

JANUARY 2022

Triumph *Newsletter*

Join Us For Our January Series

TELLING YOUR STORY

Stories are powerful extensions of who we are. We each have our own unique story to be unraveled, and by sharing them with others we help shape communities, give strength to others and paint a picture for those who follow in our footsteps.

The best story of all is the one that Jesus has told. Join us for this important session where we will embrace storytelling, whether you choose to shout it from the rooftops or quietly scribble away in a journal.

Join us for four weeks beginning Sunday, January 9 as we explore the power of the Christian story.



Week 1: The Greatest Story

Acts 17:22-34

From Netflix to social media, stories fill our imagination and time. The problem is we often compare our stories with others and feel unimportant. The good news is you are connected to the greatest story ever told.

Week 2: The Whole Story

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Part of our redemption comes from telling our whole story. By telling the whole story, we are able to see how through God's grace, even the greatest of sinners are redeemed.

Week 3: God, where were You?

Genesis 28:10-19a

God still speaks. God is not silent. God has not forgotten the story God started with you. For those of us who are feeling a little alone, if we'll just practice looking up, we might notice that God was already here.

Week 4: News Worth Sharing; A Life Worth Living

John 9:1-12

Each of us is significant, and our stories matter. There is someone who needs to hear your story and feel welcome into the story of God.

Spreading Christmas Joy

The Missions Council would like to thank everyone who participated in Un-Trim A Tree and A "Senior" Christmas and toys for our Angel Shop. St. Thomas, once again you have made a lot of people smile this Christmas season. Thank you!



We delivered gifts for 30 children in 13 families to the Un-Trim A Tree program of Volunteer Prince William



We delivered 115 Senior gifts to Manassas Health and Rehab



Our Children's Ministry team and Sunbeam Children's Center collected over 60 Advent Bags to be given out through the Food Pantry

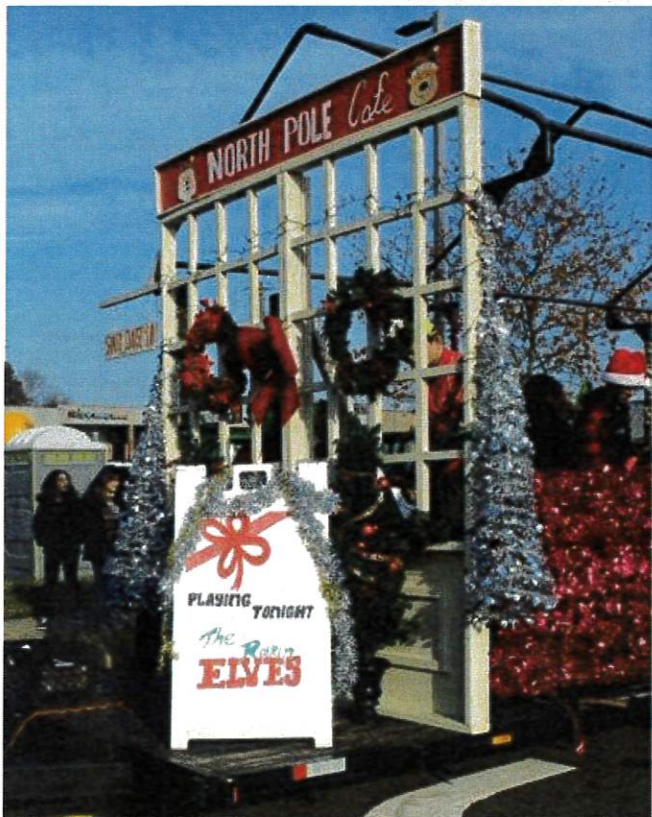
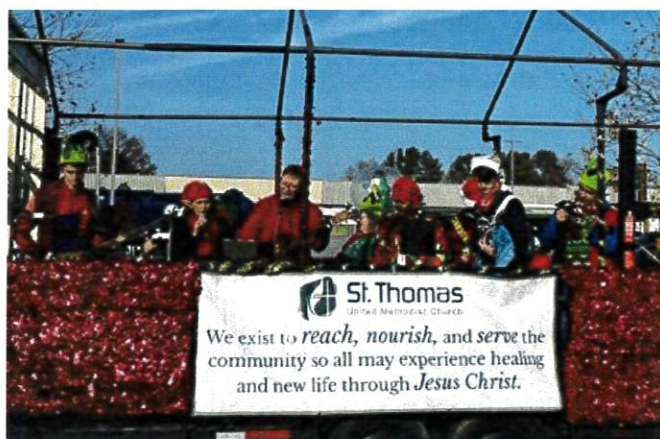


