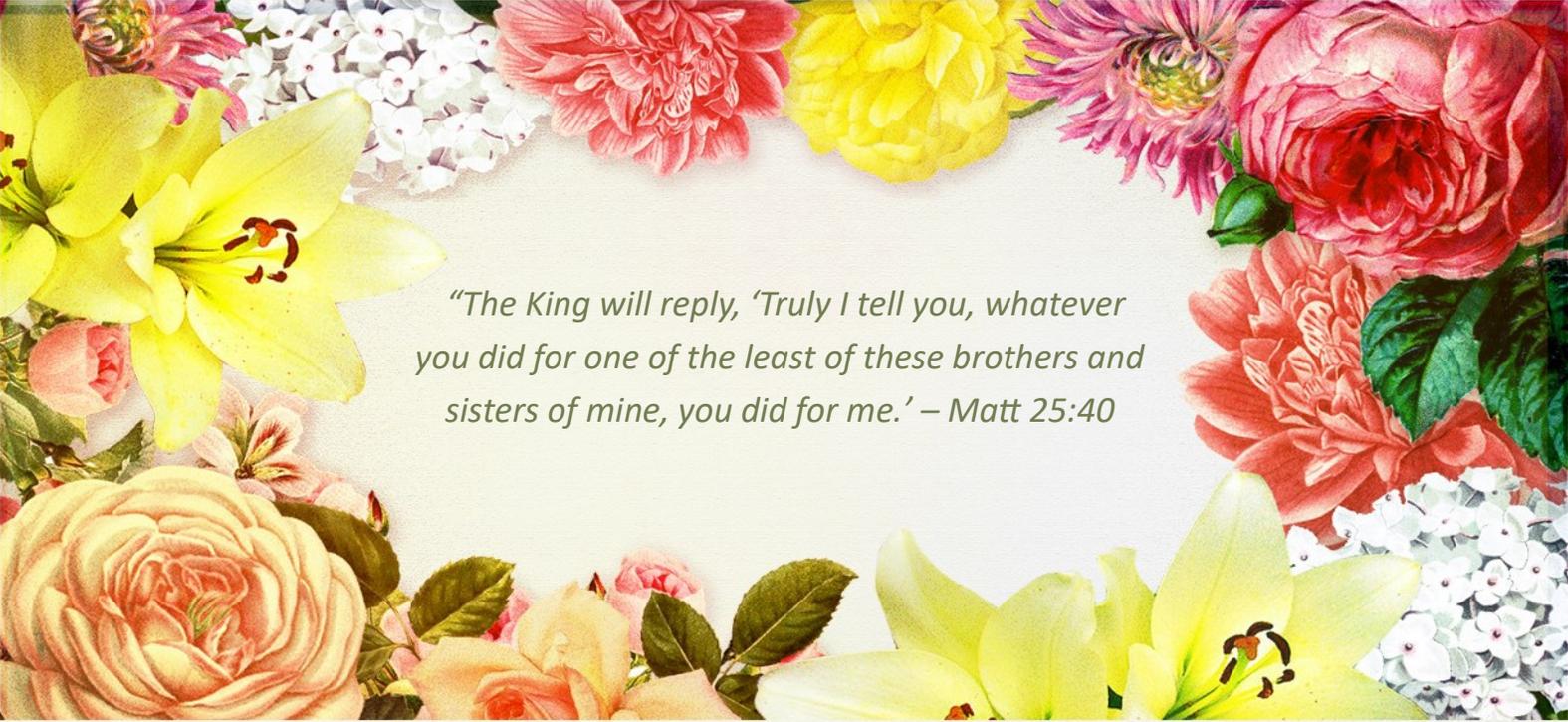
ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR DAY CARE STAFF

Sunbeam Children's Center is accepting applications for a 4 Year-Old Lead Teacher and Afternoon Teachers. 2-3 years of experience working with children in a day care or preschool or other educational setting is required. Educational studies or a degree in early childhood education is desired. Applicant must be dependable, flexible, positive, and fluent in both written and spoken English. If interested, please call 703-368-5161, option 2 or stop by the front office of the school.

