

**LOVING  
EVERY  
PERSON**



**MAKING  
ROOM  
FOR  
ALL**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2023**

**ST. THOMAS  
EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH  
COLUMBUS,  
GEORGIA**



# 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes

## St. Thomas Episcopal Church Annual Parish Meeting, February 5, 2023

The agenda and annual reports (short and long forms) were sent electronically to members, and a printed copy of the short form was available prior to the meeting. A printed copy of the long form was available by request. A quorum convened, and Rev. Grace Burton-Edwards called the meeting to order. Those not able to meet in person were given an opportunity to participate via Zoom. Prior registration was required for the online option. Rev. Grace announced the appointment of Sara Ginter to the position of Vestry clerk and opened the meeting with a prayer. The minutes from the 2022 annual meeting were distributed by email prior to the meeting. **A motion to accept the minutes was made, 2nd (Bobsie Swift/Dan Ginter), and passed without further discussion.**

Grace announced the Vestry nominees: David Brandenburgh, Brian Walker, and Garrett Vance, reviewed their qualifications, and explained the voting process, which continued through the meeting.

**Stewardship:** Norm Easterbrook reported a very successful stewardship campaign. The total amount of pledges to the general budget and Continuing Faithfulness Capital Fund category increased. The Continuing Faithfulness was created as a source for larger projects not included in the property budget and will eliminate the need for unanticipated fund raisers. The Stewardship Committee works closely with the Finance committee to meet the current and future needs of St. Thomas. Norm expressed the committee's gratitude and that the pledge response is an expression of faith and trust in the ministries of our parish.

**Finance:** Karen Lord reported a positive financial picture and clarified the plan to revise the way expenses for meals and flowers are posted. This will provide a more accurate financial picture. The average draw from the endowment fund for 2022 was 3.5%. A draw of 4.0% is budgeted for 2023.

**Property:** Tracy Leopard and Ann Johnston co-chair this committee. Tracy reported a busy year. Projects included roof repairs, new HVAC system, a new drainage ditch, Parish Hall renovation, and the beginning of the memorial garden. Workdays were successful – not only improving the grounds but creating fellowship opportunities. More workdays are planned for next year.

**Endowment:** Mitch Grossman explained the importance of the Endowment fund to the long-term growth of St. Thomas. The gifts during the past year have given us the opportunity to plan for our future and have been invested in funds that reflect our values.

**Strategic Planning:** The Strategic Planning committee was established to ensure that we are wise stewards of the generous gifts to St. Thomas. Ron Wirt informed the meeting of their work this last year. They began by prayerfully discerning the question: What is God's dream for St. Thomas? The committee was guided by concepts from *HeartEdge*, a framework on how churches can function in communities focusing on Commerce, Compassion, Culture, and Congregation. By meeting with members of our community and our congregation, the committee determined our need to expand our facility and personnel, become more accessible, renew our focus on outreach, and enrich our parish life.

**Contemplative Service:** Roxane Gwyn shared the beginning of contemplative healing worship opportunity. The service will begin Feb. 19 and gather every third Sunday at 5 p.m. The service will provide a quiet time of meditative and healing prayers.

**Ministry Scheduler:** Meg Olive-Allison reported that the new scheduling system is now available and will mean less time for the office, allow more input from volunteers, and will automatically find substitutes when needed. Training is available and patience is appreciated as we all learn together.

**Election Results:** Grace announced that all three Vestry candidates were unanimously elected to a three-year term by those attending in person and on line. She also announced that Spencer Garrard will serve as the senior warden for the upcoming year. Grace thanked the outgoing members for their hard work and dedication to St. Thomas, noting the additional work required during the pandemic. Brian Schwartz, a scientist, was able to use his knowledge and give guidance and help us stay healthy. He is a gifted institutional leader. Jon Ezzell is the father of young children and provided an understanding of how he pandemic impacted children and their education. Michelle Mullen, as a parent of a teen and young adult, has given insight in planning ministries for our youth and has provided a steady, cheerful, and hopeful leadership to our Vestry. Each brought their unique gifts to Vestry and will be missed. Grace also recognized many of the volunteers with thankful words of praise and gifts. She announced that our annual yard sale is back and scheduled for March 18 from 8 AM to 2 PM with a preview party March 17.

The annual meeting joyously celebrated our return to normalcy. We returned with renewed determination to accomplish our mission: to Love God, Love Every Person, and Learn and Serve Together. We returned to celebrate a growing congregation, to look back at our accomplishments, and to look forward to a bright future. Spencer Garrard closed with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sara Gammage Ginter, Clerk of the Vestry

# RECTOR'S REPORT

## Rev. Grace Burton-Edwards

**Loving Every Person.**

**Making Room for All.**

All of these words describe St. Thomas in 2023 so well.

We lived even more fully into our commitment to *Love Every Person*.

- Vibrant Foyers and Journey Groups built new friendships and provided a foundation for faith.
- Our Brewer Elementary partnership expanded to include Buddy Pack meals for students on weekends.
- A Summer of Service introduced us to groups in our community who put love into action.
- We continued to support our outreach partners with time and funding.
- A new Tween Class helped younger youth and older children learn to love God and love every person.
- A new Episcopal Campus Ministry at CSU created a safe space for college-age young people to explore their faith.
- When the International Rescue Committee needed a sponsor for a family in Columbus, St. Thomas immediately stepped up.
- Creation Keepers sponsored community events that linked caring for people with care for creation.
- The St. Thomas Choir added new members, and Nathan Smock and Michelle Folta led beautifully when Rick needed to take a break.
- Excursions built friendships and supported events in our community.
- We navigated staff transitions with gratitude for the time we shared and trust that God will provide the leadership we need.
- We celebrated with one another in times of joy and cared for one another in times of grief.



I could go on. St. Thomas ministries thrived in remarkable ways 2023. I know you join me in giving thanks to God for the many people who volunteer with outreach and pastoral care, serve on our committees, facilitate learning, and lead in worship. Everything we do at St. Thomas is grounded in our mission: *Love God – Love EVERY Person – Learn & Serve Together*.

What amazes me most about 2023 is that our usual ministries thrived even as we invested tremendous time and energy into our *Making Room for All Vision*.

- We welcomed many new members who got involved with worship and service.
- The Swift Memorial Garden Trail, refreshed labyrinth, and Pet Memorial created a park-like entrance to welcome people to our campus.
- A new contemplative healing service welcomed people who need a less crowded, quieter way to worship.
- Our Design Committee finalized plans for an accessible Nave and closer parking.
- Our Construction Committee selected Batson-Cook to lead our renovation in 2024.
- Our Fundraising Committee successfully led both our Annual Pledge Campaign and our Vision Campaign.
- Parishioners hosted events in their homes to invite support for the Vision Campaign.
- The congregation responded with great generosity and faith – a 7.5% increase in annual pledges overall and \$2.9 million raised so far for the Vision Campaign.

It all goes together. We are Making Room for All because we are committed to Loving Every Person.

The reports to come describe this remarkable year in more detail. Read with gratitude to God for God's provision and for all who serve among us. Read with prayer for continued faithfulness and courage for the work that lies ahead. Read with hope that the God who has begun a good work among us will continue it.

I am deeply grateful to serve among you in this remarkable time.

Blessings,

Grace

# ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S REPORT

## Rev. Roxane Gwyn, Associate Rector for Pastoral Care

I write with gratitude for a delightful and productive year serving alongside you at St. Thomas in God's good kingdom. My primary responsibility is prayer, talking to God about each and every one of you, and listening for guidance. My other roles in the parish and beyond include:

**Pastoral Care:** Our Pastoral Care Committee Chair, Donna Sharp, and I have developed a great working relationship, melding lay and clergy ministries as we seek to serve a growing St. Thomas population of members, their families and friends, and many outside the parish. I invite you to read our Pastoral Care Committee report below in this light. Together in 2023 we trained and coordinated Lay Eucharistic Visitors, explored ways to provide meals and transportation, developed a ministry of card-writing, texting, and phone-calling to folks in the parish, and spent much time in prayer for many.

As your Associate Rector for Pastoral Care, I believe I have firmly established my availability as pastor, listener, confidant, questioner, and priest. Grace and I have worked together to share this ministry. We remain in frequent communication about particular situations, as well as defining and sharing pastoral roles. It's been my great and good pleasure to spend time, under varied and engaging circumstances, with so many of you, developing deep pastoral relationships. What a privilege it is to sit beside you in joy and in grief, at celebrations or hospital bedsides, in emotional struggles, in healing, in discernment, in your homes and other places. Please know that I always look forward to hearing from you in any way.

Just as Jesus loved and served every single person, I seek in the year ahead to expand and broaden the scope of folks to whom I minister. Every single person in a parish is deserving of good pastoral care all the time, no matter the age or stage. This is truly a goal for me. In September, I began a two-year program in Spiritual Direction training, and feel I am already growing into this field and employing my learning and gifts more and more among you.

**Liturgy:** Our new Contemplative/Healing service has been a great joy to coordinate and lead. We began in February, and gathered at 5:00 once a month on Sunday evenings in a time of silence and prayer, scripture and meditation, healing prayers and anointing with oil, Holy Eucharist, candlelight, and the chanting of Taizé music led by talented cantors from our choir. The simplicity of arriving with all our fears and tears, listening for the voice of God, and departing in holy silence has been appreciated by those who are a part, thus the structure of the service will remain much the same in the year ahead. I'm hoping, however, to expand the field of folks who attend, branching out into the community to those who might welcome a quiet time of contemplation and healing.

Twice each month I join you at 8:30 and 10:30 for Sunday morning services, serving variously as celebrant, deacon, and preacher. Once a month on Sunday mornings I preach and celebrate at St. John's West Point, as our convocation seeks to share clergy resources and develop relationships with smaller parishes. I celebrate Holy Eucharist once a month on Wednesday evenings at 5:30, lead Evening Prayer several times a month, and assist Grace at one of my most deeply treasured opportunities as a priest, celebrations of life and burials of the dead.

**Formation:** A special time in 2023 for me was teaching a youth/young adult confirmation class. Our lessons were focused upon the Baptismal Covenant, our discussions were lively and challenging, and our time together was always sacred and filled with transformations. Thanks to those who served as mentors, faithfully attending many of our events alongside the students. I would welcome a new youth/young adult confirmation class in 2024, as well as opportunities for adult formation.

