

St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church



zoom



Meeting date:

January 26, 2022

7:00 pm

2021 Annual Report

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Stewardship Statement

St. Thomas the Apostle Clergy and Staff 2021

The Rev. Gar Demo, Rector

The Rev. Kelly Demo, Associate Rector

The Rev. Fran Wheeler, Deacon

Dr. Beth Loeber Elswick, Director of Music Ministry

Ms. Meribeth Risebig, Parish Administrator

Mrs. Barbara McCall, Director of Children's & Family Ministry

Ms. Abby Swanson – Director of Nursery

St. Thomas the Apostle Vestry 2021

Rector - The Rev. Gar Demo

Senior Warden – George Phillips

Junior Warden – Bruce Henricks

Third Year Members (term ends January, 2021) - Brian Gordon, Martha Lamoy, Ron Peña, Paul Van Dyne

Second Year Members (term ends January, 2022) - Laura Bond, Steve Connelly, Abby Pullin, NJ Umeh

First Year Members (term ends January, 2023) - Andy Carter (partial year – relocated), Donna Kopp, Vance Lamb, Kari Wold

Clerk of the Vestry - Brian Gordon

Treasurer - Drew Honaker

Convocation Delegates - Leslie Byrnes, Jack Dutra, Sara Meyers, Tom Meyers, Dick Wilson, Ron Weil (alt). All terms expire 1/2023.

2022 Vestry and Diocesan Delegate Candidates

This year we have 5 openings on the Vestry - 4 for a three-year term and 1 for a two-year term. To be eligible canons and by-laws require that the person be 18 years or older, be a confirmed communicant of St. Thomas, regular in attendance and a pledger and giver of record. All of these people meet these requirements and have been nominated and accepted that nomination.

VESTRY CANDIDATES: Emily Connelly, Parthy Evans, Peter Gram, Jen Newlin, Jane Wiggins

We will elect two people to serve as representatives to the Diocesan and Convocation meetings. The convocations meet four times a year and there is one diocesan meeting in Topeka in the fall. This is a great way to be part of the larger church. The delegates have a chance to hear diocesan reports, vote on the diocesan budget and other matters, and seek to link St. Thomas to the wider Episcopal Church.

DIOCESAN DELEGATES: Enjy (NJ) Umeh, Suzan Olson

Annual Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, January 26, 2022, 7:00 pm – Zoom online

Opening Hymn

The Summons

1. Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?
2. Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare, should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?
3. Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the pris'ners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,
And admit to what I mean in you and you in me?
4. Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,
Through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?
5. Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

Text: John L. Bell, b.1949, © 1987, Iona Community

Opening Prayer

Call to Order

Approval of the Minutes from 2021 Annual Meeting

Review and approval of current Annual Meeting Agenda

Election of Vestry (4 for a three-year term, 1 for a two-year term)

and Election of Diocesan Delegates (2 for a three-year term)

- Nominating Committee report & introduction of nominees present
- Nominations from the floor
- Voting by Zoom Poll if needed.

Finance Report (Abby Pullin, Drew Honaker)

2021 Report on Finances / Audit

2022 Budget

Report from Junior Warden – Dr. Bruce Henricks

Report from Senior Warden –Dr. George Phillips

Results of Elections (if needed)

Affirmation of the Rector's Nomination for Senior Warden

A Year in the Life of St. Thomas

Other Announcements / Appointments

Prayer, Blessing and Dismissal

NOTE: The Vestry will meet immediately following the dismissal on Zoom.

Annual Meeting Minutes from January 29, 2021

Opening Hymn: The Summons

Opening Prayer by Fr. Gar Demo

Call to Order and Welcome by Fr. Gar Demo

The link the annual meeting booklet was shared in the chat window

(<https://stthomasop.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Annual-Report-2021.pdf>)

The agenda was shared and reviewed. A motion by Jack to accept as presented and a second were given, the agenda was accepted by acclimation.

Review and Approval of 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes. Motion made from the floor by Martha accept the minutes of the 2020 annual meeting, motion seconded by Jack and passed by acclimation.

Enjy motioned that we accept the ministry reports be accepted as presented, that motion was seconded and accepted by acclimation.

Election of New Vestry Nominees: Diana Diaz, Georgina Green, Mariann Pena, Joe Bob Lake each to a 3 year term, and Mike Pickett to a 2 year term. Motion to cease further nominations was put forth and seconded, and the ballot of vestry nominees was accepted by acclimation. Gar shared the bios of each of the candidates, that link is here:

https://stthomasop.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/VESTRY.BIO_.2021.pdf

John McNown motioned we accept the ballot as presented, Kari seconded, ballot was accepted by acclimation as presented.

Gar shared that the current vestry has been very engaged during 2020 because we had shifted to Zoom which made it easier for everyone to participate.

Finance Report by Abby Pullin and Drew Honaker. This is Abby's first year at finance chair and Drew has been treasurer for two years. Others on the finance committee are Ashley Fleischaker and George Phillips. Abby first shared that we did have an official audit in 2020 and everything with the audit went well. Abby then ran us through the St Thomas year-end treasurer's report and balance sheet (printed version available in the packet) and then the projected budget for 2021. Abby provided some very useful commentary on the 2020 expenses, sharing that pledged came in at 104% of budget, so thank you to everyone for fulfilling your pledges in 2020. The reason it came in at 104% is that we pare it back to 97% for budget purposes so the difference is that. Salaries and benefits shows 85% of budget but do not despair, everyone was paid in 2020. The difference is that STA received a PPP loan that was intended to cover those type of

expenses so the different was the PPP funds (roughly \$81K). We ended the year with a surplus is partly the PPP funds, but netted against lost plate income still comes out very solid when we were expecting to be in a small deficit position. The 2021 budget was shared, compared to actual income and expenses from 2020. We kept the same percentage of pledges (97%). Plate income is based on getting back into the building by the fourth quarter of 2021. The net accounting software we are using does not allow for any back-dating of deposits so there is a new carryforward line for pledges that were for 2020 but deposited in 2021. Vestry did authorize a 1.3% salary cost of living increase for staff to acknowledge how valuable they all are to STA, even though 2021 does still have some uncertainty to it. We also will use up in 2021 some of the capital funds that go towards the mortgage, so ultimately the mortgage costs look higher because we will finish using up those funds. Motion given by Dick to affirm the budget, Sue seconded, accepted by acclamation. Gar thanked the finance committee for all their efforts, and special thanks to everyone for supporting STA and keeping their pledge commitments, and that was really a significant move as we transitioned from in-person to virtual and it has really been a moving target but a really great testament to the faith of the parish.

Report from Senior Warden George Phillips. George shared that one of the main responsibilities is to keep an eye on the clergy and the staff, and they have all adapted and stayed optimistic about the changes. Another responsibility of a Senior Warden is to really lean on the vestry to help guide the parish forward. George shared that he's very grateful for this vestry group for being so engaged and for the thoughtfulness and diligence of doing this work. George also asked that you do read his Senior Warden's report. He commented on some of Abby's comments about the outpouring of support. Having served on the Bishop's Advisory Medical Council he was able to hear what is going on around the diocese and we are truly fortunate and blessed for how we have navigated 2020. George Phillips has agreed to stay on as Senior Warden, so an affirmation was asked of the congregation and given by acclamation.

Report from Junior Warden Bruce Henricks. Bruce provided a list of the projects undertaken around STA. He highlighted the Apostle's Garden, and the six-phased plan provided by a landscape architect. Two phases have been completed and continuing to manage the remaining phases will be funded as donations for that purpose become available. The grounds are in very good shape, well mulched, and the parking lot was also resurfaced, the cross-tower repairs and repainted, and the updated landscape lighting. Gar thanked Bruce and Peggy for all their efforts and hours committed. Bruce will stay on as Junior Warden. A question was raised about the additional parking lot. There are still about \$80-90K set aside that is designated just for that purpose. 2020 was not really a good year for us to have intentional conversations on that topic but it is still on the radar.

Frank Revare created a promotional video as part of his Eagle Scout project effort. The video specifically highlights the welcoming/inviting nature of the STA youth group. Gar shared that video with those present, the YouTube link is here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v33KoXUWSQ0&feature=youtu.be>

The next few months will likely be some of the same with regard to services, etc, and have added in the parking lot service as part of that, which depending on weather, may be cancelled from time to time.

Gar shared the 2020 video in the life of STA. Lots of adaptation and staff creativity around how to think about ministries, communities, and ways to stay connected. Who would have thought we grew by 12 families this year when we could not meet in person?!?! It will be important when we are back together in person to welcome those new families and help them get acclimated to STA. Gar shared he is very proud of the staff and how they responded throughout the chaos of 2020.

Staff Report Presentations: Barbara McCall and Mother Kelly shared about the project they have developed which is currently being called “building a culture of social justice with children and youth”, a new developmental model, from Pre-K/2nd Grade up through the 9-12th grade group.

Beth Loeber-Elswick gave a quick update on an upcoming organ recital event to show the new digital organ to the association of local organist in the area.

Fran shared some of activities and duties in the diocese, in the province and also in the national church for ECW (Episcopal Church Women). She is also active in working with local parishes who are discerning their areas of outreach where they can make a difference and have an impact in their communities.

