

# Triumph Newsletter

DECEMBER 2024

## It's Time to Wake Up

Advent is here and it is officially “count-down” time. The very moment we put away all the Thanksgiving leftovers in the refrigerator, Black Friday begins. And, on Black Friday comes the count-down of the diminishing days until Christmas. I once had a neighbor who had a snowman on his porch that held a lighted electronic sign that counted down the number of days until Christmas. Every time I passed by it I was reminded of how many days there were to get my shopping done. When it reached seven days or less, I began to panic. The countdown was exciting but it induced in me an anxiety that I wouldn't be ready in time for Christmas.

The church has its own “countdown to Christmas.” It is called “The Season of Advent.” Instead of being a time of shopping for Christmas gifts, Advent is a time of preparation for the gift of a miraculous presence. This “preparation” is not about decking the halls or trimming the tree. This “preparation” is not about baking cookies or wrapping packages. This “preparation” is about a truth which comes into the world, it's about love cradled in a feeding trough. Advent is an alarm clock, a moment of truth to rouse

us out of the “get-by and keep-going” stupor of this world and wake up, to share the story of Christ's coming. Advent is a time to wake up our spirits so that we can be aware of God's presence in our lives and in the lives of others. Advent comes with the invitation to open our hearts and minds to the arrival of the Christ. If Jesus knocks on the door of our lives, we want to be ready and awake enough to invite him in. Wake up then for Jesus wants to enter in! Wake up for Jesus is our Emmanuel – God with us!

The extraordinary good news of Advent is that God chooses to be with us. God enters into our world desiring a relationship with us. The bad news is that we are often unaware of this miracle. The season of Advent can be a time when we take Jesus' call to “wake up” to heart. We can turn away from the busyness of this season, with all its shopping, wrapping, and decking the halls, so that we can look for God in the people and the places all around us. Here is a plan for Advent: Wake up! Be ready, and look for the God who promises to come to us in love.

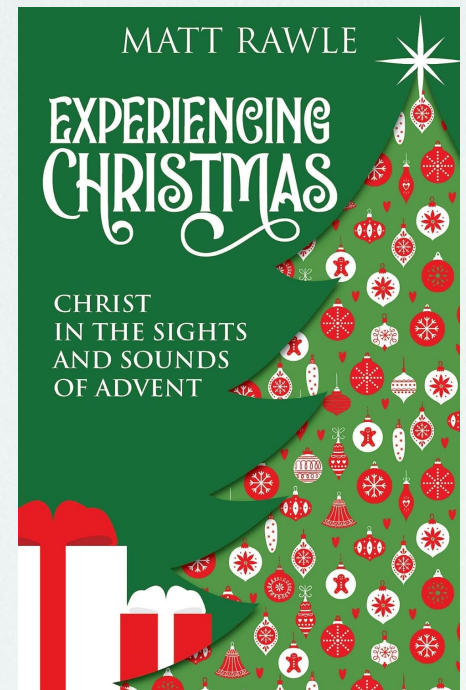
Happy Advent, and Merry Christmas!  
Pastor Matt

## Church Wide Advent Study

This year's Advent Study is "Experiencing Christmas" by Matt Rawle. We hope that all adults, youth and children will participate in some way. Pastor Matt will be using this for his sermon series and the Sunday School classes will also do this study. Adults can join Paula Renfro's class at 9:30am, or Earl Amstutz and Pat Dodson's combined class at 10:00am. The book can be purchased from several vendors: \$11.97 at Christian book.com, \$13.41 at Amazon, \$10.79 at Cokesbury.com. Ebooks are \$9.99. Prices may change without notice on each website and delivery times may vary.

## Advent with Pastor Matt

On Wednesday, December 18, join Pastor Matt at 7:00pm for Communion followed by songs, dessert and a discussion of Advent centered on our theme of "Experiencing Christmas". Look for signups in the bulletin in December.



