

The AP STLE

Back to School 2015

Using our God-given gifts to build up the Body of Christ

The Epistle reading in our worship service for the last few weeks of summer has come from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians. One particular verse of this letter stood out to me as I considered this time of year: one of returning or re-committing to routine. As we settle back into our typical rhythm with summer ending and fall beginning, we are invited to consider how we might connect (or re-connect) once again in this faith community. How can we use our gifts for the building up of the body of Christ as Paul mentions in his letter? (Eph.4:11-12)

Even our community at St. Thomas finds itself returning to routine as well. Youth group and Sunday School will soon kick-off; Adult Forum returns; Small groups and Dinner groups will re-start, and so on. We will also begin to see some new ministries added to our community's work to share the Gospel with those in Overland Park and beyond as we incorporate more aspects of the *Invite/Connect/Welcome* ministry.

The theme behind St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians fits in well with our *Invite/Connect/Welcome* ministry. Last fall, St. Thomas had the opportunity to discern how we could share the Christian story and our community's witness to it by inviting others to share with us. We considered how we welcome every person who comes through our doors, and how we connect both new and long-time members to ministries here at St. Thomas by using the gifts God has given us as a group and as individuals. St. Paul writes, "*The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ.*" (Eph. 4:12-13)



*The Reverend Steven King,
Assistant Rector*

Indeed we all, as followers of Christ, have been given gifts individually and communally. As the St. Thomas community, our gifts are expressed in so many ways as we welcome every person regardless of what s/he might look like or may or may not be able to do. Our community does have many God-given gifts and finds opportunities to grow in the image of God still further.

The same is true for all of us individually. As you enter into Fall and your routine once again, spend time in prayer discerning the gifts God has given you. How might you share them with this community and the world in a new way? What new faith practice might you incorporate into your life or your family's life? What ministry might you connect with that you previously have not?

Let us offer these gifts knowing that we have been called to serve the Body of Christ here and in the world "*with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" (Eph. 4: 2-3)

FOOTNOTES

Musical talent abounds at St. Thomas

New talent discovered

The young artists at the St. Thomas Arts Camp did delight and entertain family and friends who attended their end of camp performance. As they demonstrated their artistic, vocal, dance, and dramatic flare, the teachers began to formulate new opportunities to encourage their skills.

Barbara McCall, Andrew Ouellette, Beth Elswick, Kelly Demo, Taryn Layne-Mulhern and Jenne Weil are planning to foster greater artistic growth in these talented young people. We do not have to wait until next summer to do so. We all encourage them to share their art throughout the coming year, especially in the coming St. Thomas Talent Show.

The young artists of St. Thomas are fortunate to have a place to gather, explore their artistic passions, and expand their creative potentials.

Look to your Sunday School and youth groups to find the next generation of church musicians and leaders.

Talent Show--1st Advent

Please mark your calendars for the first Sunday in Advent, Sunday, **November 29** for the **St. Thomas Talent Show**.

Do you sing, dance, do magic, or have a stand up comedy routine? Are you a ventriloquist? Can you play an instrument: trumpet, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, bagpipe, harmonica, kazoo, tub and washboard, saw, spoons? Get the picture? The evening looks to be creative and fun.

Five musical groups support worship services

Much of the Fall will include attending to the needs to the parish for musical support of worship. We have five groups of musicians to share the work: the Children's Chapel Choir, the Children's Choir, Youth Musicians, the Praise Band and vocal ensemble, and the St. Thomas traditional choir.

The children regularly sing in Children's Chapel. They share their singing on All Saints Day and Christmas Eve.

Children's Choir rehearses on Wednesday afternoon from 5 – 6 pm, and they offer their music on All Saints, Thanksgiving Eve, Christmas Eve and many other times.

Youth musicians who play instruments joined together for practice at the end of Arts Camp every day of the week. They played music for the beginning and ending of the Arts Camp presentation. They will get together for special projects during the year. The youth musicians will provide all of the music for the 7 pm Christmas Eve service.

The Praise Band and vocal ensemble meets on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 until 7:30 pm, leading worship at the 8:45 am Sunday morning service.

Christopher Grundy music

This Fall the Praise Band will lead worship using several settings of music by Christopher Grundy, a musician from Eden Seminary.