Community Clothing Closet

Renee Kinnear, Coordinator

What started out as the DC Homeless ministry has now morphed into the Community Clothing Closet. About 6 years ago, I started serving with the DC Homeless when my friend Vera Steen asked me to join her. When the pandemic hit last year we stopped traveling to DC. By the summer, I was feeling a burden for the homeless and who was helping them now that many organizations had stopped going into DC. I was looking for a way to donate the toiletries and clothing that we were storing, and after research I learned that many of the homeless were being put up in hotels, and some local DC charities were still actively trying to meet their needs. I spoke with the Mission Council and was disappointed to hear that there were no plans for anyone to go into DC for the remainder of the year.



“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ – Matt 25:40

One Saturday, I decided to visit the columbarium and sat and prayed. I found myself talking to Vera about what we should do about the DC Homeless mission. She had a heart for helping them too and since she led me to serving them, I was hoping I would hear a word on how we could still help those in need. It wasn't long after that, when I had the idea to serve those in need in our own community! I knew how the weekly food pantry numbers had tripled. I figured if so many people were in need of food, they must have a need for clothing too. That was when the Community Clothing Closet (CCC) was born!

We have been distributing clothing since Oct 2020. We operate out of the parsonage house and each month on the 3rd and 4th Saturdays, we pass out a clothing request form to those waiting in the food pantry line. Volunteers fill their orders by bagging the clothing requested and then we hand it to them as they leave the Pantry. We have been serving an average of 90 families each week (an average of 270 people). I also meet with some families during the week. We provide clothing and shoes for men, women and children.

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We are blessed and grateful for all the donations we receive! Our donations have come from the congregation, neighbors, friends, family and the Food Pantry. Several churches have partnered with us to collect coats, hat/gloves, jeans, hoodies, and children's clothing. A shout out goes to Park Valley Church, Gainesville UMC, Starbucks, and several other groups who held winter coat drives and still continue to support us. We gave out over 500 coats, hats and gloves from Dec through February. I am so amazed that whenever I have a need for a particular size of clothing, it appears within the week. When I didn't think I'd have enough volunteers to operate a particular week, people would just step up.

We get just what we need, when we need it! Manna in the wilderness! It has truly been a blessing to serve in this capacity alongside faithful people, being the hands and feet of Christ! You know who you are, and I can't thank you enough for serving alongside me and meeting the needs of our community!

It takes 6 people each Saturday to distribute, and lots of hours during the week to sort, fold and tag clothing. We would love more volunteers to help in both areas. Teens can help, and anyone with even a little Spanish speaking abilities would be most welcome. Contact Renee Kinnear if you want to learn more about how you can help.



Update: October Mission Extravaganza

One of the Mission projects completed in October was painting stepping stones to bring beauty to the Columbarium and the planting beds near the front doors of the church. The stones have all been placed thanks to Ron and Cathy Campbell. Look for them as we return to Worship!



Legacy Giving

Barry Barger, Permanent Endowment Committee Chair

Legacy giving to our church to honor or remember our loved ones is offered in two forms. The first form is funds donated to St Thomas UMC such as cash, checks, stocks, property or trusts, not intended as a part of the operating budget. These gifts are often, but not exclusively given, by friends and family at the time of celebration of their loved one's life. At St. Thomas, these funds are administered by the Gift Fund Team, which is chaired by George Anderson. The gifts are normally used to fully fund an immediate need of the church as agreed upon by the Gift Fund Team and the giver of the gift or primary contact for the family member in whose memory the gifts are given. Some examples of immediate needs that the Gift Fund team legacy funds have supported are the new tables in Fellowship Hall, a new communion set, brass stand or other items needed for worship, a new tree planted near the Columbarium, etc.

The second form of Legacy Giving is similar to the first, but differs in that the non-operating budget gift is invested for the long term where the principal is preserved and the interest is used to fund various needs (i.e. property maintenance, care or improvements), mission work of the church, or scholarships. Some will call this a living legacy. Many universities, charities and organizations have permanent endowments. These funds are administered by the Permanent Endowment Committee, which is chaired by Barry Barger. In future editions of the Triumph, we will look at the various ways gifts to the Permanent Endowment Fund may be used by the church.

Should you feel led to honor or remember a loved one, please let the church office know. Either George or I will contact you to answer any questions that you may have or assist you in setting up your gift or endowment.

United Methodist Women



UMW Spring Tea Sunday, May 16 at 2 pm Please join us for our Virtual Spring Tea! To RSVP and receive the Zoom link, email Chair.STUMW@gmail.com Our UMW Elves will deliver a gift bag of treats to enjoy during the Tea.