## Drive Thru Nativity

Sat, Dec 14 | 5 - 8 pm



**Volunteers needed!**  
Look for the sign up board  
in the Narthex!

## Drive Thru Nativity

Experience the wonder of the Christmas story from the comfort of your car with our Drive-Thru Living Nativity, brought to life by members of our church and with live animals. This is our gift to the community, but many volunteers are needed to make this event a success. In addition to actors, we need help with scene construction/assembly and food preparation. Please visit the Signup Board in the Narthex or visit the Events page of the website to find out how you can be a part of this special event!

## Blue Christmas Service

For many of us, Christmas is a time of excitement and joy, but the Christmas season can also be a time of grief and sorrow, loneliness, alienation, and sadness when we think back over some of the pain that has happened in our lives. In this special worship service, we will claim these feelings through special music, readings, and prayers. You will also be given an opportunity to light a candle as a symbol of offering up your sorrows to the hope we have in the coming of Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world.



*Blue Christmas Service*  
Mon, Dec 23 | 7 pm  
Meditations & Candles

# Christmas Cantata

Sun, Nov 15 | 9 am & 11 am



## Breakfast with Santa

Save the Date: Sun, Dec 15



Free

## CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER

Wed, Dec 25 | 11am - 3 pm

DINE IN OR CURBSIDE PICK-UP



**OWLS MINISTRY**  
OLDER WISER LIVELIER SENIOR MINISTRY

On November 22, we tried a new venue in Gainesville - Firebirds Wood Fired Grill. As always it was a great time to get together for food and loads of fellowship - we had 35 signed up this month! We had a few cancellations due to schedule conflicts and the weather, but those that came were well taken care of by the wait staff and enjoyed the fellowship. The soup of the day was Tomato Bisque and the kitchen graciously accommodated several off the menu requests for Grilled Cheese Sandwiches!

In December, we'll meet at the Food Court in Manassas Mall at 1pm on Friday, December 20. (Mark your calendars - it's the 3rd Friday!)

Wear your festive best and join us to celebrate Christmas. Choose your lunch from a wide selection at the Food Court - everything from subs or pizza, to kabobs and sushi. Enjoy a great time of fellowship with your favorite crew! As always - friends are welcome!

## Christmas Missions

The Missions Council wishes to thank everyone that has participated in our Christmas Missions. We are in the process of giving toys out to approximately 200 children and gifts to 120 Seniors. **Please remember to bring your wrapped and labeled Senior gifts to the church between December 1st and 12th.** Your generosity has enabled the children and the seniors to have a very Merry Christmas! Thank you so much!!!



# KITCHEN MINISTRY

ST. THOMAS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

We would like to ask your help in getting the word out about our FREE Christmas Day Dinner. Please let your family, friends, and neighbors know that they can come to church to pick up their dinners curbside on Christmas Day from 11:00am-3:00pm. We will offer inside seating from 11:00am-3:00pm.

We could use your help with the Christmas Day Dinner, how you may ask? If you have not taken a card from the board in the Narthex please consider donating an item or two or donating money for us to purchase some of the larger items not listed on the board. If you are able to help prepare the dinner please sign up on the board. The in person help sheets will be up by Dec. 10. Online signups will be available on the website after Thanksgiving. Thank you for your help, we so appreciate it!

We will have 3 Tuesday Night Dinners in December and then put our efforts into preparing for the Christmas Day Dinner before enjoying some time off between Christmas and New Year's week. Tuesday Night Dinners will return on January 7, 2025.

We had a huge turnout for our Thanksgiving feast! How wonderful to have the Fellowship Hall full. We do have some new people joining us on Tuesdays from time to time and may we ask that you make them feel welcomed? Please invite them to join you at your table.

Thanks for signing up online or calling the church office before noon on Mondays. This helps us greatly in preparing the right amount of food.

