St. Thomas
the Apostle
Episcopal
Church

ANNUAL MEETING

2026

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St. Thomas Clergy and Staff

The Very Rev. Gar Demo, Rector
The Rev. Kelly Demo, Associate Rector
The Rev. Fran Wheeler, Deacon
The Rev. Dr. Suzan Olson, Assistant Rector
Barbara McCall, Director of Children's and Family Ministries
Julieanne Stapleton, Director of Music Ministry
Jill Waits, Parish Administrator
Lauren Cassat, Parish Life Coordinator
Meribeth Risebig*, Communications
James Albrecht, Bookkeeper
Children's Ministry Interns – Joshua McCall* and Hannah Connelly*
Youth Intern – Jeanne Ozkan
Nursery staff – Bella Wade, McKenzie Simons, Austin Tevis, Katherine Schlotman, Malia Baker
Vocalists & Pianists – Si-fou Tzang, Hope Dedrick, Maggie Hendricks, Minjun Lee*

*On staff in 2025 but not currently on staff

St Thomas Vestry & Delegates

Vestry
Parthy Evans – Senior Warden (exp. Jan. 2026)
Mike Pickett – Junior Warden (exp. Jan. 2026)
Ron Weil – Treasurer (exp. Jan. 2026)
Jenny Palmer – Clerk of the Vestry (exp. Jan. 2026)
Jeff Kinkade – Finance Chair (exp. Jan. 2026)
Ashley Fleischaker – Third Year (exp. Jan. 2026)
Tim Pullin, Tammy Dodderidge, John Pfannes, Jenny Palmer – Second Year (exp. Jan. 2027)
Jay Martin, Mary-Ann Gaston, Bruce Henricks, Noelle Dowma – First Year (exp. Jan. 2028)

Delegates
Ron Weil, George Phillips
Alternates: Ray Wheeler, Dick Wilson

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

Annual Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, January 28, 2026, 7:00 p.m.

Opening Hymn – The Summons

Opening Prayer

Call to Order

Approval of the Minutes from 2025 Annual Meeting

Review and approval of current Annual Meeting Agenda

Election of Vestry (4 for a three-year term)
Election of Diocesan Delegates (4 for a three-year term)
- Nominating Committee report & introduction of nominees present
- Nominations from the floor

A year in the Life of St. Thomas

Finance Report
- 2025 Report on Finances / Audit
- 2026 Budget

Report from Junior Warden – Mike Pickett

Report from Senior Warden – Parthy Evans

Report from the Director of Music Ministries

Report from the Director of Children and Family Ministries

Results of Elections (if needed)

Affirmation of the Rector's Nomination for Senior Warden

Other Announcements / Appointments

Prayer, Blessing, and Dismissal

NOTE: The Vestry will meet immediately following the dismissal in the Assembly Room.

St Thomas the Apostle January 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes

Meeting Time: 7:00 PM Wednesday, January 28th, 2025
Location: Parish Hall, St Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church
Opening Hymn: The Summons
Opening Prayer: Led by Fr Gar Demo
Call to order

Approval of the 2024: Unanimously approved
Approval of 2025 agenda: Unanimously approved

Election of Vestry Members
No nominations from the floor
Election of Vestry (4 for a 3 - year term)
Fr Gar introduced the nominations for Vestry Candidates: Jay Martin, Bruce Hendricks, MaryAnn Gaston, Noella Dowma.
The current slate of candidates was accepted by acclamation--no ballot needed.

Year in the Life of St Thomas/ A.I. invasion
Fr. Gar presented a Year in the Life of the Church video with the help of Artificial Intelligence. This included financial reports, capital campaign updates, vestry minutes and highlights of different ministries, worship and outreach. There was also a photo slideshow.

2024 Report on Finances Ashley Fleischaker and Jeff Kinkade

Ashley shared the 2024 Year End Report. It was a great year. We have paid down our mortgage over $300,000 this year. Our expenses were under our income.

Jeff shared the 2025 Projected Budget. We have a projected income of $958,000. We are projecting our 2025 expenses to be approximately $975,908. This is a difference of $17,908 which is close to a balanced budget and is less than 2%.

Capital Campaign Update-We have received $383,000 to date. We made a $300,000 mortgage payment. The first $500,000 collected from the campaign will go to the mortgage. Our refinance date is in September.
Finance Committee includes- Jeff Kinkade, Mike Pickett, Ashley Fleischaker and Parthy Evans.

Jr Warden Update- Mike Pickett shared some minor things done around the Church as general upkeep such as: painting the benches, kitchen clean up and Christmas lights.
We had a HVAC unit go out in 2024. We are very fortunate to have the solar panels.
We are also upgrading more lights to LED lights and more solar added in 2025. We also plan to reconfigure offices and bathrooms with the capital campaign funds in 2025.

Sr Warden Report-Parthy Evans shared how dedicated and involved our staff and our volunteers are.

Report from the Director of Children and Family Ministries- Barbara McCall shared how a lot of new things were started in 2024 to continue into 2025. Barbara became a Godly Play trainer last spring. She can fully train others and use licensed Godly Play materials. We will also be asked to pilot new materials. We will be a resource for other churches in the Diocese as well as across the country.

Report from the Director of Music Ministries- Julianne Stapleton shared how welcome she has felt at St Thomas her first year. She highlighted some of the many musical offerings available at St Thomas such as Chancel Choir, Praise Band, Youth Band, Children's Choir, Arts Camp, Christmas Pageant and more.

Results of Elections: (not applicable)

Rector's Nomination for Senior Warden: Fr Gar asked Parthy Evans to be Senior Warden for one more year. -Affirmed.

Announcement of Vestry Officers:
Junior Warden-Mike Pickett
Treasurer- Ron Weil
Finance Chair-Jeff Kinkade
Secretary- TBD

Other Announcements- Fr Gar expressed his gratitude for those rotating off the Vestry- Jane Hoppe, Steven Stewart, Peter Gram and Emily Connelly. He also thanked Ashley Fleischaker for her service as treasurer.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM

Minutes submitted by Emily Connelly, Vestry Secretary.

Membership and attendance 2025

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 to many new members this year. Here is a chart of the years since 2005.

Blessings,
Fr. Gar Demo

YEAR	ASA	Easter	Christmas	Members	Pledges	Baptism	Weddings	Funerals	Conf/Rec
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+352	890	227	7	4	12	12
2022	237 +142*	485+264*	527+282*	903	223	12	1	12	22
2023	232+177*	568 +213*	675+247*	947	222	6	2	14	7
2024	242+163*	582+223*	679+232*	940	219	12	5	14	15
2025	240+206	529+264	659+270	899	222	7	5	19	20

In 2025*:
ASA: 240 average attendance in person, and 206 online.
The first number is in person, the second number is online, unique views on FB and YouTube.

Associate Rector Report

One of the highlights of 2025 for me was being invited back to the Progressive Youth Ministries conference to teach about our Senior High Sunday School Curriculum, The Giving Project. I was able to take Hannah Connelly with us who is a graduate of our program. The program was really well received and having Hannah lent legitimacy as the participants were able to hear real stories of how our program affected her life. Also, Ali Phillips completed her Giving Project, refurbishing the veggie garden out back to a (largely) self sustaining butterfly garden.

I was asked to be a guest on the All Things Episcopal podcast to discuss heaven and hell.

This summer, my 9th on staff, we saw once again a full range of our summer camps including Mega Camp (the diocesan-wide sleep away camp in the Flint Hills), ROTC (Reaching Out To the Community) for elementary, junior and senior high, arts camp, Vacation Bible Camp, and, of course our annual mission trip. This year we learned about urban poverty by working in Austin, TX. There we learned about several different models the city is using to address the homelessness crisis.

We also hosted our annual Lenten and Advent luncheon series with an average attendance of 25.

My liturgical duties remain a joy for me as preaching and leading the Eucharist are central to my calling.

As always, I am deeply grateful to the people of St. Thomas for the privilege of living out my ministry here.

Rev. Kelly Demo, Associate Rector

Diaconal Report

This year I celebrated my 15th anniversary as an ordained Deacon, and I am now in my eleventh year at St. Thomas. I am extremely grateful for the many blessings we continue to share with each other in our community and in the world.

Did you know that in The Episcopal Church, deacons and priests are both ordained clergy but fulfill different duties? While among their duties, priests lead worship services and celebrate the sacraments as pastors, deacons' roles tend to be more service-oriented, directly assisting communities in need, assigned and under the direction of their bishop. And, unlike priests, deacons usually aren't paid for their work. The church has about 3,300 deacons—including retirees and non-parochial deacons—1,806 of whom are assigned to a parish, according to Church Pension Group.

"Deacons are the bridge between the church and the world."