The congregation is already singing "Here in This Place," a tune suggested by Father Gar, who, by the way, personally knows Christopher Grundy.

*Dr. Beth Loeber Elswick,
Director of
Music
Ministries*



The music for the 8:45 am service always reflects the lectionary readings for the liturgical year. As a group, this team of musicians is developing a wonderful repertoire of music in order to support the ministry of St. Thomas. We should be most proud of their work.

The traditional choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm and sings regularly at the 10:45 service.

Members of the traditional choir also serve as cantors for the 5:30 pm Saturday service. The music of the 10:45 service is varied such that it regularly includes styles from classical vocal and instrumental works to spiritual songs from earlier American times.

The music supports the lectionary readings as well as other liturgical needs of worship. The ensemble regularly presents a service of Lessons and Carols on the first Sunday in Advent, special music for the later Christmas Eve service, and a major choral work on Passion Sunday to begin the journey through Holy Week.

Together, the traditional choir, the praise band and vocal ensemble, the youth musicians, the children's choir, and the children's chapel choir work together to produce great music for worship and fun.

Please consider singing with one of the groups!

Deacon Fran shares her reflection on K2K visit in early June

Simply put, if I was asked to sum up my experience in Kenya in a few words, I would say, “Beautiful country and beautiful people.” I felt so welcomed with warm, gracious hospitality everywhere I visited. Much joy was felt from the moment I met the members at the first gatherings of the K2K team, to the long travel there and home again, to encountering the people of Kenya. The relationships between each of our encounters with one another and through ministries shared during our visit, were evidence of Christ’s work through each of us.

Each evening, the team gathered for reflection, prayer and planning. As team chaplain I prepared the **spiritual time for prayer and reflection**. Our evening prayers and worships varied from Compline, the “At the Close of Day” devotional, or just simply a calm prayer. I assisted Father Joshua Gitonga (who is the vicar at All Saints in Maai Mahiu,) at a service our first Sunday there, and preached on Mark 3:20-25, “*In whatever you do, serve wholeheartedly the Lord.*” I also assisted Mtr. Dawn Frankfurt, the college team chaplain, as she led a lovely service at our campsite beside the lake.

There were **clergy visitations**. One enriching experience occurred when I visited with Fr. Joshua Gitonga and his family. We had a wonderful time discussing and learning about each of our different languages, cultures and heritage backgrounds, and visiting each of his church locations at St. John’s in Karima and St. Steven’s in Muniu.

For several days, I accompanied Fr. Joshua on ten different pastoral visits to women residing in the rural areas outside of Maai Mahiu. We purchased and presented 50 lb. bags of groceries for each of those we visited. Visits consisted of a ritual of being welcomed into homes, introductions, reading and reflection from the Gospel for the day, prayers for the host, presentation of our gift for them, prayers for the guests, and some singing if the Holy Spirit called us to do so.

As an extension of hospitality and sincere gratefulness for our gift of presence and food, several women offered us generous gifts of kale and zucchini from their gardens, a cup of tea, or a meal to share. A first fruit gift offered at the Altar from a parishioner’s garden was graciously offered from Fr. Joshua as a gift to me for serving their congregation and praying for them. This was a humbling, gracious, and joyous experience for me. Each of these gifts were then turned over to the chefs/cooks at the hotel to prepare with our meals so that we could all share in the gratefulness together as it was intended.

I accompanied the team on a visit to the Agatha Amani House (started by STA member **Nyakio Lake** and named after her mother), a shelter for women that provides a safe haven and support for women of domestic abuse; there we observed how best we could serve them. The team determined how they would proceed with the research, purchase, and installation of solar panels for the House. In addition, we had a veterinarian on our team who examined and spent time with the home’s cow, and examined and provide nutritional advice on the care of the rabbits that are bred and raised there as a source of income. We also decided what other home improvements needed to be made, such as doing work on the gutters, building a ladder, and rebuilding some of the rabbit pens, for example. At the time of our visit, the shelter currently was occupied by two residents who came from severely-battered lives; the love and hope extended to the women cared for at Agatha’s home is greatly needed and appreciated.