Fr. Gar thanked the church members present and the staff for all their support, involvement, and dedication to making St. Thomas a vibrant community. He asked for patience for the process of getting back to in-person and he does not want to ask for vaccination cards! Currently we have about 45 people (primarily health care workers but some of our elderly members) who have been vaccinated. Still a lot of runway ahead of us as the vaccine rollout continues.

Closing Prayer, Blessing and Dismissal by Fr. Gar Demo

Respectfully Submitted,
Brian Gordon, Clerk of the Vestry

Membership and Attendance Report 2021

Dear People of St. Thomas,

St. Thomas continues to be a vibrant and healthy congregation. We had a number of great services with large attendance at both Easter and Christmas. We have had many funerals, weddings and baptisms, and our membership continues to grow. We had an increase in pledges due many new members this year. Here is a chart of the years since 2005.

Blessings- Fr. Gar Demo

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ASA</u>	<u>Easter</u>	<u>Christ- mas</u>	<u>Mem- bers</u>	<u>Pledges</u>	<u>Bap- tism</u>	<u>Wed- dings</u>	<u>Funerals</u>	<u>Conf/ Rec</u>
2005	217	406	439	623	135	5	1	2	6
2006	239	390	463	674	136	11	2	5	9
2007	258	539	493	690	167	16	6	4	15
2008	260	614	563	735	189	11	3	3	5
2009	277	612	412	691	189	18	5	4	5
2010	273	663	543	679	193	17	3	19	29
2011	270	652	637	715	206	9	4	16	0
2012	278	668	752	720	204	11	4	21	10
2013	287	696	702	740	199	23	6	21	12
2014	297	731	685	768	205	14	11	15	5
2015	297	747	707	762	222	13	8	23	28
2016	310	784	746	826	228	9	7	9	15
2017	317	749	747	997	218	8	5	21	18
2018	310	691	742	1057	229	7	5	13	0
2019	290	735	731	1075	232	10	8	16	14
2020	309	--	--	841	223	5	2	17	--
2021	170+174 *	339+358 *	649+35 2	890	227	7	4	12	12

In 2022: 257 streamed services, 143 In Person, 51 Parking Lot

ASA: is 344 which includes 170 average attendance in person, and 174 online.

*first number is in person, second number is online views on FB and Youtube

Associate Rector Report – Mthr. Kelly Demo

I believe this past year was one of beginning to reconnect. We had people in neighborhood groups see people they have gone to church with for years but never knew lived close to them! We had members of our small groups reach out in care and concern for their members who were sick or who couldn't get out because of the pandemic. And we have seen tremendous growth in our youth community. We have new friends whose families are members now of St. Thomas but we have also welcomed many new friends who are unchurched, or from other christian and even non-Christian faith traditions! We have many youth from the LGBTQ community who have felt welcomed and loved in Christ's name by their fellow youth group members. We were able to host a full compliment of our summer camps including an amazing mission trip to Colorado Springs. After a year of feeling so disconnected in 2020, 2021 gave me hope and felt pretty great as we began the road back to rebuilding our community.

Senior Warden Report – Dr. George Phillips

As I write this letter to you, my St. Thomas family, we are fully immersed in the Omicron surge of COVID-19. In the hospital system for which I work, we have implemented stricter operational protocols to protect our health care workers, so that we can maintain enough employees to care for our patients. Those of us who are willing and able are signing up to take on additional shifts in our inpatient units, emergency rooms, and urgent care clinics to meet patient demand and relieve overworked physicians and staff. We now must conserve our limited supply of COVID-19 test kits. All of this feels like a repeat of the responses we made in 2020, before we understood this virus as well as we do now, and before we had effective vaccines. Time has moved on, and yet we are repeating our history. Since I wrote my Senior Warden letter to you last year, what have we accomplished? What have we done with that time?

“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.” 2 Peter 3:8-10 (NIV)

As a physician, I have plenty of patients, but I'm not sure I always have plenty of patience. I think you might understand this feeling: I AM SO READY FOR COVID-19 TO BE OVER! But, God has other plans for us right now.

In 2 Peter, we are reminded that our perception of time is very much human and not necessarily divine. In and of itself, the opening verse reminds us that our self-centered focus on time often obscures or ignores the working of God's Kingdom on Earth. A humbling message, indeed...

But then the next verse comes right back to reassure us that God has a plan and, in fact, that master plan has a place for each one of us to repent and live in full relationship with God. “Jesus, take the wheel”, indeed! Yet there is something reassuring in hearing that there is a place in the plan for us.

In the final verse, we are apocalyptically reminded that the return of the Lord will be sudden - but again, that is in the context of our human perception of time. God surely knows the plan for his return, even if we cannot fathom the timeline.

For me, that leaves me with a takeaway message that is both simple and difficult - live in the moment. Meet others in the moment. Serve God’s Kingdom in the moment.

So, St. Thomas family, how did we do in 2021 at serving God’s Kingdom in the moment?

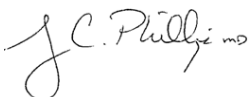
I think we did amazingly well. We continued our leadership with several important community ministries, such as Comanche Elementary and IHN. We nurtured our parish relationships through ongoing small group gatherings (virtually and in-person!), Christian formation for children, youth, and adults, and returning to in-person worship while continuing to offer on-line opportunities for all to stay connected. We took care of our grounds and our building, creating welcoming, safe, and healthy spaces for contemplation and worship. We made conscious choices to take on new and exciting ministries, such as adoption of a refugee family from Afghanistan. Our parish remains active in service to God’s Kingdom.

Our parish also enjoys the fruits of those labors. We have found an option to allow us to return to the inclusion of both bread and wine in the sacrament of Communion. We have grown in the number of members who have joined our parish family! And through your generosity, our Stewardship Campaign saw a record amount in pledges, giving us the resources to do more in service for God’s Kingdom within our parish and the greater community.

Looking back over the past 2 years, I grieve for what we as a community and society have lost, as well as for the things we were not able to realize together. Looking forward, I worry for what is still to come, and along with many of you, I somewhat anxiously face the uncertainty of what Father Gar has coined the “Great Discernment”, wondering how God’s calling for me (and for us) will be manifest in years to come.

But for now, in this moment, I smile with deep appreciation for what our St. Thomas family has accomplished together. I acknowledge with sincere admiration our clergy, our staff, and our Vestry for the dedication they have shown for our parish. I offer heartfelt thanks for each of you and for your contributions of time, talent, and treasure in service to God’s Kingdom. And, in this moment, my grief and anxiety are tempered with faith in the promise of salvation and the anticipation of what is to come for our parish in 2022.

May we continue to prayerfully seek God’s presence and trust in His plans for St. Thomas, now and into the future.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "G.C. Phillips MD".

Peace,
George Phillips, MD - Senior Warden

Diaconal Report 2021 – The Rev. Fran Wheeler

I have been at St. Thomas for 7 years now and continue to be grateful for the many blessings we continue to share with each other in our community and in the world. In addition to serving at the Altar during services, my diaconal ministries were served in the following ways during 2021:

- **Liaison for Comanche Elementary and the Caring for Kids Ministry** - This ministry connects us and various other businesses and organizations within the Overland Park community in support with Comanche Elementary and their school community. Each year, the requests in how we support the school vary based upon the school's current needs. At the school's request in 2021, efforts continued to be led to coordinate support for students, teachers, and staff through this ongoing COVID/variant time. Please see the Outreach section of this Annual Report to learn about the many ministries we do to support this School. A great deal of appreciation is extended to all those who have contributed their time, talents, and treasures to help make a difference in the lives of these children and their families as well as the teachers and staff of Comanche Elementary.
- **LEV Coordinator** - Each week Lay Eucharistic Visitors take communion out to those who are unable to attend church due to illness, or other special circumstances. As Deacon, I lead the coordination efforts to recruit, train, and schedule our Lay Eucharistic Visitors. We have grown this ministry to 24 trained LEVs and still are growing. Our next opportunity for LEV training will be held in February 2022. I am extremely grateful for the loving compassion and dedication our LEVs provide each week, and throughout the year to all we visit.
- **Mental Health and Wellness** – 2021 found a need for this group to come together and determine ways in which we can support our St. Thomas community regarding Mental Health and Wellness. This group has provided awareness of Mental Health & Wellness by educating, providing resources, and coordinating several events throughout the year. Please see the Pastoral Care section to learn more about this what this new Mental Health and Wellness ministry has done in its first year of ministry. I am grateful for the creativity this new team has offered, and for their patience and dedication as we continue to explore how this ministry will best serve our community.
- **Pastoral Visits** – I assist with pastoral visits as needed.

In addition to my ministries at St. Thomas, I work part time as the Administrative Assistant to the Dean at the Bishop Kemper School for Ministry in Topeka. I also serve on a Diocesan level as Co-Chairperson for the Diocesan Outreach Task Force, and chairperson for the Alleluia Grant, which oversees the application process, selection, and distribution of Diocesan Outreach Matching Grants for local outreach ministries within our Diocese. I also serve as President on the

board for Episcopal Church Women (ECW) in our Diocese. This board meets quarterly and plans various annual events for Women in the Diocese. In addition, I also serve as President on the Board for Episcopal Church Women for Province VII which consists of active ECW chapters in 10 different dioceses within our Provincial area. Part of my role with this is to be available for support to their diocesan boards, and to be available for presentations and appearances at their annual meetings and retreats. I also serve on the Province VII program committee which coordinates and organizes special events/retreats within the Provincial area. In addition I serve as one of the representatives of our Diocesan ECW at General Convention's ECW Triennial. This year I again will attend the Triennial held in conjunction with General Convention taking place in Baltimore this summer.