Besides serving at the Altar during services, my parish diaconal ministries were served in the following ways during 2025:

- **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 from the school vary based upon the school's current needs. This year introduced further volunteer support for the school's school supplies contributions, community cookout/carnival, mobile pantry, and Holiday Shop. This year we will be providing a new 9 Square in the Air game for their PE and extracurricular activities/events. Please see the Outreach section of this Annual Report to learn more 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 many 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.
- **Thanksgiving in Action** – For the past 5 years now, we have joined with First Christian Church in Olathe providing boxes of groceries for a Thanksgiving meal to food insecure families in the Olathe community. This year the St. Thomas community provided about 100 boxes of food to this ministry. In combination with other local Olathe churches and scout troops, we were all able to provide 172 families with a meal at Thanksgiving with even more that were to be handed out for Christmas meals as well. Thank you to all who contributed with this community partnership to support those in need of food.
- **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. Please see more about this ministry in the Pastoral Care section of this annual report. I am extremely grateful for the loving compassion and dedication that our LEVs

provide each week and throughout the year to all we visit.

- **Pastoral Visits** – I assist with pastoral visits as needed.
- **K2K Fundraising Team** – I serve on this committee to help raise funds and awareness of the various ministries we support in Kenya.

In addition to my ministries at St. Thomas, I work part-time as the Administrative Assistant to the Dean and as the registrar for the Bishop Kemper School for Ministry in Topeka. I serve on a Diocesan level as 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 serve as President on the Board for Episcopal Church Women for Province VII, which consists of active ECW chapters in 9 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 ECW events/retreats within the Provincial area. In October, I was humbled to be appointed by our Bishop to be one of the new Co-Directors for the Kansas to Kenya Ministry.

In Christ's Service,
Fran Wheeler, Deacon

Senior Warden Report

With pleasure I provide the Senior Warden's report for the year of 2025. The Senior Warden gets a ring-side seat in an Episcopal Parish as a helper to the Rector, as part of the Vestry and finance committee, and in having a responsibility to provide a connection between the Vestry and the parish. This past year I have marveled watching our community serve and grow inside and outside the four walls of St. Thomas. A reading of the annual reports from our clergy, staff, and lay leaders reveals some overarching themes. I want to touch on a few of those.

We are authentic in being able to see others—really see the person—serve others as they need and love others. The foundation for that authentic Christian living is laid for us by Father Gar, Mother Kelly, Mother Suzan, and Deacon Fran as our clergy who teach us against the backdrop of the Episcopal pillars of Scripture, tradition, and reason. Our Annual Report is replete with examples of this playing out for us as parish members and for many, many others, some of whom never have or will come through the doors of St. Thomas. The ripples of impact from our humble hub at 123rd and Antioch extend locally, nationally, and to other continents.

We are a teaching parish and generously answer the need to share what we have learned with other churches, other organizations, and colleagues at our national church. Our clergy and staff and many lay leaders are recognized and sought after writers, teachers, collaborators, and thought partners. Again, this ministry impact extends locally, nationally, and to other parts of the planet.

There is of course a business that underlies and supports our ministry work. We are a very well-run business thanks to all of our commitments and the talents of our leadership in planning and finance. We are so fortunate to have pairings across our leadership of heart-based ministry paired with experience in the business of running programs, carrying out ministry goals, and in financial acumen. Our time and money commitments to our parish are in the best of hands.

We are generous with our time and money. The hours of prayer and work that underlie our ministry are precious and expansive. The money we give reflects an understanding of what it takes to "make all this happen" and what it will take in the future to make more happen.

We excel at enjoying one another's company. Fellowship is our strong game. We all know that. Having a community in life is something I know that we want for everyone. We live this out in inviting, welcoming, and involving others and we are in community with those we serve.

Our ministry reports are rich with other overarching themes of St. Thomas. In enjoying them I have to ask myself—what is our next level? Of course more of the same is obvious, but there are additional steps we can take in our service to our God. Our "awareness quotient" is strong and we know that there are more who are hungry, suffering, marginalized, and unable to fully participate in society. I am betting that we see some wonderful ministry enhancements and additions in next year's annual reports.

Yours in love,
Parthy Evans
Senior Warden

Junior Warden Report

I am pleased to report that the building and campus are in excellent shape thanks to the passion of the staff and congregation. As I've stated before, our church home is often similar to our own homes. Mid-year, we took note that the corners leading into the parish hall had come into disrepair from the many bumps and scrapes that happen in the "lived in" nature of our house. Nothing that couldn't be fixed and well worth the price of memories made throughout the years. We are so fortunate!

In my 3 years as the Jr. Warden, I have had the benefit of seeing some tremendous transformation in the efforts to deliver a sustainable footprint. Two solar arrays, LED lights throughout, web enabled programmable zoned thermostats, water fountains with bottle fill capabilities, an Eagle project butterfly garden and the list goes on. You see an Eagle project with Adirondack chairs by the fire pit, Security cameras, web enabled and programmable doors, and soon you'll see changes to the office area to support the best church staff in the business. There's so much more!

The capital campaign along with credits and rebates have put us in a much improved position for handling breakdowns of equipment, lessening the stress of reallocating spoken-for assets. Cost containment efforts from contract renegotiations, insurance coverage adjustments, and the assistance of the congregation in everything from garden to kitchen maintenance have all added to the solid position we're in as a community.

With much appreciation for the time, talents, and treasures that have been provided in improving and maintaining St. Thomas and God's creation,
Mike Pickett
Jr Warden

Endowment Fund

The St Thomas Endowment was formally established in 2023. This is being done in partnership with the Episcopal Church Foundation. As of December 31, 2025, the Endowment had $342,715 in assets for general use. Last year, the vestry took a 5% withdrawal and provided $16,000 to the annual fund in 2025. A portion of the endowment will be made available each year to support St. Thomas ministry.

If you would like to consider a gift to the endowment or want more information, please contact the office.

Adult Formation

We tried some new subjects this year as a part of Adult Formation. In the Spring, the Rev. Suzan offered a 6-week series on creative responses to faith stories during Sunday morning Adult Forum. She brought in several speakers and led the classes. The Rev. Lynn Powell offered a 6-week formation series on contemplative prayer. The Rev. Kelly Demo offered a season on "Why Faith."

During Lent and Advent, we offered Wednesday lunch conversations around faith. During Lent we utilized Godly Play stories and during Advent we focused on Women of the Bible—both classes offered by clergy and Barbara

McCall. During the fall we continued our study of the weekly lectionary and have shifted to TED talk reflections on spirituality.

In addition, we host a Wednesday morning theology study, a Thursday morning Bible Study, and several book groups in the congregation. Each of these groups have more detailed information in this report.

In 2025, we had over 40 people participating in our "Year in the Bible." People have the opportunity to read the entire Bible throughout the year. This is coordinated by Sheryl Roller every other year.

The Rev. Gar Demo

Bible Challenge

Bible Challenge 4 launched on January 1, 2025. This year, we used The One Year Chronological Study Bible, New Living Testament. There was general excitement about a chronological study Bible and about the New Living Testament. Many found this translation easier to follow and understand than the New International Version we had used previously. Each time we began readings in a new book, a link to the appropriate video overview by bibleproject.com was sent.

Thirty-nine people started the Bible Challenge and 10 completed it by reading all or almost all of the Bible in 2025. This amounts to 25%! Even more exciting—there are 47 individuals who have read all or nearly all of the Bible! From these 47 individuals, 5 have completed the Bible Challenge twice!

Respectfully submitted,
Sheryl Roller

Wednesday Study Group

We began the year by looking at the Future of the Church through the lens of several different theologians: Why we Struggle Now & When Religion Fails, Economics become Demonic —Michael Dowd; Rethinking Christianity & The Monastic Heart—Sister Joan Chittister; The Future of Christianity—Center for Action and Contemplation; and Creating a Church for the Future—Brian McLaren.

In the fall we studied *First Light: Jesus and the Kingdom of God* with John Dominic Crossan. We focused on the socio-political-religious beliefs which developed through the confrontation of the dominance of Rome and the humility and love of Jesus.

We are always a lively group who vie for time to discuss our thoughts and beliefs. There is no homework required.

Suzie Taylor-Meadows

Thursday Morning Bible Study

The Thursday Morning Bible Study completed our survey of the New Testament, using *New Testament Survey* by Kevin J Conner and Ken Malmin. Matthew through Galatians were discussed during the fall of 2024. In January 2025, we began with Ephesians and concluded with Revelation. As is our custom, members of the study group chose which books of the Bible they wanted to facilitate a discussion about. On October 2, 2025 the new study B*ible Women: All Their Words and Why They Matter* by Lindsay Hardin Freeman began. We started by selecting the women we wanted to discuss and then choosing which women we wanted to facilitate a discussion about. We reviewed the life stories and impact of 10 women: Eve, Miriam, Priest of Midian's Daughters, Daughters of Zelophehad, Deborah, Naomi, Ruth & Orpah, Ruth, Queen of Sheba, and Esther.

Respectfully submitted,
Sheryl Roller & Susan Strom

Women's Retreat

On Nov. 22nd, about thirty women from St. Thomas gathered to hear guest speaker Janet Strickler share meditations on gratitude. We shared stories, prayed, and had a wonderful time.