The K2K team was blessed with a **\$4,000.00 donation** specifically to be used for **feeding children**. As part of my ministry during this trip, I met with several facilities to determine how and where this donation would be distributed. With prayerful consideration and further discussion with Fr. Joshua, we determined it would be of most use by sharing this gift with each of the following places:

1. **Prayers Beyond Boundaries** – a school/home that was established in 2007/2008 in response to the overwhelming need to support orphaned children after the 2007 Post Election violence. The school serves 125+ students with 72 residents on the premises;



Deacon Fran with Fr. Joshua Gitonga and Margaret, parishioner from St. John’s, Karima.

Wardens Writings



*Don
McArthur,
Senior
Warden*

New Staff Members

We've had some staff changes at St. Thomas over the past couple of months. While we appreciate the talents and efforts of those who are no longer in their prior positions, I'm excited about our direction and future. I don't think our worship and programs will miss a beat and new energy will

come into our congregation.

I'd like to thank **Ann Clements** for her many years as our Director of Children's Ministries. She has been a fixture at St. Thomas to welcome new youngsters and families since 2001. With new twin grandbabies on the way, I think we can all understand a shift in priorities. Thank you, Ann, for all you have done to help St. Thomas be so great to so many families.

We are truly a fortunate parish to have someone the caliber of **Barbara McCall** to want to take on the position of Director of Children's Ministries. With years of experience as a teacher and a master's degree in education, she will put her unique stamp on our programs. What a blessing to have someone we all know and respect with a strong background willing, ready, and able step into the position.

As for the older youth, we'll be welcoming **Olivia Allen** to St. Thomas to help Father Steven with our youth ministry. Olivia is a sophomore at Baker University and has been a counselor at Camp Wood and active in diocese youth programs for many years. I look forward to seeing Olivia around St. Thomas lending a hand with our growing youth group.

Speaking of Father Steven, please give the guy a break! Actually, you may not even know he needs a break as he has tirelessly kept things going at St. Thomas with all of our changes. In the middle of his vast summer programs for our youth, our excellent assistant rector Father Ben accepted a new calling (Congratulations!), and Father Gar began his well-deserved sabbatical. With all these changes, Father Steven has remained a strong presence at St. Thomas. Thank you, Father Steven.

As I look toward the school year starting, Father Gar returning from his Sabbatical, and all of the renewed energy I outlined above, I can't help but be excited about St. Thomas.

I hope you are as well.

Don

STEWARDSHIP

Why We Give

This year "Commitment Weekend" will be November 7th and 8th. At that time we will ask all members of St. Thomas to fill out a card for their annual pledge, come forward and present it at the altar. As always we will ask our parishioners to be generous in their support of St. Thomas' ministries.

To some it may seem like this year has been a litany of the church asking for donations. Some have expressed that the requests for money have caused them concern—that there is a growing fatigue brought on by being constantly asked to give.

So prior to this year's pledge drive, the Stewardship Team is going to ask many of you, "Why do you give to St. Thomas?"

We expect the answers till be as varied as the range of people in our parish. For some it will be "in thanks to God's many blessings;" for others, "because Christ calls us to support our neighbors in need;" for some it may be, "to support worship."

Between now and November 7th ask yourself, "Why do I give?" If you pray about it you may discover that the answer is different than you thought.

—John McNown



Remember those warm knitted hats you gave to the children in Kenya? Take a look. Here are the happy children wearing them. They say "Thank You to everyone!"
Photo/Joe Bob Lake

IHN MINISTRY

4th Annual IHN Auction a huge success!

“Cruisin’ for a Cause” was a fun theme for the 2015 JoCo Interfaith Hospitality Network dinner/auction. The venue was transformed to look like a luxury cruise ship’s dining room complete with gangway ramp, live palm trees, candles, shells and starfish. There was a captain in uniform to greet guests and live music on the piano.

Items in the live and silent auction included Chiefs/Royals ticket packages, vacation packages, entertainment and dining gift certificates, unique household and personal items and several sports memorabilia items including the 2014 World Series home plate signed by Salvy Perez! Auction action was lively!

The auction, a major IHN fundraiser, netted \$61,450.21, exceeding the \$60,000.00 goal. This funding, along with grants from organizations and donations from congregations, families and individuals, makes it possible for IHN to reach out to situationally-homeless families and single women in Johnson Co.

As a charter member, St. Thomas has been involved in this ministry for over eleven years. In addition to our congregation’s financial support and volunteer involvement, many St. Thomas members committed additional time, talent and treasure to help make this auction successful.