We served 39 families with 117 children through our Angel Shop

Finally, the Mission Council donated \$1000 worth of Winter Coats to Loch Lomond Elementary School!

Christmas Parade

Thank you to our volunteers who created & led this year's "award-winning" float at the Manassas City Parade!



Living Nativity

For the second year in a row due to the impact of the pandemic, the Drive Thru Living Nativity was presented in a shortened form. We hosted five scenes (four "living" murals plus the choir) and offered the drive-thru for only two hours. However, that did not prevent 169 cars with 521 people from coming through and enjoying key scenes of the story of Jesus' birth. The weather did not cooperate with the originally scheduled date, so the event was presented on Sunday, Dec. 12. Much credit goes to the actors and the setup crews for being able to move from one day to another rather seamlessly. We were fortunate that Pastor Arum was able to make arrangements for animals at the last minute, as the original menagerie could not make our secondary date. Two goats and two donkeys filled the bill this year. In another step toward normalcy, Frank and the kitchen crew provided soup and sandwiches for the actors between their scenes – social distancing did apply. Pictures can be viewed on the church website under Who We Are/Photo Gallery.

St. Thomas continues to be a destination point for the community during the Christmas season. As usual, it took many hands to make this year's event happen. Thank you to you all!



Love on the 4th Sunday of Advent

Christmas Cantata



Children's Christmas Pageant

Breakfast with Santa



St. Thomas 21st Annual Christmas Day Dinner

Whew! What a whirlwind of activity took place in the Fellowship Hall and Kitchen between Dec. 14th and Dec. 24th as we prepped for the annual Christmas Day Dinner. We had some of our turkeys smoked by Don Haines this year-what a wonderful treat! The rest of the turkeys were baked and then hams and turkeys were prepped for serving, potatoes were peeled and cooked, stuffing was made, and dessert containers were filled. We also prepped some of the main meals for the early morning deliveries. Christmas morning we had more people help getting the food into the containers for our curbside service. Volunteers came by 10:30 to take food to our first responders and homebound sweethearts. If we counted correctly we served 1,949 people. Of those, 630 were delivered to first responders plus we made an additional 281 boxed desserts for the hospital. A special thank you to Connie Santee for coordinating our deliveries. We have the best clean-up crew around! We would like to thank everyone who helped IN SOME WAY with the Christmas Day Dinner. We couldn't do it without YOU! A great big THANK YOU goes to Frank Priest for his leadership and delicious food. Make plans now and mark your calendars to attend next Christmas-Dec. 25, 2022!

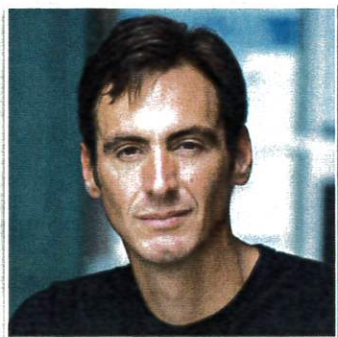
The 2021 Christmas Day Dinner Team



Leadership News

Bi-District Leadership Training Day

The Alexandria and Arlington Districts will host its annual Bi-District Training Day (BDTD) on January 15, 2022. This year's event will take place virtually, and registration is now open to all of the Virginia Conference.