Rev. Kelly Demo, Associate Rector

Children and Family Ministries

2025 was a year of growth in multiple forms for our Children's Ministry program.

On January 1, I officially became a Licensed Trainer with the Godly Play Foundation, opening up a variety of opportunities for St. Thomas and its children to benefit from the newest, most up-to-date developments from the Godly Play Foundation, and for St. Thomas to serve as a hub of activity and training opportunities to children, families, leaders (volunteer and paid), and churches spanning from just up the street, to Wichita, to Omaha, Nebraska to Waco, Texas. Through these training opportunities, St. Thomas now has 8 fully trained Godly Play Storytellers among our congregation and leadership. In March, Barbara hosted the first of two (next to come in the winter/spring of 2026) "Listen and Learn" sessions for our St. Thomas Families utilizing a Lilly Foundation grant-funded opportunity from Godly Play's "Everyday Godly Play" initiative. This program invites adult loved ones and their children to experience Godly Play together and offers the adults the opportunity to engage in a facilitated conversation around their hopes/dreams for their children's faith experiences and to share with church leaders how they can be supported in reaching those goals. Four families, along with Mother Kelly and St. Thomas Youth & Children's Intern, Hannah Connelly, participated in the event. In March and April, with the generous support of Laura and Fred Kouri, our program was the benefactor of a generous donation with matching funds to Godly Play Resources in our honor that brought in over $2000 worth of new Godly Play stories and materials to our program. These materials expanded our story offerings from the New Testament and Enrichment lessons that help our older children dive deeper into the life of Jesus and other Old and New Testament figures, and refurbished some of our original materials from 15 years ago. These refurbished materials supported our work here with the children of St. Thomas as well as children of the diocese by travelling to Mega Camp with Barbara and with our High School "Reaching Out to the Community" team to the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in Independence, KS. We are so grateful for the support of the Kouris in helping us to get these amazing new materials! Godly Play continues to be the anchor of our Sunday Morning offerings for children during the September–May program year, as we welcome an average of 20 children to our 3 age-based "circles" with 2 leaders per room alternating weeks with their teams of 3-4 people. Children have enjoyed stories including "The Greatest Parable," "Jesus and the 12," "The Synagogue and the Upper Room," "Holy Baptism," "The Holy Bible," and more!

The first half of the year brought some new faces entering our circles as we have welcomed 7 new families (with 1-3 children each) to our children's programming. These families have plugged in across our children's offerings from Children's Church to Godly Play to Summer Camps, Children's Choir and the Christmas Pageant, and parents have engaged in our Moms' and Middlemen's small groups. We are blessed by each family's presence, and it is always such a joy to see how St. Thomas's emphasis on radical welcome is displayed by even our youngest children as each new child has been embraced by their peers.

Children's Church continues to be offered as an option to young children who have transitioned out of nursery care, but would like a little more wiggle in their worship during both Sunday Services, all Summer Sunday services, and certain special services (such as Maundy Thursday and Good Friday). Recently, we have seen a balancing of attendance between our two Sunday services with the 8:45 and 11 a.m. worship each seeing an average of 5-7 children in attendance. We continue to promote that this program is optional and fully celebrate when each child decides that they are comfortable and ready to stay with their grown-ups in "big church."

Children's Summer @ St. Thomas — In June, our preschool-6th grade students went on a "Road Trip" through the Bible at Vacation Bible Camp where they explored all the ways that God is with them wherever they go through the stories of Abraham & Sarah's journeys, Moses & the Exodus, Mary's visit to her cousin, Elizabeth, Jesus going to Zacchaeus's house, and Paul's journeys! Each night we shared a delicious dinner prepared by our Kitchen Krew under the leadership of MaryAnn Gaston, followed by stories with Ann Clements and Lauren Cassat, arts and crafts with Jenny Palmer and Hannah Connelly, and games with John and Josh McCall… with Josh & Father Gar closing out the night with our favorite camp songs! Our VBC culminated, as usual, with our "Family Night" Closing Worship and an indoor picnic due to inclement weather, but our "CAR"nival games were just as fun inside and our Kona Ice Truck still made it over and getting a little wet to get that good Hawaiian Shave Ice was worth it! In July, our 3rd-6th grade children once again "reached out" to the Kansas City community in service at a variety of local organizations and built friendships through some fun afternoons around town. We closed out the summer with Ms. Julieanne, and our very special guest, Mrs. Kitty Fapp from Grace Cathedral in Topeka for Visual Art, as we worked to put on our 2025 Arts Camp show,"Once Upon a Lily Pad," which you can read more about in our Children & Youth Music segment of the Music Ministries annual report.

Each year, a variety of special activities and events are sprinkled through our calendar. One of these, mentioned earlier, was our first Godly Play "Listen and Learn" Family Workshop. Additional favorites include our Palm Sunday Agape Soup Supper & Walk Through Holy Week, our Celebration Sunday Easter Egg Hunt the Sunday after Easter, Summer Kickoff picnic & bouncy house (which ended up IN the sanctuary due to rain), Summer Sunday playtime after church, Blessing of the Backpacks & Back to School Bash, and our fall, small-group Family Communion Workshop which welcomed 3 children and their loved ones to learn about the sacrament of Holy Communion. That same month, Barbara was invited by Forma: the Network for Christian Formation to present on this topic at their 2026 Conference in Denver, CO. And our year wouldn't be complete without our longstanding tradition of the ADVENTure Advent Wreath Making workshop and our Christ Child's Birthday Party following the final dress rehearsal of the Christmas Pageant.

Our Children's Ministry program continues to faithfully serve not only our own children and families of St. Thomas, but also serves as a resource and shining example for Episcopal churches in Kansas, West Missouri and beyond of what is possible when a church community faithfully and diligently supports its children as full and valued members of the body of Christ.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara McCall
Director of Children and Families

St. Thomas Nursery

Throughout 2025, our Nursery offered loving care to children ages 6 months through age 4 for all regular Sunday services, monthly Mom's Group, the Women's One-Day Retreat, and Parents' Nights Out. We are blessed by a current group of five steadfast members of our Nursery Team led by McKenzie Simmons, in her fourth year on our staff; along with Bella Wade, now in her third year on staff; Austin Tevis, who joined us in June 2025 then returned to us in December after a study-abroad semester in Costa Rica; Katherine Schlotmann and Malia Baker who joined us in the Summer. Having graduated from Olathe South High School in December, Malia is currently on hiatus for scheduling as she recovers from a recent illness and determines her next steps toward her goal of becoming a nurse. Two of our team members are university students studying in the field of neuroscience/psychology, one is a licensed childcare professional working in the field, and one is a para-educator in the public schools who is completing her master's degree in Special Education in the next year. We are beyond fortunate to have the support of the Vestry in providing an hourly rate of pay that has drawn in such qualified individuals to care for our children and provide our families with peace of mind that their children are in very capable hands in our Nursery. Additionally, in the last year we have been able to drastically decrease—if not fully eliminate—our reliance on an outside nanny agency to provide temporary care. (Though, a number of the caregivers we met through that agency have requested to remain on our "backup" list should we need their help as they greatly enjoyed their time in our building and with our children.) We are so fortunate to have the loving care offered through our talented team in the St. Thomas Nursery! We appreciate their care and dedication to our tiniest Episcopalians.

Barbara McCall
Director of Children & Families

St. Thomas Nursery Staff - as of December 31, 2025
Malia Baker* (On hiatus)
Katherine Schlotman (Active - Sundays, Mom's Group & special events)
McKenzie Simons (Active - Sundays & special events)
Austin Tevis (Active - Sundays, Mom's Group & special events)
Bella Wade (Active - Sundays & special events)

Music Ministries

2025 Music Ministries: A Year of Flourishing and Outreach

The year 2025 was marked by significant growth and vibrant accomplishments across all St. Thomas Music Ministries teams. We were delighted to observe an overall increase in program attendance, a testament to our community's deep and continuing engagement with the arts. Under the leadership of the Director of Music Ministries, we have heard very positive feedback on vocal blend, diversity of cultural repertoire, inclusivity, and collaboration.

Traditional Worship:

Our **Chancel Choir** continued to faithfully provide exceptional musical offerings, with the dedicated artistry of pianist/organist Si-Fou Tzang and the vocal strength of section leaders Hope Dedrick, Maggie Hendricks, and newest soloist, Shuqi Thang (a KU doctoral candidate). A notable highlight was the interactive choral workshop ***Let All the World In Every Corner Sing***, led by Andrew Earis, Director of Music from St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London. Beyond weekly services, our choir produced two exceptional oratorios, including John Rutter's ***Requiem*** in March and the ***Missa Brevis*** by Josef Gabriel Rheinberger on All Saints Day in November. While also providing quality music for funerals, weddings, the Advent and Lenten Lunch Series, and Women's Conference, our team joined with the Praise Band, Ron Lackey (vocals), Jay Standley (drums), Dr. Kristi Baker-Lampe (piano) and four other church choirs from the Diocese to lead music for the 2025 Diocesan Convention, held at the Overland Park Convention Center, in October. We also prepared lively African music for a visit from Bishop Antony Mambo from Kenya, while having the honor of his wife Lucy's meaningful vocal piece. Lastly, our dedicated Chancel Choir members enhanced our Christmas Eve services, which included high school students and college alumni soloists, singing challenging vocal repertoire that featured our very own instrumental soloists Dr. Rene-Anne Poulin on violin and Melody Tzang on harp. We are blessed to have the organizational skills and dedication of Mr. Jim Mell, who continues to keep our music library running smoothly.