We wish to acknowledge and thank everyone for their help:

COORDINATING TEAM: Sue Elliott, Cathy McCormick, Dola McNown & Margaret Walkenshaw

VOLUNTEERS: Dan & Noelle Dowma, Sue Elliott, Donna Fye, Les Ganninger, Steve & Tracie Glasscock, Karen Leftwich, Cathy McCormick, Dola & John McNown, Sarah Meyers, Jan Summers, Margaret & Ron Walkenshaw and “stand-by” clean-up crews, McArthur Family, Rimmer Family, Brian Geary, Eric Kling and Linda Kling

DONORS &/OR DONATION PROCUREMENT: Jim & Barbara Adam, Blair & Jean Adam, Jerry & Susan Carman, Kay & Phil Childress, Craig & Janet Christie, Kent & Ann Clements, Fr. Gar and Kelly Demo, Gordon & Susan Docking, Dan & Noelle Dowma, Jack & Judy Dutra, Sue Elliott, Steve & Ashley Fleischaker, Don & Donna Fye, Les Ganninger, Brian & Heather Geary, Steve & Tracie Glasscock, Steve & Karen Leftwich, Dave & Jackie Lichius, Cathy McCormick, Dola & John McNown, Jerry & Susan Miller, Meribeth Risebig, Lea & Marianne Rowland, Ron & Margaret Walkenshaw, Ray and Deacon Fran Wheeler

The Mission of IHN is to unite and enable the faith community to provide homeless families with emergency shelter, meals, compassionate assistance with social services, and relationships with caring people in the faith community. We hope to return the homeless families to a renewed sense of dignity and hope and independent living in the shortest time possible.

For More Information see www.jocoihn.org
To be involved with this ministry at St. Thomas contact
Dola McNown dolamenown49@gmail.com or at 541-9226 or
Margaret Walkenshaw mwalkenshaw@kc.surewest.net or at 891-4766.

Small Groups

Lions and tigers and humans...Oh my!

In June, the Explorers found that they didn’t need to visit Africa to see lions, India to see tigers, South America to see jaguars, or the Rockies to see cougars; they only had to go to the *Cedar Cove Big Cat Sanctuary* in Louisburg, Kansas.

Having been warned to eat before they saw the afternoon feeding at Cedar Cove, the Explorers chowed down at the Hillsdale Bank Barbeque, then rolled across Miami County for the feeding of the big cats. Most the big cats had no manners and ripped right into the tubs of raw meat slid into their cages, but one very large tigress gently took food from the hand of a brave young woman. The Explorers were really impressed.

In addition, the St. Thomas Explorers have been busy looking for God in the world around us through the “Nooma” video series from Rob Bell. Bell uses scripture and everyday things each Christian experiences such as “trees,” “rain,” “noise,” and “Sundays” to show us how God can impact our life if we just watch, listen, and believe.

Each video has led to some lively discussions among our members.

The St. Thomas Explorers meet at 7 pm in Parish Hall 3 on the second and fourth Sunday of each month. Day trips to places of interest in the local area add to the “Faith, fellowship, fun and food” that makes up the group’s charter. If you’re interested in learning more, contact **John & Dola McNown at 541-9226.**

Parishioners use their gifts



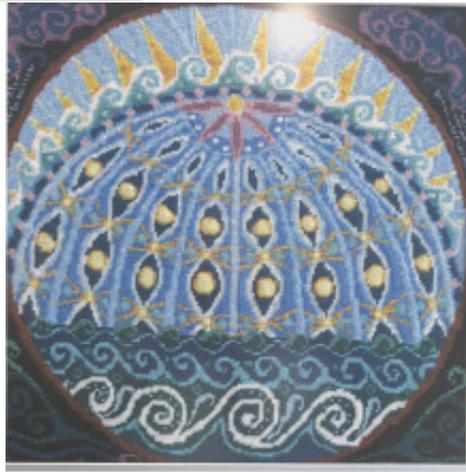
Day 1

In keeping with the late summer's theme and liturgical readings from Paul's letter to the Ephesians about God's giving each of us gifts to help build up the Body of Christ, I am inviting you to take a stroll with me through our church building to observe and appreciate the many original pieces of art joyfully contributed by our gifted members.