*In Christ's Service,
Deacon Fran Wheeler*

Vestry Committees

Property – Junior Warden report

St. Thomas' campus and grounds

Our overall church campus is in good order. We plan to make alterations in our lawn chemical program to reduce the content of crabgrass in our turf. We have extensively improved our drip irrigation system including within the renovated landscaping in the Apostle's garden. We will be using a new irrigation maintenance firm to capitalize on their experience with all types of irrigation systems. Our shrubs and trees are healthy and will continue to be monitored, trimmed and maintained.

All six phases of the relandscaping of the Apostle's Garden were completed in July. This major improvement was fully funded by the generosity of our parishioners. The outpouring of generous support for this project exceeded our financial expectations and following completion of both the landscaping and customized irrigation we retain about \$7500.00 in reserve for maintenance and future improvements of our gardens.

St Thomas's building

Our physical structures are sound and in good repair. We are converting all aspects of our lighting to LED bulbs wherever possible to complement the solar panels being installed this spring. Our lighted marquis at 123rd and Antioch is soon to be retrofitted with LED fixtures. Collectively we are working to lessen our carbon footprint whenever an opportunity presents itself.

The Finance committee recommended the reapportionment of retained Capital Campaign funds allocated to the parking lot expansion to be used to update and refurbish our Christian education wing. The Vestry has approved that recommendation and we are now studying how best to utilize those funds. The specifics will be shared once our plans are more fully developed.

Bruce W. Henricks, M.D. - Junior Warden

Thom's Green Thumbs / Apostle's Garden and Columbarium

The Apostle's garden experienced a major transformation in 2021. Due to the outstanding generosity of so many we were able to complete the entire project. The landscape architect and her firm plan to add some more ground cover this spring and will continue to monitor the plants with us. Our plantings were selected to provide year-round interest while being low maintenance. This spring we plan to finish a minor addition to the landscape on the West side of the sanctuary to continue our overall plan to re-beautify the gardens around the periphery of the parish hall and nave.

A dedicated group of volunteers worked regularly to dig, weed, replant beds, hand water for period of weeks prior to the completion of the new drip system, and re-locate plants throughout the gardens. Their efforts preserved our investment in the Apostle's garden. This same group of individuals are committed to helping maintain all we have accomplished in making our campus visually appealing. Our Apostle's garden and columbarium are a sacred place for remembrance and reflection that warrants all our respect and full attention.

Twelve Memory Bricks were ordered in 2021 and will be placed as they are finished by the monument company. The Memory Brick program is ongoing and there are order forms in the Narthex, or you can contact the church office for anyone wishing to place an order. A minimum of four bricks at a time are necessary to process an order. The engraving process is limited by the availability of staff and scheduling at the monument company so we must be patient with the process.

Thom's Green Thumbs are always looking for help so if you have interest please contact me directly.

Peggy Henricks

Adult Formation

Adult Formation

Our efforts at Adult formation continue to meet online through the pandemic. We have shifted in our offerings on Sundays to include a variety of TED talks and reflections on that week's Gospel Themes. We have included classes from CHURCH NEXT and other online formats. During Lent we offered a 5-week Lenten lunch with presentations from several national leaders focused on the question what their last lecture would be. We had an Advent speaker series focused on spiritual practices and prayer. There are several weekly offerings that are well supported, including the Wednesday morning study group, Education for Ministry and several small groups.

The Rev Gar Demo

Education for Ministry – EfM

Lay people face the difficult and often subtle task of interpreting the richness of the church's faith in a complex and confusing world. They need a theological education that supports their faith and helps them to connect that faith to their lives. Education for Ministry (EFM) is a four-year program from the Episcopal Seminary of the University of the South in Sewanee, TN. The EFM program provides participants with an opportunity to discover how to respond to the call to Christian service and carry out their ministries.

For 2020/2021, our EFM seminar has eight students. We are excited to welcome four year-one participants, two participant who returned for year two, and one each in years three and four. Each participant brings their unique experience and relationship with God to our weekly exploration. As you may imagine, EFM is meeting virtually in Zoom each Wednesday evening. We meet for 36 weeks and are almost half-way through our academic year. Each week in EFM we practice a process of theological study and reflection. In study we explore the old testament (years one), the new testament (year two), church history (year three), and theology and philosophy (year four). In reflection, we explore church traditions, our culture and our society and how to connect our unique selves to ministry in this world. When you are interested in becoming a part of EFM's outstanding educational program and learn more about your journey with God, please contact Ray Wheeler, 913-269-0542, ray.wheeler60@gmail.com or one of the Clergy.

The Wednesday Study/Discussion Group

Our name may make us sound more studious than we are, for reading assignments are not part of our programs! The meetings consist of watching a video featuring well-known theologians, writers, and clergy and then discussing the topic presented. While we had to meet via Zoom, we managed to keep learning and conversing. Our virtual teachers have included: Richard Rohr, James Finley, Brian McLaren, Marcus Borg, Dominic Crossan, Brene Brown, Walter Brueggeman,

Joan Chittister et al. We meet on Wednesday mornings 10:30 to noon in the Assembly Room—Covid permitting—September through May. Suzie Taylor-Meadows is facilitating, Carolyn Martin our valuable tech person, and Harriet Duff our communications person. All inquiring minds are welcome to join us!

Martha Sharp

The St. Thomas Book Club

What a year! It was challenging in so many ways but we managed to meet every month except one! We read a variety of genres providing lots of material for discussion. We did not meet in December so we are looking forward to resuming our schedule and digging into the books chosen for January - May. Newcomers are always welcome! Happy Reading!

Beth Anderson, Book Club Coordinator

St. Thomas Women's Retreat - Because of COVID there was no women's retreat this year. We are eager to return to it in 2022!

Introducing the Old Testament

Introducing the Old Testament: A Short Guide to its History and Message by Tremper Longman, III is the text we are using to guide the overview of each book of the Old Testament. This is a 35-week study, discussing 1 book each week. We began August 26, 2021. We anticipate concluding our study on May 19, 2022.

Each week, we read a chapter in the text, watch the appropriate Bible Project video, may read a blog and usually watch a video from a biblical scholar about the content and context of the book being studied. We have watched lectures by Tremper Longman, III and episodes of David Pawson's *Keys to Unlocking the Bible*. When we gather on Zoom, we discuss information learned from our study during the week and consider where we have agreements/disagreements with the content and assess our learnings.

We have completed the books of the **Pentateuch** (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), **History** (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah), **Poetry & Wisdom** (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs/Solomon). We now move into the last 17 books of the Old Testament- the books of **Prophecy**, beginning with Isaiah and ending with Malachi.

We chose to study the Old Testament because many Christians are unfamiliar with this portion of their Bible. The Old Testament shows how Christ's birth fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament and righted the misguided, convoluted understandings of what God required of His people.

Susan Strom and I facilitated this study.

Respectfully submitted,
Sheryl Roller

Children and Family Ministries

Barbara McCall, Director of Children and Family Ministries

2021 has been a year of slow and steady transition for our Children's Formation program which has truly been a blessing as we have continued to ride the Covid Rollercoaster. As we look toward another coming year influenced by the Covid 19 Pandemic, it would be easy enough to sadly consider all of the things we still can't do, but in reality, there are so many things we CAN do and we HAVE done. So let's CELEBRATE!

While we finished our formation year of Sunday School utilizing Zoom – making it an entire program year of children's formation online, the improved numbers with warmer spring weather allowed us to connect once again for our in-person, in-the-Parish-Hall "Family Worship Services" including a beautiful Easter Morning Family Worship and Easter Story Themed Egg Hunt that was well attended by Covid standards.

The summer months, and continue decreasing case numbers allowed us to bring back some of our time-honored St. Thomas traditions IN-PERSON including our "Peace Works" Vacation Bible School that served 25 children with additional incredible youth and adult volunteers. The theme introduced a word or concept related to beloved community from 5 different world cultures/religions including "Shalom," (Hebrew) "Ubuntu," (South Africa) "Se Si Puede," (Mexico) "Heiwa" (Japan) and "Agape" (ancient Greek). While our VBS could not involve the nightly dinners, we did enjoy an amazing "picnic" on the final night with catered meals from 2 Guys and a Grill, along with singing, and a beautiful Godly Play story of Jesus washing the feet of his friends. Our summer also included a return of our Arts Camp program led by Dr. Beth Elswick that engaged children in sharing their own retellings of bible stories depicting acts of kindness and love, along with songs and dances from a children's musical called "Positive." In the final week of the summer, we welcomed a record number (35!) of 3rd-5th graders for a week of service and team building for our annual Elementary "Reaching Out to the Community" day camp.

Although the return to school brought increasing numbers, the promise of a vaccine for children yet to come and the willingness of our adult congregation to support our too-young-to-vaccinate children through mask wearing, allowed us to return to in-person Sunday School in September utilizing our outdoor altar space and Parish Hall rooms once the weather got too cold after Halloween. The "free advertising" provided by our outdoor setting along Antioch road helped our neighbors and the community to see that St. Thomas is a church family committed to nurturing it's youngest members spiritually and physically through this pandemic, and this helped us to bring in multiple new families during the fall months. We are so blessed to have had these beautiful children and their families among us as we continue to learn and grow in God's Love as a church family in spite of the obstacles presented to us through the pandemic.