Contemporary Worship and Community Engagement:

The **Praise Band** (PBnJ) continued its spirited ministry, enriching our weekly contemporary services. We were honored to lead worship for the 2025 Chrism Mass, the 166th Diocesan Convention, a special combined service led by Bishop Antony Mambo from Kenya, and our annual Broadway Day, featuring music from *The Lion King*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and *Wicked*. The band expanded its membership to 11 talented musicians, who seamlessly provide their talents on a rotational basis. The year culminated with the Praise Band seamlessly integrating with the Children's Choir and Youth Music Team for the annual Nativity Pageant Musical, ***Finding Christmas***, featuring a memorable appearance by our infamous Christmas donkey.

Our more intimate **Saturday evening services** were significantly enhanced by the consistent, meaningful contributions of pianist Minjun Lee and the diverse musicians featured during the Second Saturday receptions, fostering a rich, intimate worship experience. We were saddened to see Minjun's departure, but look forward to our future accompanist beginning January 24, 2026: Mrs. Ann Thang (wife of tenor soloist Shuqi Thang).

Children's and Youth Ministries:

Our Children's and Youth Ministries thrived, staging a highly successful Summer Arts Camp, *Once Upon A Lily Pad*. We had a very lively large group of children, who immersed themselves in developing creativity through art, drama, vocals, choreography, culinary arts, and faith-based liturgical classes each morning. Led by talented and skilled educators, arts leaders, and youth helpers, our mornings offered classes while our afternoons were dedicated to rehearsals for the musical theatre production. Our goal was to ensure that our production was student-led, which inclusively involved all of the children in the production process: set design, student-directing, performing, choreography, art displays, and preparing production treats for the reception. With rapidly increasing seasonal attendance, we anticipate a magical summer ahead with whimsical production of *The Music Machine*, an exploration into Agapeland, focusing on virtues and the fruits of the spirit.

Concert Series:

Our Concert Series successfully expanded its community outreach, hosting inspiring performances by talented musicians such as Melody Tzang (harp), Dr. Kristi Baker-Lampe (professor of piano performance), Minjun Lee (composer/pianist), and Kyoungseon (flute).

Professional Development and Global Inspiration:

Expanding our cultural and creative horizons, Julieanne undertook a 10-day professional development trip to London. She collaborated with Andrew Earis and the teams at St. Martin-in-the-Fields and London Children's

Choirs, returning with a renewed vision for inclusive creative ideas to enrich our program and broaden our musical perspective.

Program Development and Outreach:

Key initiatives include hosting a Choir Invitational Festival to connect with other regional choirs, thoughtfully integrating music into Vacation Bible Camp (VBC) programming, and executing another successful Summer Arts Camp.

As a dedicated member of the **Kansas Liturgy, Music and Arts Task Force**, Julieanne and the team are focused on developing a new online music-sharing resource for Diocesan choirs. This effort includes interviewing choral directors and formulating helpful communication systems between churches while collaboratively brainstorming innovative ways to build the future of the Arts in our diocese.

Our outreach goals encompass mini-workshops led by our praise band members, assisting other churches in expanding their music programs, and exploring future musical experiences. These include musical theatre and acting classes and vocal and piano lessons (designed for all ages and ability levels), including music opportunities for our special needs friends. Our overarching objective is to bring an expressive warmth to each worship service and actively encourage participation in our community-wide Arts program.

Looking Ahead: The Vision for the 2026 Music Program

We jumped back into rehearsals on January 6, working on Epiphany music, Lenten pieces, and preparing for magnificent brass music for Palm Sunday and orchestral works including Mozart's *Regina Coeli* for Easter Sunday. The Praise Band will help lead Holy Week, with music inspired from the world of jazz music. Our Concert Series will highlight our very own Hope Dedrick, who will perform a short opera, and a vibrant concert by Shuqi Thang (tenor). We are currently partnering with The University of Kansas and UMKC music programs and will be hosting concerts and recitals for young talented artists. Our Praise Band members are excited to once again join with the Youth Music Team and Children's Choir for the annual Broadway Day, where we will perform highlights from the beloved musical *Les Miserables*. With energetic music for VBC, Arts Camp, June's Chancel Choir highlights, and July's 'legendary artists' themed pieces, the summer will provide joyful and uplifting music for all to enjoy. We will announce our November oratorio in May and look forward to creating glorious music from new composers from around the world. We would like to begin offering 6-week musical theatre classes, vocal lessons, and piano training sessions for our children, youth, and Thom's Helpers this Fall. Our Christmas season will be filled with traditional favorites, instrumental surprises, and dramatic choral selections to enrich the liturgy of every worship experience.

Julieanne Stapleton
Director of Music

Administrative Ministries

The Administration team at St. Thomas plays a vital role in the day-to-day operations of the church. As the first point of contact, they warmly welcome visitors, answer questions, and provide essential support to clergy, staff, and parishioners. Their responsibilities are wide-ranging and include producing digital, verbal, and written communications; answering phones and emails; maintaining records; making copies; managing supplies; coordinating with staff; organizing building use and lock schedules; and assigning volunteer tasks. They also serve as the primary contact for reporting and scheduling building maintenance.

Administration also handles the communication of the church by supporting publications and the church's online presence. They create and print weekly service bulletins, Prayers of the People, and newsletters, as well as materials for special services and events. They play a key role in preparing, producing, and distributing financial statements, capital campaign and stewardship mailings, and materials for church-wide events, including the annual meeting.

A significant part of their work involves managing the church's membership and scheduling software, ensuring member information, contributions, attendance, and special needs are accurate and up to date. They carefully maintain the church calendar, coordinating building usage, room access, and setup for all events and outside groups, ensuring every detail is in place.

Administration also supports evangelism efforts by helping connect newcomers to the church and by connecting with outside groups who use our building and those who encounter our church with various needs.

We have many volunteers that further support these efforts by assisting walk-in visitors, answering phones, recording messages, and providing general information. Additional tasks may include proofreading, stuffing and

bundling of bulletin inserts, assisting with mailings, data entry, typing, copying, cutting, folding, replenishing pencils and welcome bags, stocking and taking inventory of the kitchen, replenishing the giving and prayer request cards in the Nave, helping with organization, hanging of the outdoor banners, collecting and dropping off recycling, organizing games in the education wing, recharging batteries, handwriting and mailing out birthday and special occasion cards, sharpening knives for the kitchen, scrubbing and spot cleaning on the chairs and kneelers. A special shout out to Mary-Ann Gaston, Joyce O'Hara, Beth Anderson, Marianne Rowland, and Nancy and Geoff Williams who all make these happen. Together, they make it possible for the church staff to do more of everything else.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jill Waits, Parish Administrator
Lauren Cassat, Parish Life Coordinator

Evangelism Ministries

Hospitality: Coffee Hour

Throughout the past year, Coffee Hour followed each Sunday service, offering parishioners and visitors a welcoming time of fellowship and connection. Volunteers prepared and set out coffee, tea, lemonade, cookies, and other treats, creating a warm and inviting space for conversation and community-building after worship. We could use a few more helping hands and would love to add volunteers to this important hospitality ministry!

Lauren Cassat, Parish Life Coordinator

Hospitality: Summer Brunches

The Summer Brunches continue to be a successful ministry at St Thomas. The Vestry took on the providing of a meal following the combined 10:00 service with the goal of bringing the congregation together to share in fellowship through food in the Summer season. The first year had an average attendance of around 45, the second year around 70, and this past year around 90.

For 2026, we will be moving the meals to a congregation-led ministry, as many of the heavily involved members have rotated off the Vestry. We will need help to continue to support and build this ministry on a going-forward basis. In 2025, we enjoyed a number of "guest chefs" including the McArthur family (pulled pork), Dr. Sharon Lynch (quiches), Father Gar and family (brats and dogs, migas), Pride Alliance (bagel and yogurt bar), The Village People Neighborhood Group (pancakes, eggs and the trimmings), Diane Diaz (breakfast burritos) along with others.

From late April – May, we will be recruiting for help to make 2026 even better. We served brunches from Memorial Day to Labor Day so if you feel called to assist once, three times, or more often, please step up to let us know of your interest. Needed assistance is as follows weekly:

- 3-4 people for preparations—9:00 to put cloths on tables, cut up fruits and/or breads, set out the plates, napkins and utensils for the day
- 4-5 people for clean-up—clean and remove tablecloths, gather the leftovers to package, wash and dry the serving dishes and dispensers—usually done by 1:00
- Guest chefs, if you feel called, or contributing cooks—Either taking on the main dish or filling in around it with assistance from our team.
- 1 person to collect free-will offerings for the individual meal or the season.