Help Wanted! Bazaar Crafters are looking for someone with calligraphy or fine painting skills for doing finishing work on crafts, such as painting faces or words. We use acrylic paint on wood or glass surfaces. Photos of crafts or craft patterns and paint will be supplied. If you are interested, please contact Crafters.STUMW@gmail.com.

Spring Gift-Giving Season Rada Cutlery has a wide variety of gifts for Mother's Day, new Graduates and all those Summer Weddings! In addition to cutlery, they have utensils, baking pans, unique seasonings and mixes; even cookbooks. All proceeds from this fundraiser are combined with funds raised through our Bazaar to support Missions. Since we can't take orders in person, you can order online by going to:

<https://radafundraising.com?rfsn=4803461.2b654e>.

Coming June 1st: Virtual Summer Craft Bazaar

Get to Know the Food Pantry Team



Jhenny Michalek, Director. As Director, Jhenny manages operations and logistics. She fosters and develops the teams and volunteers. From greeting the families on Saturday mornings to shuffling deliveries within the building, Jhenny manages it all! Jhenny is an advocate for feeding the community and Chairperson of the STUMC Food Pantry Committee.

Kate Brown-Wing, Assistant Coordinator. Assists with the Pantry operations and logistics, serving as a Pantry lead. Kate is also developing a training manual and is the artist responsible for our team shirts. Kate helps with making volunteering at the pantry easier to navigate and faster to learn the pantry protocols and systems.



Jennifer Miller, Saturday Captain. Jennifer is the Team Captain on Saturday mornings. She coordinates the distribution with 15-20 volunteers as they serve to provide food to families. Jennifer has grown up at St. Thomas, and loves being a part of this mission.



Lisa Detwiler, Delivery / Driver Coordinator. Lisa coordinates all the drivers that volunteer their time by making weekly or daily runs to local grocery stores. Volunteers pick up donations and deliver them to the food pantry. There can be up to 9 deliveries on any given day.



Saundria Robinson, Team Leader. Our newest member of the Lead Team, Saundria has been a regular volunteer for years at the Pantry. She will be taking the Lead on Wednesdays.



Mary Catlett, Team Lead. Mary came to us from Volunteer Prince William. She and Sheila met when they both came to volunteer on the same day and became fast friends. They are co- Team Leads on Tuesday and Friday. Mary is also part of the STUMC Food Pantry Planning Team and loves packing up food for families to receive during the week.

Sheila Fritts, Team Lead
Sheila is co-Team Lead on Tuesdays and Friday with Mary Catlett. She is instrumental with coordinating the donation that the pantry makes each week to Grace Life. Sheila brought in a stereo for us to listen to music while we work and is always ready to help.



Tommy Sutherland, Sweets Team Lead. Tommy works wonders sorting and organizing each weeks' many, many boxes of baked goods in the "Sweets" room.



Over the years, the food pantry has been blessed with many volunteers. Some from our own congregation, some that are family or friends of regular volunteers, some from Volunteer Prince William, and some are even from the families we serve every Saturday.