Our December menus are:

**Cookie of the Month:** Gingerbread Cookie

Dec. 3

Garden Salad  
Bacon Cheeseburger  
French Fries

**Dessert:** Tapioca Pudding

**Kid's Meal:** Same as adult meal

Dec. 10

Hawaiian Chicken  
Pineapple Rice Pilaf  
Glazed Carrots  
Dinner Roll

**Dessert:** Cherry Crisp

**Kid's Meal:** Chicken Strips

Dec. 17

Christmas Feast  
Baked Ham  
Roasted Redskin Potatoes  
Corn Scallop  
Banana Bread

**Dessert:** Peppermint Bark

**Kid's Meal:** Same as Adults

Dec. 24

No Tuesday Night Dinner

Dec. 25

Christmas Day Dinner serving 11:00am-3:00pm

Dec. 31

No Tuesday Night Dinner

Have a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.



# United Women in Faith

## UWF Annual Christmas Party

*Friday, December 6 at 6:00pm in Room 300 upstairs.*

All ladies of the church are invited to join us for an evening of food, fun and fellowship to celebrate the Christmas season. Bring a dish to share for our Potluck Dinner and a wrapped gift for our Gift Exchange (under \$25 value). This is always a special evening. All are welcome - friends, sisters, daughters or moms! If you would like a ride - please contact Pat Dodson.

## Craft Mini-Bazaar

*Sunday, December 8, 8:30-12:30, Fellowship Hall*

Back by popular demand! Come early for another chance to shop for unique gifts created by our multi-talented craft group. The Mini-Bazaar will be open from 8:30am to 12:30 pm, so you can shop before or after services. All proceeds go to missions chosen by the UWF in support of women and children.



## Mini Holiday Bazaar

**Sun, Dec 8 | 8:30 am -12:30 pm**

**Shop for Crafts in the Fellowship Hall**

## Walking Group

This month we will meet on Dec 7 at 9am at the Pat White Center at Ben Lomond, then walk the neighborhood. Join us for a wonderful opportunity to be active and enjoy great fellowship.

## Book Club

The Ladies Book Club will NOT meet in December.

We will next meet on January 10th, 2025, to discuss EXODUS by Leon Uris. Exodus tells of the Jewish peoples search for a homeland after centuries of pogroms and the devastation of WWII. The book is lengthy so you might want to start reading now.

Besides the novel, you might want to also read Numbers 34: 1-15, Deuteronomy 28:1-14, Deut. 6: 1-25, Joshua 13: 1-7, Joshua 23: 1-13, and finally Joshua 24:1-28 to understand the Jewish position that the land of Israel belongs to the Jewish faithful.

Our February book is THE GUERNSEY LITERARY AND POTATO PEEL PIE SOCIETY by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. GUERNSEY is an interesting book about the occupation of the British Isle of Guernsey by the Germans during WWII. The book is written entirely in letters.

All Ladies are invited to attend the book club even if they have not finished (or read) the book. We usually meet on the second Friday of each month at 10:30 am in Room 304.

## Dorcas Circle

For December, the Dorcas Circle will meet on the second Tuesday, December 10, at 1:00 pm, at The Olive Garden on Sudley Road. Join us for food and fellowship to celebrate the Christmas season. This year, in lieu of a gift exchange, we will make donations to Rachel & Nolo Garcia who are missionaries in Guatemala.



The children's ministry had a good November with our regular programs, Veteran's Day dinner, and our crafty Thanksgiving celebration. And now we have a very busy December planned!

We hope that everyone will join us for the Hanging of the Greens service at 4pm on December 1, followed by our Advent activities including dinner, cookie decorating, and making a fresh advent wreath for your home. This evening is designed to be fun for all ages and all types of families. Please stay even if you don't have a child in your household now.

For December, we will follow the Christmas Vacation series from GrowKids. This series focuses on the birth of Jesus, God's plan and timing, and why we celebrate Jesus as God's gift to the world. For children's church we will follow the church wide Advent study.