We will gather ideas from all interested in assisting with regards to the menu with the goal to always be looking 2-3 weeks ahead. While this takes a lot of effort, it is well worth it in building our community. If you have interest in assisting, please contact Father Gar, Ashley Fleischaker, Jeff Kincade, or myself and we'll add you to the list to share more information as the Summer season gets closer.

Together in sharing God's blessings at St. Thomas,
Mike Pickett — Summer Brunch Ministry Lead

Hospitality: Invite/Welcome/Connect (IWC)

For the past eleven years, St. Thomas has actively participated in the Invite/Welcome/Connect ministry. IWC aims to invite new people to church, make them feel welcome, and connect parish members to a ministry as well as

building community with other parishioners. This very important ministry has been a high priority at St. Thomas and we have seen results of the ministry by growing the church every year.

IWC hosted three Newcomer lunches in 2025 in which 64 new members (record number) attended to learn more about St. Thomas. The annual ministry fair was held in November and it is always such an amazing display of all the ministries offered at St. Thomas. Don't forget that all of us working together as the body of Christ are responsible for inviting, welcoming and connecting our St. Thomas family.

Jean Adam — IWC Warden

Neighborhood groups

Our neighborhood groups continue to meet and morph as membership changes. We have six active groups around the city that encourage fellowship and help people who go to different services at St. Thomas get to know each other.

Rev. Kelly Demo

Apostle's Garden and Columbarium

The Apostle's Gardens and Columbarium have continued to mature nicely. Our seasonal plantings, focused use of pollinator plants, and attentive maintenance have allowed our grounds to flourish.

Cathy McCormick, Tracie Glasscock, Lisa Farnsworth, Jim Kelly, Brian Morris, Bill Kidder, Clara and Frank Lane, Cathy and Rick Warner, and Bruce Henricks are dedicated parish volunteers who help make our gardens an attractive reality. Simply put, without their efforts our gardens and overall campus would not be so appealing to the eye.

Our goal each year remains to select plantings that offer pleasing seasonal color with others that generate year-round visual appeal. That emphasis is centered about our main South entrance but is utilized throughout the church grounds. We strive to create a visually pleasing environment that complements the welcoming nature of St. Thomas and its commitment to the care of creation.

We are one in our dedication to St. Thomas,
Peggy Henricks

Outreach Ministries

Comanche Elementary—Caring for Kids

St. Thomas continues to grow in our ministry and relationship in supporting Comanche Elementary School in the Shawnee Mission School District. Comanche Elementary is a Title I school with 85% of their students on the free and reduced meal plan and often times may have a high rate of transitory families.

As one of the school's faith community sponsors, 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, financial, and social levels as the school's needs arise.

In 2025 St. Thomas volunteers participated by ministering in the following ways:

- **Conference Dinners:** Each semester, a dinner for the teachers/staff during Parent Teacher Conferences is provided. This provides an extension of thoughtfulness by showing our support and appreciation of the Comanche teachers/staff. One of the other community partners usually steps up to sponsor this meal in the fall, and St. Thomas traditionally has provided it in the winter/spring. This year we provided lunch instead that included slider deli sandwiches, potato salad, and a few other sides and desserts for 45 teachers/staff during the month of February.

- **Assessment Snacks**: At the Principal's request, individually wrapped healthy snacks are provided to students during their State Assessment Testing.
- **6th Grade Graduation:** 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 food for a grilled hotdog lunch at the park located right next to the school.
- **School Supplies:** 60 backpacks were filled with school supplies. A backpack and school supply list for grades K-6 were provided, and parishioners purchased the supplies themselves and filled the backpacks. Packs were returned to the church, and Thom's Helpers volunteers helped in delivering them to the school.
- **BackSnacks:** St. Thomas packs and delivers backpacks filled with kid-friendly snack items for children to take home on the weekends. Students enrolled in this program are usually students whose families may be experiencing financial difficulties, or situations where children may not have access to food or are often simply left home alone or unsupervised. Food and backpacks are provided by Harvesters each week. Comanche had 45 students enrolled in the BackSnack Program.
- **Mobile Pantry:** A new Mobile Pantry was started in May 2021 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 for distribution of food intended for families in need of emergency food assistance. Food is provided by Harvesters and each distribution consists primarily of fresh produce and various other fresh/frozen dairy and meat products and is provided on a first come first served basis. Each month we have approximately 20-25 volunteers that help unload from the truck, sort, and then load the grocery items into drive-by vehicles. We are approximating about 120-150 households served each month.
- **Holiday Shop:** An overwhelming collection of household and gift items again were donated by parishioners of St. Thomas, and our various community partners, to support the school's Holiday Shop. The shop is provided for students to use earned fun money to purchase gifts from the shop for their families and loved ones at Christmas. Volunteers also helped with transportation and set up of the merchandise collected and in helping students shop and wrap their gifts for their loved ones. Thank you to all who graciously contributed items and their time to make this event such a wonderful success.
- **Hygiene & Cold Weather Items:** Toothpaste, toothbrushes, winter coats, and other cold weather items continue to be donated by parishioners at various times throughout the year as needed.
- **Community Cookout:** Started as a way for the school to reach out in relationship with their students/families, we have provided support to the Comanche Community by helping them organize a community cookout once a year. St. Thomas volunteers to provide the food, cooks, and servers for a BBQ dinner for this event. This year at the school's request we again served hamburgers and hot dogs. Additionally, bottled water, chips, and desserts were also provided. We continually serve approximately 400+ meals to Comanche students/families and staff. We are truly blessed to grow in our relationship with the Comanche school community and our other community partners.
- **MVPs:** We have several opportunities to also volunteer in the classrooms. MVP's are volunteers that assist teachers and students in the classrooms. To volunteer for this, you must go through the school district's one day training. Additional information for this ministry may be found on the school's website.

I am extremely grateful for all those who have contributed their time, contributions, and donations when the school's needs are sent out parish wide. Thank you so much for your continued willingness to serve!

Respectfully submitted,
Deacon Fran Wheeler

St. Thomas Emergency Pantry

Over the past few years, I have been chairing the emergency food pantry. This ministry was supported mainly by the Explorer's group.

Between January and December, approximately 28 families received food. Beginning in September 2025, there was a very significant rise in requests for food.

After discussion with Father Gar, it was decided to include the entire parish in this ministry. We participated in the fall ministry fair and the result was overwhelming. Nearly 20 new volunteers signed up to provide food as needed. We currently have a backlog of food. Therefore it may be a while before volunteers are contacted. Anyone

interested in helping with this ministry should contact me or the church office.

A huge thank you to St. Thomas for helping to feed our neighbors right here in Johnson County.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Werner

Blood Drives

St. Thomas hosted five American Red Cross-sponsored blood drives this year. These drives provide STA parishioners with a convenient opportunity to truly "give" back to the community by donating blood and helping to save lives.

Agatha Amani House

The year 2025 was a special year for the staff, volunteers, and survivors and their children at Agatha Amani House in Naivasha, Kenya. This nonprofit organization provides safety, empowerment, and training to women who are victims of sexual or domestic violence and celebrated its 11th Anniversary since opening in 2014. Nyakio Kaniu-Lake, founder and Executive Director of Agatha Amani House, extends her heartfelt appreciation to St. Thomas and its parishioners for all the love and support she has received over the past decade. Agatha Amani House was the first long-term shelter for abused women in Kenya since its inception in 2014. Even today, eleven years later there are only two other shelters of its kind in Kenya. In 2025, adjoining land was purchased and Agatha Amani House now occupies four and a half acres of land, compared to one acre eleven years ago. The organization continues to focus on sustainability and expanded its organic farm in 2025. The survivors have learned new skills in sewing, natural building, and in farming this past year. New vegetable gardens were created during the year. Seven volunteers from Europe and South America served at Agatha Amani House during the year. Nyakio attended a month-long ECO Village design training session in Cali, Bogota, at an ECO Village and has developed a plan for establishing an ECO Village to support future survivors at Agatha Amani House in their transition back to the community. We are looking forward to 2026!

Joe Bob Lake

Kansas 2 Kenya "K2K"

2025 was not a typical year for Kansas 2 Kenya or "K2K" as it is most often called. K2K is an outreach ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas. K2K was founded twenty years ago by Dr. Steve Segebrecht. In normal years K2K forms two mission teams and travels to Kenya in June. One team called the Medical Team conducts free clinics in three rural areas that has seen thousands of poor Kenyans over the years. The Kenyan government put a temporary freeze on all incoming medical missions in 2025 and unfortunately the K2K Medical Team could not travel to Kenya. The other K2K mission team is called the Community Team and seeks to establish long term relationships with organizations who focus on the sustainable development goals set out by the United Nations and other global business and nonprofit organizations. The Community Team was led by Nyakio Kaniu-Lake and Diane Kruger-Boley. Six individuals who had signed up for the Medical Team opted to join up with the Community Team and were especially helpful in diagnosing and helping a baby at Agatha Amani House get needed treatment at Kijabe Hospital. The Community Team did projects at Agatha Amani House, Karati Boarding School for developmentally challenged kids, Karati Public Elementary School, All Saints Anglican Church of Kenya, and the Maasai Village near Maai Mahiu. They also conducted two conferences for women. All of this activity was done in the spirit of "community transforming community" which is the core mission of K2K. It is time to form teams this June, and we encourage all to consider joining up on one of the teams!