The rollercoaster of a year finished on a very high note with the return of our in-person Christmas Pageant as our children and younger youth shared “The REAL Meaning of Christmas” through poetry, scripture and song at our 4 PM Family Christmas Service.

Although, that high note has led us down yet another hill on the roller coaster with the onset of the Omicron variant, we are continuing to move forward with the generosity of our congregation allowing us to continue using the better ventilated space in the Parish Hall, and through the dedication and love of our incredible Children’s Ministry Staff and Volunteers: Ms. Addy Ferren (Children’s Ministry Program Assistant), Mrs. Ann Clements, Mrs. Donna Kopp, Mr. Jenny Cox, Mr. John McCall, Mrs. Amanda Honaker, Mrs. Jennifer Schields, and our newest addition, Mrs. Lauren Evans, whom we are THRILLED to welcome to share her gifts and storytelling experience with our children.

The year 2021 may have brought continued challenges, yet our church has lovingly continued to prioritize the spiritual and physical health of our children, allowing our paid and volunteer staff the ability to pivot and flow as we offer an enriching formation experience for our youngest members - and for that we are truly blessed and thankful!

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara McCall
Director of Children and Families

St. Thomas Nursery - 2021

Due to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic, we have been unable to operate the St. Thomas nursery during the year 2021. In the fall, our Children’s Ministry paid staff (consisting of Ms. Barbara and Ms. Addy) began offering care to one child during the 11 AM worship service when the Family Worship Service ended. Our hope to reopen the nursery with paid staff by mid-January was dashed by both the increase of cases with the Omicron variant and staffing challenges. At this time, Ms. Barbara and Ms. Addy are prepared to continue offering care on a case-by-case basis as parents are comfortable with this option with a goal of re-opening the nursery around Easter 2022.

If your family is interested in nursery care in the coming months, please contact Barbara McCall, Director of Children and Families at bmccall@stthomasop.org, as this information will be very helpful to us in planning on a weekly basis and for staffing needs as we approach a possible re-opening in the spring. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara McCall
Director of Children and Families

Communications Ministries

Media and General Communications

We use various means of communication to get the word out. **The outside sign** on the corner of Antioch & 123rd announces Summer Camps, Blessing of Pets, Shrove Tuesday Pancakes and our regular Holy Communion Services. Office volunteers get two sets of letters ready, the existing letters are replaced with new, and letters are re-alphabetized in bins. Office volunteers have been known to periodically WASH the letters. During most of 2020 the sign read “Love Your Neighbor: 6 Ft, Wash Hands, Wear a Mask.”

We place certain **banners** along Antioch Rd. - Summer Arts Camp and the Cookie Sale have particularly benefitted from the banners. Others include “Love Your Neighbor,” Thanksgiving Dinner, Easter Eve & Day Services.

The parish **website**, <http://www.stthomasop.org> included our Online Worship information as well as a red arrow to watch “live streaming.” Also included is a form for pledging and tithing online. We have registrations for Summer camp, Women’s Retreat, and surveys. The website’s front page includes “featured sliders” at the top to announce upcoming events, a link to the church calendar, COVID update videos, bulletins for services, and recent Tower Talks.

We switched to a new database, “Breeze”, and an email application, “Mailchimp.” Breeze syncs new email information directly to Mailchimp, thus eliminating an extra step as we did before. We use Mailchimp to create attractive Weekly Updates, to warrant cancellations, tell about upcoming services, provide updates to all groups at the church. The weekly emails are linked to Facebook. We can also use the “Breeze” database to send basic emails to individuals and groups.

“**Signup Genius**” is used to create attractive signups for all kinds of events and volunteerism. Signup sheets would still be placed on the display board in the narthex and we add names to the sheets each day as they come through Signup Genius.

A new phone system was installed and we are still getting used to it and learning how to use it. The calls can be transferred directly into voicemail and the message is sent to email boxes.

The **St. Thomas Episcopal OP Facebook page** on the internet continues to be a good source of communication. There you will find updates about future events, reports of past events, and a plethora of photos from church events, *and future plans are being made to include more.*

All-Parish calls and Prayer Chain calls are delivered through “**One Call Now**,” an automated phone messaging and texting system announcing upcoming events, emergency outreach, cancellations and deaths, and prayer requests. All new members are added to the All-Parish call list, unless advised otherwise.

Office volunteers are a big part of communication also. During the course of COVID stay-at-home recommendations some volunteers eased their way into returning 1-3 hours a day, depending on their comfort level. They provide that personal touch of actually talking to a

person when they call and come into the office. They receive walk-in visitors and answer questions, answer the phone and record messages, and provide general information. Other tasks might include proofing, stuffing inserts into bulletins, assist with mailings, data entry, typing, help with annual meeting materials, copying and folding inserts, tallying up service attendance in the “red book,” replacing pencils/welcome cards and prayer request cards in the church, re-organization, and heaven forbid – unstapling bulletins to replace a page and re-stapling. Ugh!

Some specific tasks: *Linda Bemis* sends out Altar Flower commemoration emails; *Joyce O’Hara* replenishes giving envelopes on Welcome desk and bags up paper recycling for *Tim* to take home. *Beth Anderson* faithfully comes in to proof Tower Talk each week and recharges batteries. *Marianne Rowland* translates phone prayer requests into writing for a parishioner who prefers not to get phone calls, prepares and mails birthday cards each week, and her handwriting is so beautiful that she is prepares Baptism certificates. *Jane Swanson* is willing to do just about anything— she’s a real trooper, and still learning where everything is. *Nancy Williams* has a creative streak and made new headers for the hallway bulletin board as well as attractive signs for just about anything, plus she also has nice handwriting when needed. *Geoff Williams* catches typos and is very resourceful and helpful, even fixed a cabinet that’s under the volunteer desk and replaced blades in the box cutter. *Karen Mell* helped out while I took a week off and will eventually spend more time in the office. One new project has been taken on by *Becky Laney* which is generating a complete memorial list from the many lists we’ve kept in our files and as a bonus she’s learning new tricks in Excel/Microsoft Office. Earlier she also cross-checked our directory with the database to make sure everyone with an email address was tagged to receive weekly updates.

They ALL help me do my job so I can do more of everything else – like communicating!

Meribeth Risebig, Parish Administrator

HOSPITALITY

Coffee Hour

Having the opportunity to visit and share in fellowship always seems to be more inviting and welcoming when we visit over a snack and beverage. St. Thomas currently has several people that volunteer and serve as hosts that assist with the preparation, set-up, and cleanup of refreshments during coffee hour after each of the services each Sunday. When we are not restricted with COVID Guidelines regarding the serving of food, food is usually provided ahead of time, so no cooking/baking is required. (Many thanks to Thom's helpers for the cookies they bake for us, and to the occasional bread contributions from the invite welcome connect bread ministry.) We are currently still in need of more volunteers, and a short training is available to all new serving hosts.

If you would like to volunteer with this ministry and share in offering this hospitality, please contact Deacon Fran Wheeler.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deacon Fran Wheeler

Invite/Welcome/Connect

This year, the IWC team continued its efforts to extend invites, welcome visitors and new members, as well as, aimed to make connections between parishioners. Digital worship allowed those who were unable to worship in person, to connect and comment online during the service. In March, several members of the team attended the virtual digital diocese IWC conference led by Mary Parmer (creator of IWC) to learn more ways to help our team connect parishioners in a digital world. The Easter Season brought out the skills of the bread bakers- IWC organized the parish bread bakers to make a loaf of bread for each household - close to 400 loaves were distributed.

Once again, our numbers of new members and visitors grew in 2021. IWC hosted a Newcomer lunch in June and November for 20 new members. Food Truck Sunday was a big hit in September with Taco Republic serving tacos for an outside lunch. The annual ministry fair resumed in November to display all of the ministries offered at St. Thomas.

People are the Church and we are so glad to be able to gather again at St. Thomas as the Body of Christ.

Jean Adam - IWC Warden

Fellowship Groups

Bridge Group

Bridge group hasn't met since early 2020. Miss our group and will notify when the time is right.

Under normal circumstances we have one Bridge Group known as The Fourth Thursday Daytime Group. We play from 12:30 to 3:00. We have two and sometimes three tables. We play friendly Bridge and have several levels of expertise. If you like to play cards please feel free to join us. Call Marge at 492-3305 or send me an email at marg.dellinger@gmail.com and I'll be in touch with you when we start playing together again. This is a great way to get acquainted at St. Thomas.

Peace, Marge Dellinger

St. Chad's Agape

St Chad Agape has been in existence since the 1980's and still going strong - that is until COVID-19 arrived on the scene. We normally meet in our homes about 6 times a year with members taking turns as hosts. We share a meal, visit, and catch up on our families, activities, travels, etc. When COVID-19 decided to hang around in 2021 we were determined to gather, so in March we met at my home. We were so grateful and happy to be together again and are hopeful that 2022 will allow us to return to our normal gatherings.

We miss seeing and worshipping with our St. Thomas family and are hopeful for a more normal 2022. As Lester Holt says at the end of his nightly broadcasts, "Please take care of yourself and each other!"