**Fellowship:** Excursions, our new and evolving program of cultural/social/outreach/fellowship events for adults of all ages (and sometimes children and youth) met with enthusiasm this year. Occasions included a performance of Hansel and Gretel by The CSU Schwob Opera Theater, the Historic Linwood Cemetery Ramble, a Columbus River Dragons Hockey game, a hilarious performance of Tootsie at the RiverCenter, and an intriguing and informative exploration of Goodwill Southern Rivers. Attendance at Excursions is good, with different parishioners and friends joining each time. We established an advisory group of a dozen folks who meet occasionally to review, ponder, and plan ahead. We look forward in 2024 to hiking on local trails; gathering for more local music, drama, and museum opportunities; education-oriented experiences; and a pilgrimage to Montgomery for tours of the Legacy Museum and Memorial for Peace and Justice.

Thank you, dear friends, for opening your hearts to me and weaving me into your spiritual lives at St. Thomas. Please know that candles are lit and prayers ascend each evening as I pray for each of you beloved children of God.

Christ's peace and my love, Roxane





# ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S REPORT

## Rev. Darius Sudayi, Associate Rector for Mission

To St. Thomas Episcopal Church in common mission with St. Mary Magdalene Episcopal Church,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from Christ our Lord. I bring you greetings from the congregations which I was blessed to minister with this past year as your Associate Rector for Mission. Our Diocese and many other Dioceses are thinking of ways in which bigger parishes can support small parishes. I am thankful that while others think, and pray, about this work, St. Thomas is doing it!

This past year I was graced to celebrate Eucharist and preach at St. Mary Magdalene Episcopal church every first and third Sundays of the month. I was at St. Nicholas Episcopal Church (Hamilton) most of the fourth Sundays of the month, and St. Mathew in the Pines (Seale, Alabama), when there was a fifth Sunday of a month and a couple of fourth Sundays of the month.

It has been a joy to worship with you on the second Sundays of a month as a celebrant or a deacon. I have also celebrated and preached in our Wednesday evening services and led several of our Tuesday and Thursday evening prayers. I must confess that I have enjoyed reading with the kids at Brewer Elementary more than I thought I would! Get in touch with our Director of Parish & and Community Engagement for an opportunity to experience this mission.

I was also able to attend a couple of mission events done by East Carver Heights Community, under the leadership of Greg and Lisa Herring; get in touch with them for opportunities to minister in a way that is so fulfilling. I enjoyed participating in some of the adult formation classes this past year; thank you for those who invited me. I treasure invitations to events which helps us to grow in knowledge, love and hope so keep them coming! As the year ended, I have enjoyed getting to know and support the Duarte Family from Guatemala as they settle in Columbus. St. Thomas is blessed to have the opportunity to work closely with them and minister to them in practical and hands-on ways.

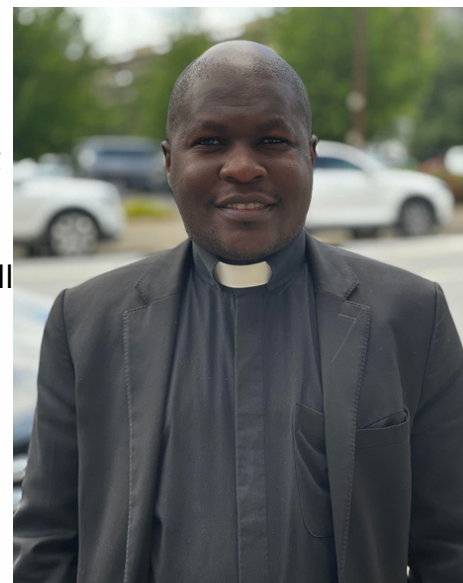
Mission starts with worship and praise; we worship God for who God is to us, and we praise him for who He is, and we do this at church. I have been excited about our capital campaign 'Making Room for All.' Our liturgies give us an opportunity to get renewed in hope, rest a bit, and find direction before going out to love and serve the Lord. Worship and praise invite us into God's presence and as we praise God together with the heavenly host; we get the fuel to go out and do mission. It has been great to see this starting and forming over the past few months and how all of you are supporting this good work.

Lastly, it has been said that we are at our best when we get the grace to call out the best in each other, and so I would like to finish my report with an invite for prayer, and offer a prayer as we continue to partner with God in his work.

I invite your prayers for St. Mary Magdalene Episcopal church this coming year as they plan to take up the notch the good work they are doing. I invite some of you to visit with them this coming year. We all need encouragement in this our Christian walk, and we can do this work with the folks at St. Mary and folks all over Columbus and beyond. As you sit for our Annual Meeting, I will be at St. Nicholas in Hamilton: prayers for them as they look forward to having their own Priest this year. I invite your prayers for St. Mathew in the Pines as they continue with construction and God's work in their area.

This coming year I pray for opportunities to minister with more of you in the mission opportunities we have and those which God will surely invite us to. I pray for God's grace to enable us to hear what each of us has to offer and find ways to live into our calling to be a church that invites all people to experience the unconditional love of God.

Fr. Darius Sudayi



# SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

This has been an eventful year, particularly in view of the remarkable progress in our church's construction project. Design committee meetings, meetings with architects, meetings with the liturgical designer and a myriad of others were necessary parts of the overall effort.

I taken part in at least 64 meetings and extra church commitments during this year. This pales when I look at others who attended many more meetings, especially Grace.

It is a great joy to have witnessed the wonderful growth of the congregation. I appreciate the warm welcome that has been extended to those who have visited and later became members. We have welcomed many persons who were confirmed or received.

The church staff continues to be amazing. Their abilities, devotion to the church, and ever-present smiles are truly outstanding, and a significant number are long-time employees. Their great abilities are diverse and fill many greatly needed roles.

Roxane Gwyn and Darius Sudayi have greatly helped in many ways since they came to the staff. Not only have they been able to give Grace some relief in her ministry, they have become much-appreciated for their individual gifts and talents.

I am very grateful for our fearless leader. The Rev. Dr. Grace Burton-Edwards continues to lead us with wisdom, love, and a splendid sense of humor. She is so skillful at her many endeavors and splendid service. She never ceases to dazzle me with her patience and gracious smiles.

This year has been an honor for me. I have received an extraordinarily broad education in how this parish works, and I am better for the experience.

Respectfully submitted,  
Spencer Garrard

# JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

My work as Junior Warden related primarily as liaison to the Finance Committee, and as part of a committee consisting of the Senior Warden, the Treasurer and myself to advise the Rector.

The year 2023 was very good for Church finances. Our pledges were generous, as were the gifts received in the plate, and we received several substantial individual gifts as well. The Making Room for All campaign benefitted from these gifts, giving us a significant base to build on.

I served on the committee to review bids from contractors on the renovation project. We ultimately selected Batson-Cook, a firm with historic ties to West Georgia and Columbus. They have responded attentively to our needs and requests, and have worked to control our cost projections.

The coming year bodes an exciting time for our church, and we will step up to the challenges of managing this immense undertaking. We owe thanks to the Vestry and all staff and committee members who make these things possible. Thanks be to God.

Respectfully submitted,  
David Brandenburgh

# TREASURER'S REPORT

## What is this ministry?

The task of this ministry includes safeguarding the assets of the parish, provide and administer an annual budget, manage the finances to help assure funding for ministries of the church, and make recommendations to the Vestry regarding anything involving the finances of the parish.

## Who participated in 2023?

Those serving on the finance committee are Karen Lord, Norm Easterbrook, Susan Sealy, Ellen Free, Tracy Leopard, and David Brandenburgh. Instrumental in providing pertinent information and directing the work are Rev. Grace Burton-Edwards and Patty Slembariski.

## How will this ministry Love Every Person in the years ahead?

By safeguarding and allocating the assets of the Parish, this ministry will help ensure that the programs established to foster a community of love and acceptance and have the funding needed to support and further those programs.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Lord,  
Treasurer

# 2023 VESTRY, CLERGY & STAFF

## Vestry

**Senior Warden: Spencer Garrard (3rd), Junior Warden: David Brandenburgh (1st),**

**Deidre Bohannon (3rd), Susan Connery (2nd), Michael Dempsey (2nd),**

**Julia Slater (3rd), Louise Tulloh (2nd), Garrett Vance (1st), Brian Walker (1st)**

*(Each member serves a 3-year term. The year of each vestry member's term follows his/her name.)*

**Clerk: Sara Ginter      Treasurer: Karen Lord**

## Clergy

**Rector: Grace Burton-Edwards**

**Associate Rector for Pastoral Care: Roxane Gwyn**

**Associate Rector for Mission: Darius Sudayi**

## Staff in 2023

**Debbie Anderson:** Staff singer, **Katie Buckley:** Staff Singer, Children's Formation Assistant (resigned children's position in 2023), **Seth Burgamy:** Kitchen manager, Sexton, **Denny Clark:** Parish Theologian (resigned in 2023), **Heather Driggers:** Children's Formation Director (resigned in 2023), **Michelle Folta:** Staff Singer, **Wilson Ford:** Assistant to the Sexton (resigned in 2023), **Brandon Fortson:** Staff singer (resigned in 2023), **Olivia Fortson:** Staff singer (resigned in 2023), **Logan Gordy:** Staff singer, **April Jacobs:** Staff singer, **Taylor Mack:** Youth, Young Adults, and Campus Ministry Director, **Rachel Massey:** Staff singer (resigned in 2023), **Rick McKnight:** Organist/Choir Director, **Hunter Mullen:** Staff singer, **Jeffrey Oakman:** Staff singer, **Meg Olive-Allison:** Director of Parish and Community Engagement, **David Rambo-Serrano:** Staff singer, **Erin Redden:** Children's Formation Director (resigned in 2023), **Alaina Renfroe:** Nursery attendant (resigned in 2023), **Patty Slembariski:** Director of Parish Administration, **Dexter Smith:** Staff singer (resigned in 2023), **Evie Smith:** Nursery attendant, **Victoria Torsiello:** Nursery attendant (resigned in 2023), **Dorothy Uwanawich:** Nursery attendant, **Jenneken Carpenter Varum:** Nursery attendant, **Rachel Ward:** Staff singer, **Nick Williams:** Livestream tech, **Frances Woolfolk:** Custodian



# 2023 PARISH DATA

## 60 NEW MEMBERS:

Alice Barlow	Brittany Daniels	Theresa Lewis	Mollie Smith
Fred Barlow	Parker Daniels	Tony Lewis	Nathan Smock
Ashley Becker	Heather Driggers	Jeremy Mack	Hannah Springer
Josh Becker	Macklyn Driggers	Laurie Mahon	Margaret Terrell
Carol Boers	Bonnie Ellis	Luise May	Victoria Torsiello
April Brown	Kathy Frost	Ann McDuffie	Alice Underwood
Jerry Brown	Susan Hansbarger	Dan McDuffie	Ellie Underwood
Ro Brown	Judy Heider	Faye Melton	Katie Underwood
Ruth Brown	Kathy Herren	Steve Melton	Charles Wagner
Amara Cannon	Chris Jeffries	Amanda Peck	Elissa Wagner
Layne Cannon	Marlea Jeffries	Nancy Powell	Ollie Wagner
Bob Chitwood	Barbara Kreyling	Jennifer St. John	Argy Wargo
Evan Collins, Jr.	Rebekah Kreyling	Taylor St. John	Chloe Wise
Audrey Daniels	John Laska	Crystal Scott	Liz Wise
Benjamin Daniels	Kayron Laska	Gloria Scott	Sophia Wise