BDTD speakers offer training sessions and workshops in a multitude of ministry areas to help attendees learn and grow. This year's event will feature the Rev. Michael Beck (pictured left), author of *Fresh Expressions in a Digital Age: How the Church Can Prepare for a Post Pandemic World* and *Contextual Intelligence: Unlocking the Ancient Secret to Mission on the Front Lines*.

Bi-District Training Day will be online only in 2022, with a wide variety of topics. The cost is \$30 for a "day of pass" and \$50 for an "all access pass" that allows viewing of all sessions through July 2022. Participants can choose from 66 workshops — including three live sessions with Michael Beck and five live Zoom lunchtime conversations for networking and fellowship. Prerecorded content from more than 50 speakers will be available. The event covers topics in 23 different categories. If you want to learn or grow to help your church and community, there's a session for you!

Register for Bi-District Training Day: <https://bdttd2022.heysummit.com/>

Leadership at St. Thomas in 2022

As we reflect on all that has happened in 2021 and prepare for a new year in 2022, we would like to thank our incredible staff and all the lay leaders who have ensured continuity of ministry in what has been a challenging year. In particular, please help us thank the following outgoing leaders who have served faithfully on your behalf and to also welcome the new ones who are stepping up to lead in their place going forward:

2021 Outgoing Leader	Position	2022 Incoming Leader
Barry Barnard	Church Council, Vice Chair	Hunter Lenz
Gordon Haines	Lay Leader	Pat Brown
Bill Bixby	SPRC Chair	Kathy Rea
Roxanne Sutton	Communications Chair	Nathan Hall
Merv Lyle	Front Porch Team Leader	Alicia Hamilton
Sarah Hammack & Donna Williams	UMW Chair(s)	Pat Dodson
Barry Barnard	Adult Discipleship Convener	Holly Banner

Indeed, our best resource at St. Thomas is our people who selflessly give of their time and talents so that all might experience healing and new life through Jesus Christ. Without a doubt, we will all live an extraordinary life as we invest our time in living the vision that God is giving us. May each of us seek to discern the ways that we can be the hands and feet of Christ in the year ahead.

We will be hosting a Leadership Webinar specifically for St. Thomas leaders on **Monday, January 10 at 7 PM** to help equip folks with the nuts of bolts of leadership at our church (i.e. how to schedule an event, request a check, reserve the van, live into our strategic plan, etc.) and is open to all leaders at STUMC serving on Boards, Committees, Councils, and Ministry Teams. Look for more detailed information via email and our weekly bulletin.

Hospitality Work Stream Groups

The apostle, Peter, writes to encourage us in 1 Peter 4:8 – 10, “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

It’s time to recognize our God-ordained need for people, and then seek to build relationships with the people God already has placed in our life.



Back in October, many of the leaders of the church came together for our annual Leadership Summit. We began to discern a need to begin a longer conversation about the ways we might offer radical hospitality to one another and to those in our midst we may have intentionally or unintentionally overlooked previously.

So, beginning in January, we’re going to create four Hospitality Work Stream Groups that will meet for about 6 months to a year. Here are the people we’d like to do a better job of welcoming into our community:

- Young adults
- Those experiencing economic hardship
- Non-natives and/or those for whom English is a second language
- LGBTQ+ individuals and/or families with LGBTQ+ members

These are folks that are already a part of our community in some way and we’d like to build on this intentionally. So, we’re asking you to prayerfully discern whether you’d like to join one of these groups for a longer conversation. This is not a top down approach. We don’t have a set of expectations or outcomes in mind.

What we do plan to do is to ground ourselves in the Word of God. We plan to pray and invite the Holy Spirit to guide our conversation. We are going to listen well to one another, and we’re going to pray some more. We might seek out expert knowledge or take time to learn more if a group feels like they need this.