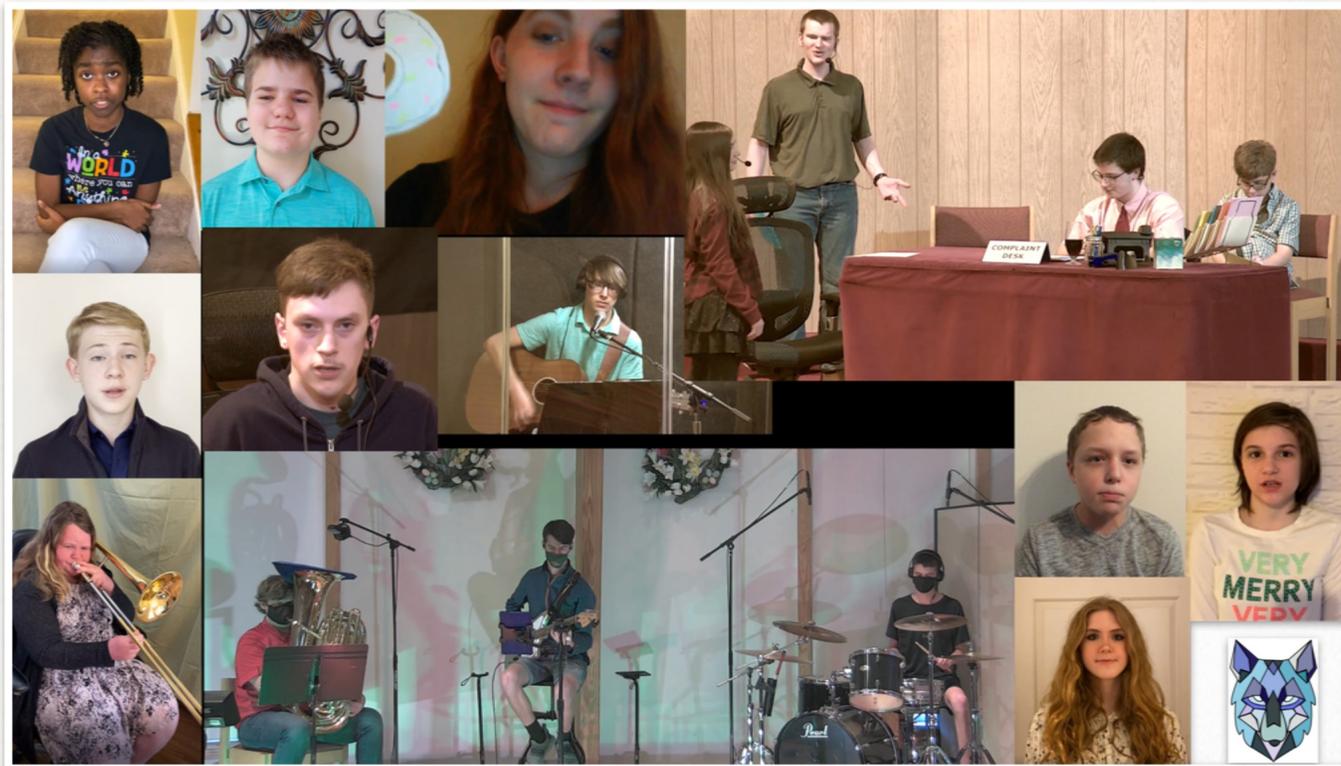
Volunteers like the Vandivere Family, Cathy and Ron Campbell, and their granddaughters, Julia Bryant, Leonard Fick, The Michalek Family, Missionary Volunteers from the Church of Latter-Day Saints, and many, MANY more! Thank you for making the Food Pantry possible!



Student Ministry

Pastor Arum

Thank you so much for your support on Youth Sunday! Our Facebook chat window was full of 'virtual' clapping and cheering! 18 of our students shared their gifts and talents in creating such an inspirational worship service. Please keep our students in your prayers so that they may grow into faithful disciples of Christ and live a life God intends them to live—a life full of grace and love.



Summer Mission Opportunities!

Save the Dates! Here are three COVID-Safe opportunities for our students and their family to engage in mission works for our church and our community. All details have already been emailed to the students and their parents. If you haven't received it, please contact Pastor Arum immediately! Below is a summary of our plans:

1. Two "Home" Mission Weekends (Friday, June 25 – Sunday, June 27 and Friday, August 13 – Sunday, August 15): Our students will participate in mission works for our church, our church members, and our community. Projects include helping with renovation of the Old Church Building, serving at the Food Pantry and at the Community Clothing Closet, working on a small project at our church members' place, and/or volunteering at local non-profit agencies.

2. Jeremiah Project Family Mission Camp (Thursday, July 29 – Sunday, August 1): Jeremiah Project is a well-known agency that offers short term mission trips in Virginia and West Virginia for middle and high school students (Pastor Abi is one of the founders!). We are participating in the Family Mission Camp. Each family unit makes up a work team and will lodge separately from other families to ensure COVID-safe environments. Families will gather together (but socially-distanced) to eat and worship as a St. Thomas family. Families of the students may bring their YOUNGER siblings (3rd – 5th grade). If you are looking for a special vacation plan that will make a great memory for your family, this will be a perfect one!

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



THE JESUS STUDIES

The PACK AM (Sunday School) has been vibrant with this year's new curriculum, *The Jesus Studies*! This curriculum is designed to help our students navigate through issues they are confronted with on a daily basis in ways that are Christ-centered. We hope that our students will be equipped to see the relevant issues of their lives

through the words of Jesus. Our faithful leader, Perry Bailey, leads The PACK AM.

The PACK on Sunday at 6:30 PM via Zoom or In-Person

We will hang out, play fun games, participate in mission projects, and/or have some faith talks. The list below shows a tentative plan for the month of May. Whether we meet in-person and/or online, we hope that the PACK continues to be the place where the students can hear the message of hope and encouragement and relax and share a laugh or two with each other.