As you enter our building through the south door, you will spot a bronze statue of St. Francis of Assisi. This bronze statue was commissioned by a member of our church as a memorial to his mother; our own sculptor extraordinaire *Mary Lynn Swafford* created it. On your way into church, take a moment to admire it.

When you enter our church and are in the narthex, look towards the southwest wall. There you will see a group of needlepoint canvasses on display. These needlepoint pictures depict the story of the first six days of Genesis; only three of the six pieces are shown here because of space constraints.

These were lovingly stitched by a very gifted and self-effacing needlepoint artist *Marcia Honaker*. Marcia claims that her work was just "a little something" she did while waiting as her husband was undergoing his lengthy treatment for cancer a few years ago. Her handwork is simply exquisite.



Day 2

The Stations of the Cross



1.



2.



3.



St. Francis of Assisi



5.



Day 3



6. 7.



to bring beauty to our church

On one of the walls facing the needlework, you will find an original painting by *Penny Dillon*. Penny used her skill as an artist to commemorate the Home and Hearth retreat led by Mtr. Kelly Demo in 2010. It was presented to Mtr. Kelly at the beginning of the retreat and was present for the entire weekend.

Now as we enter the Sanctuary, look on either side of the altar. There you will see individual works of art that depict each of the fourteen stations of the cross. The artists who contributed their talent to this project and the stations they did are: *Bill Kidder* (#1 and #9), *Rachael Chambers* (#2 and #6), *Jackie Lichius* (#3 and #8), *Cher Ulrich* (#4 and #11), *Jack Dutra* (#5), *Mary Lynn Swafford* (#7 and #12), *Steve Rimmer* (#10 and #13), *Judy Dutra* (#14). These paintings and sculptures convey the artist's deeply felt emotions about Jesus' suffering and death. We are fortunate to have them enrich our Holy Week worship.

As you turn around and face the choir loft, you will see three banners hanging from it. Each depicts a Christian symbol/cross relevant to our faith. The creative team of *Donna Fye* (seamstress), *Bill Kidder* (designer) and former member *Kathy Carr* (designer) are responsible for execution of these banners and for just about every one of our Liturgical banners, as well as the wedding banner and our St. Thomas banner. Donna can regale you with her funny stories about their construction and the difficulty of putting the design onto fabric. Just ask her about it some time. These banners have enhanced every worship service.

Truly all of these persons have used their gifts to build up the Body of Christ. Our worship at St. Thomas is more meaningful to have these gifts of love from our very own parishioners. Thank you all! —*Rosemary Abbott*



Home and Hearth commemorative painting.



14.



13.



8.



9.



10.



11.



12.

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Comanche Elementary– School Supply Ministry

by Deacon Fran Wheeler

Thank you to all who supported the school supply collection for Comanche Elementary. St. Thomas was able to purchase backpacks and some bulk school supply items thanks to your generous contributions. We are grateful for those who also donated many of the additional supplies needed to help meet the school's request for the upcoming school year. It was a fun time for all as many joined in fellowship over a continental breakfast and packed school supplies that filled backpacks for 50 students.

A big thank you to our youth who gathered for ROTC this summer as well. As part of their outreach in the community, they generously provided bagged treats that were placed in each of the backpacks as a warm and encouraging "Welcome Back to School snack" for the students.

Thank you, for serving our community, and making a difference in the lives of others!



Continued from page 3

2. **Beat the Drum Orphanage** – a small not-for-profit orphanage for HIV positive children. This home currently supports 25 children from the ages of 3 months to 14 years;

3. **St. Nicholas School** – School and orphanage supported through the Anglican Church of Kenya; and,

4. **Upendo Group** – A local group that All Saints Church (ACK) supports as victims of HIV. Food was provided to this group for these families and their children.

There was even time for me to have some fun with children at an annual soccer tournament coordinated by the college team for **Ngeya School**, another local school in Maai Mahiu. I spent time with multiple groups of children ages 5-13, touring the school, sharing in questions and answers, and playing some of the

school playground games with them. The children had a great time watching me do my best to participate in these games with them!

To be in the presence of so many wonderful children who delighted in not only the physical gifts we brought with us, but for our time and presence, was just inspiring.

The entire K2K experience was extremely humbling and inspirational. Although this year's community team was smaller than others in the past, the time spent there was most meaningful, effective, and so gratefully appreciated. The Holy Spirit was strong at work and the joy and love of Christ was evermore present.