Then, each work group will make some practical recommendations to the Church Council for best practices we’d like to put into place going forward. Each work stream will have a subject expert and a key leader who will share what’s being learned and discerned with the Council – who will help ensure we create a safe space for conversation and will convene the particular work group. If you’d like to sign up for one of the workstream groups, you may do so by emailing Pastor Abi, abi.foerster@stthomasumc.org, by January 15, 2022, or by going to the church website, <https://www.stthomasumc.org/reach/weekly-announcements.html> and completing the form under the “Church Hospitality Workgroups” announcement.

Endowment Giving

Barry Barger, Permanent Endowment Committee Chair

I was pleasantly surprised when I was advised that some of our congregation had indicated on their pledge cards that they were interested in remembering our church in their wills. My father had specific directions as to remembering their church and as his executor it fell to me to see those directions were carried out. Since Christmas tends to be a nostalgic time of year, my mind wandered to long ago memories of that time and the pleasure that I felt in fulfilling his Christian wishes.

New Year is celebrated as a time of new beginnings. Just as the world was forever changed by the birth of Christ, we make resolutions for the New Year with the intent to make a lifestyle decision such that we are forever changed for the better. Included in this should be putting our affairs in order. Nothing is worse than a family that is grieving a life threatening illness or a death and are left with no direction or idea of the loved ones wishes. Please do not put your family through this. Prepare a will, designate an executor and power of attorney, and codify your directions and limitations for medical treatment. These are complicated issues and documents that can change in format by law need to be professionally prepared and periodically reviewed. Doing this may be the most important resolution that you ever make. You and your family are entitled to the peace and comfort that follow. Linda and I thank God that our parents had the foresight to take care of these things.

For those of you that indicated an interest in remembering St. Thomas in your will, thank you and we will soon contact you. Should there be others with similar interest or questions, please contact me through the church office. Our mission is to inform and serve you.

May this New Year bring you health, joy and happiness through the Love of Christ!

United Methodist Women

Thank you for supporting our bazaars in 2021! We raised just over \$6000 and all of these proceeds will be given to the missions the UMW supports over the next few months.

Our Virtual Christmas Party was a big hit! Even though we weren't able to be together in-person, we had a lot of fun with our gift exchange and visiting. Each year the UMW recognizes the significant contributions of one of our members. This year we honored Virginia Wald for her many years of service supporting the Crafters, Apple Pies and the Bazaar by presenting her with a gold Special Mission Recognition Pin.

After three years, Sarah Hammack and Donna Williams are stepping down as Co-Chairs. We are happy to report that Pat Dodson will be coming back again as the UMW Chair and Sarah will step into the role of Secretary. If you would like to join us on the board and help plan events, let us know at Chair.STUMW@gmail.com.

Our next event will be in February. Look for more information in the February newsletter.

Sunbeam Children's Center Updates

November was an exciting month for SCC. First, we had the old wooden structure taken down on the big playground and all the clover and weeds removed from the area. Second, the slide was still in great shape so it was utilized by embedding it into the earth for a natural look and all new sod was put down. It looks amazing and we are so excited for the children.



We also had our Thanksgiving Feast to celebrate



Thanksgiving with others again before the actual holiday. Only one family member was

allowed to attend, but it was still a blessing to have everyone together again.

A special thank you to all the families that supported the "Advent" Mission Project for the STUMC Food Pantry. They bags were arranged around the "Jesse Tree" and will help families in need in our local community.

We also had a "Wishing Tree" for the SCC staff. The tree had ornaments with Christmas gift wishes for the SCC teachers and staff. The wishes were for their classroom, big room, kitchen, playground and maybe one special item for themselves. Thank you so much to all who provided gifts to show the staff how much you care.

Children's Ministry

The Children's Ministry was busy throughout the Christmas season, packing Advent bags, presenting the Christmas Pageant, keeping up with our Sunday School lessons, and having fun while serving others in KidsCare2, the Tweens program. We are looking forward to the new year to begin the next series of our curriculum, "A Day at the Museum." We are going to learn about Jesus' early life and ministry with many creative and multisensory activities!