Also, don't forget the Drive Thru Nativity on Saturday, December 14 and Breakfast with Santa on Sunday, December 15! Details available elsewhere in the Newsletter and on the church website.

On December 22 at 10 am we will have our annual Children's Christmas Pageant. There is only one service at 10am this day. This year the program is titled The Party and it is all about adding Jesus to our Christmas preparations. We will have roles for everyone, and we will all sing together, but speaking roles will be assigned in advance. If you would like to have a speaking role, reach out to Kristi at [Kristi.Swanson@stthomasumc.org](mailto:Kristi.Swanson@stthomasumc.org). There will be additional practices for speakers. We will have a dress rehearsal for all speakers and any other kids who want to practice at 1pm on December 15 after Breakfast with Santa.

The Christmas Cookie Competition will take place in the fellowship hall directly after the children's pageant. Join us to sample homemade cookies and vote for your favorite. Sign up here to bring cookies: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409054EABAA2CABFC1-53383933-cookie>

On December 29 we will have a Sunday Funday New Year Pajama Party. Meet in the sanctuary and we will dismiss to Sunday Funday after the children's message. Wear your pajamas and bring a blanket. This will also be our treasure box day for tickets.

## HANGING OF THE GREENS & FAMILY ADVENT NIGHT

Sun, Dec 1 | 4 - 7 pm

Music, Wreath Making, Cookie Decorating & More!



## CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

"The Party" | Sun, Dec 22

one service only at 10 am



All children welcome!

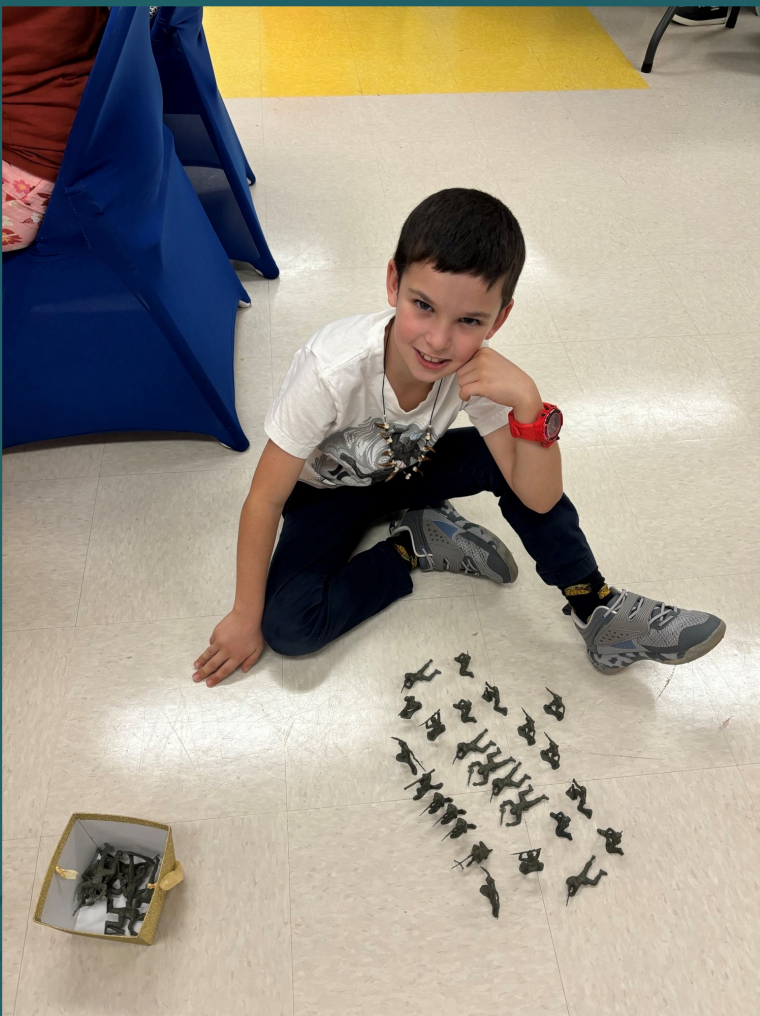


# THE PACK

ST. THOMAS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The youth have had a great November. We've been splitting up for Sunday school, joining with the adults and the King's Kids programs.