## 7 BAPTISMS

Amara Cannon	Ellie Underwood
Layne Cannon	Elissa Wagner
Evan Collins, Jr.	Ollie Wagner
Alice Underwood	

## 22 CONFIRMATIONS/RECEPTIONS

Susan Anderson	Evan Collins, Sr.	Rebekah Kreyling	Lynn Smith
Ashley Becker	Joanna Collins	Bill Lacy	Lauren B. Taylor
Josh Becker	Amanda Flynn	John Laska	Lauren M. Taylor
April Brown	Mitchell Flynn	Kayron Laska	MaryJane Wrenn
Ro Brown	Kathy Frost	Kathleen Mullins	
Reggie Brushwood	Barbara Kreyling	Amanda Peck	

*(More confirmations took place in January 2024)*

## 1 MARRIAGE

Charles Freeman McCluskey & Randel Merrill Dierkes

## 18 DEATHS/BURIALS

Marianne Baxter	Kenny Lewis	Joe Stewart
George Goddard	Charlotte Mullins	Rolene Stewart
Mills Goddard	Mike Nichols	Bill Thomas
Dixie Harmon	Lee Parker	Mitchi Wade
Sam Harmon	Margaret Patterson	Trey Wells
Norma Jergens	Marvin Smith	Angela Wright

# MINISTRY REPORTS

We invited ministry leaders to summarize their activities in 2023 by responding to these questions:

- What is this ministry?
- Who participated in 2023?
- How will this ministry Love Every Person in the years ahead.

## Acolytes

*Wilson Ford, Acolyte Director*

Acolytes serve by carrying the petite cross, gospel book, or torches, and also serve as crucifer. Serving as an acolyte is a wonderful way for our children and youth to participate in worship and serve our church. As director I train acolytes and assist with scheduling. In 2023 the following children and youth participated as Acolytes at St. Thomas.

Esi Akyempong	David Flinn	Oliver Meeks	Wyatt Perkins
Lawrence Akyempong	Addison Gaskin	Tommy Meeks	Ryan Starkweather
Kona Cogle	Addison Harrison	Aidan Mitchell	Hagulwa Sudayi
Austin Connery	Owen Harrison	Hudson Mitchell	Lovick Sudayi
Grayson Connery	Hunter Hayselden	Thomas Olukolade	Alice Underwood
Riley Connery	Asha Hostetter	Chloe Olive-Allison	Ellie Underwood
Elyse Dahlgren	Vivian Hostetter	Kingston Olive-Allison	Martha Wade
Eli Demko	Lola Beth James	Sam Olive-Allison	Ruthie Wade
Sadie Demko	Gideon Jones	Kentleigh Peck	Bert Wadkins
Luke Ezzell	Keagan McFalls	Shelby Peck	Colin Young
Will Ezzell	Kelly McFalls	Tripp Peck	Mia Young

## Adult Formation

*Grace Burton-Edwards*

Sadly, in 2023, we said goodbye to our wonderful Parish Theologian, Dr. Denny Clark, who moved to Nebraska over the summer to be closer to family. Denny's ministry through St. Thomas over the past several years was transformative. He joined our staff during the pandemic and helped us learn to learn together in new ways – in person, online, together, and in small groups. His final official Sunday was May 28. We were grateful to see him again in December at our Advent Lunches.

Here are some highlights from a year of learning together:

- We discussed Howard Thurman's *Deep River* with friends from Greater Beallwood Baptist, meeting on Wednesdays at Greater Beallwood and at St. Thomas. Rev. Grace and Rev. Adrian Chester held a pulpit exchange at the end of the study.
- Living as a Called-Out People, led by parishioners, explored on Sundays some ways that Christians are called to be different from the world around us.
- Denny Clark and Art France led reflection on our suffering and the suffering of Jesus during Lent.
- Journey Groups in Lent and Easter season focused on the Nicene Creed, using Marianne Micks' book *Loving the Questions*. Journey Groups in the fall discussed *Liturgical Life Principles* by Ian Markham, a spiritual introduction to our liturgy. Malinda Shamburger also convened a new *Manna & Mercy* group for those who missed that discussion in 2022.
- Faith and the Visual Arts, led by parishioners and community members, focused on how art can put us in touch with the Divine.
- Our Summer of Service invited parishioners who serve with non-profits in our community to share about their work.
- TheoEd videos on Sundays introduced us to powerful voices of faith.

- A Spiritual Gifts study on Wednesday nights invited us to think about and share God's unique call to each of us.
- Several parishioners participated in CVEM's Striving for Justice conversations about anti-Semitism, the environment, and EJ's community remembrance project.
- We offered three rounds of Welcome Classes to support many newcomers in exploring the Episcopal Church and preparing for Confirmation and Reception.
- Rev. Cindy Cox Garrard continued to offer a wonderful midweek lectionary Bible study for women.

Christian formation shapes us as God's people and followers of Jesus throughout all our lives. Thank you to all who participate in adult formation seek to grow in Loving Every Person.

## Altar Guild

*Sue O'Dell, Chair*

The primary purpose of the Altar Guild at St. Thomas Episcopal Church is to prepare the altars in the Nave and the Chapel for the Eucharist. Care of the altar, sanctuary, vessels, linens and vestments are other "behind the scenes" tasks necessary to support the liturgical life of the parish.

There are currently three altar guild teams, each of which is "on duty" for two weeks out of six. The teams are responsible for Sunday services in the Nave and the Chapel as well as the Wednesday night service in the Chapel and a monthly Thursday morning service. The teams work together to prepare for Christmas season and Holy Week and Easter services and other occasions such as weddings and funerals.

2023 participation:

Team 1. Sue O'Dell, Susan Anderson, Beverly Gordy, Amy Hatfield, Carole Hill, and Malone Moore.

Team 2. Darlene Everritt, Paula Evans, Barbara Ellis and Leslie Holloway.

Team 3. Jo Cates, Lisa Herring, and Marianne Sheehan.

During 2023 we have added several new members: Alice Barlow, Faye Melton, Nelia Partain and Doug McLeod. As soon as these new members are up to speed, we will be able to form our long hoped for fourth team!

We have some former members who are not currently able to participate but continue to be with us in spirit and prayer. Those members are Charlie Snipes, Neal Fenter, and Sandi Pauli.

Through the closeness of working together, our altar guild members have developed deep friendships and mutual respect for one another. This ministry has helped us to be closer to each other and strengthened our dedication to our tasks as well as our individual relationships with God. It is a joy to participate in the work we do for each St. Thomas service.

We always welcome new members, and we can figure out a way to accommodate anyone's schedule.

## Brewer Elementary School Partnership

*Margo Easterbrook, Partnership in Education Coordinator*

Wow! What a Year! Our partnership with Brewer Elementary School went into overdrive this year with the addition of the Brewer Buddy Pack Program.

We were asked by Brewer to provide weekend Buddy Packs (meals and snacks) for 80 students identified as living in food insecure households. St. Thomas parishioners stepped up to the plate to fund this huge new undertaking with their generous donations. Libba Russell contacted Feeding the Valley to make arrangements, and St. Thomas volunteers agreed to deliver boxes of Buddy Packs to Brewer on a monthly basis. We delivered 400 meals in November and another 400 meals in December. These meals went home in the backpacks of students on a weekly basis. This program will continue throughout this school year. With continued funding, we hope the Brewer Buddy Pack Program will continue for many years to come.

Our Brewer Buddy Reading Program entered its 7th year (we took the year off in 2021 due to the pandemic). Under the current leadership of Meg Olive-Alison, volunteers meet at the school on Tuesdays from 9:00 - 10:00 to read one-on-one with at-risk students. Brewer Buddies in 2023 include: Ruth Brown, Barbara Kreyling, Martha Mullinax, Faye Melton, Steve Olive, Meg Olive-Allison, Nancy Powell, Darius Sudayi, Mary Lewis Walsh, and Jane Wilson.

We supported the teachers at Brewer with a Back-to-School Breakfast in August, another welcome Back-to-School Breakfast in January after the winter break, and Boxed Lunches from Jason's Deli for Teacher Appreciation Week in May. We also provided snacks and notes of encouragement for teachers during the testing weeks at the end of the school year.

We sponsored a table for all Brewer Partners at the Chamber of Commerce Partnership in Education Kickoff Event in October.

In addition, we provided student support by collecting backpacks and school supplies for students in August. We provided snacks for Brewer students during State testing in April. We also supplied a variety of clothing and toiletry items for the Brewer Uniform/Clothes closet throughout the year.

We make a big difference in many lives through our partnership with Brewer Elementary School, and we couldn't do it without the tremendous support of St. Thomas Episcopal Church Parishioners who so generously and consistently give from their hearts.

I want to thank the following volunteers for their continued support throughout the year:

Grace Burton-Edwards, Meg Olive-Allison, Libba Russell, Lisa Herring, Norman Easterbrook, Donna Sharp, Sara Ginter, Jennifer Fletcher, Ruth Nichols, Martha Mullinax, Robin Trimarchi, Barbara Billings, Ann McDuffie, Judy Heider, Tommie Hunter, Vicki Partin, Celia Page, Jenny Holder, David Wilson, and Larry Dooley.

We remember Marianne Baxter who volunteered with us faithfully for many years.

## Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministry

**Malinda Shamburger, Director**

For four decades, CVEM has worked to ensure that all people, especially those living in the Chattahoochee Valley, reap the benefits of strong communities. When our neighbors suffer, so does our community. There are several ways CVEM works for equity. Our Direct Service program assists our neighbors with rent, utilities, transportation, and other needs. In 2023, we met with other agencies that provide assistance and found ways to collaborate. Through these partnerships, we can assist more people and address root problems. Our TAP program continues to teach children how to be in community with one another by understanding the things that make us different are the things that will make us a stronger community. TAP does this through art, music, and inviting people of different religions and ethnicities to sit and talk together. Our Striving for Justice Conversations allow people to learn about social justice issues, connect with people they may not ordinarily spend time with, and respond to whatever action is necessary.