Joe Bob Lake

Thom's Helpers

Thom's Helpers is a ministry that serves adults with a variety of special needs and abilities. Thom's Helpers meet on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday every week at St. Thomas when the church is open. These special helpers set up and tear down locations throughout St. Thomas for special events including celebrations of life, weddings, presentations and meetings. They bake cookies for the church as well as for outside organizations, and pack and deliver BackSnacks to Comanche Elementary School. Thom's Helpers shred documents/paper for St. Thomas and

serve in a variety of ways to help others in our church and community.

This is a self-supporting ministry whose members love to shred documents, bake cookies and help others. A number of St. Thomas parishioners serve as mentors for Thom's Helpers and supervise their activities.

Gerry Miller — Coordinator

Immigration Ministries

In 2025, the Immigration Ministries team worked diligently to continue support for our immigrant neighbors and to understand and respond to a quickly changing policy and enforcement immigration environment. We welcomed a new Afghan family seeking refuge from persecution due to the assistance they provided to the U.S. military in Afghanistan—providing cultural orientation, assisting them with rent and utilities when their promised grant funding was prematurely terminated, and helping with a myriad of other needs, including home furnishings and clothing, transportation to food banks, assistance with school enrollment, coordination and transportation to healthcare appointments, and much more. In addition, our volunteers continued with in-home English Language Learning (ELL) instruction for the new family and two existing families; and we provided tuition assistance for more advanced JCCC ELL classes.

As the year progressed, immigration policy changes essentially brought an end to immigrant arrivals, and enforcement changes caused concern for many immigrants—including those (like our families) who are pursuing legitimate paths to improvement of status and, ultimately, U.S. citizenship. In response, the Immigration Ministries Team launched a new advocacy initiative aimed at monitoring the evolving landscape and educating legislators, other officials, and the community in support of our immigrant neighbors. In addition, the team identified legal resources as a crucial need for immigrant families and has provided financial support to assist with access to sound legal advice. Team members have also shown support and solidarity with immigrants in our community by accompanying individuals to check-in appointments with federal immigration agencies. Going forward, we are in discussion with local resettlement organizations to fill the gaps in services and funding resulting from the revocation of the organizations' federal grant funding.

This is a trying time for our immigrant neighbors and for the volunteers who serve and love them. Please keep them all in your prayers.

Laura Bond — Coordinator

Thanksgiving Dinner

A wonderful Outreach program at St. Thomas is our annual Thanksgiving Dinner that is attended by parishioners but also open to anyone in the community that would like to join us for a traditional Thanksgiving meal. We have wonderful volunteers that help prepare the meal with some of them returning every year. Some of the best moments are from our neighbors that are thankful for a warm meal. We served more people this year, about 125 in 2025. We will continue with the tradition and be back in 2026.

Peace,
Donna Fye

Thanksgiving in Action

For the past 5 years now, we have joined with First Christian Church in Olathe providing boxes of groceries for a Thanksgiving meal to food insecure families in the Olathe Community. This year the St. Thomas community provided about 100 boxes of food to this ministry. In combination with other local Olathe churches and scout troops, we were all able to provide 172 families with a meal at Thanksgiving with even more that were to be handed out for Christmas meals as well. Thank you to all who contributed with this community partnership to support those in need of food.

Deacon Fran Wheeler

Pastoral Care Ministries

St. Martha's Guild

We are a meals ministry, whose members lovingly provide and deliver meals to those who are just home from the hospital or who have a severe illness and need a good warm meal. We bring either a home cooked meal or a purchased meal. In 2025, we delivered 77 meals to individuals and families.

St. Martha's Guild is a lovingly gracious, caring ministry. We are doing as Jesus asks us to do; to love and serve our neighbors as we love ourselves and our families.

Thank you to all our members for everything you do. When called, emailed or texted, and there is an immediate need for a meal, each and 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. You are in my prayers. Love, Joy, Peace.

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

Susan Strom

Comfort and Love for Those Who Mourn

St. Thomas has a long-standing tradition of offering hospitality and refreshments following funeral services and Celebration of Life services. Through this ministry, parishioners provide comfort and care to grieving families, friends of St. Thomas, and at times members of the wider community. In doing so, we live out Christ's call to reach out to others with compassion and love.

Receptions are typically held in the Parish Hall and feature light refreshments such as cookies and finger foods. The St. Thomas office notifies parishioners by email or phone tree when volunteers are needed to help with setup, serving, cleanup, or by baking or providing food.

Everyone is welcome to participate in this ministry of hospitality, where we offer comfort, friendship, and support during times of loss.

For more information, please contact the St. Thomas Office at 913-451-1512 or admin@stthomasop.org

Jill Waits

Walking the Mourners Path

We have five facilitators for WMP. We had a spring group of 12 and in the fall we had two groups—one with 3 participants and one with 7. We plan to offer multiple opportunities this year. During the program, people explore the challenges and walk through grief with others in a loving environment. We have had 138 people participate in this program over the years.

Fr. Gar Demo

Prayer Chain

The Bible tells us that our most important calling is to love God and to love our neighbor. One vibrant way that we do this in our St. Thomas community is through prayer. Our prayer chain provides a vehicle in which we pray for each other—prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of healing, prayers of comfort. When we pray together we provide strength and hope for those in need. Diane and I have made many calls this year and each call has alerted our prayer warriors into action. On behalf of myself and all of those who have requested prayers I thank our prayer warriors. If you would like to join this group and receive prayer chain calls please contact Lauren.

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."

If you have a prayer request for yourself or someone close to you please feel free to contact Diane or Deb.

When leaving a message clearly state your name and phone number, and for what you would like us to pray.

Lay Eucharistic Visitors

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 had 11 actively trained Lay Eucharistic Visitors on rotation in 2025. During the year, our LEVs visited and provided communion to 723 individuals.

We are continually blessed to share communion with our Brookdale friends each month as well. Brookdale is a small memory care facility in Overland Park with which we've had a relationship for about 7+ years now. I am thankful for John and Dola McNown and Beth Anderson for their continued commitment to make this ministry possible.

I am extremely grateful for each and every LEV for their loving compassion and dedicated commitment to Christ and for the transformational experiences encountered with each person we visit.

Respectfully submitted,
Deacon Fran Wheeler

Training for this ministry is usually offered twice a year. If you think you may feel called to serving with this ministry, or would simply like more information, please feel free to contact Deacon Fran.

Spiritual Direction

Spiritual direction is offered as a ministry of deep listening and holy attentiveness, creating space for seekers to notice and respond to the presence of God in the ordinary and extraordinary contours of their lives. Rooted in the wisdom of the Christian tradition, this ministry is grounded in listening "with the ear of the heart," as articulated in the Rule of St. Benedict, and in trusting that God is already active within the lived experience of each person.

At the heart of spiritual direction is a reverent respect for the unique spiritual journey of every individual. Each directee's freedom and agency in their relationship with God is honored. The role of the spiritual director is not to advise, fix, or prescribe, but to accompany—to listen deeply, reflect faithfully, and support the directee in discerning God's movement in their life with integrity and trust.

This ministry integrates Scripture, Christian tradition, and lived experience, holding them in conversation as sources of wisdom and discernment. Attention is given to the ways God may be encountered through prayer, relationships, suffering, joy, vocation, transitions, and the questions that arise along the way. The process affirms that spiritual growth unfolds over time and often through attentive noticing rather than immediate resolution.

A typical session begins with a period of silence or opening prayer, allowing both director and directee to become centered and receptive to God's presence. The directee is then invited to share what is most present on their heart and mind. Through attentive listening, gentle reflection, and thoughtful questions, the session explores patterns, experiences, and movements of consolation and desolation, with particular attention to where God may be inviting awareness, response, or rest.

Sessions conclude with a brief summary of what has emerged, along with the offering of possible spiritual practices or invitations for prayerful attention between sessions. Each gathering ends with a closing prayer or blessing, entrusting the ongoing work of discernment to God's care.

Through spiritual direction, individuals are supported in cultivating a deeper awareness of God's presence in all of life, strengthening their capacity for discernment, and growing in freedom, trust, and faithfulness in their relationship with God.

At St. Thomas, there is no fee for parishioners. Appointments generally last 45 to 60 minutes made in advance with any of the clergy.

The Rev. Dr. Suzan Olson

Clergy Visits

Pastoral visitation at St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church is a central expression of the Church's ministry of presence and care, extending the compassion of Christ into the lives of parishioners during times of illness, transition, vulnerability, and joy. This ministry reflects the Church's commitment to walking alongside individuals and families with attentiveness, prayer, and faithful accompaniment.