Beth Anderson - St. Chad Agape Shepherd

Dinner Groups

Dinner Groups are part of the Fellowship Ministry and are designed for participants to get to know other parishioners better. We did not meet in 2021 but will hopefully continue in 2022. In 2019-2020, we had 6 Dinner Groups with about 8 people in each that met for dinner and fellowship. Each group had a leader and met every other month depending on the availability of the members.

Going forward, Susan Ott will be the new Coordinator for Dinner Groups.

Neighborhood Groups

Neighborhood groups are growing and helping people reconnect. Some groups have met in person, some online, but they are all having a good time! Everyone at St. Thomas should be assigned to a neighborhood group and have an "Anchor" who has reached out to you. If you have not heard from your Anchor or want to connect but don't know how, please reach out to Mother Kelly at kdemo@stthomasop.org.

Outreach Ministries

The Outreach Team at St Thomas leads the parish in reaching out to those in need of assistance in our parish, our community, the nation and around the world. Following this introduction are reports from selected outreach ministries. Please read them to get an idea of the difference we make in the lives of the many individuals we serve.

In addition to the highlighted ministries we have ongoing partnerships with Olathe Public Schools, 1st Christian Church of Olathe, and the City of Olathe.

Outreach is what all of us do on a daily basis as we live the life God calls us to live when we make the decision to follow Him. We love one another... we do for others what they cannot do for themselves and we give of ourselves to help those in need.

Please read the following reports to see just exactly how much difference we make when we Come, Grow, Serve and Make a Difference!

Sue Elliott, Chair

Comanche Elementary – Caring for Kids Community Ministry 2021

St. Thomas continues to grow in our ministry and relationship in supporting Comanche Elementary School in the Shawnee Mission School District. As a faith community sponsor, we in combination with the City of Overland Park, the Overland Park Police Department, Community Impact Church and various other local businesses and organizations have committed to helping develop relationships and a sense of trust among both Comanche Elementary and Overland Park communities by supporting the school to help build and grow on the relationships between the school staff and families on both an educational and social level. Once Pandemic restrictions hit in March of 2020, all in person projects/events with the school were cancelled with the school until further notice. Even in 2021 with many of these restrictions still in place we continued to meet many of the school's needs thanks to your support.

In 2021 St. Thomas volunteers participated by ministering in the following ways:

- A need for additional recess equipment/supplies became apparent with the need to have more available with social distancing and sanitary guidelines needing to be followed during recess and Physical Education times. At the request of the school, St. Thomas provided additional recess equipment consisting of Sandbox molds, buckets, and shovels, soccer balls, footballs, classic bouncing rubber balls, basket balls, flying discs/frisbees, toss and catch paddle games, and buckets of sidewalk chalk
- A dinner for the Teachers/staff during Parent Teacher Conferences was provided in the Month of February. This year we had sandwich boxes catered in by Goodcents. Appreciation was extended for our thoughtfulness by showing our support and appreciation of the Comanche Teachers/Staff.

- St. Thomas again had several volunteers participate virtually with Comanche's Dr. Seuss Read Across America Day in March. Readers read virtually with the classrooms for a ½ hour shift –during the 8-noon timeframe.
- Individually wrapped healthy snacks were provided to students during their State Assessment Testing.
- At the school's request, in lieu of providing the traditional donuts and fresh fruit this year for the 6th Grade Graduation Breakfast, we provided individually packed muffins, and fruit cups.
- 50 backpacks were again filled with school supplies this year. This year parishioners purchased the supplies themselves and filled provided backpacks by having a contact free drive-by drop off.
- A new Mobile Pantry was started in May with the combined efforts and support from Harvesters, Comanche Elementary, St. Thomas the Apostle, and several other various community partnerships. This mobile pantry is held the second Saturday of each month. St. Thomas in addition to providing some of the volunteers, also contributes to many of the supplies needed in maintaining the pantry. Please see Donna Fye's extended report regarding this ministry.
- Winter coats, and other cold weather items continued to be collected and delivered to the school at various times throughout the year.

Thank you to all those who continually answer the call in supporting this school community!
Deacon Fran Wheeler

Mobile Food Pantry at Comanche Elementary School 2021

In late 2019 the Outreach Team talked about operating a drive thru mobile food pantry with Harvesters at Comanche Elementary but there were no openings on Saturdays. Then COVID happened and things changed for all of us in the country. Around April 2021 we checked back with Harvesters if there were any openings and there was 1 on the 2nd Saturday, which was perfect, but when should we start? We had to have a Saturday because of the school schedule and empty parking lot. The Outreach Team and staff at Comanche wanted to start as soon as possible so we moved very fast and we had our first drive on May 8, 2021. Since then, we have been able to have a drive the 2nd Saturday of every month with nice weather, lots of volunteers and over 61,000 pounds of food from Harvesters. We have learned a lot in the last 6 months and have enjoyed every minute. Volunteers are always needed and can sign up through Sign-Up Genius, it is a great opportunity for a family or teenager to get volunteer hours.

Submitted: Donna Fye, Deacon Fran Wheeler and Rick Bush.

St. Thomas Emergency Pantry

St. Thomas keeps a supply of food on hand for situations when someone contacts the church office for assistance. One of our Christ Care small groups provided 15 bags as their outreach ministry. They fill reusable bags with shelf stable food for families or individuals in need.

The emergency pantry serves both parishioners and others in the community. The clergy and office staff distribute bags upon request and assistance is always provided in strictest confidence.

Jo Co Interfaith Hospitality Network – A Community Response to Homelessness

Jo Co IHN is a local ministry which addresses a growing need, that of providing compassionate, nonjudgmental care to situationally homeless families and unattached adult females in Johnson County. It is a unique, comprehensive approach that involves people of faith welcoming homeless families and unattached single women into their houses of worship for shelter and sustenance. This program works intensively with a limited number of families at any one time to help less fortunate neighbors get back on their feet and return to independent living.

During 2021, the name of Johnson County Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) changed to Jo Co IHN – A Community Response to Homelessness. Although the name of the organization changed, the mission of IHN remained the same: to provide shelter and care to situationally homeless families and single, unattached women to help them to return to being self-supporting and independent.

The network is comprised of 37 established congregations, a blending of many faiths and denominations. These congregations provide meals and shelter in the evenings and overnight by converting Sunday School classrooms and offices into sleeping spaces; each family has its own sleeping room, while single women share a sleeping area. Guest families relocate to a new congregation every Sunday afternoon.

Within the organization, there are 11 Host churches and 26 support churches. St Thomas became a Host church in 2018. This means that, during Host week, guests will come to St Thomas every day for evening meals, nonjudgmental companionship during the evenings, overnight shelter and transportation to/from the Family Center. Services provided to the guests in the program come through volunteers. Volunteers donate food and supplies during each Host week; Host weeks occur approximately every 12 weeks.

A daytime facility, the IHN Family Center, provides families with a place to call “home”, an address and a phone number to use during their stay in the Network; at the Family Center, computers are available for job searches and for searching for affordable housing. Participating families also receive social services and assistance with life-skills, such as budgeting, goal-setting, parenting, and achieving/maintaining positive relationships.

All volunteers who interact with guests must have completed one 2-hour training conducted by IHN. Trained volunteers can sign up for specific jobs, such as: cooking dinner and eating with the guests, providing nonjudgmental companionship during the evenings, staying awake for a few hours during the night to insure that everyone sleeps safely, transporting families in the IHN van, or laundering bedding at the end of each Host week. Most volunteer positions are a commitment of 2 – 2 1/2 hours. In addition to supporting the guests during each Host week, St. Thomas members also provide volunteer hours as Family Center receptionists, IHN van drivers, members of IHN committees, or at special IHN events or fund raisers. A volunteer training was held in October, 2021, at St. Thomas; 65 interested parishioners from various faiths attended, and 9 new IHN volunteers from St. Thomas resulted from being exposed to the details of IHN.

In early April, 2021, Jo Co IHN hosted a Covid vaccination clinic. It was held at the IHN Family Center and was open to the public. Included in the group that was vaccinated that day were 10 people who are St. Thomas members as well as 2 of our Thom's Helpers. Another 8 St. Thomas members volunteered at the event to direct cars in the IHN parking lot or to assist inside the IHN Family Center.

In a typical year, IHN volunteers support the annual IHN auction; this event is the major fundraiser through which a large portion of the Network's annual expenses are covered. In 2020 and again in 2021, this auction was forced by Covid 19 to move to a virtual model which did not require the support of many St. Thomas volunteers. Each year, St. Thomas has provided space for quarterly Primary Coordinator meetings when IHN representatives from all Network congregations meet together; in 2020, the virus prevented such gatherings from occurring, and only one such meeting took place during 2021.

2021 St. Thomas Financial and In-kind Support of IHN Ministry:

Estimated in-kind donations (food/supplies) -- \$75.00

Estimated in-kind meals provided by volunteers -- \$100.00

Parishioner financial donations for St. Thomas IHN Ministry -- \$600.00

Donations to IHN from St. Thomas Outreach Committee budget -- \$3000.00

TOTAL In-kind and Financial Support -- \$3775.00

Host Week Volunteer hours – 210 hours

Host week Laundry Services – 47 hours

Auction Volunteer hours – 47 hours

IHN Board of Directors – 24 hours

TOTAL St. Thomas Volunteer hours – 325 hours

2021 Building Use – 239 hours

Report submitted by Dola McNown and Margaret Walkenshaw - IHN Co-coordinators

Blood Drives with American Red Cross

At a time when the American Red Cross has had many venues cancel blood drives, they are elated that St. Thomas has offered to host multiple events throughout the year. In 2021 they collected a whopping 207 units of blood! This equates to around 621 potential lives saved. A special thanks to Thom's Helpers for the set-up and tear-down of the parish hall and the office staff for accommodating the needs of the Red Cross on blood drive days.