In 2023, CVEM provided Direct Service to 183 families in Georgia and 24 in Russell County, all together 691 individuals. \$95,041 was spent. TAP served 35 children, 14 teens, and 20 plus adults. Striving for Justice engaged 15 persons per conversation.

In 2024, we will continue collaborating with our partner agencies and churches. Our work is grounded in the Baptismal Covenant. Therefore, we will commit to seeking and serving Christ in all persons, striving for justice and peace among all, and respecting the dignity of every human being.

# Communications

## *Meg Olive-Allison, Director of Parish & Community Engagement*

The Communications Ministry at St. Thomas helps to organize the internal and external communication of the church. This includes managing the website, Facebook, Instagram, emailed newsletters, mailed newsletters, emailed prayer list, as well as handling internal requests from staff members, requests from parishioners seeking information about happenings in the church or assistance with projects, and responding to inquiries from visitors and potential new members. This ministry creates and handles special printed communications projects throughout the year such as seasonal newsletters, Annual Parish Report, and the stewardship campaign materials.

Highlights from 2023:

- A small group worked together on a brochure describing worship at St. Thomas which we share with visitors and new members. This has been very well received.
- We worked with a local print shop to design and print brochures for the annual stewardship campaign and The Making Room for All Vision Campaign, new letterhead, and notecards for birthdays and anniversaries.
- Using Instant Church Directory has allowed us to keep an up to date church directory with pictures! The directory is available in print, online, and through an app on phones and tablets, and can be updated easily!
- Our website with Membership Vision still meets our needs and helps streamline communications efforts through signups, calendar keeping, and more!
- We spent time learning to use Ministry Scheduler Pro to schedule volunteers for a variety of ministries at St. Thomas. This system helps volunteers schedule themselves and find substitutes when needed.
- We continue to send email news three times a week with a news and events message on Monday, "Wednesday Word" from Clergy on Wednesday, and "This Sunday at St. Thomas" message on Friday. These regular messages are sent to 571 people on our email list through Mailchimp.
- We continued using Zoom and livestream to better connect from home.
- We continued sharing "Celebrations and Sorrows" by email each week to 414 email addresses on our Parish Mailing List through Gmail.
- We continued mailing seasonal newsletters to around 300 addresses in the parish.
- We continue to use Facebook and Instagram to connect with one another and share news and updates.

# Creation Keepers

## *Christine DiFeliciano, Chair*

**What is this ministry?**

Creation Keepers' mission is to share in the stewardship of our earthly home. Working to slow the realities of climate disturbance, we as faithful stewards **REAP** the bounty of God's creation and act with intention to:

**R4: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Refuse.**

**Expand** our own educational horizons to recognize the interdependence of life in the local Chattahoochee Valley, in our state and beyond.

**Advocate** for policy and accountability to dismantle ecological injustice and racism.

**Prize** God's good gifts of beauty and wonder as we commune in the sacred spaces of our natural environment.

In the gathering magnitude of climate disturbance with its negative impacts on all life, born and unborn, Creation Keepers continued to balance the ominous message of carbon emission realities against the hope-filled message of God's love and our Christian partnership in Earth care.



## Highlights for 2023:

- Hosted a community panel discussion and brainstorming session in conjunction with Clean Energy Columbus and EnvironmentGA. Activities included a discussion and Q & A with panelists sharing a clean energy vision.
- Facilitated discussion during CVEM's Striving for Justice at Trinity Episcopal. Watched and discussed the 3-part GIPL (Georgia Interfaith Power & Light) promoted video on solar, "Current Revolution." Discussion with other attendees from St. Nicholas and Trinity increased awareness of solar solutions as part of the local, state, and national response to climate disruptions and its resulting injustices.
- Collected signatures from people of faith and our faith leaders encouraging EPA to adopt Strong Climate Pollution Rules from fossil fuel burning power plants.
- Contacted each of our City Council members as a representative of St. Thomas Creation Care Team to influence City Council to vote YES on the Clean Energy Columbus Resolution. Networked at League of Women Voters and Fair Count GA to learn more about Fair Count's 3 pillared approach to fair voting. Purpose to strengthen environmental issues as an issue for deciding and casting votes.
- Presented to the 8/8/23 City Council meeting. St. Thomas members showed up in force. The 100% Clean Energy Team was there ALL DAY and showed resolve to present the resolution. Some city leaders are very supportive.
- Lunch and Learn with FT Moore's Energy Manager to provide vision for community leaders to invest in innovative energy ideas that pay back in cost savings over time.
- Hosted a Saturday Green Summit with GIPL for faith leaders and community climate activists. The purpose was to encourage other faith leaders to act with intention to care for our shared home. Attended by 70 people who enjoyed lunch by Seth, keynote speaker, the Rev. Dr. Jennifer Ayres of the Candler School of Theology, Emory University, breakout sessions, and fellowship.
- Help the Hooch with Clean Energy Columbus to Make Columbus Beautiful. Networked with Fair Count GA and other community activists.
- Creation Keepers fellowship at the home of Christine DiFelicianantonio
- Continued Creation Keeper membership support at \$250.00 level to each of their community partners: Trees Columbus, Oxbow Meadows, Georgia Interfaith Power & Light, the Victory Garden & Farm with Turn Around Columbus, Environment GA and Chattahoochee River Keepers.

Participants in 2023: Christine DiFelicianantonio, Mick Etchison, Art France, Ann Johnston, Martin McCann, John and Vicky Partin, Brian Schwartz, and all the attendees in February and in September. Six additional members have shown interest in helping in 2024.

Plans for the future: Creation Keepers plans to present a request at the 1/23/24 City Council meeting to influence city leaders to voice their opposition to the mining proposal in the Okefenokee Swamp and commit to its protection as a unique state and national treasure. We continue to advocate for solar on our own St. Thomas building to set an example of walking our faithful commitment. This will be important as we continue our work to influence the city to solarize and reduce carbon emissions.

# East Carver Heights Community Development Corporation

## *Greg & Lisa Herring*

East Carver Heights CDC began as the Boxwood Soccer Club, a St. Thomas Ministry operating out of the Boxwood Recreation Center in the East Carver Heights neighborhood. We have since evolved into the community organization we are today.

**Boxwood Soccer:** 2023 was a busy and successful year for Boxwood SC. We fielded five teams ages 6 to 16 for both the Spring and Fall seasons. The Spring season begins in February and continues to May. The Fall season begins in August and ends in November. This equates to 170 practices and games per season and 340 per year! We provide all registration, uniforms, equipment, water, snacks, coaches, team managers and organize practices and game rosters for all our players. In addition, we have our annual

Summer Camp in July. Team award parties, Trunk or Treat, and Christmas Party are all also annual events. Our organization provides opportunities for social interactions and relationships in a safe atmosphere that our players may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. Through teamwork, cooperation, and resilience in the face of adversity, our teams have achieved excellence, winning multiple trophies and championships. They have learned that the way to win on the soccer field is loving each other, and in so doing have inspired their families, neighbors, and all of us who have been involved.

*Thank you to all of you who brought us the cases of water and snacks.*

*Thank you to all who showed up with a trunk full of candy at Halloween.*

*Thank you to all who were there to setup, serve and clean up at our parties.*

*Thank you to the "real" Santa.*

*Thank you for the individual donations and the Church's financial support.*

*Thank you, St Thomas for your encouragement and continued support.*

**Path To Shine®, Inc.** is a mentoring program for elementary school children. We meet at Carver Heights Presbyterian Church's outreach building at 800 32nd Ave. We meet on Tuesdays of the school year from 4:30-6pm. Our mentors are trained and background checked. The training focuses on helping children with learning. We start out with a healthy snack provided by volunteers. We work on homework or reading. Then we have a curriculum lesson with a book we read or a speaker. We love every person by offering help to all elementary students struggling in school at no cost to them. Students receive new books at the end of the fall and spring semesters. We take students on field trips during the year to The Community Garden to pick vegetables, and to the Muscogee County Recycling Center and to the Reptile talk at Oxbow Meadows. We learned to carve a Jack O'Lantern at Halloween and Florence Wakoko Studstill stopped by to help. We had a graduation party for 5th graders. Speakers included Jennifer Fletcher and Bunky Clark. Path to Shine-Columbus mentored six students this year. Our mentors are Margo Easterbrook, Sandra Montgomery, Suzanne Burdeshaw, Susan Gilbert, LaShanda Porter and Chad Keene. Sara Ginter organizes and schedules the snack angels: Jessica Ezzell, Jennifer Fletcher, Mandy Flynn, Sara Ginter, Susan Gilbert, Leslie Holloway, Pauline Marth, Faye Melton, Vicky and John Partin, Charlene Rallo, and Donna Sharp. They provide each student with a healthy snack of a sandwich half, juice, and fruit. We continue to "love every person" by offering Path to all communities in Columbus. We also have attended back to school events and other resource fairs to share about Path to Shine-Columbus.

### **Boxwood Friends and Neighbors Network (FANN)**

A Friends and Neighbors Network is where families who qualify for food assistance work together to unload, and sort food, meet, pay dues, and then clean up and take the food home. A community is formed through the work everyone does together and the meetings which include prayer, a pledge and speakers who bring information about local resources and services. Food is purchased from Feeding the Valley with healthy food in mind. East Carver Heights has few grocery stores offering good produce and healthy options. The dues the group pays are pooled to purchase in bulk items like tissue, cleaning products, and laundry pods. On average this year, the Boxwood F.A.N.N. has served a dozen families twice a month. This year we had speakers from CVEM, Jerome Lawson-Cure Violence Columbus, Dr. Hud-Project Rebound and Johnny Walton-Fitness Trainer. F.A.N.N. meets at the Boxwood Recreation Center. We are grateful to be back to the neighborhood where we started and closer to our members. We love every person by keeping our families food secure and providing them with resources through engaging speakers.

**Boxwood ESL** Some of our soccer players' parents speak Spanish, and we asked if they would attend English classes at the Boxwood Recreation Center during practices. Many of them expressed an interest. We were lucky to have St. Thomas parishioner and Spanish teacher Martha Mullinax teach a group for a season at the Boxwood Recreation Center. Sadly, we did not have enough students for a class. We appreciate Mrs. Mullinax's service. We will prayerfully evaluate if this is our mission. We love every person by working to serve our Hispanic community.

We worked with the new Boxwood Recreation Director to hold several Boxwood Soccer awards banquets and special events including the annual Trunk or Treat with sponsors, Target, The Community Warriors, Boys on the Hill, and St. Thomas Episcopal Church. St. Thomas parishioners donated candy and several dressed up and handed out candy, including Norm and Margo Easterbrook and Renee and Bob McAneny. Our biggest event is our Christmas Party where over 50 soccer players received a new coat! We were lucky to have Dan Ginter to provide Santa magic! St. Thomas parishioners Norm and Margo Easterbrook were there to help serve pizza, cookies, juice, and tamales. Love for every person was shown by St. Thomas parishioners who bought new coats for children. We showed love for parents and children! Thank you for your generosity St. Thomas. Coats were also purchased and donated by Brookstone School.