Pastoral visits occur in a variety of settings, including homes, hospitals, assisted living and long-term care facilities, and other contexts where members of the parish may be experiencing physical, emotional, or spiritual need. These visits are shaped by the pastoral conviction that presence itself is sacramental—bearing witness to God's nearness even when words are few.

Each visit is guided by attentive listening and respect for the dignity, agency, and circumstances of the person being visited. Conversations are led by the needs and concerns of the parishioner, allowing space for lament, gratitude, storytelling, and prayer. When appropriate, Scripture, silence, or the rites of the Church—such as prayers for healing or preparation for the Eucharist—may be offered, always with sensitivity to the individual's desires and spiritual readiness.

Pastoral visitation also serves those experiencing life transitions, including grief, hospitalization, recovery, aging, and reintegration following absence from worship or community life. The ministry affirms that no one is forgotten and that the Church remains present beyond the walls of the parish building.

Through pastoral visitation, St. Thomas the Apostle embodies its vocation as a community of care, extending Christ's love through faithful presence, prayerful listening, and compassionate response. This ministry strengthens bonds within the parish, fosters trust, and supports the spiritual and emotional well-being of the community as a whole.

From June through December 2025, 23 parishioners were visited (in homes, hospitals, hospice houses, senior living facilities). Thirty-one in-persons visits were made with 91 total touchpoints (phone, text, Email, in-person).

The Rev. Dr. Suzan Olson

Bethany Community

The Bethany Community of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus is an intentional contemplative community within the Diocese of Kansas, dedicated to spiritual formation, shared discernment, and growth in Christian discipleship. Rooted in the Christian contemplative tradition, the community takes its name from the household at Bethany—a place in the Gospels where love, listening, service, and friendship with Christ are held together in faithful tension.

The word contemplative derives from the Latin cum templum—"with the temple"—signifying a place of encounter with God. Contemplation is understood as a panoramic, receptive awareness that welcomes the fullness of a moment without exclusion. As articulated by Richard Rohr, contemplation invites participants to receive reality as it is, trusting that God is already present and at work.

The intent of the Bethany Community is co-participation with the Holy Spirit through attentive presence and mutual listening. Members practice cooperation with one another by remaining grounded in what is, trusting that the Spirit's movement becomes discernible when individuals and the community are receptive rather than striving. Presence, in this context, is an embodied attentiveness—being alert, grounded, and honest before God and one another.

Each contemplative gathering follows a consistent rhythm. Meetings begin with a time of check-in and opening prayer, followed by a guided or prompted twenty-minute silent sit, framed with both an introduction and a gentle conclusion. After the silence, participants engage in reflective conversation around one of the community's ten core practices, sharing how a contemplative way of life is unfolding in their lived experience. Gatherings conclude with conversation around a shared text or spiritual reading.

The Bethany Community understands itself as a community of learners. Growth—spiritual, relational, and vocational—is central to its purpose. Members are invited to bring their whole selves into the space, trusting that vulnerability, listening, and shared reflection are means through which God forms the community.

The first "Taste and See" introductory session was held in October 2025, with ten participants in attendance. A second "Taste and See" session is scheduled for early February 2026. The community meets monthly, typically on the first Thursday of the month from 1:00–2:30 p.m., with an optional gathering time beginning at 12:30 p.m. Facilitation is shared between Mother Suzan and a co-facilitator from another parish within the Kansas City metropolitan area.

The Bethany Community chapter held at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Overland Park welcomes Christians

from across the wider metropolitan area and maintains an open posture toward members of other Bethany Communities within the Diocese of Kansas, who are welcome to attend meetings as guests. Prospective participants are encouraged to attend a "Taste and See" session prior to joining a regular monthly gathering, ensuring clarity of purpose and commitment to the contemplative rhythm of the community.

The Rev. Dr. Suzan Olson

Small Group Ministries

Moms' Group

Our mom's group continued this year with strong momentum, doubling in size over the past calendar year as more women found connection and support within the group. We prioritize quarterly social gatherings to deepen relationships and foster community beyond our regular monthly meetings.

Katie Birchfield & Liz Knights

Middlemen's Group

The "Middlemen" is a group designed for men in their 30's, 40's, or 50's, and is focused on fellowship, spiritual growth and understanding the role faith plays in our daily lives. It can be difficult to find time to juggle faith and spirituality with our busy personal, family, and professional schedules, so this group provides an opportunity to explore with others facing similar pressures. Our small but close-knit group meets for breakfast on the 4th Saturday of each month, with other opportunities to connect and strengthen our community throughout the year. We'd love to have you join us whenever you are able! For more information, please contact John.

John McCall -Leader

Classic Men's Group

The Classic Men's Group meets every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the year except for the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's holidays when falling on either of the normal meeting days.

Books of a spiritual nature are selected by the group and discussed to gain different perspectives. We also build fellowship and relationships within the group. The meetings usually last no more than one and a half hours and include time for treats

Tom Meyers

Explorers

Another Year of Faith, Fellowship, Fun and Food

The St. Thomas Explorers is a group of retired members who meet on the first and third Thursdays of each month at 7 PM in Parish Hall 2. This year was the first on our new schedule where we have avoided meeting during the winter months. Our first meeting in 2026 will be on Thursday, March 19, when we will start with our annual "St. Patrick's Day Potato Bar" potluck. Each "meeting year" ends on the first Thursday in December with a "Christmas Dinner and Caroling."

Our typical meeting follows a format of Opening Prayer, a 45-minute Bible Study (usually with a DVD for guidance), Compline, member updates and fellowship with snacks. Meetings are generally an hour and a half to two hours long with anywhere from 14 to 25 people present.

In addition to our regular meetings, the Explorers generally take two or three day trips to spots of interest within two hours of KC. These are always fun and we always find a place to eat for lunch or an early dinner.

Many of our members are leaders in the Kansas to Kenya (K2K) ministry, the Immigration ministry, and the emergency food ministry.

Currently the Explorers has about 30 members making it a good way to get to know other people at St. Thomas and become involved in various ministries. All are welcome.

For more information, contact: John McNown either by email or by calling his home phone and leaving a message.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." Ephesians 2:10.

Prayer Shawl Ministry is an amazing group of people who knit, crochet, and weave prayer shawls, afghans, shawls, and winter hats. Each prayer shawl, afghan, and hat is interwoven with prayers for healing, comfort, mercy, love, strength, peace, joy.

When we have newly created prayer shawls available to be given, they are first blessed by the clergy.

In 2025, we gave 110 hats to Cross Lines Community Outreach in KCK, 65 hats to the children and adults in Kansas to Kenya (K2K), 91 hats to the Christmas Bureau, 20 hats to Comanche's Holiday Mart, and hats as needed to other Outreach organizations. In 2025, we gifted 13 prayer shawls and 281+ winter hats.

When needing a prayer shawl, please contact the church office or me.

When your Outreach organization is in need of warm winter hats, prayer shawls or afghans, we can help.

Prayer Shawl Ministry meets the first Monday night of each month at 7:30 p.m. – 9 p.m., and every Saturday morning 10 a.m.– 12 p.m. We gather in the Narthex.

Please join our ministry. It is an amazing group of creative, kind and loving, (fun,) gracious people who love getting together to knit, crochet, loom knit, or weave. If you are a new knitter or crocheter, or want to learn, we have wonderfully gifted, patient teachers who will help you anyway we can to create knitted or crocheted items. Please come.

Deep peace,
Susan Strom

Co-Leaders:
Susan Strom & Linda Manuel

Young Adult Small Group

The Young Adult Small Group met throughout the year and meets at 7pm on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday evenings. We've experienced significant growth this year and hope for the same in 2026. 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 upcoming year will be focused on developing relationships and tools to foster greater spiritual growth and community in the small group. This past year primarily focused on understanding how God transcends cultures and how to break down real and perceived barriers in furthering the kingdom of God.

Tim Pullin

PRIDE Alliance

The LGBTQIA+ Alliance at St. Thomas decided to rename itself this year to PRIDE Alliance. First it was easier to say but we think is also more representative of our groups many allies!

We completed our third full year in 2025. We have had significant growth as a group with a membership now of 40+parishioners. The group is comprised of both individuals who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community and their allies. Our goals are to 1) have more visibility within the St. Thomas parish community and 2) more visibility of our parish within the LGBTQIA+ community. To support those goals in 2025 we sponsored various activities:

- In January Will and Trust attorney Stephanie Smith spoke to the Alliance and guests about how to protect your assets and wishes in an ever changing political environment.
- In June (Gay Pride month) we had a table display in the Narthex that provided reading material and support resources.
- Once again we participated with the Missouri Diocese on the planning committee for the Pride festival on the Plaza. That weekend a Pride Mass was celebrated at St. Paul's (Midtown) and, following the Mass, we marched in the Pride parade with the other Episcopal parishes, from both Missouri and Kansas. Members of our group helped staff the Episcopal booth throughout the weekend event. In 2026 we plan to have a separate booth for The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas.
- In June we hosted Kansas State Representative Linda Featherston who spoke on Kansas anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation. This was well attended and provided great insight into how previously won rights are being stripped away.