As the new year dawns, the Children's Ministry starts planning our summer. It may seem early, but preparing for summer camps, VBS, and other summer programming requires substantial time and effort. Summer camp themes and dates will be released soon. VBS will take place June 20-24 this year. Please save the date for this program and also share the date with your family, friends and neighbors. We plan to move back to an in-person format with more open registration this year. We had a great program in 2020, but had to keep it very small. We aim to create an exciting and memorable experience with a "Food Truck Party" theme! Kids have been waiting two years for this celebration. Please consider volunteering to help make VBS an unforgettable week!



Student Ministry

By Pastor Arum



Did you find the faces of our students from the photos from the Drive-Thru Nativity, the Manassas Christmas Parade and the Breakfast with Santa event? Our students are best! They are not growing into disciples of Christ, but they are ALREADY faithful disciples of Christ who are serving people with love!

We had fun, too! We had a virtual game night, playing “Among Us” together, when we had to make a last-minute change in our gathering plan due to Pastor Arum’s quarantine. We also had the PACK Christmas Party! At the party, we had dinner and many Christmas goodies, made ornaments, played games, sung carols, and exchanged a gift.

What a year 2021 was! Our students finished strong the year of 2021 thanks to mutual support with one another and most of all, God’s help in the midst. We are looking forward to many new learnings and fun fellowship in the new year!

We will take a short Winter Break and resume our PACK AM (Sunday School) and PACK Night (Sunday Night Gathering) on Sunday, January 9.

Here are the highlights of The PACK Christmas Party!







News from the Kitchen

Happy New Year! We are delighted to resume our Tuesday Night Dinners. Thank you for signing up online or calling the church office by noon on

January 4

Spaghetti and Meat Sauce
Roasted Vegetables
Bread Stick
Dessert: Coconut Cream Pie
Kid's: Same as adults
Cookie of the month: Pecan Sandies

January 11

Chicken Quesadilla and Cheese
Guacamole
Sour Cream
Rice and Beans
Dessert: Churros with Chocolate
Kid's: Same as adults
Cookie of the month: Pecan Sandies

January 18

Salisbury Steak
Mashed Potato/Gravy
Corn on the Cob
Fresh Bread
Dessert: Cherry Pie
Kid's: Cheeseburger/Fries
Cookie of the month: Pecan Sandies

January 25

Baked Cod
Rice Pilaf
Butternut Squash
Bacon Corn Bread
Dessert: Bread Pudding
Kid's: Grilled Cheese
Cookie of the month: Pecan Sandies



St. Thomas
United Methodist Church

Upcoming Events

8899 Sudley Road, Manassas,
Rev. Abi Foerster, Senior Pastor
Rev. Arum Kim, Associate Pastor

stthomasumc.org

703-368-5161

Newsletter Deadline:

15th of the month

Please email all articles to both:

samantha.bouquet@stthomasumc.org

receptionist@stthomasumc.org

- **Jan 2** - Sunday Schools Resume
- **Jan 4** - Tuesday Night Dinner Resumes
Choir Rehearsals Resume
6:15pm Praise Band
6:30pm Chancel Choir
7:30pm Handbell Choir
- **Jan 9** - Taste of St Thomas Newcomers Event
- **Jan 10** - Leadership Training Webinar
- **Jan 18** - Children & Youth Choirs Resume
5:00pm Children's Choir
5:30pm Joyful Noise Singers

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
January Birthdays						1
2 Gary Gallahan Ron Weber	3	4 Chloe Izzo	5 Arum Kim	6	7 Joan Doggett Jamison Weed	8 David Ometz
9	10	11 Wyn Weber Mitchell Sutton	12 Al Dawson Riley Miller	13	14	15 Sue Booher Holly Banner Susan Must
16	17	18	19	20 Zachary Brockwell	21 Debbi Sessa Dwayne Young	22 Sarah Jarrett Lydia Schnack
23	24 John Guice	25 McKayla Wright	26 Samuel Jarrett	27 Marian Ludlow Janie Russell	28	29 Matthew Hammack
30 John Duffy	31 Kristi Swanson					