## Endowment Committee

### *Mitch Grossman, Chair*

The 2023 endowment committee consisted of devoted members including Marianne Richter, Robert Moore, Ann Burr, Travis Wade, Paul Hostetter, Marcel Meijer, Reverend Grace Burton-Edwards and chair Mitch Grossman.

St. Thomas finances are divided into three categories: the Annual Budget derived from your yearly stewardship giving, which is used for salaries, repairs and utilities; Capital Campaigns, like our Making Room for All Vision campaign, which is for larger specific projects; and the St. Thomas Endowment Fund for long term funding which provides us a source of income each year to support church and faith life beyond the day-to-day giving.

The endowment committee continues to review endowment financials quarterly with our Truist advisors and works on helping others understand the importance of planned giving. Each year only a small portion the Endowment fund is used, and the remainder is left to grow. Over time, as more generously include their gifts to St. Thomas, the stronger the living church becomes for generations. As a reminder, a gift in perpetuity can be public or anonymous. In the coming year, the committee will focus on how we can better memorialize endowment gifts in a more meaningful and outward way. The endowment committee is very thankful to all those who have given or are thinking about giving to St. Thomas Endowment.

## Episcopal Campus Ministry (ECM)

### *Taylor Mack, Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries*

In partnership with the Diocese of Atlanta, St. Thomas was able to establish an Episcopal Campus Ministry (ECM) for students at Columbus State University and other local colleges in August of 2023. ECM provides a safe space for undergraduate and graduate students in the Columbus area to explore their faith. ECM met on Tuesday evenings through the fall semester on CSU's main campus for weekly prayer, dinner, and discussion.

ECM students worked together to establish the following values to define the organization and its mission:

- ECM is grounded in the Episcopal/Anglican tradition. We are rooted in liturgy and united by a passion for love-centered theology. The Episcopal church has a history of striving for progressive, inclusive, and affirming faith practices. We believe that scripture, tradition, and human reason can all inform our faith and inspire our growth.
- ECM is strengthened by love. We believe that the message of the scriptures is to share love with all people. We seek to support and validate the unique experiences of every person through hospitality and grace. College students face a variety of challenges as they navigate school, life, and transitions. At ECM, we strive to provide a safe space where students can consider faith, friendships, and feelings while being authentically true to themselves.

- ECM is inspired by growth. Students at ECM are encouraged to ask questions and share their doubts. We seek to build Christian leaders who serve others out of love and passion for the Gospel, rather than out of obligation or fear. We encourage members to take on leadership roles and build friendships within ECM as well as in other areas of campus and community life. Though we are only college students for a limited time, ECM hopes to develop and support each student's faith journey as they become lifelong learners and leaders.

# Episcokids

## Heather Driggers

2023 was a year of transition in our Children's Ministries. We thanked Erin Redden for MANY years of service as she left her formal ministry with St. Thomas to focus on her new ministry as a High School Assistant Principal. We welcomed Heather Driggers for a season who did a wonderful job during her time with us. Thanks to Heather for preparing this report as she concluded her ministry with St. Thomas in December 2023. And thanks to Maddie Redden for joining our staff as Interim Direction of Children's Ministries in January 2024.

### Nursery

Our Nursery is thriving and we have seen our numbers grow. Many new families and babies joined our congregation this year. Dorothy Uwanawich and Evie Smith have remained on nursery staff. Jen Carpenter Varnum joined the nursery team in December and will be with us in 2024. We were also able to open our second nursery classroom as a 3-4 year old class. This has allowed the older nursery children to have a Sunday School hour along with playing and being creative. We are hoping that in 2024 we will have a regular rotation of parishioner volunteers so we can have this class open each week.

### Children's Formation

At the beginning of the year the children attended Children's Chapel in the Parlor. They have now transitioned to having Children's Chapel in the Chapel each Sunday. Using the Lectionary and the Sparks Children's Bible, our rotation of parishioner volunteers have been sharing the Gospel with as many as 30 children each Sunday. The Gospel is shared simply, and designed to stir children's imaginations and spirituality. A small altar and interactive lesson elements have also been implemented. The Children's Bulletins were also transitioned to "Illustrated Ministry Bulletins" from the "Sunday Paper Jr." In 2024 we are hoping for more volunteers from the congregation to join the rotation and our growing numbers.

Wonderful Wednesdays took place on Wednesday evenings from 6:15 - 7:30 for the first seven months of the year and then we transitioned to 6:30 - 7:30 with the 2023-2024 school year. An activity table was also set up for Wednesday night dinners from 5:30-6:20 to give the children activities before leaving for class, after finishing dinner. Class took place in the open Outreach community room with a recent transition to the large Outreach classroom. Children between the ages of 4 and 5th grade have encountered relevant themes through a rotation of weekly lessons and play. The Children's and Youth programs began to follow a rotation that would bring clarity and consistency for families each week. We have a "wonderful" group each week with up to 12-15 children on average.

Shine Time, our Sunday School hour, took place from 9:30 - 10:15 with a rotation of volunteers. We started the year with centers and lessons in the Outreach Community room. We have recently transitioned into the large Outreach classroom where we had centers that included Lego, blocks, silk scarves, coloring, and a reading nook. The classroom transition was a more welcoming environment with fun decorations along with ownership of the space for the children each week. We hope the children will feel welcomed and invited into a space that is all their own. The children spent the latter part of the year learning through the *Manna and Mercy* curriculum that coincided with the Tween Time class. We focused on teaching the children the full story of the Bible in bite size pieces. Our average attendance, with Tween Time happening, was between 10-15 children.

## Highlights

- Shrove Tuesday with children's activities put on by the youth
- Flowering the cross on Easter
- Children's Egg Hunt and Parish Picnic
- Vacation Bible School, Living into God's Dream, where we were able to secure multiple carts full of food for the Wynnton Neighborhood Network, teaching children to love and care for others as God has loved them.
- Outdoor Pet Blessing at Lakebottom Park
- Trunk or Treat, our biggest yet!
- All Saints Procession
- A visit from Saint Nicholas in the Chapel
- Lessons and Carols Christmas Pageant with 30 participants
- Children's candy cane Christmas Party

In 2024, after many transitions this year, we hope to encourage parishioners to offer their time and talents to the youngest members of St. Thomas Episcopal Church. As we continue to grow in our faith and live into our baptismal promises we want to continue to provide opportunities to expand our ministries by sharing the Good News to our neighbors and members of our greater community.

## Flower Guild

*Ralph Wimberly, Chair*

The Flower Guild provides us an opportunity to bring artistic talents to share on the Altar during worship and other events throughout the church year. The team follows the liturgical calendar through the seasons of the church year. This year I have all the faith we shall begin anew and continue our faithfulness in support of what God wants and leads us to do. I am grateful for both in person and support from afar. I look forward with excitement with how the renovation will affect our focus in what we are called to do. Many thanks to all who support this ministry.

Christmas was brought to life with the help of Isiah Harper, Barbara Billings, Ceci Shirley, Christine Slusher, and Maddie Redden. Many thanks to Jo Cates and Nelia Partin for stepping in when I need help. Many thanks to all who participated in 2023.

Guild members are Jo Cates, Nelia Partin, Ceci Shirley, Christine Slusher, Dawn Farrow and Barbara Billings. I am looking forward to new members joining the team this year as I limit what I am able to do.

## Foyers Groups

*Barbara Brandenburgh*

Foyers are dinner groups formed every year by a committee. You can sign-up for Foyers in two ways: clicking on a link in the August editions of Spiritual Adventures or through the Ministry Pledge Forms. Groups are formed in early September with a Host Leader assigned to each group. All dinner groups converge together one final time in June for a Foyers Finale dinner.

Sixty-One participants signed up this year with six dinner groups being formed. Approximately half of the signees were new to Foyers. This created a wonderful opportunity for making deeper connections with our new(er) St. Thomas members.

The participants this year are: Paula & David Acton, Alice & Fred Barlow, Ashley & Josh Becker, Carol Boers, Kathy Bonner, Jennifer Boyd, David & Barbara Brandenburgh, Ruth & Jerry Brown, Fran Carpenter, Karrmen Currin, Christine & Steve DiFelicianantonio, Sara & Dan Ginter, Susan Hansbarger, Judy Heider, Leslie & Jeff Holloway, Ena Hunt, Barb Kreyling, Reb Kreyling, Tracy Leopard & Penny Wise, Korie MacDougall, Luise May, Virginia & Toby McCullough, Ann McDuffie, Doug McLeod, Faye & Steve Melton, Martha & Jerry Mullinax, Kathleen Mullins, John & Vicky Partin, Linda Prince, Mike & Charlene Rallo, Malinda Shamburger, Amy Smith, Mollie Smith & Robin Trimarchi, Nathan Smock, Susan & Keith Leigh, Molly Sutter, Bernie Sutter, Bobsie Swift, Margaret Terrell, Chaz & Elissa Wagner, Argy Wargo, Jane & Dave Wilson, and Allyson Young & Mitch Grossman.

Foyers ties in perfectly with our ministry of Love Every Person. Historically, ALL members are invited to participate in Foyers and that will continue. Foyers is an act of hospitality which in turn is an act of love.



# Grounds

## *Martin McCann, Chair*

In 2023, the Grounds committee scheduled workdays on the first Saturday of the month. This seemed to help scheduling and turnout. Turnout was very good, especially for tuning up of the areas in and about the Swift Memorial Garden. Jessica Ezzell and Ann Johnston did an amazing amount of work planning and supervising this project. A special thanks to all who worked on this project. The dedication of the garden was widely attended on October 1st.

Dan Ginter and Libba Russell have been continued to mow the soccer field and the area behind the Day School. Vicky and John Partin have maintained the labyrinth. The labyrinth has been redone with crushed slate. Hopefully weeds will be less of a problem. In all, a good year.

For 2024, we will be challenged by renovations of the nave and surrounding grounds. Soon we will need to be available to move documents and wares out of the attic and basement. Stay tuned. This may not be a first Saturday of the month. We continue to be open to any and all suggestions about organization, schedules, and future plans,

# Kitchen

## *Seth Burgamy, Kitchen Manager*

We prepared Wednesday nights dinners serving more than 2,300 meals! On Sunday mornings, we prepared sausage muffins with pastries and coffee. Special events to include Epiphany, the Annual meeting, Rick's 20th Anniversary, Shrove Tuesday, the Clean Energy Summit, the yard sale preview, Easter Vigil, Easter breakfast, Second Easter lunch, snacks for Vacation Bible School, Welcome breakfasts, backpack blessing breakfast, the dedication of the Swift garden, Thanksgiving dinner, Advent lunches, Wassail party, as well as funeral receptions -- all with the help of dedicated volunteers.