Kansas2Kenya "K2K" / Agatha Amani House

Like most everything else in the world COVID has caused major disruptions to our Kansas 2 Kenya "K2K" Community and Medical Mission trips for the past two years and it does not look good for 2022. Despite this interruption we have continued to connect with our friends and partners in Kenya. Nyakio spends at least 8 months a year overseeing the operation of Agatha Amani House, a shelter for abused women that she founded in 2013. Joe Bob travels twice a year to Kenya and works with Nyakio for about 7 weeks each trip.



Additionally, Nyakio and Joe Bob make twice a year visitation trips to the other K2K projects that include The Osborne Library, Ngeya Primary School, All Saints Anglican Church of Kenya "ACK" and Karati Boarding School. Staying connected to our friends in Kenya during COVID is important for our long-term relationships.

Thanks in large part to St. Thomas, life at Agatha Amani House has continued without interruption since the start of COVID. In fact, as domestic and sexual abuse has increased significantly in Kenya during this pandemic, we have been asked to rescue more survivors and currently we are over capacity at the shelter. Fortunately, we have been able to acquire adjoining land for future expansion which is becoming needed faster than expected.



Although final decisions have not yet been made regarding mission trips in June 2022, we still have the need to raise funds for supporting our projects. Therefore, we are planning on having an Annual K2K Fundraiser at Saint Thomas on Saturday, May 21, 2022. Details will follow later.

Thank you, St. Thomas!!

Respectfully submitted, Joe Bob & Nyakio Lake - Team Leaders - K2K Community Team
913-530-6366

Jlake10@kc.rr.com



Photos from Agatha Amani House in Kenya-
The St. Thomas diaper drive was so appreciated!

Thom's Helpers



Thom's Helpers is a ministry of the Outreach Program of St Thomas. It serves adults with a variety of special needs who in turn serve our spiritual community. Thom's Helpers is inspired and trained by parishioners at St Thomas and handle many needs of our congregation and our community.

In 2021 this amazingly productive ministry has:

- Been welcomed with open arms by our spiritual community Performed hundreds of random (and often unintentional) acts of kindness... just because they are who they are.
- Brought smiles to thousands through personal contact and stories shared, celebrated birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and non-holidays, supported and grieved the losses of family and friends and rejoiced in the fact our loved ones are "having a party with Jesus."

- Met, hugged and unconditionally loved many people who have walked through our doors....and been loved and accepted in return Learned many new job and interpersonal relationship skills
- Worked 4200 hours (the equivalent of over 2 full time people....given KS minimum wage this equates to \$30,450.00) Holy cow Thom's... what would we do without you ♥!
- Baked over 2,200 cookies for coffee hour for special events and special orders; made more than 40 jars of salsa; set up the parish halls for wedding receptions, celebrations of life, meetings and rentals; cleaned up our church grounds; shredded massive amounts of documents (in 615 hours) for individuals, churches and businesses.
- Shopped for supplies; set up for coffee hour; washed dried, folded and put away laundry; cleaned the parish halls; recycled and counted the bulletins; prepared the children's busy bags; loaded cars for the pantry and prayed for others...every week of the year.

Thom's Helpers and their Helpers have more fun than anyone can possibly imagine! They work hard, play harder and love all of you and each other more than you can imagine! Thom's Helpers consider St Thomas the Apostle "their church" and take great pride in the work they do and the love they



share. Thank you for letting them be a part of this spiritual community where they serve, gain independence and make a tremendous difference.

We have added 2 Thom's Helpers and 4 helpers to our crew and we are anxious for you to get to know them all!

Sue Elliott

Naturalization and Ceremony Reception Sponsor

During COVID participation in naturalization ceremonies at the U.S. District Courthouse, Western Missouri (Kansas City) are postponed.

Pastoral Care Ministries

Pastoral Care Ministries help through patiently assisting when and where needed in our parish community. PCM has had a wonderful year assisting our parish community with invaluable sources available at moment's notice.

St. Martha's Guild

We are a meals ministry. We bring meals to those who are just home from the hospital or who have a severe illness and need a good nourishing meal. We bring either a home cooked meal or a purchased meal. In 2021, we delivered many wonderful meals to many grateful families.

St. Martha's Guild is a deeply caring ministry. We are doing what Jesus asked us to do; serve others. Last year we continued with contactless meal delivery. Contactless meal delivery will continue into 2022.

Thank you to all our members for everything you do. When I call, email or text, and there is an immediate need for a meal, every one of you stop and say, "I can take the meal tonight." You are all truly loved and appreciated. Thank you so much for being in St. Martha's Guild.

If you are interested in becoming an important part of our ministry, please contact Susan Strom. Thank you.

Susan Strom - kcsuejazz@hotmail.com or 913-244-6402

Comfort and Love for Those Who Mourn

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Mt 5:4

For many years, St. Thomas had a tradition of offering hospitality and refreshments following celebration of life services. It's a special way for parishioners to comfort St. Thomas' friends and families and occasionally other people in our community. We know we are reaching out to others as Christ called us to do.

The Corona virus changed much of our lives and during most of 2020 and 2021, gatherings and receptions were limited. This was done to help keep all people safe.

We pray that the virus will be overcome soon and we will again be able to have refreshments following memorial services. When there will be a reception the St. Thomas Office emails or sends out phone messages to all parishioners asking for volunteers to help with the reception or people who can provide cookies or food for the reception. Everyone is welcome to be part of this ministry and can respond to the message.

We will be able to offer compassion, love and support through our hospitality and friendship.

Dola McNown, Sue Elliott, Suzie Bowden (Occasional Coordinators)

Walking the Mourner's Path

We have six facilitators for WMP. In 2020 we finished our class prior to the pandemic starting in January. Due to the nature of the class an online format is not feasible. We will be starting the sessions again once we get to a point when in-person meeting is safe.

Fr. Gar Demo

Prayer Chain

Our prayer chain provides a vehicle in which we pray for each other - prayers of thanksgiving, healing, comfort. When we pray together we provide strength and hope for those in need. Diane and I have made over 50 calls this year and each call has alerted our prayer warriors into action. If you would like to join this group and receive prayer chain calls please contact Meribeth in the church office. If you have a prayer request for yourself or a family member please feel free to contact Diane or Deb. When leaving a message clearly state your name, phone number, and for what you would like us to pray.

Ephesians 6:18 - And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Deb: 913-620-2426 or email themcarthur4@gmail.com

Diane: 913-268-7788 or monteendiane@gmail.com

Guild of the Christ Child

Due to Covid restrictions during 2022, Guild of the Christ Child was coordinated by Suzie Bowden. There are a few friends who made blankets, burp cloths & bibs. The rest of the items that go into the layette bags Suzie bought from the Guild fund. Even with Covid, Guild of the Christ Child filled & gave out 44 layette bags for Advice & Aid Pregnancy Center in Overland Park. They have been very appreciative of the layette bags, as they give them to the moms when they complete their pregnancy classes.

Hopefully when Covid settles down we can get back to doing collections at church again.

If anyone is interested in helping with Guild you can contact **Suzie Bowden** at 913-207-0072 (cell).



Lay Eucharistic Visitors - 2021

Lay Eucharistic Visitors are lay ministers who take communion from our Sunday service to shut-ins, primarily people in assisted living facilities/homes, hospitals, and others who cannot be with our parish family for service due to illness or special circumstances. The Lay Eucharistic Visitor tradition dates back to the earliest years of the Christian church, serving the homebound and invalid. Our Lay Eucharistic Visitors are trained at St. Thomas and licensed by the Bishop. Each week they go forth and carry the sacraments of bread and wine to those they visit so that those they visit may share with us in the communion of Christ's body and blood. Lay Eucharistic Visitors care and tend to those they visit both spiritually and emotionally, and often reflect on the readings and/or the sermon. In addition, they share with one another what is currently going on in the life and community of St. Thomas, the world, and within our personal lives, enabling a growth in relationship with one another and with Christ.

St. Thomas has 24 trained LEVs with which 11 were actively on rotation in 2021. During the months of January thru April we had no LEVs actively visiting due to COVID restrictions still in place with many of the facilities we usually visit. During the months of May through December our LEVs had 43 location visits which consisted of a total of 150 people receiving communion. Our LEVs made 17 home visitations, and 26 Senior independent/assisted living facilities.

I am extremely grateful for each and every LEV for their continued commitment to Christ and their devoted compassion to all we visit.

Deacon Fran Wheeler

Mental Health and Wellness - 2021

Mental Health and Wellness – 2021 found a need for this group to come together and determine ways in which we could raise awareness about Mental Health and Wellness in the community. The team provided awareness by providing education, resources, and various topics of conversation that we hope provided the community with a better understanding of the various ways Mental Health and Wellness can impact our lives and the lives of others.

In its first year of formation this team coordinated the following speakers and events within its first year of formation:

What is mental and behavioral health and wellness?