- * May 2 (Sun): PACK **In-Person** at **6 PM** (30 minutes earlier than we usually meet) at church in the parking lot. St. Thomas is planning to offer a short Communion service at 6:30 PM, and we are helping out! We will gather a little earlier so we can prepare for and welcome our church family. Stay tuned for more details!
- * May 9 (Sun): PACK **via Zoom (but in the kitchen at your place)** at **5 PM**. A goal for this day is to make something edible for your mom and/or mom-figure. Students need to RSVP, so Pastor Arum can deliver the necessary ingredients to their homes on Sunday afternoon, right before the Zoom gathering.
- * May 16 (Sun): PACK **via Zoom** at **6:30 PM**. Pastor Abi is leading us through 'Catch Your Breath' sermon series. Let's talk about what kind of difficulties in a student's life take our breath away and how we can catch our breath again.
- * May 23 (Sun): PACK **In-Person** at **6:30 PM** at Fairmont Park (9805 Fairmont Ave, Manassas, VA 20109). The park is located within our community and it's only 2 miles from our church. We will clean the park as a mission project and then play some games on the lawn!
- * May 30 (Sun): **NO** PACK, but there will be a little **outing only for the 8th graders** (Middle School Graduates)! We want to celebrate and acknowledge their achievement as they graduate from Middle School. Wait for a special invitation with all the details from Pastor Arum!
- * June 6 (Sun): **LAST PACK** of this school year **In-Person** at **6:30 PM** at church in the parking lot or in the Fellowship Hall. We will have a special celebration for the High School Graduates!



Celebrating Our Graduates!

We would like to celebrate our graduates during Sunday Worship Services on Sunday, May 23rd. If you are or someone you love is graduating this year, please fill out the online form by Sunday, May 9th available at <https://forms.gle/3kd47pum5bBKKJfaA>. The link is also available on the Event page of our church website.



VBS Is Happening This Summer!

You're invited to explore the ways God's great light shines in the world, and shows everyone how they can reflect that light in their own lives! Begin your summer off with a lot of fun and joy after a long school year by planning to join our in-person VBS this June! We'll be gathering at St. Thomas June 14 – 18. Registration is the same as for our summer camps. Cost is free but space is limited — so don't wait. Sign up today!



To Register Go To: StThomasUMC.org

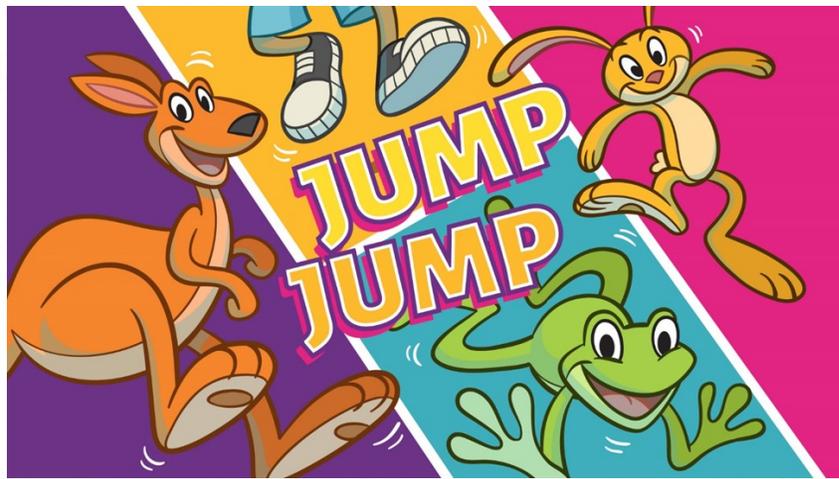
Sunbeam Children's Center and the children's ministry of St. Thomas are offering 5 weeks of affordable, high-energy camps this summer! Camp is organized around one common theme each week and specifically tailored to meet the developmental needs of 6 to 8-year-olds and 9 to 11-year-olds. Each day campers will experience games, crafts, friendly competitions, and a variety of new experiences and outdoor play all around the theme for the week. Each camp week is limited to 30 campers, split into two groups of 15 campers each with two adult camp staff for each group, and 'master educators' who will help lead the themed curriculum daily. Hours of operation are from 9 am – 4 pm, Monday - Friday.