- In October we had a booth at the Johnson County Pride festival that is primarily a family event. At our booth we had various beads where the children (and adults) could make their own bracelets. This was a big hit, and our booth was visited by many attendees.
- The PRIDE Alliance would like to thank our parish community, and especially Father Gar and Mother Kelly, for the tremendous support that we receive.

John Pfannes

Book Club

*Evening Book Club

We meet the third Tuesday of each month at 7 pm with the exception of December and summer. Beginning in 2025 Beth Anderson was still leading our group after many, many years. Thank you for keeping us organized Beth. Kathie Warner took over in the fall of 2025. We have at least 8-12 in regular attendance. In the spring of each year, as a group, we select the books for the following year. Generally, the person who suggested the book will lead the discussion that month.

*Daytime Book Club

At the Ministry Fair I put up a sign up for anyone who might be interested in a daytime book group. Nine ladies signed up. We had our first gathering Thursday, January 22 at 11:30. We are going to have a "Chat and Chew" and follow the same book list from the night group.

Kathie Warner

Games

Hello All! We have a new small group this year around board gaming and hobby gaming! We have met several times, usually on first Sunday, and while the groups have been small-ish it has been a great time of fellowship and fun.

The games small group meets on the first Sunday of the month after church for a few hours. We have played a range of games from card games to hobby games. It is a welcoming group that welcomes all experience levels. If you have been curious about the hobby or if you are the type of individual that likes to have an activity to socialize card and boardgames are great. A great way to unplug and get away from our phones and work and engage with your brain and with others.

While there have been some scheduling issues, we are working through those and will start meeting on the first Sunday of the month at 12:30 after the 11:00 service and will have some food and snacks available.

Who might find this group for them? If you are a teen or adult that likes boardgames and card games. Or if you are an adult that potentially wants to join a small group but you are looking for something that is activity centered. You don't have to have any experience, and it is a friendly welcoming environment. We will do any teaching you need. It is a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon where you can unplug and exercise your brain with others.

One of the best aspects of the group, is how much folks who have come have enjoyed themselves. Those of us who like to spend time playing games love sharing them with others.

Thanks and Be Well,
Steven Stewart

Worship Ministries

Acolytes

Acolytes continue to be a quintessential servant leadership ministry at St. Thomas. We currently have 23 children and youth who are trained as acolytes, in grades 3-12. They serve at the 8:45 and 11am services as well as some special services throughout the year.

Rev. Kelly Demo

Eucharistic Ministers and Lectors

I'd like to thank all Eucharistic Ministers and Lectors for their service in 2025. Currently we have 15 EMs and 36 Lectors. Thanks to all of you for your continued ministry and leadership.

Fr. Gar Demo

Altar Guild

Altar Guild experienced many changes in 2025. Our beloved Sacristan, Becki Laney, retired and her role was filled by new co-leads, Anne Kidder and Jennifer Stewart. Several of our longtime Altar Guild members also retired. We had a very successful recruitment campaign in the fall of 2025 and were excited to welcome many new faces to our ranks. We currently have 19 members on our roster which gives us good coverage for the services.

Altar Guild has many responsibilities. We work behind the scenes with the help of Thom's Helpers to make sure everything is ready for each service. This encompasses not only the three services each week but also weddings, funerals and baptisms. We set the table, refill the candles, change the altar hangings/banner and dishes to align with the liturgy, and prepare the home communion kits for the Lay Eucharistic Visitors. We also have teams that wash and press the linen and bake bread for communion. Thom's Helpers and their sponsors have generously been assisting us with filling the candles and service setup each week.

Moving forward we plan to continue training our newest members, building in some additional opportunities for fellowship, and would like to recruit some help for the team that washes and presses the linens. Many hands make light work and we are truly thankful for all our amazing volunteers, and those whose faithful service has ended! New members are welcome at any time.

Jennifer Stewart and Anne Kidder—Co-Sacristans

Ushers

My name is Steve Fleischaker, and I am grateful to be Chair of the usher team ministry at St. Thomas. 2025 was another good year for our 18 usher volunteers with a focus on providing an inclusive experience for all attendees when passing the collection plate, whether they give in person, online or annually.

The St. Thomas congregation continues to grow and attendance at our services has increased. We do our best to have two ushers at each service and a third usher at larger services such as Christmas and Easter.

This year, I want to use my space in the annual meeting program to make an appeal. Our ushers each serve at an average of 3 services every two months but with scheduling conflicts we really need a few more volunteers in order to provide a smooth communion process.

If you are looking for a ministry to get involved with in 2026, please reach out to me or St. Thomas staff about becoming an usher.

I hope I speak for all of our ushers and junior ushers in saying thank you for your kindness in allowing us to play a small part in your St. Thomas worship.

St. Thomas Jr. Ushers

In the fall of 2025, the new iteration of our Junior Ushers ministry celebrated its first anniversary! Junior Ushers is the first opportunity for elementary aged children, beginning in Kindergarten, to engage in worship ministry at St. Thomas. Our current corps of Junior Ushers officially consists of seven children in grades kindergarten through 5th grade, with four serving regularly and three serving as substitutes. However, as of November, we have an additional three children who have trained and volunteer to serve regularly bringing our total number of participants to 10!

During worship services, our Junior Ushers welcome children into the worship space by handing out our weekly children's bulletins and showing them where our worship bags and other books and activities can be found. They then return to assist the Ushers during the offertory and communion portions of the worship.

The support and care of our Senior Ushers in welcoming these young helpers in worship has been truly heartwarming, and the families of our Junior Ushers and I offer our heartfelt thanks to them for their support. It is a joy to see yet another opportunity for the children of St. Thomas to establish connections with adult members of the parish.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara McCall
Director of Children & Families

Greeters

Greeters are present at each service welcoming newcomers and regular parishioners alike both before and after the services. We have over 21 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 welcome. Would you like to help us greet? If you are interested, please contact Robin Phillips to learn more.

Bread Bakers

Our 14 bread bakers have been working on a regular basis making small loaves of bread that are included in the red welcome bags for newcomers. Generally, 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 to learn more.

Tech Team

High-quality audio and video help us welcome people into worship, wherever they may be. Whether someone is sitting in the pews or joining us from home, these tools allow us to share the gospel and stay connected as one church family.

With more than 150 services live streamed each year, our reach extends well beyond our building. A dedicated team of volunteers faithfully runs the audio and video equipment during each service, making this ministry possible. For those who cannot attend in person because of illness, distance, or other challenges, live streaming offers a meaningful way to remain connected to worship and to hear God's Word.

Flower Guild

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. The highlight of the year was the opportunity to take a master class in flower arrangement taught by Robert Lackie. Much was learned by all and we got to watch Robert as he created the flowers for our Easter services. Jane Hoppe, Ashley Fleischaker, Cathy McCormick, and Carla and Frank Lane had a great year creating beautiful works of floral art to add to our worship services. Susan O'Bar and Megan Dumas signed up at the last ministry fair so we are so looking forward to them joining our ranks. New recruits are always welcome and no experience is necessary. The time commitment is minimal (an hour or two a month). 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. The weekly signup sheet for altar flowers is posted in the hallway outside the office or you can call the office at least a week in advance. The suggested donation for flowers is $50.00. The office handles all monetary donations.

Leslie Byrnes

Youth Ministries

The cornerstone of our youth ministry program is our youth group meetings on Sunday nights from 6–8 p.m. We meet most Sundays throughout the school year. The evening generally begins at 5 p.m. with one of our older youth offering peer tutoring/homework time (it was his Giving Project). Julieanne has begun a wonderful youth band that practices at 5:30. The rest of the group gathers at 6 to sing with the band and pray and worship before we head in to have dinner that is provided by one of the youth's parents. We often play some games before moving into program time. Last spring our focus was on healthy relationships of all kinds and this fall our program is focused on learning about different faith traditions and finding common threads of truth that run throughout many belief systems.

We have also started an older youth/college student Bible study that meets weekly and is working our way (slowly!) through the Psalms.

Rev. Kelly Demo

Ecological Intention Report

Report of SOLAR and ENERGY Improvements

St. Thomas installed solar panels in 2022 and 2025. With the addition of our new solar this year we have a 112kw system. Our solar array could cover 90% of our electric use. We are still learning how this works for us and attempting to improve our energy consumption.

In 2023 and 2024, we installed new LED fixtures in most fixtures in the building. In the summer of 2025, we transitioned to a new HVAC control system that allows more precise control through online portals. We have continued to convert our building lights. The combination of these factors REDUCED our electric demand. For example, in December 2022, our electric bill usage was 14,000 kwh compared to December 2025 when it was 2,270 kWh.

Since inception, the SOLAR panels have produced 276.9 Mwh of energy, reducing our CO_2 emissions by 417,000 lbs, the equivalent of planting 3151 trees.

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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