In Christ's service,

Fran

Thom's Helpers Are
Your Bakers
at St. Thomas



Most people know about "Morgan's Salsa" the all-fresh salsa made by the young people of Thom's Helpers, the St. Thomas Ministry for Young Adults with Special Needs, but how many know about "Thom's Bakers?"

Nearly every week, Thom's Helpers fire up the ovens in St. Thomas' kitchen and make hundreds of cookies for Sunday Coffee Hour, VBS, ROTC, Arts Camp and any other activity where people need a tasty treat.

Thanks to **Donna Fye**, who secured scores of boxes of frozen cookie dough from Harvesters, **Michael, Morgan and Sawyer** along with their Senior Cookie Chefs, **Sue Elliott, Cathy McCormick, Shirley Roberts and Dola McNown** have become the baking elves of St. Thomas.

Next time you are in the church and see the Thom's Helpers (Michael, Morgan or Sawyer) let them know how much your sweet tooth appreciates their long, hot hours in the kitchen.

If you feel that you might like to be a substitute volunteer for the Thom's Helpers ministry please contact Sue Elliott through the St. Thomas Office. A little of your time working with these young people will yield immeasurable rewards.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

We are *GROWING* in God's Love

Well, the calendar may not say it's the end of summer yet, but believe it or not the kids are about to head back to school which means we've got SEVERAL exciting things on the horizon for our youngest members!

Our **registration for Sunday School** begins **Sunday, August 2nd** and will continue through the beginning of September. This process greatly helps us to arrange class groupings, plan activities and ensure that we have plenty of loving volunteers lined up to lead and assist in our classrooms. Sunday School forms may be picked up and returned at the registration table in the narthex on Sundays throughout August and early September.

On **Sunday August 16th**, all children are invited to bring their backpacks to church as we celebrate their new academic school year with our annual **Blessing of the Backpacks**. At each service, students will be asked to come forward with their backpacks for a special blessing and to receive a special small gift from our congregation.

Our **Sunday School Kick-off Night** will take place on **Wednesday, September 9th from 6:00-8:00 pm** and will include an Ice Cream Social and opportunity for students and parents to visit the Sunday School classrooms and meet the teachers. **Our first official day of Sunday School will be Sunday, September 13th.**

I am very honored and happy to accept the opportunity to pick up where Ann Clements left off as the new Director of Children's Ministries. It has been a privilege to work with Ann and the children of our congregation previously as a parent and volunteer, and I am excited about the possibilities of merging my experience as an elementary school teacher with my faith to help support the spiritual growth of our children. If you ever have any questions or ideas to share, or if you would like to volunteer for one of our children's ministries please don't hesitate to contact me at bmccall@stthomasop.org.

*Barbara McCall,
Director of
Children's
Formation*



Ending on a high note!

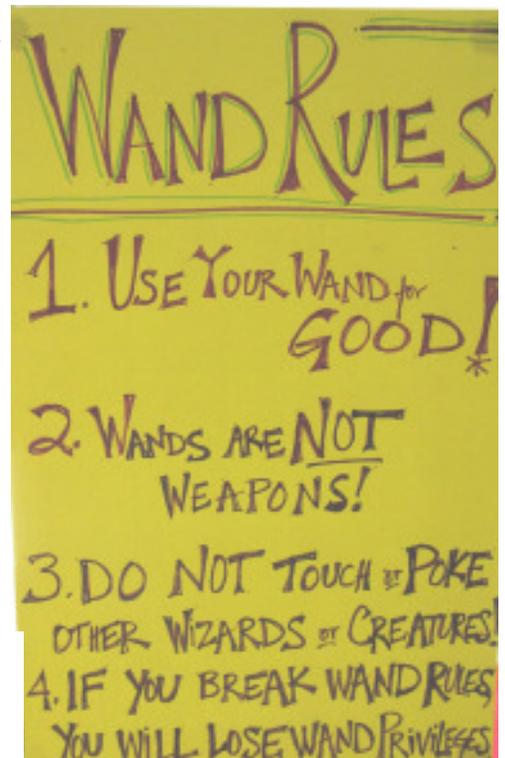
What a busy summer we've had for the kids and youth of St. Thomas. It's been a whirlwind and a bit crazy at times, but looking back on it, I am struck by how much fun we've had. We've shared good works with each other and the community. We made many new friendships and have grown in faith. We've learned how we fit into God's world. A summary of the Summer's activities can be found on page 10 under Youth Group news.