- June 21—25 – Heart of a Champion Sports Camp
- June 28— July 2 – Mad Science
- July 12 – 16 – Cooking the Colors of the Rainbow Camp
- July 19 –23 – Theatre Arts Camp

COST:

- \$150 for 1st camper, 10% discount for additional campers
- Before / After Care (4-5 pm) is available - \$25 additional per week

Prior to the first day of camp, families must provide a copy of their child's birth certificate to verify age and their immunization record to comply with licensing requirements. Registration closes for each camp one week before the start of the camp. Cancellations or transfers to another week must be made two weeks before the start of the camp. Money will be refunded for cancellations, minus a \$15 non-refundable registration fee.



Preschool Curriculum

Key Question: Whose way is perfect?

Bottom Line: God's way is perfect.

Basic Truth: God made me.

Memory Verse:

"God's way is perfect." 2 Samuel 22:31, 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. 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 the church office.

Kids Care 2



This April, Kids Care 2 tweens further explored the resurrection and transformation of Jesus Christ. They made resurrection rolls and created

with Legos to stimulate the senses and make connections to the Easter story. Join Mr. David for the final get together of the year on Friday, May 14th at 6:00 PM.

Elementary Curriculum

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Monthly Life App:

Commitment—Making a plan and putting it into practice

Monthly Memory Verse:

Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come.

1 Timothy 4:8, NIV



News from the Kitchen

We are enjoying the warmer weather and more daylight hours as we serve our Tuesday Night Dinners. Thanks for ordering and coming to pick up your meals. We enjoy preparing the food, packaging it, and greeting you as you come to get your meals. Here are our May Menus:

May 4

Honey Roasted Chicken
Risotto Rice
Green Bean Casserole
Cinnamon Roll

Dessert:

Strawberry Angel Cake

Kids:

Chicken Strips

Cookie: Mom's Special Cookies

These decorated sugar cookies will be boxed and ready for gifting to someone special on May 9.

May 11

Garden Salad
Spaghetti and Meatballs
Spring Vegetables
Parmesan Breadsticks

Dessert:

Lemon Meringue Pie

Kids:

Same as adults

Cookie:

Sugar Raspberry Filled

May 18

Tempura Fried Shrimp
Cocktail Sauce
Fresh Broccoli Salad
Fried Okra
Hush Puppies

Dessert:

Boston Cream Pie

Kids:

Grilled Cheese

Cookie:

Cowboy Cookies

May 25

BBQ Pulled Pork Sandwich
Potato and Egg Salad
Creamy Cole Slaw
Country Baked Beans

Dessert:

Key Lime Pie

Kids:

Hot Dogs

Cookie:

Lemon Coolers

A Note From the Front Office:

With groups beginning to come back in person and some still continuing to use Zoom for their meetings, we ask you to please remember to complete a Room Usage form to reserve a space for your group in the building. If you need a Zoom meeting setup, please use the Zoom Meeting Request Form located under the resources tab on our website. If your group has an announcement to be published, please use the Communications Request (also located under the resources tab on our website). Using these tools to communicate helps us to better support your ministry and communicate effectively with the church. Thank you!



St. Thomas
United Methodist Church

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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

Upcoming Events

- **May 1** Trustee Yard Clean Up Day, 9 am—2 pm
- **May 2** Outdoor Worship & Communion 6:30 pm
- **May 14** Kids Care 2 (last event until Fall), 6 pm
- **May 16** UMW Virtual Spring Tea ,2 pm
- **May 23** Pentecost Sunday
Cantata: "Songs of the Spirit" 9 and 11 am
Recognition of Graduates
- **May 26** Special Church Conference, 7 pm
"Return to In-Person Worship" Town Hall, 8 pm
- **May 31** Memorial Day (Church Office Closed)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May Birthday Calendar						1 Don Mootz Jess Seagle
2 Brenda Mootz Betty Kadel	3 Bill Clouse	4 Emily Page	5 Shannon Lauren Sharon Schrack	6	7	8 Cliff Farrar Lori Harper
9 Kathy Rea Diane Ameen	10 Debra Hunter Roger Stone	11	12	13 Sharron Anderson Courtney Gay	14	15 Frank Michalek
16 Brendan Banner	17 Kimberly Bixby Ellis Adams Mary Blay	18	19 Linda Sears	20	21 Marie Davis Jane Yost	22 Jan Burch
23 Lee Enke	24 Zuzanna Steen	25	26	27 Deb Crawford	28	29
30 Scott Wagner	31					