# Labyrinth

The labyrinth received a much-needed restoration in 2023 as part of building the Clifford J. Swift Memorial Garden Trail. The slate chips used to create the trail were installed on the labyrinth, creating a more solid surface that should avoid some of the shifting we experienced with the earlier crushed granite. The renovation of the trail and labyrinth also extended to the Pet Memorial, making the whole area more inviting and welcoming. The labyrinth is open to the whole community, and people are often seen walking the path and communing with God. Thanks to Vicky Partin for her care of the labyrinth over many years. Thanks to Martin McCann, Ann Johnston, Jessica Ezzell, Tracy Leopard, and Nelia Partain for developing plans for the garden trail and labyrinth and for organizing workday volunteers. Thanks to Martin, Dan Ginter, and Fred Romanus for cleaning the sidewalks. And thanks to many volunteers who worked this year to restore the labyrinth and make it a beautiful place of outdoor worship.

# Lay Eucharistic Ministers & Lectors

## *Meg Olive-Allison*

These volunteers have dedicated their time and talent to serve during worship on Sundays and Wednesdays, in addition to serving in weddings and funerals. We are grateful for those who have returned to serving at the altar or reading in services and those new folks who have been added to the roster.

## Lay Eucharistic Ministers and Readers in 2023 include:

Paula Acton	Spencer Garrard	Marquette McKnight	Mike Smith
Barbara Brandenburgh	Dan Ginter	Charlene Moore	Mollie Smith
David Brandenburgh	Linda Harmon	Malone Moore	Jennifer St. John
Jerry Brown	Alaina Harrison	Randy Moore	Katie Underwood
Ruth Brown	Amy Hatfield	Robert Moore	Sherry Wade
Ann Burr	Leslie Holloway	Jerry Mullinax	Tom Wade
Jack Ceccato	Elizabeth Hostetter	Kathleen Mullins	Travis Wade
Nicole Ceccato	Paul Hostetter	Perrin Nicolson	Kern Wadkins
Evan Collins	Anne Huie-Strong	Meg Olive-Allison	Chaz Wagner
Joanna Collins	Ena Hunt	Susie Olive-Allison	Elissa Wagner
Pat Daniel	Tommie Hunter	John Partin	Kevin Waldrup
James Decker	April Jacobs	Vicky Partin	Hannah Walker
Christine DiFelicianantonio	Melissa James	Laura Perkins	Jonathan Walz
Donna Dooley	Rebekah Kreyling	Charlene Rallo	Stefania Wilcox
Larry Dooley	Bill Lacy	Erin Redden	Ron Wirt
Norm Easterbrook	Susan Leigh	Heidi Regan	Molly Wright
Tanya Edwards-Jones	Tony Lewis	Sid Regan	Allyson Young
Jessica Ezzell	Jeremy Mack	Marianne Richter	
Jennifer Fletcher	Taylor Mack	Malinda Shamburger	
Cindy Cox Garrard	Pauline Marth	Ceci Shirley	

## McCann African Mission

### *Sandy McCann, Coordinator*

The African Mission Fund was established in 2004 as a pathway for donations to the mission work of Sandra and Martin McCann during their time in Africa. Although they returned seven years ago, donations made to this fund are still being used to support education in Tanzania. Donations are from individuals, both from within and outside of the parish, and from the Outreach Council of St. Thomas Episcopal Church.

I am currently in the process of buying computers for the incoming seminary class at Msalato Theological College in Dodoma, Tanzania. We have a trustworthy local Muslim merchant, Brighton Katabazi, with whom we have worked for the past two years. The Reverend Moses Matonya, PhD, whom some of you may remember, highly recommended Brighton. It is a huge benefit to be able to support the local economy.

Brighton has located a merchant who has thirteen 14-inch refurbished Hewlett Packard (Core i3 11 Generation 8GB RAM 512 SSD) that fit within our budget of \$6000.00. I have approved Brighton to continue his efforts to obtain these. This is the first time we have not bought new computers, but I trust Brighton's judgment.

HP computers are the most widely available in Tanzania and the easiest to be serviced. The gift of a computer is nearly beyond the comprehension of a poor student in Tanzania. For theological students to have any hope of keeping up with the world, in a land where almost no one can afford textbooks, a computer is a library and a lifeline to the outside world.

A gift of \$2000.00 was also sent to the Diocese of Mara in northern Tanzania for the Mothers' Union Fund. George Okoth, the bishop of Mara, was a classmate of mine at Virginia Seminary and he and his wife, Janet, were our next-door neighbors for many years at Msalato. The wife of a diocesan bishop is automatically the head of the Mothers' Union in her husband's diocese. The wives of bishops have huge roles in the parish education of the women and children.

I am extremely grateful for having another year of Patty Slembariski's financial expertise and diligence in keeping the financial records of the African Mission Fund. We also thank St. Thomas for maintaining this account and the Outreach Council for generously supporting such endeavors.

# Memorials Committee

## Ann Johnston, Chair

This committee is responsible for the receiving of gifts in memory or honor of parishioners and selecting furnishings of the campus. We are also responsible for the maintenance of the columbarium. The Memorial Committee is grateful to Tracy Leopard for the work she has done in the columbarium this year.

This year our committee divided to do separate tasks.

Nelia Partain, Ralph Wimberly, and Ann Johnston were joined by Sara Ginter and Tracy Leopard to work with Jessica Ezzell to plan and help develop a memorial garden. The garden was created to celebrate and give thanks to Bobsie and Clifford Swift for the generous gifts they have given to St. Thomas.

Ralph Wimberly, Jonathan Walz, and Ann Johnston were part of the Design Committee. We worked to design the renovations of the Nave and choir loft for the *Making Room for All* project.

Nelia Partain and Ann Johnston worked with Seth Burgamy to plan the renovations for the kitchen.

If you are considering making a memorial gift or if you would like to join the committee, please contact one of the members: Mary Free, Ann Johnston, Nelia Partain, Jonathan Walz, and Ralph Wimberly.

# Men's Group

## Paul Hostetter

### What is this ministry?

The St. Thomas Men's Group was formed to offer the male members of St. Thomas Church an opportunity to support feeding ministries, yard work around the church, parking assistance, outreach activities, and social time together as men of faith.

This year we held 6 social events at locations including Jarfly, Nonic, The Mix Market, Scofflaw Brewing, and at the home of Michael Dempsey. These opportunities have created deeper connections at a time when friendship and faith are more important than ever. We cooked over 300 hotdogs for this year's Trunk or Treat event and assisted with parking at several events, including Easter and most recently the deeply moving funeral for Mitchi Wade. We assisted Margo Easterbrook by delivering lunches to Brewer Elementary. Finally, we assisted with yard work on the parish grounds throughout the year.

### Who participated in 2023

David Acton, Joe Akyempong, Fred Barlow Jr, David Brandenburgh, Reggie Brushwood, Jerry Brown, Taylor Burton-Edwards, Ray Capo, Robert Chitwood, Denny Clark, Ben Daniels, James Decker, Mike Dempsey, Larry Dooley, Norm Easterbrook, Skip Farrow, Mitch Grossman, Isiah Harper, Greg Herring, Paul Hostetter, Tommie Hunter, William Lacy, Jeremy Mack, Marcel Meijer, Steve Melton, Mike McFalls, Robert Moore, Jerry Mullinax, Perrin Nicholson, Roger Redden, Mike Smith, Joe Stewart, Kevin Waldrup, Dave Wilson, and Ron Wirt.

### What are the next chapters ahead for this ministry?

We plan to continue doing what we have been doing: supporting the church's mission and providing social opportunities that allow us to further deepen friendships at St. Thomas.

# Music

## *Rick McKnight, Organist & Choir Master*

The St. Thomas Choir continues to be the principal choir leading worship at 10:30 on Sundays. This is a non-auditioned group that meets on Wednesday from 6:45-8:30 and again at 9:30 on Sundays, August - Pentecost. The Summer Choir sings when the St. Thomas Choir is on holiday. They enjoy a wonderful sense of camaraderie, and as Katie Buckley says, "Come for the music; stay for the community."

The choir continues to sing a wide variety of music from many styles. This summer we had parishioners request their favorite hymns, which was a lot of fun. We are blessed to have a lot of accomplished musicians in the choir and have reached a record high enrollment.

Lots of 2023 was taken up with planning our nave renovation and handicap access. This will be very exciting as we prepare to make our church a place for everyone for years to come. A lead gift from the estate of Joe Fischer has helped make this possible. Joe sang in the choir for years and commuted from Auburn twice a week. As Joe said, "The difference is worth the distance."

We are busy now planning what worship in the parish hall will look like starting April.

I have now entered my 21st year serving as Organist-Choirmaster and it is a joy.

### **2023 St. Thomas Choir Roster**

Laurie Alltop	Michelle Folta	Luise May	Jane Smith-Williams
Debbie Anderson	Cindy Cox Garrard	Shana Monteith	Nathan Smock
Fred Barlow	Logan Gordy	Joe Morrow	Margaret Terrell
Matthew Brandenburgh	Isiah Harper	Hunter Mullen	Louise Tulloh
Shara Bryan-Torsiello	Elizabeth Hostetter	Payne Newsome	Kevin Waldrup
Katie Buckley	Seyi Isijola	Ruth Nichols	Rachel Ward
Raymond Campbell	April Jacobs	Jefferey Oakman	Ralph Wimberly
Fran Carpenter	Chad Keene	G.L. Page	Ron Wirt
Bob Chitwood	Karen Lord	Mary Ann Rahm	Molly Wright
Clay Dykes	Marquette McKnight	Amy Rivers	
Kim Etchison	Kim MacDougall	Adleyn Scott	
Summer Flinn	Korie MacDougall	David Rambo Serrano	

# Outreach Council

## *Michelle Mullen, Chair*

The Outreach Council includes leaders of all of our Outreach Ministries who meet to coordinate our Outreach efforts and determine how the amount of the annual church budget designated for outreach will be shared. The budget for outreach is based on ten percent of the total of budgeted pledges minus our diocesan commitment. In 2023, the total budget for Outreach was \$52,839, designated as follows:

	BUDGET	YTD EXPENSES
AFRICAN MISSION	6,000.00	6,000.00
BOXWOOD MINISTRIES	3,000.00	3,000.00
CREATION KEEPERS	3,225.00	3,225.00
CVEM	18,000.00	18,000.00
E.CARVER HGTS CDC	15,000.00	15,000.00
ERD	500.00	259.67
MISCELLANEOUS	114.30	354.63
PATH TO SHINE (Diocese)	1,000.00	1,000.00
WNN	6,000.00	6,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52,839.30</b>	<b>52,839.30</b>

In addition, St. Thomas supported outreach ministries with donations from reserve funds and designated gifts.

