

The APOSTLE

FALL 2017

Dear Ones,

What is it going to take to make the church matter to us? This is a question that has come up in many places around the church from national leaders; even our own vestry has asked this question. The social waters around us place less value on the church (any religious institution, really) than once existed. What this means is that in some ways all levels have to be much more intentional about our mission and ministry, and we can't rest in the assumption that people think we matter. The church DOES matter. Our spiritual life is CRITICAL for our well-being and making space for that in our life is CHALLENGING.

People are busy. In some ways they are running frantically to keep up with all the demands on their time and energy. Sometimes there just isn't any room in their life for "one more thing." Certainly there is less and less opportunity for reflection and prayer. If you are plugged into social media or have a smart-phone, you have given unprecedented access to your personal space and time to all kinds of people, companies and entities that want a piece of you! It isn't unusual to see photos of families or friends sitting with their eyes fixated on screens rather than on each other. This preoccupation is taking a toll on all of us in ways we can hardly imagine.

There isn't a simple answer. There is something we can DO for ourselves and community. We can be INTENTIONAL about our life. What that means is choosing how we will use our time each day. It means choosing how we will put our gifts to use in the world around us. It means putting our resources to work for the benefit of others.

I believe one of the mission tasks of the church in this day and age is to be a place that CHALLENGES us to see our life in just that way. The one life we are given is a gift, and we have so much more ability to control how we live it out than any generation before in history. **Mary Ann Radmacher** shared this poem in her book "Live with Intention:"

*live with intention.
walk to the edge.
listen hard.
practice wellness.
play with abandon.
laugh.
choose with no regret.
continue to learn.
appreciate your friends.
do what you love.
live as if this is all there is.*

So what is it going to take? What will it take for you to live a life filled with intention and purpose? And more to our community: what will it take the people of St. Thomas to live as a gathered community of Christians living out our mission in the world around us? In many ways we are already there, but there is much more for us to do.

With you on the journey,

Father Gar Demo

REFLECTIONS



The Rev. Kelly Demo,
Assistant Rector

Parents Night Out the same....but different

For several years now one of our most popular programs here at St. Thomas has been *Parents Night Out*. The program is just what the name implies; it is a chance for parents of our younger parishioners to drop their kids off and enjoy an evening out. Their young ones

are then cared for by the youth of the parish. It has been a wonderful learning ministry for the teens, a godsend to many parents, and a great way for the kids in the church to feel ever more at home at St. Thomas.

This year, after listening to parents, teens, and the kids, we are going to be making a few changes to the program. First, we will be moving the hours to **5:30-10 pm** on Saturday nights (see the dates below). This will allow plenty of time for parents to catch a movie but still get little ones home in bed. It even gives them a chance to attend the 5:30 service if they so choose. The evenings with the kids will be very structured, and we will have games, crafts, and a movie based on a theme.

Parents Night Out is a fundraiser for the youth program as well. The monies received from parents of little ones for the night are divided into “accounts” for whatever youth are in attendance that night. Then as that money builds they can use money from their “account” to go towards camp, the mission trip, etc. As it is a fundraiser, we walk a balance between helping the youth to make money and not asking the parents to pay too much for the evening. We are going to continue the policy of our service being a free-will offering, but our suggestion is \$20 for the evening per child or \$40 per family. We will also have the ability to take credit card payment this year.

Finally, we are asking parents of the youth to volunteer for one of the nights. We always have at least one staff person there for the night, and in the past, the volunteer youth ministers have taken a shift. However, I do not feel we should ask so much of them. Since this is a fundraiser that helps alleviate fees for their youth’s activities, we are asking parents to take on just one evening.

Below are the dates of the PNO’s for the year. We very much look forward to playing with and getting to know our younger St. Thomasites! Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks.

October 7
November 4
December 9
January 6
February 3
March 3

Mather Kelly



Invite/Welcome/Connect (IWC)

As we say goodbye to summer and hello to fall, there are several ways you can play an important roll in Invite/Welcome/Connect:

- Use one of the St. Thomas cards on the Welcome table to invite a neighbor, co-worker or family member to church or one of our many events;
- Remember to say “hello” to your fellow parishioners and new members;
- Wear a nametag each week;
- Use social media to stay in touch with St. Thomas members and see what is happening on the St. Thomas website and Facebook page; and
- Visit the next Invite/Welcome/Connect Ministry fair in October to discover ways to connect with your St. Thomas family.