As most of you know, this is my last summer and year as Director of Children's Ministries. I'm stepping down to help with my soon-to-be-born twin grandbabies. My fourteen years a DCM have been so special, and I truly feel blessed to be able to do God's work through serving our children and families. The love, prayers and support from Father Gar and staff, leaders and parishioners has truly been a gift and helped to make our children's programs shine. Barbara McCall will be your new director, and since she has been active in our children's ministry as a teacher, supporter and parent, she'll be able to do wonderful things for our kids, their families and the congregation.

You'll still see me around—the kids of St. Thomas are truly special in my heart, and while I will help Miss Barbara out where she needs me, I look forward to exploring some other areas of ministry.

Thanks and God's blessings to all!

*Ann Clements,
former
Director of
Children's
Formation*



YOUTH GROUP NEWS



Mission Team '15 from left to right: first row, Riley Demo; Second row: Maddie Rimmer, Hannah Stirling, Heather Bradley-Geary with daughter Bre in front, Addie Ferren, Rachel Healy and Sofia Muller; Third row: Brent Ferren, Olivia Rimmer, Father Steven, Cormac Palmer, Cole Wheeler and Colin Palmer. Photo/Father Steven

The youth of St. Thomas have had a full summer of fun and formation! Over the course of June and July, St. Thomas sponsored and hosted five camps and, in addition, sent many youth to Camp Wood--the Mega Camp--with the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas. Be sure to ask Father Steven about his encounter with snakes!

We had 165 youth participate in these camps! Whether it was serving neighbors in need locally through **Reaching Out to the Community (ROTC)** or serving those in need in South Dakota through our mission trip, youth were able to make a difference and learn about their faith through service to others.

Arts Camp, led by Dr. Beth Elswick, provided opportunities for 27 youth to learn about gifts known to them and to discover their unknown talents through cooking, dancing, singing, and more! There were home-made pizzas, chocolate-covered bugs, and KC-style barbeque to enjoy. It was a week filled with joyful noise, smiling kids and full tummies.

At **Vacation Bible School**, Harry Potter and his Hogwarts crew joined us for an awesome week. Wizards of all ages learned about the Baptismal Covenants, identity and virtues and how to use them to serve God and overcome adversities. Music, singing, crafts, and delicious meals were provided each night by a dedicated crew of house elves. At the end of the week, we celebrated with hot dogs, Kona Ice, and a special appearance by Alex the Balloon Boy.

—Father Steven King. Ann Clements contributed to this column.

Looking ahead

As we look to the fall, we are preparing for the beginning of youth group once again! Last year we spent our program time learning about the Fruits of the Spirit. This year, we will delve further into the **Beatitudes** (from **Matthew 5**) and learn how they might apply to our lives today.

We always have time for eating dinner together, playing fun games, and taking many outings into the Kansas City area. All youth in grades 6-12 are invited to join us on Sunday evenings at 6:00 pm for this great time of fun, formation, and fellowship.

We hope to see you August 23rd and throughout the school year!

Introducing Olivia Allen



Olivia Allen is a recent addition to the staff at St. Thomas; she has been hired to serve as an intern for Youth and Children's Ministry. She will be here about ten hours a week working mostly on Sundays.

Currently, Olivia is a sophomore at Baker University studying psychology. She is a member and Vice-President of Philanthropy for the Alpha Chi Omega sorority at Baker.

She is from Overland Park and attends St. Michael and All Angels in Mission where she has been an active participant in their youth group including going on mission trips to Honduras when she was younger.

In addition, she has been active in the diocesan youth program and attended events like Church Camp and Miqra; she even had the opportunity to rector Happening #89.

She is very excited to start working at St. Thomas and getting to know the community as well as learning more about the youth program here.

Be sure to say hello when you see her.

OTHER CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Nursery

We can't believe how quickly the summer is winding down! With our amazing success in VBS, we're continuing to look forward to having all of our friends back in town. We love having so many familiar faces, as well as visitors in the nursery and in Sunday school.