Outreach Collections	
African Mission	11,450.00
Brewer Elementary	4,000.00
CVEM	7,719.25
Rector's Benevolence	3,420.00
WNN	5,049.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,638.25</b>

### Who participated in 2023?

Jo Cates and Libba Russell (WNN), Malinda Shamburger (CVEM), Greg Herring (East Carver Heights, Boxwood Soccer), Lisa Herring (East Carver Heights, Path to Shine, FANN), Margo Easterbrook (East Carver Heights, Brewer Partnership), Florence Wakoko (Episcopal Relief and Development), Sandy McCann (African Mission), Christine DeFelicianantonio (Creation Keepers), Vicky Partin (Bridge), Michelle Mullen, Meg Olive-Allison and Rev. Grace (Staff).

### How will this ministry Love Every Person in the years ahead?

In 2023, the Outreach Council continued its work to find new ways to partner with others to spread God's love in the community. Through reserve funds, gifts were made to those serving people with disabilities experiencing homelessness, underserved and at-risk youth, and refugees starting over in a new country. In addition, the Brewer Buddy Pack program was initiated to support access to food for children during weekends and holidays.

We are excited about all of these developments and expect to have many new stories about Outreach to tell in 2024.

## Pastoral Care

***Donna Sharp - Chair of the Pastoral Care Committee alongside  
The Rev. Roxane Gwyn, Associate Rector for Pastoral Care***

The Pastoral Care committee serves growing numbers of members and friends through prayer, visitation, sharing Holy Communion, cards, calls, and other communication and service. In the coming year and years ahead, the Pastoral Care committee and its many lay and clergy ministers seek to love every person by increasing the numbers of people we serve and increasing the numbers of people who serve. We believe that every person, not only our elders and those with physical challenges, stands in need of pastoral care from their parish. In 2024 we will explore opportunities for integrating different age groups into the ministry. Meanwhile, we are grateful for the outstanding pastoral care service rendered by laypersons in 2023.

**BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY:** Bereavement booklets, a set of 4 during the year, are sent by Steve Scott to families following the loss of their loved one, including guidance about coping with loss and remaining strong in their faith. Steve writes notes to these families on cards printed with a painting of St. Thomas created by Adleyn Scott. Booklets were sent in 2023 to 16 families.

**CARD MINISTRY:** 24 parishioners (Paula Acton, Barbara Billings, Ruth Brown, Raymond Campbell, Nicole Ceccato, Karrmen Currin, Jennifer Fletcher, Mandy Flynn, Sara Ginter, Beverly Gordy, Amy Hatfield, Ena Hunt, Melissa James, Renee McAneny, Doug McLeod, Faye Melton, Charlene Moore, Charlene Rallo, Donna Sharp, Molly Sutter, Bobsie Swift, Deborah Tucker, Hannah Walker, and Maryjane Wrenn) were a part of this team in 2023, serving as greeting-card writers, texters, and phone-callers to 25 people.

**LAY EUCHARISTIC VISITORS** offer an extension of our Eucharistic table to those who cannot physically join us at church. 2023 found us blessed with a dedicated team of LEV's: Alice Barlow, Ann Burr, Daniel Mitchell, Charlene Moore, John Partin, and Donna Sharp. These lay ministers and our clergy try to provide communion on at least a monthly basis.



MEALS were offered on an as-needed basis, determined by staff and pastoral care ministers. 20 known (and many unknown) parishioners participated in providing food to folks in life transitions. Meals are organized through an on-line sign-up system coordinated by staff.

TRANSPORTATION: A dedicated handful of parishioners provided rides to and from church and other places during 2023. This continues to be an area of growth, given challenges of fragile older persons, children, time, and distance. In the year ahead, the Pastoral Care Committee will seek ways and means to address this ongoing need.

VISITATION: In 2024 we will begin a lay visitation schedule in addition to ongoing visits by clergy. Volunteer parishioners will be connected with people from our parish who will enjoy occasional visits.

## Prayer Group

*Donna Sharp - Chair of the Pastoral Care Committee alongside  
The Rev. Roxane Gwyn, Associate Rector for Pastoral Care*

### What is this ministry?

The St. Thomas Prayer Group takes time to pray together for our parishioners, our neighbors, our church, and the world. We meet at 11:30 each Monday morning on Zoom or in the Chapel. We pray from both a public and a private list. Names on our private prayer list and reasons are held in confidence. Contact one of the members if you are interested or would like to be included in the prayer list. The Prayer Group is made up of Sonya Boyd, Ann Burr, Nicole Ceccato, Beverly Tant-Gordy, Renee McAneny, Donna Sharp, Mary Jane Thomas, and The Rev. Roxane Gwyn. We have happily added one person to our group this year, Kathy Herren. We look forward to continuing our faithfulness of prayer throughout the year ahead, continuing to lift up the needs of our parishioners, our neighbors, our church, and the world.

## Property Committee

*Ann Johnston & Tracy Leopard, Co-Chairs*

The mission/ministry of the Property Committee is to manage the maintenance, repair and improvements of St. Thomas's buildings and grounds in such a fashion that all members and visitors will feel they have been in the presence of God when in attendance, helping us to reach others in our wider community.

The committee meets on the first Monday of each month. Members serving during 2022 were Ann Johnston and Tracy Leopard, Co-Chairs; Dan Ginter, Tanya Edwards-Jones, Martin McCann, Fred Romanus and Dave Wilson. Church staff members who are part of the committee are Grace Burton-Edwards, Patty Slembariski, and Seth Burgamy.

During the year, the committee coordinated, managed, and actively engaged in on-going maintenance and repair projects throughout the church, rectory, and the entire church grounds. Some of the main accomplishments of the Property Committee in 2023 include:

- Major kitchen repairs and improvements to include new cabinets, sinks and workspaces, following a Christmas Eve flood
- Roof repairs that included:
  - Fixing leaks in the kitchen, choir loft, and other areas
  - Repairing bullet holes
  - Installing a new roof on the breezeway next to the Day School
  - Installation of new roofing at the robing hallway area
- Stained glass window cleaning and maintenance
- Tree Care
  - Removal of fallen trees on our property and neighbor's property
  - Fence repair due to fallen trees
  - Arborist inspection of several trees that led to appropriate pruning and fertilization

- Youth Hut maintenance to include not only removing weeds and undergrowth, but also removing uninvited wildlife that had taken up residence
- New sidewalk ramp
- Aesthetic (and functional) improvements to include divider lines on the driveway leading to the rear of the church, restoration of the parlor restroom, and new outside coffee hour tables

In 2024 the committee looks forward to working with the Construction committee to improve our existing property, while coordinating changes and repairs with the overall church restoration

## Rector's Discretionary/Benevolence Fund

*Rev. Grace Burton-Edwards*

Contributions to the Rector's Discretionary Fund support unbudgeted needs for the work of the church. Funds given as an honorarium for the rector or given for use in the congregation at the rector's discretion are deposited in the Rector's Discretionary Fund. In 2023, \$9,441.43 was given to the discretionary fund for use in the congregation at the rector's discretion, and \$9,421.80 was spent, including some funds transferred to the Benevolence Fund.

The Rector's Benevolence fund is held in a separate checking account to which the rector is the only person who has access. This is to protect the anonymity of people who are aided by the fund. The Senior Warden reviews expenses from the benevolence fund on a periodic basis. In 2023, \$4,225.95 was given to the benevolence fund, and \$4,547.76 was shared.

## Refugee Resettlement

*Meg Olive-Allison*

St. Thomas was contacted in July of 2023 by the International Rescue Committee about partnering to help resettle a Guatemalan family to Columbus. The family had ties to Columbus and wanted to be resettled here. When families are resettled outside of the metro-Atlanta area, the IRC looks for community partners to assist. They found and chose St. Thomas.

The Duarte family of three arrived in the US at the end of September and spent a month in Atlanta for orientation and a brief time with family near Columbus. A team moved them into their duplex in Columbus on December 1. St. Thomas is committed to partnering with the family as they establish themselves in the area in the coming year. This work has been a delight, as we have the opportunity to meet and know people whose lives we are helping to change. It has also been delightful to have so many St. Thomas folks work together to make this resettlement happen. It has brought out gifts in parishioners and provided the opportunity to share resources and work together that we could not have imagined.

Many people have worked to welcome the Duartes to Columbus. From searching for housing for the family to repairing appliances to building furniture and setting up their home to donating bikes and bedding and furniture, to translating and offering transportation; we have worked together and continue to work together well. The original team that was trained by the IRC included Olin Doss (with the Hispanic Outreach Committee) Martin McCann, Faye Melton, Martha Mullinax, Meg Olive-Allison, and Darius Sudayi. So many others have donated time, items, funds, and more to make this work possible. I hesitate to list those who have helped because several have done so behind the scenes, but those we know of who have helped include: Susan Anderson, Deidre Bohannon, Lauren Copes, James Decker, Jennifer Fletcher, Wilson Ford, Ellen Free, Dan and Sara Ginter, Mitch Grossman, Melissa James, Barbara Kreyling, Tracey Leopard, Faye and Steve Melton, Jerry and Martha Mullinax, Kathleen Mullins, Perrin Nicolson, Susie Olive-Allison, Nelia Partain, Mike and Charlene Rallo, Maddie Redden, Malinda Shamburger, Chris and Patty Slembariski, Lauren and L.T. Taylor, Karla Thompson, Chaz and Elissa Wagner, Brian and Hannah Walker, and Penny Wise.

# Saint Thomas Readers Book Group

## *Sonya Boyd, Past Convener*

For the past eighteen years it was my pleasure to convene the Saint Thomas Book Group, an activity that grew from fellowship to ministry. During the past year as I knew that I was retiring, I gave thought to the direction that we took from 2005 onward. As with most book groups, we read and frequently discussed the selections. Space does not permit me to describe all that we did, but in reading at least one hundred books, we explored various genres and our discussions were lively. Everyone was welcome. We grew in attendance from eight in 2005 to more than a dozen regularly attending, at times reaching twenty five. Persons of other denominations attended. We became a tool for outreach.