Guest Presenter: Kari Wold, MA, LMLP

Kari launched our first Mental Health and Wellness lecture series by presenting on the following topics:

- Mental health (a broad overview)
- Information on mental health and resources
- Tools you can access for yourself or loved ones.

“Mental Wellness and You”

Guest Presenter: Megan Clark, BA, CPP

The Pandemic left many people feeling more isolated and lonelier. It is more important now than ever before to focus on mental wellness and taking care of ourselves.

Topics included:

- How to normalize feelings
- The impact of the pandemic on mental health
- Local resources and how to access care

What Makes it Trauma? Understanding the “T” in PTSD

Guest Presenter: Kiersten Adkins, Executive Director for Pathway To Hope, and operates a private practice specializing in trauma recovery, severe & persistent mental illness and family dynamics.

Spiritual Yoga: “Listen to Your Body”

Guest Presenter: Michael Funston, Associate for Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministry for the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, and wellness coach for family and friends. Michael’s class focused on the following:

- The physical, emotional and mental health benefits of body movement
- The practice of mindful breathing, stretching and listening to our bodies as a way to benefit our mental and spiritual health
- Ability to listen to our bodies as part of the Body of Christ.

YOGA and You (Though this event was canceled, we do hope to reschedule it for this year.)

Guest Presenter: Angela Minard, Certified Yoga instructor w/Darling Yoga in Overland Park

In addition, several team members provided articles in the newsletter on various topics about stress, self-care, feeling what we feel, and managing the holiday blues (which included a few links to virtual Christmas light tours, and Christmas concerts). These were offered at the tail end of 2020 and as we introduced this ministry in the beginning of 2021. We also initiated an effort to honor education professionals from both our St. Thomas Family & the Comanche Elementary Community by writing and sending notes and cards of appreciation.

I look forward to this team’s ongoing commitment as we further explore how this ministry will best serve our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Deacon Fran Wheeler

Small Group Ministries

Below is some news from each of the groups:

Classics Men's Group

The Classic Men's Group covered many books on Christian subjects, studying many different authors. We meet every second and fourth Thursday of the month for discussion and fellowship. We are always interested in having new members and appreciate new perspectives. Presently we are meeting at the Parish Hall #2.

Tom Meyers

Coffee with a Hint of Christ

Coffee small group meets on the 1st & 3rd Wednesdays of each month from 9:30-11am at St. Thomas (once a month in the summer at member's homes). This year we were able to meet on ZOOM, outside and eventually inside at St. Thomas. We currently have 12 members. We have been working a book called "Why Unanswered Questions, Not Unquestioned Answers, Build Faith: The Value of Doubt" by Bill Tammes. Individual prayer requests, fellowship and laughter happens frequently during our small group.

Jean Adam

Explorers: 2021

After meeting online via Zoom for over a year, the Explorers small group, was overjoyed to again be able to meet in person beginning with our usual "Taco Bar Kick-Off" on the first Thursday in September. Being actually able to see one another and continue our fellowship with prayer and the breaking of bread, or in this case taco shells, allowed us to return to some sense of "normal".



During our long Zoom period we were able to continue in our bible studies, prayers and discussion. On some occasions we were able to include Nyakio Lake, who joined us along with some of the residents from Agatha Amani House in Navasha, Kenya. Seeing the progress being made by Nyakio, the staff and the residents at AAH is always a special time but seeing all the lushness of the gardens and banana groves in February did cause a little envy.

With a total membership of 29 active members, the Explorers are using smaller group “break-out” sessions, then coming back together to recap and share when doing bible study. There is always prayer before our meeting and Complime at the close before we end with snacks and fellowship. At our 1st and 3rd Thursday 7 PM meetings in Parish Hall 2, we have 16 to 20 members in attendance and this year we have had the good fortune of having several new members join our group.

This fall’s study was “In the Grip of Grace” covering Paul’s letter to the Romans.

We ended 2021 in a festively decorated Parish Hall 2 with our annual “Christmas Party” with food from Jack’s Stack and deserts and other goodies provided by our members.

Again in 2021 we were unable to take any day trips because of COVID, but we have several sites on our list is 2022 allows us to travel, learn and sample the food of our surrounding area.

John & Dola McNowen

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer Shawl Ministry is an amazing group of people who knit, crochet, and weave prayer shawls. Each prayer shawl we create is interwoven with prayers for healing, comfort, mercy, peace, love, and joy. Once we have a few prayer shawls created, they are blessed by our clergy. They are given to whomever is in need. All you need to do is contact the church office, or one of our co-leaders, Linda Manuel or Susan Strom. We will get back to you as soon as we can to help you with your prayer shawl.

At the start 2021/end 2020, we gave Mother Kelly 50 shawls we had created. These shawls were given to be a part of COVID-19 care packages that were given to teachers, aides, nurses, doctors, and first responders. It was wonderful to be a part of this great project.

Our first Prayer Shawl Ministry meeting in person was Saturday, July 5, 2021. It was wonderful to be back together talking, stitching, and enjoying one another company. Six shawls were turned in that day, along with winter hats. We met in person for the rest of 2021.

In 2021, we created 47 and gave 70 prayer shawls. We created and gave 185 winter hats to the homeless in Topeka. We have also created 239 - 8" knitted or crocheted squares; JOCO IHN Afghan created 3 and given 2.

In the winter of 2020, Father Gar told us about a homeless project that was being headed by the Rev. Jenn Allen in Topeka. We are continuing to support Rev. Allen by creating and giving her hats for the homeless.

In late summer we started a new project one we think is very good for everyone. Our members are creating 8" squares. We take 30 squares to create an afghan for an JOCO IHN

graduate. The squares have many prayers and blessings in them. Once the afghan is put together, it is blessed and given to a new IHN graduate.

Please join our ministry. We would love to have you join us. If you are a new knitter or crocheter, or want to learn, we have really great, patient teachers who will help you anyway we can to create your first knitted or crocheted item. Please come.

Welcome to Prayer Shawl Ministry!

Co-leaders: Linda Manuel and Susan Strom

Solos Dining Out

In 2021 Solos Dining Out did not get together as a large group and dine out or in. We are being very careful and cautious. There were a couple of times when two or three of us would meet and dine out together. Our hope is in 2022 we may be able to get together in small groups of 5 or 6 or more and dine out. We need to be patient and hope in returning to all of us getting together and Dining Out. It will come in God's time.

If you're Single and looking to join an outstanding small group, please contact Susan Strom. We Welcome You!!

Deep peace,

Susan Strom

(kcsuejazz@hotmail.com) 913-244-6402 (text is best)

The Faith Club

The Faith Club is a group of Christians, Jews and Muslims who meet together to share their belief in God and to grow in our knowledge of the many commonalities that bind us and learn to understand the differences. The end game of this small group is to become friends through our strong faith in God; proving that you do not need to look alike, talk alike, pray alike or vote like to develop strong bonds of friendship.

For the last five years we have gathered monthly for one hour discussing a topic decided upon on by each group prior to the meeting. Currently there are two womens' groups that meet in the evening hours, and two womens' groups that meet during the day, plus one womens' group that meets on the week-end. Our one but mens' group meets in the evenings. Besides our meetings once a month we have taken "field trips" to see plays, to visit museum exhibits, have met in our homes and libraries when the Covid numbers were lower, and, gathered in a Johnson Co. library or two. On a truly memorable Sunday in August, Faith Club members along with The Dialogue Institute, sponsored an all- family picnic and we hope to repeat the adventure this summer if Covid numbers dictate. Currently we meet on Zoom or skip a month if it is too hard for our friends to gather. In November we had our last large group gathering in-person at

St. Thomas. We are hoping to have another large gathering with all groups on Zoom in late January or early February.

Covid-19 has most definitely changed our way of getting together, and we have dropped from 70 members two years ago to around 40 at present time. We are not deterred, however, as most of us think Zoom is doable and even like coming to a meeting in our slippers, no make-up, etc. Zoom has made it possible to set plans for the following year. We have invited our clergy, imams, rabbis and leaders in our six groups to give us information on community out-reach programs. We have and will continue to reach out to the those who are homeless, under-fed and under-recognized. We believe in God's plea to "love your neighbor as yourself" and are helping to make the world seem a bit smaller, more caring, more diverse and more united.

Submitted by Charlotte Brotherson

Young Adults

The Young Adult Small Group met throughout the year and continues to meet every other Thursday evening. Our group seeks to develop strategies to be the light of the world and understanding for the communities that members live and work in. This past year was focused on understanding how God transcends cultures and how to break down real and perceived barriers in furthering the kingdom of God. This coming year will primarily focused on developing relationships and tools to foster greater spiritual growth and community in the small group.

Tim Pullin

Contemplative Prayer

Contemplative Prayer has been cruising along for the past year, adjusting to outside meetings or Zoom like everyone else. We have around 3-5 regular attendees but our small group is perfect to pop in when you are able! During Advent in 2021, we met every week. Usual meetings are the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 7:00 in the evening! We'd love to see you!

Steve Connelly

Worship Ministries

Eucharistic Ministers and Lectors

I'd like to thank all Eucharistic Ministers and Lectors for their service in 2021. Many of our folks have shifted to reading online and participating in the limited in-person services. Currently we have 20 EMs and over 26 Lectors. In the Spring of 2021 we restarted our weekly in person worship services and continued some prepared services online. Thanks to all of you for your continued ministry and leadership.