**Mark your calendars now for the next Invite/Welcome/Connect Weekend on October 28th & 29th. We will showcase all of the ministries at St. Thomas. I am sure you will find a ministry that is just right for you!

—Jean Adam

Invite/Welcome/Connect Team



MUSIC MINISTRIES

The Call to Create/The Call to Practice

If we are created in the image of God (*Genesis 1:26*), and choose to use His actions, kindness, and love as models for living, then it seems to me that we need to take the act of creation very seriously.

In Genesis, the first actions that we see are the Heavenly Father actively working through space and time in the glorious design of our universe.

Again, in chapter 2, the narration continues with the specific origin of Adam and Eve. The creation story continues with the Garden of Eden. As a parent, teacher, and artist, I am drawn to the fact that my first Bible story is one of creation. Being creative is a lofty challenge.

Let us use these stories as models for ingenuity giving impetus to inventiveness. Clearly, we are not being asked to make a world from nothingness.

However, when we are given the mandate to “make music” and “sing praises to God” and “let everything that breathes, praise the Lord,” it seems clear that simply playing and singing through the old tunes does not do justice to worship.

We must do our best work. Even when we recite old stories and sing old songs, we must work to make the presentation a new and timely commu-

nication. When we sing newer music, we must practice as diligently as we would were we presenting a work that has already stood the test of time.

Our children have already displayed vast vocal and instrumental talent. They are dancers, actors, and artists. Given the opportunity and support, they infuse worship with energy levels during exciting presentations. As the church ramps the engines, please assist our kids in transportation to rehearsals, Sunday school, Children’s Chapel, and events that utilize their energy and talents. Look for kids to sing with the Blessing of the Pets, All Saints, and Veteran’s Day.

With a fixed budget, our music program will reuse materials and music. The lectionary readings repeat in a three-year cycle. Being creative is a necessity if we are to do justice to God’s call to sing praises.

Our praise band musicians are busy writing and arranging music for the 8:45 service. The traditional choir will present an Advent cantata by Dietrich Buxtehude with organ and brass.

As we listen to music via ear buds in our cars, we must be aware that those examples are virtually flawless, and they are almost never live perfor-

mances. The recording technology has created systems with harmonizers such that no notes are out of tune. The recordings are error free. We live

Footnotes

Dr. Beth L.
Elswick,
Director of Music
Ministries



in an age when problems can be digitally tweaked in a sound studio.

At St. Thomas our choirs listen to recordings of the great artists of our time. We enjoy wonderful examples of artistry. However, music at St. Thomas is always live. To my thinking, it is always exciting. We work to bring our music to the highest level because of our devotion to St. Thomas and our gift to the worship service.

We are creative using the talents of amateur musicians to glorify God. We are called to be creative. We must work to do it well. Let’s do it. Come join us.

Beth



MINISTRIES: OUTREACH

Spread some Christmas Cheer at the Johnson County IHN Holiday Party December 9, 2017

We all love to spread a little Christmas cheer. This year you can do so by being a part of the 13th annual **Johnson County Interfaith Hospitality Network Holiday Party**. Both IHN graduates and current homeless guests are invited to the party on **Saturday, December 9, 2017 from 11:00 am—1:00 pm** at St. Thomas Church. Celebrate the holidays by donating and being involved with this year's party.



An enormous amount of food is collected every year for dispersal to the IHN graduates through their holiday gift baskets.

Photo/JeanAdam

As in previous years, the IHN families will receive a holiday food basket (for the holiday meal and extras for the pantry—photo above) and gift cards. The “Kids Store” provides the children an opportunity to shop **free of charge** for small gifts for parents, guardians, and siblings. The party will include activities/games/crafts for the children, a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, as well as lunch for our guests and volunteers. The party is also a great opportunity for the IHN guests to meet or reconnect with other guests and volunteers.

More information about the party and how you can help will be available in the weekly *Tower Talk*. **On-line sign ups to provide food and gift cards**, as well as adult volunteers slots for the party will be available in November.

Questions? Please contact **IHN Holiday Party Coordinator Jean Adam** at 530-9097 or via email Jean_Adam2004@yahoo.com.

Running for Natalie



Photo/Barbara McCall

On Saturday, September 9, approximately 25-30 St. Thomas members turned out in support of the Fleischaker Family at the **4th Annual Natalie's A.R.T. Run**.