We're so excited for the fall and for our new year of Sunday school! In addition to providing nursery support for the little ones, we'll, again, be teaching the pre-kindergarteners. While we're sad to see Ann leave, we're so thrilled to begin our collaboration with Barb. As Barb begins to dive into the curriculum in the youth Sunday school classes, we will be piggy-backing on many of those lessons to teach those stories to the little ones.

There are again a few changes in our staff. Grace and Sammy will be returning to college and visiting on some weekends. As many of you probably guessed, Ashley is pregnant and due in late September. Under doctor's orders, she'll be off until after the baby comes, but will likely be back in the late fall. Katie will continue to work with us and will be joined by Megan. Please help us welcome **Megan Hatfield** to our staff!

As always, thank you so much for the opportunity to work with the little ones. We're excited to begin another year and are looking forward to seeing so many familiar faces!

Love and prayers,
Kelly Lillis and the nursery staff

Parent's Day Out

Boy it's hard to believe the first day of Parent's Day Out on September 14, 2015 is only a month away. We are busy planning and preparing for the new school year. Enrollment is going well and there are only a few spaces available in the younger age group.

Substitute caregivers are needed. If you are available on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm and would like to occasionally substitute, please contact **Michelle Beeler** at 626-1492 to discuss this opportunity.

This line up of little guys is enough to form either an Ultimate Frisbee team or a Water Polo team. Anyone interested in coaching?

Photo/MichelleBeeler



PARISH NOTES

BIRTHS

Lilyane Aurora Jamison was born on July 7, 2015 to *Maria (Ganninger) & Nick Jamison*. Proud grandparents are Tracie Glasscock and Les Ganninger.

ADOPTION

Sydney Luella Weichel was born on June 12, 2015. Thrilled parents are *Shannon & Kristie Weichel*.

BAPTISMS

The following received the sacrament of Baptism:

On Sunday, July 5, 2015,
Sadielynn Rose Barnes
daughter of Jason & Emily Barnes,
and sister of Aidan and Caleb;

On Sunday, July 12, 2015,
Oliver Wade Brotherson,
son of Eric & Sarah Brotherson
(of Colorado),
and grandson of Steve and Charlotte Brotherson;

On Saturday, July 18, 2015,
Daniel Steven Adams and
Alyssa Grace Adams,
children of Stacey Belle Adams;

On Saturday, July 25, 2015,
William Patrick Shanks and
Jane Margaret Shanks,
children of Greg & Alice Shanks.
All were welcomed into the household of God.

DEATHS

Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to **Paul Van Dyne**, and sons **Scott** and **David**, on the passing of wife and mother, *Marcia Van Dyne*.



Our Services

Saturdays

5:30 Holy Communion

Sundays

8:45 Holy Communion
with praise music & band

9:45 *Sunday School/
Adult Formation*

10:45 Holy Communion
with traditional music



St. Thomas the Apostle Church
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Overland Park, KS 66213
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• fax: 913-451-1966 •

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Return Service Requested

The next Apostle deadline is
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th.

Join "Team St. Thomas" for the **2nd Annual Natalie's A.R.T. Run** Saturday, October 3rd

We are once again calling for all runners, joggers, walkers or leisurely rambler to join Team St. Thomas to support the Fleischaker Family and the memory of Natalie Fleischaker at the **2nd Annual Natalie's A.R.T. 5K and Fun Run** on Saturday, October 3rd at the South Creek Office Park in Overland Park.

The event begins at 7:45 am with a warm up, followed by the 5K, Kids Run and a pancake breakfast. Cost of participation is \$27 for members of the 5K Team, or \$15 for kids in the Fun Run.

Registration forms are available after all services in August in the narthex, or contact **Barbara McCall** at bmccall@stthomasop.org for more information.

Your Calendar in brief

AUGUST

Sunday School registration all month

- 16: Blessing of Backpacks**
- 23: Adult Forum begins at 9:45 am;**
Youth Group kick-off at 6 pm.

SEPTEMBER

- 7: Labor Day; Office closed.**
- 9: Sunday School kickoff with ice cream social. YUM!**
- 13: First day of Sunday School**
- 14: PARENTS DAY OUT begins!**
- 20: Invite/Welcome/Connect weekend**
- 27: APOSTLE deadline**

OCTOBER

- 3: Natalie's A.R.T. 5K Run**
- 4: Blessing of Animals at 4pm**
- 9-10: Women's Annual Retreat**