Fr. Gar Demo

Altar Guild

During this past year the Altar Guild has continued to adapt and serve in our changing and “new normal” environment.

Our purpose is to serve the clergy by making sure we have ready those things necessary for the celebration of the Eucharist and other Sacraments. We do this by cleaning and pressing the linens, baking the bread, filling the candles, changing the frontals and banners and cleaning and filling the home communion kits. In addition we set the table by putting out the bread and wine and the instruments used to dispense them for each service.

A big thank you to Thom's Helpers and their sponsors, the “laundry ladies”, our bread maker and all who who served.

Becky Laney, Sacristan

Music Ministry in 2021

What a year-----one worth recording---and we did. When Covid restricted our in-person gathering, we recorded anthems and hymns making a music library. This year we recorded 180 works, helping to support the entire lectionary with appropriate music. This music library contains anthems, praise songs, instrumental works, and vocal solos. Thank you, choir, choir director Jim Elswick, praise musicians, college students, and Father Gar.

When limited worship became a possibility, our members were very happy to return to St. Thomas. We gathered together for Palm Sunday and Easter services. The band and choir began to seek out ways of performing music in the live setting.

Our summer Arts Camp was much fun as we presented the musical *POSITIVE* with a live action song/dance/drama production. Jenne Weill led the students in the Art Classes. Tori Knox created dances to accompany the music. Christian Parker, Hannah Sullivan, Jillian Hardeman, Joshua McCall, Garrett Cox and other youth supported the outdoor activities, stretching, exercise, drama, recording activities, and music. The youth particularly helped with the lunches and outside times. Barbara McCall helped the students create the dramas for the

production. Her thoughtful messages brought the children together every morning as we started each day. Beth Elswick taught the songs while adding music theory concepts.

As you know, this has been a rebuilding year. We have had new members in both ensembles. Philip First, guitarist and composer, has been a wonderful asset to the praise ensemble. Joel Harrison has been an added singer and pianist for the praise group.

New traditional choir members include Andy Fazio, James Mell, Maria Gilson, and Jeff Whitton. Our new college students include Brady Wolff, Joel Harrison, and Ethan Kaufmann. Returning college students include Hope Dedrick, the main cantor at the Saturday evening service. Soprano Maggie Hendrick recently graduated from UMKC Conservatory. Maggie is beginning her first year as an elementary school music teacher. This year she has also conducted the St. Thomas choir many times, and we thank her.

Our upcoming work is to continue to grow and be supportive of worship even when there are challenges ---as in the past year. We are incredibly thankful for the support of the congregation, Meribeth Risebig, the Vestry and clergy.

Dr. Beth Loeber Elswick

Ushers

The St. Thomas Usher team currently has about 22 regular trained ushers. We also have substitute ushers but welcome more! We are always looking for a few more to replace long-time ushers and to reduce workload for the others. We could also use a few more retired ushers, to help out during the occasional work week services. Ushers typically work once each month, with some serving once every 5th Sunday, and a few working two times a month. The Ministry Scheduler is a big help, making it easy to trade or change schedules when needed. This minimizes “burnout” and provides for a long-term, healthy usher cadre. About half of the ushers have been CPR-trained, and are an integral part of St Thomas’ safety plan. These ushers, along with the staff and clergy, are versed to take a leadership role during fire, weather, and medical emergencies. The Usher Team plays an integral, important part of St Thomas Episcopal Church. As we get further into 2021 and are able to meet inside again, we welcome any who would like to join us in this welcoming ministry for St. Thomas. Training will be offered.

Greeters

After taking a break during remote services due to Covid, the Greeters were very happy to be able to fully resume their jobs this past year serving at each service welcoming newcomers and regular parishioners alike both before and after the services. We have over 34 people serving to make St. Thomas a welcoming church. With their smiling faces, greeters do several things to help create a welcoming atmosphere such as holding doors, helping with name tags, assisting with directions, and helping newcomers connect and feel welcomed. Would you like to help us greet? If you are interested, please contact Robin Phillips at 319-331-5507 to learn more.

Bread Bakers

This past year the Bread Bakers have made many adjustments. We started the year holding off on baking as Covid was limiting our in-person church, and then we fired up the ovens full speed and added a few one-time bakers to our ranks in order to produce over 400 loaves of bread that were shared with all the members of the congregation as part of our Easter celebration and with the teachers and staff at Comanche Elementary School as part of Teacher Appreciation Week. After our big Easter push, we slowed down again as we had some spare loaves that covered our needs. Since the spring, we have only been baking on an as needed basis as the number of loaves needed has not been as high. Now that things seem to be evening out a bit, our 17 bakers will be back to work on a regular basis this spring making small loaves of bread that are included in the red welcome bags for newcomers. The bakers take turns baking, and each week one of them usually makes 6-12 small loaves depending on the current need. If you are interested in baking, we would love to have you join our group! Please contact Robin Phillips at 319-331-5507 to learn more.

Flower Guild

The Flower Guild has slowly gotten back to business as usual. We have been thrilled to be doing arrangements for St. Thomas in-person and online worship. We are looking forward to Easter (praying for COVID numbers to go down).

The members of the Flower Guild at St. Thomas offer a wide range of talents and abilities, but all share a love of flowers and a love of our church. No experience is necessary and new recruits are always welcome. The time commitment is minimal (about two hours a month) and we work in teams. We share fellowship, laughter, and fun creating arrangements to the glory of God.

Flowers are not only for memorials – they can be given in thanksgiving for birthdays, blessings received, prayers answered, anniversaries, etc. There is a flower signup chart in the hallway next to the office, but you can always call the office or send an email to mrisebig@stthomasop.org to sign up to commemorate (Information is needed at least a week in advance). The suggested donation for flowers is \$50.00. The office handles all monetary donations.

Submitted by Leslie Byrnes

Youth Ministries

What an extraordinary year we had! Our group grew in numbers (we average around 25-30 a week), in their faith, and grew closer to each other. The youth have been so resilient and eager to be creative as we connect in these Covid days. We have met outside, online, in person but masked...anything we can do to be together but stay safe! I cannot express what an honor and joy it is to work with these young people. Below is an overview of our program year.

Youth Group is sort of the cornerstone of our youth program. We meet most every Sunday night through the school year from 6-8pm. We were able to do some dinners in the fall but have had to pull that back again. We generally play some games and then go into program time. In the fall of this year we challenged each other with "hot topics". We gave a topic (for instance "if scientists can bring back a woolly mammoth, should they?") and one group was "pro", one was "con" and one group we called The Prophets. Their task was to look at what scripture and the Episcopal Church has to say on a matter. Then we discuss! We were pretty limited in our other outings but we did get to go ice skating before Christmas which was a blast. Our three rules of youth group are 1) We are kind. 2) Youth group is a stress-free place to come relax and play and 3) Youth group is a safe place to explore the big questions. I could not do what I do without the dedicated group of adults who come each week to support the program. My many thanks go out to Heather Bradley-Geary, Brian Gordon, Abby Pullin, Ashley Fleischaker, Hannah Gruman, Christian Parker (our intern), Elizabeth Parker, Kari Wold, Mike Pickett and Jen Newell and Jillian Hardeman who are our pinch hitters!

Another part of our program that works to develop our youth is our Giving Project Classroom. The Giving Project is our Sunday morning program for senior high youth. Led by Drs. Lisa and Dan Gruman and Dr. George Phillips, it seeks to help youth match their God-given gifts and passions with a need in the church or in the world. Last year the youth almost completely planned the mission trip and fundraising themselves. Many of their individual projects were put on hold because of Covid so we are restarting and revisioning their projects now. The other thing this group did was to learn and then teach to their peers an anti-racism program that we did in the spring of last year at youth group.

Our summer ROTC (Reaching Out to The Community) continues to grow. Each summer we see many familiar faces and several new ones as well! We were able to go back to some sense of normality for our elementary and middle school ROTC camps and got to go to various agencies around the metro area. Our senior high ROTC heard a presentation from the CEO of SAVE Inc. about Pride Haven which is a shelter for homeless LGBTQ+ young people. After hearing the talk and doing a needs assessment the youth did a one-day donation drive at a local Hy-Vee to get toiletries donated. They brought in SO MUCH. It was a beautiful thing! After that they also

partnered with the Kansas Leadership Center to do a vaccine promotion event. Two of the youth made a music video and the rest ran a social media campaign.

Finally, our summer mission trip for 2021 was also a great success. We traveled to Colorado Springs to work with agencies that serve the homeless population there. The highlight of the trip was lunch and a sing along with the residents of Freedom Springs, a facility that houses formerly homeless veterans. I want to thank Heather Bradley-Geary for her connections and leadership on the trip. I cannot tell you how proud I was of our youth! They worked so hard and there was story after story of how very kind and engaging our youth were.

Thank you for the honor of allowing me to work with these extraordinary young people.

Kelly Demo, Associate Rector and Director of Youth Ministries

2022 Vestry Stewardship Mission Statement

Each member of our parish possesses unique gifts by God. We encourage our parish family to:

Come... as you are with what God has given you.

Grow... in the Word of God. Nurture opportunities to use our talent and cultivate our giving.

Serve... by giving back with what God has given us. Glorify God with our treasure.

Make a Difference. Be willing to have a positive effect on our church, community, country and the world.

Take joy in giving and seize each moment for stewardship in our spiritual home.

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