Natalie Fleischaker, who had been a fixture in our children's programs, fought a brave battle against D.I.P.G., a terminal form of pediatric brain cancer.

Natalie earned her angel wings in May of 2013. Each year, members of St. Thomas join together as a team to enjoy the 5K walk/run or to volunteer in memory of our sweet Natalie.

Pictured here are Jackson Barrington, Jennifer Barrington, and Ashley Fleischaker in the back row; Emma Barrington in front.

MINISTRIES: SMALL GROUPS

Prayer Shawl Ministry



On May 7, 2017, the St. Thomas Prayer Shawl Ministry had 25 prayer shawls blessed at all three services. These prayer shawls are made by members of the ministry and are to be given out to any member of St. Thomas, their family or friends. Prayer shawls are a visible reminder that the recipient is being prayed for through their illness, surgery, death, or any other circumstance where prayers are wanted.

There are prayer shawls of many sizes and colors for both men and women. They can be obtained by calling **Linda Manuel**, 438-7407 (home) or 980-2170 (cell), or **Suzie Bowden** 599-6290 (home), 207-0072 (cell), or by letting **Meribeth Risebig** know of your needs. It helps us to know the recipient's name, color preference (if known), and if they are male or female.

Please don't hesitate to ask for a prayer shawl. We enjoy making them and giving them out.

Blessings,
St. Thomas Prayer Shawl Ministry



Photos/Suzie Bowden

StA Explorers a group of "Faith, Fellowship, Food and Fun"

The **St. Thomas Explorers** began their 6th year together on Friday, September 8th, with a "Taco Bar" potluck and the sharing of family and trip pictures. Everyone was excited to be back together after the summer hiatus especially with the smell of great food adding to the reunion atmosphere.

The Explorers love to take day trips in the Kansas City and surrounding areas and have a great time visiting places as diverse as the Truman Presidential Library, the Toy and Miniature Museum, the top of the Kansas Capital Building's Dome, the Kansas City Gangster Tour, the Atchinson Ghost Tour and the Budweiser Clydesdale Breeding Farm. Somehow, we are always able to find a nearby place to enjoy great lunch and fellowship.

The Explorers meet on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month at 7 pm in Parish Hall 3 at St. Thomas. Meetings usually follow a format that begins with prayer followed by brief Bible reading that leads into a faith-centered video study and discussion. Meetings often include a time to share experiences with one another. We always end with a prayer and snacks.

While large for a "small group," the Explorers love the opportunity to be together and grow our faith through our friends.

If you would like more information contact: **John and Dola McNown** at 541-9226. Or see us at church.



StA Explorers ready for a new year of faith and fellowship.
Sitting: Dola McNown, Leila Potts, Susan Strom. *Standing:* Steve Glasscock, Tracie Glasscock, Bill Werner, Kathy Werner, Joe Bob Lake, Jerry Carman, Susan Carman, June Giancarlo, Ron Giancarlo, Beth Anderson, John McNown.

Photo/John McNown

MINISTRIES: Thom's Helpers

Eclipse Can't Darken Thom's Spirits

On August 21st, St. Thomas' Thom's Helpers took off for Wyandotte County Park Shelter House A for a perfect view of the "total eclipse of the century!" Sporting matching "Total Solar Eclipse" t-shirts, approved solar eclipse glasses and a ready-to-party attitude, the Thom's Helpers set out up Kansas 7 in the St. Thomas van toward Bonner Springs for their full 12 seconds of totality.

Dola McNown, Marge Dellinger and Beth Anderson stopped by Subway and picked-up the sandwiches for the picnic lunch only to find twice as much food as they expected! It turned out that a patron of Subway saw a worker creating the Thom's order and was so taken with the thought of our group taking a day off from working at the church, that he paid for a second complete order of everything! This was far more than our Thom's group needed, but it later gave us a great opportunity to show God's love to others.

Driving west on 127th, **John McNown** picked up *Morgan Diaz, Michael Findling, Eric Kling and Sam Chaptentier* as we headed for a rendezvous with **Patti Bartowzeski and Joe Bob Lake** who would complete our adventuresome group. Only *Sauna Magnan* of the Thom's was unable to attend, but her friends in Thom's made a special video so she would know how much she was missed.