The Veteran's Day dinner was a lot of fun and it was very meaningful to hear from so many of the Veterans of our church. We made cards for deployed troops which we hope will bring joy to our soldiers.



We wrapped up the month with Friendsgiving which was a great time to interact and share a meal with the adult Sunday School classes. It was a fun evening filled with good food and great fellowship.

For December, the youth will help with Hanging of the Greens and Family Advent Night, Drive-through Nativity and Breakfast with Santa.

We will also have a Christmas party in the Youth Center on December 15 at 6pm. For the gift exchange, each person needs to bring a new sock filled with some of their favorite items -- candy, snacks, activities, toiletries, whatever you like! We are also asking everyone to bring a snack to share and focusing on a dip theme so if you can, bring your favorite dip! If for any reason you need an assist with the snack or gift, just reach out to Kristi at [Kristi.swanson@stthomasumc.org](mailto:Kristi.swanson@stthomasumc.org) and we will take care of it so you can attend and share in all the fun.

# Annual Christmas Parade - Saturday December 7

78th Annual

*Manassas Christmas Parade*

Sat, Dec 7 | 10 am - 12 pm



Come join the fun walk with St. Thomas United Methodist Church Praise Band on December 7 between 10:00 - 12:00 for the 78th Greater Manassas Parade. This year theme "Christmas in Candyland!"

The team will meet at the church at 7:30am. If you want to meet them a bit later, contact Alicia Hamilton, or the church office in advance to coordinate.

This is always a fun event and a great way to kickoff the Christmas season!



8899 Sudley Road, Manassas, VA 20110

Rev. Matt Sergent, Senior Pastor

[stthomasumc.org](http://stthomasumc.org)

703-368-5161

Newsletter Deadline:

15th of the month

Please email all articles to both:

[samantha.bouquet@stthomasumc.org](mailto:samantha.bouquet@stthomasumc.org)

[receptionist@stthomasumc.org](mailto:receptionist@stthomasumc.org)

## Upcoming Events

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| Dec 1  | Hanging of the Greens & Family Advent Night 4pm - 7pm              |
| Dec 7  | Christmas Parade   10am - UWF Walking Group   9am                  |
| Dec 8  | Craft Mini-Bazaar   Fellowship Hall 8:30am - 12:30pm               |
| Dec 14 | Living Nativity   5pm - 8pm  |
| Dec 15 | Christmas Cantata   9am & 11am<br>Breakfast with Santa 10am & 12am |
| Dec 18 | Advent with Pastor Matt   7pm                                      |
| Dec 22 | Children's Pageant   10am - Cookie Competition   11am              |
| Dec 23 | Blue Christmas Service   7pm                                       |
| Dec 24 | Christmas Eve   7pm Contemporary & 9pm Traditional                 |
| Dec 25 | Christmas Day Dinner   11am - 3pm                                  |
| Dec 29 | Carol Service   10am   |



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Peggy Lawlor	2	3 Cary McMahon	4 Monique Buchanan	5	6 Carolyn Glade	7 Bill Bixby
8 Elizabeth Goldfarb	9	10 Debbie Heverin	11 Jenalynn Weed	12	13	14
15	16	17 Mason Sanchez Danielle Harcup	18 Lynda Workman Walter Granados	19	20 Sybil Johnston Leonard Fick Esperanza Enchill	21 Ginny Bixby
22	23	24	25 John Verosko	26	27	28 Dommie Izzo
29 Giovanni Schoch Roger Stone Jr	30 Tracy Spencer Martha Jones	31		December Birthdays		