Of course, the eclipse was a bust for us. Clouds kept us from seeing the sun for most of the morning. An occasional glimpse of the moon's path across the sun between banks of thick, dark clouds was about all we could see from our location at Shelter House A. But did that dampen the spirits of our group? Not in the least! We played games! We made videos! We met a Wyandotte County Sheriff's Deputy and a family from Arkansas who had come north to see the "great eclipse!" So of course, we shared our bounty from Subway with them. It was like "loaves and fishes." We ordered some and the Lord provided more so we could share.

The sun might have been hidden behind clouds and the shadow of the moon on August 21st, but in Shelter House A at Wyandotte County Park the light of Christ was shining brightly from Thom's Helpers.



Thom's Helpers and the Deputy Sheriff at the solar eclipse, Left to right: Marge Dellinger, Patti Bartowzeski, Morgan Diaz, John McNown, Michael Findley, Wyandotte Sheriff's Deputy, Eric Kling, Sam Chaptentier, Dola McNown, Beth Anderson.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children's Church and Sunday School: What's what and where does my child belong?



Barbara McCall,
Director of
Children's
Ministry

The quick answer is that Children's Church and Sunday School are two very special, but unique, ways that we offer to our children to come to God each Sunday morning. That word UNIQUE is very important, because they are, in fact, two different things that can go hand in hand.

Children's Church is a child-focused worship service that targets children in preschool through 3rd grade. When our children accept the invitation "to follow the cross to Children's Church," they begin by processing to their special sacred worship space. When they arrive, they begin with a brief social time often telling about their week or asking and answering questions. Sound familiar? It's what most of our adults do in the Narthex before heading into worship. Our worship official opens with an opening prayer. Next, we listen to one of the readings of scripture heard in the "big church" – usually the Gospel. Our "sermon" is a shared discussion or activity designed to help the children relate the words of the lesson to their own lives – just as Father Gar and Mother Kelly design their sermons for the congregation. Of course, what would a worship service be without music? Following our lesson, Dr. Beth and Ms. Melissa and their UMKC Friends join the children for praise songs, and, let me tell you, do these kids ever get the spirit! Children's Church ends with a closing prayer where petitions from the children are heard. We offer thanks to God for our time together and his words to us that day before sending the children back to their families to come to the table for Holy Communion.

While Children's Church is a special time, I do want to make clear that accepting the invitation is never required. While some children enjoy the atmosphere offered in Children's Church, and for some it can provide a good transition between Nursery and learning how to engage in traditional worship, for other children staying in the beautiful sanctuary, near their families is the best, most comfortable way to come to God. That is okay! "All are welcome," after all.

Sunday School takes place between the two Sunday Services and offers children a fantastic opportunity for extended interaction with their own community (age-alike friends, and their teachers/mentors) and stories of the bible that help them understand their place in the world as children of God.

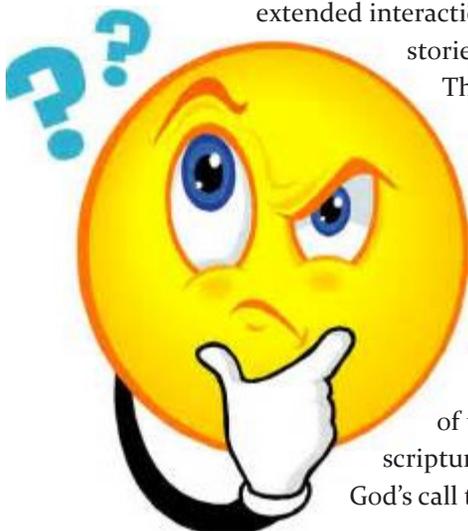
This may not be like the Sunday School you remember, however. In our classrooms, our children experience these stories through play, drama, choice in crafts, books, games, reading, etc.

In our youngest two classrooms, children in preschool through first grade, enjoy experiencing what adults might think of as "classic" bible stories—stories of Moses, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; of bible heroes like Joshua, Joseph and David; and stories that help them know that there is a God who loves them and has a plan to use them to do good in the world.

In our mid-late elementary classrooms, our children dig deep into the gospel lesson of the day in kid-friendly language and learn how to apply the lessons taught in those scriptures in their day-to-day lives; and they prepare for the exploration and discernment of God's call to them that they will encounter in their Youth formational experiences.

So, there you have it. Children's Church and Sunday School...worship and formation...apples and oranges. Two unique offerings for kids that both fit beautifully into the fruit basket that is our Children's Ministry program. Your child is welcome and has a place in both.

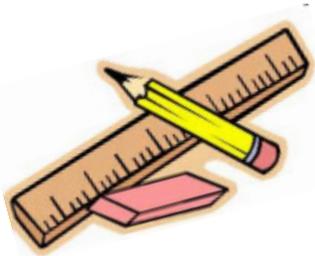
—Ms. Barbara



Rally Day opens the school year with fun, food and friendship!



Blessing of Back Packs



Refreshments!

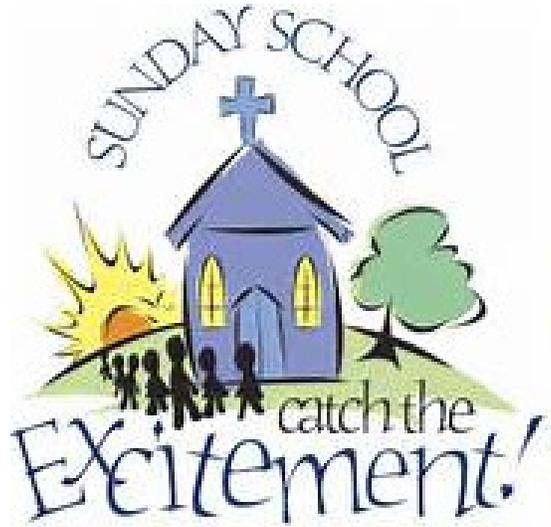


Fun on a waterslide!



Friends!





The classrooms just buzzed with excitement on Sunday morning, September 10th as our Sunday school program officially began for the 2017-2018 school year.

In the top photo, **Ms. Ann** and **Ms. Emily** engage their Pre-School class with an activity. In the middle photo, three Pre-Schoolers have a hearty appetite for snacks!

In the bottom photo, **Ms. Charlotte** reads a story to a captive audience as her co-teacher, **Ms. Leslie** looks on.

Parish Notes

Baptisms

Pierce McMillan

was welcomed into the household of the Lord on August 13, 2017.

He is the son of
Eric & Clarissa McMillan.

Marriages

Congratulations to

Dan Kraft and Elena Hurlock

who were united in marriage on August 18, 2017.

Dan is the son of Larry & Linda Kraft and grew up at St. Thomas.

Deaths

The sympathy of the St. Thomas family is extended to:

Barbara Staley

on the death of her husband,
Dennis;

Jane Wiggins

on the passing of her mother,
Maxine Hoppe;

Barbara Adam, Blair & Jean Adam and the rest of the Adam family

on the passing of their husband/father/father-in-law
Jim Adam.

Christmas is around the corner!
Our annual youth group fundraiser
"Scrumptious Cookie Sale"
will be held on
Saturday, December 2
from 9 until sellout
(or 4 pm).
Plan to participate!



Our Services

Saturdays

5:30 Holy Communion

Sundays

8:45 Holy Communion
with praise music & band

10:45 Holy Communion
with traditional music



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The next deadline for the
APOSTLE
is November 5, 2017.

Your Challenge

LIVE WITH INTENTION,
WALK TO THE EDGE,
LISTEN HARD,
PRACTICE WELLNESS,
PLAY WITH ABANDON,
LAUGH,
CHOOSE WITH NO REGRET,
APPRECIATE YOUR FRIENDS,
CONTINUE TO LEARN,
DO WHAT YOU LOVE...
**LIVE AS IF THIS IS ALL
THERE IS.**

Mary Anne Radmacher

Calendar in brief

New Times

October:

- 1: **Blessing of Animals, 4 pm**
- 7: **Parents Night Out from 5:30 to 10:00 pm**
- 14: **St. Paul's Breakfast serving**
- 15: **All-Parish annual Hayride, 5:30 pm at Sharp's in Stilwell**
- 20-21: **Diocesan Convention in Topeka**
- Women's Annual Retreat at Heartland Center**
- 28-29: **IWC Ministry Fair weekend after all services**
- 29: **BOO BASH/Chili cook-off from 5 to 7 pm**

November:

- 11: **Diocese of KS Regional Confirmation at StA**
- 12: **Red Cross Blood Drive, 8 am-12:30 pm**
- 22: **THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE, 7 pm**

December

- 2: **Annual COOKIE SALE!**