During those years parishioners and others who were not attendees, gave amazing presentations that were thematic to the books we read. Authors visited and gave us insight into their works. The Chattahoochee Valley Public Library System provided many opportunities for us. In turn, we supported The Big Read. We also supported the St. Thomas Little Library. We were featured in Sheryl Green's column in the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* and in the *Columbus and the Valley Magazine*.

One aspect of our readership was exploring books that provided ethical or spiritual points which contributed to the depth of the discussion. We also focused on literacy and reached into the community. We survived the pandemic by staying in touch via email and telephone calls. Our reading lists were published on the Facebook site of the North Columbus Library.

Then September 2022 came, giving us a unique opportunity. We read *The Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the great ballplayer's integrating the major leagues. After our discussion of the book, we donated our copies to the Jackie Robinson Boys and Girls Club of Cairo-Grady County, GA.

We also read and discussed six other books, concluding in September 2023. Our meeting schedule was influenced by delayed construction in the kitchen. In the reading season of 2022 and 2023, we also enjoyed two Zoom calls with nationally known authors: Julia Spencer-Fleming and Anna Maria Evans. We are grateful to Dr. Denny Clark who assisted us with Zoom Technology. These visits were a treat. From September, 2022 until September, 2023, we averaged an attendance of sixteen persons at each gathering. Six of the original group from 2005 continued meeting in 2023. I am grateful for their participation and friendship.

Thank you for the opportunity to convene the St Thomas Book Group. I was blessed! And now, please continue to support the Book Group in 2024!

*In October of 2023 the Book Group began meeting under the leadership of Alice Barlow and Martha Mullinax. We are grateful for their leadership.*

# St. Thomas Day School

## *Kym Futch, Director*

St. Thomas Day School's purpose is to build a strong core of school readiness in each student through social, intellectual, emotional and physical development in a loving Christian-based teaching environment. As a highlight from the year 2023, the interior hallways were painted a bright white and the trim in a high gloss black. The halls are very inviting and pop with all of the additional colors. With a State of Georgia grant, the playgrounds were updated with rubber mulch with lifetime warranties. New play equipment and toys were also purchased.

Classes started off smaller than usual, however, each week that has gone by, enrollments get higher and higher. With the biggest turnover in years of staff, we have hired 8 new employees. Teams are creating the best classroom environments, and the children are flourishing. We currently have 18 staff and 76 children.

# St. Thomas Softball

*Jeremy Mack, Team Captain*

## **What is this ministry?**

The St. Thomas Softball Team brings together parish members and community friends to compete against other area churches. This year's team won the first playoff game in team history and finished in 4th place.

## **Who participated?**

Players: Joe Allen, Evan Dadey, Bear Elder, Alaina Harrison, Ashley Huie-Strong, Melissa James, Jeremy Mack, Taylor Mack, Toby McCullough, Mike Morrill, Susie Olive-Allison, Jana Speer, Robert Wadkins Jr., Chaz Wagner, Elissa Wagner, Anna Williams, Chris Williams

Score Keepers: Wilson Ford, Dixie Harmon

## **How will this ministry Love Every Person in the years ahead?**

St. Thomas participants ranged from age 19-55. The team invites anyone 18 and older who is interested in playing to join the team. We have a wide range of skill levels, and everyone is able to play and enjoy spending time with one another.

# Strategic Planning Construction

*Dan Ginter*

The St. Thomas Construction Committee consists of David Brandenburgh, Mitch Grossman, Robert Moore, Fred Romanus, Brian Walker, and Dan Ginter as Chairman.

The committee assisted in choosing a construction company and met with other committees to determine the most appropriate design that will allow accessibility for all to our building and grounds. The committee's purpose is to be a liaison between St. Thomas and the Batson-Cook construction company as well as coordinating work. We will monitor the progress of the work being performed and report any potential problems to the appropriate church staff members. Construction will begin on April 8, 2024, and is scheduled to be completed by Advent 2024. We are looking forward to ensuring that St. Thomas will Make Room for All.

# Strategic Planning Design

*Ann Johnston*

The Design Committee is charged with deciding the appearance of the nave and all areas affected by the Make Room For All project. We have had the wonderful opportunity of working with a very capable and enthusiastic liturgical designer named Ed Joyner. We also have had much help from our architects, Emily Flournoy and Jenna Williamson. Ed, Emily, and Jenna were extremely helpful. They have provided us with many ideas, drawings, samples, of tiles and every other product we could possibly use. We have had multiple meetings and are pleased with the design we have so far. We are continuing to work on several elements of the design such as what the screen behind the altar will look like.

The committee consists of: Alice Barlow, Jo Cates, Spencer Garrard, Sara Ginter, Ann Johnston, Chair, Rick McKnight, Sue O'Dell, Libba Russell, Boise Swift, Jonathan Walz, and Ralph Wimberly.

We truly hope that what we decide on is pleasing to the parishioners and that we will help in Making Room for All.

# Strategic Planning Fundraising & Annual Stewardship Campaign

## Ron Wirt

The Strategic Planning group created in 2022 and composed of former wardens and treasurers wound up its work in the Spring of 2023, and we formed three smaller groups to continue the work with members of the original planning committee and others in the congregation, focusing on Fundraising, Design, and Construction.

In 2023, the Fundraising Committee led both the Stewardship Campaign and the Vision Campaign to Make Room for All. You, the church, made 162 pledges to the Stewardship Campaign, raising around \$660,000 for the annual budget, and as of last week, 126 gifts or pledges have been made to the Vision Campaign, totaling over \$2.9 million to “Make Room for All.”

In April, we held a congregational update meeting and sent out a survey to ask about the relative importance of nave expansion, accessibility, and a new covered drop-off on the church exterior. The consensus was that we should do all three. In late August, we held another congregational update meeting and announced that the general contractor, Batson-Cook, would work up more specific cost estimates.

On October 1, the church held a special Evensong service and a garden party celebration of the new Clifford Swift Garden Trail at St. Thomas. Please plan to go see it this spring! The capital campaign for the building project was named Vision Campaign to distinguish it from the annual Stewardship Campaign and also to represent the vision of a welcoming, accessible space with Room for All. With the help of Meg Olive-Allison and some talented outside partners, we created two brochures, Web pages, and a video for use in the campaign. The campaign was officially launched in October with a chili supper, followed by a series of festive in-home events hosted by Barbara and David Brandenburgh, Ann Burr, Hunter and Michael Dempsey, Cindy and Spencer Garrard, Donna and Larry Dooley, Sara and Dan Ginter, Martha and Jerry Mullinax, Faye and Steve Melton, Allyson Young and Mitch Grossman, and Susan and Ron Wirt. Virginia McCullough created a beautiful campaign poster for us to display the progress of the Vision Campaign.

In early December, a large group of stakeholders in the Vision Campaign met to review projected costs and funds raised or pledged so far. That group presented to Vestry its strong support for moving forward with all aspects of this project. Another congregational update was held before Christmas,.

My deep appreciation goes to the Strategic Planning, Building, Design, and Fundraising committees, to the hosts of in-home events, to Virginia McCullough, Jerry Mullinax, Tracy Leopard, Mitch Grossman, Andrew Meeks, and Alice Barlow for their testimonial messages on behalf of the two campaigns, to Bobbie and Clifford Swift, the Walter Alan Richard's Foundation, and the estate of Joe Fischer for their invaluable lead gifts, and to all those who have made pledges to the Vision Campaign. We will recognize all campaign donors on a commemorative wall plaque in the renovated space.

Our new elevator is nearly finished, and we are excited to get started on the nave and exterior, and we look forward to reporting on the finished projects at this time next year!

Strategic Planning: David Brandenburg, Ann Burr, Tanya Edwards-Jones, Jon Ezzell (Vestry liaison), Neal Fenter, Cindy Godwin, Mitch Grossman, Ann Johnston, Rick McKnight, Robert Moore, Celia Page, John Partin, Malinda Shamburger, Mike Smith, Bobsie Swift, Sherry Wade, Travis Wade, and Ron Wirt were the committee members, along with Rev. Grace as Rector

Stewardship and Fundraising (Co-Chairs Ron Wirt, Tanya Edwards-Jones, and Travis Wade, and committee member Norm Easterbrook)

Design (Ann Johnston, Chair)

Construction (Dan Ginter, Chair)



# Ushers

## *Dan Ginter, Captain*

Ushers have an important role in the St. Thomas ministry. They are the first people to meet and greet people as they enter the church. They demonstrate a positive Christian attitude and are there to assist. Ushers ensure security during the service by locking all doors, being aware of any possible intruders, assisting in the collection of the offering and communion, and helping a Vestry member count the offering. With the addition of the new Automated External Defibrillator (AED), ushers will know the location of the device and how to use it if the situation arises. Anyone wanting to join the usher ministry is welcomed and will be given the opportunity to serve St. Thomas.

In 2023, there were 28 ushers and by the end of 2023, there are now 33 ushers. Ushers have served 70 times in 2023 for regular and special services and funeral services.

### **The following is a list of ushers in 2023:**

Alice Barlow	Mitch Grossman	Doud McLeod	Donna Sharp
Barbara Brandenburgh	Amy Hatfield	Charlene Moore	Ceci Shirley
David Brandenburgh	Greg Herring	Malone Moore	Christine Slusher
Jerry Brown	Lisa Herring	Randy Moore	Sonny Taunton
Reggie Brushwood	Tommie Hunter	Robert Moore	Brian Walker
Michael Dempsey	Bill Lacy	Michelle Mullen	Hannah Walker
Larry Dooley	Keith Leigh	Susie Olive-Allison	Jane Wilson
Skip Farrow	Tony Lewis	John Partin	Mary Jane Wrenn
Neal Fenter	Pauline Marth	Vicky Partin	Allyson Young
Danny Ginter	Bob McAneny	Charlene Rallo	
Allen Gordy	Renee McAneny	Steve Scott	
Beverly Gordy	Mike McFalls	Malinda Shamburger	

# Vergers

## *Meg Olive-Allison*

While the vergers take on a visible role in making sure a worship service moves smoothly, much of the vergers' work is done behind the scenes and prior to the start of the service. A partial checklist a vergers goes by at St. Thomas looks something like this:

- Touch base with lectors and lay Eucharistic ministers (LEMs) to make sure they are in attendance and are prepared for the service; if not, assign replacements.
- Check the readings to make sure they are properly marked.
- Light the candles on the altar.

The work of our vergers allows clergy time to greet parishioners, make announcements, and prayerfully prepare the parish for worship. While preparing the church for worship, vergers, as part of their ministry, also offer words of greeting and welcome to newcomers and visitors.

### **Thanks to our Vergers who served in 2023!**

Tanya Edwards-Jones	Malinda Shamburger
Paul Hostetter	Katie Underwood
Joe Mills	Travis Wade
Perrin Nicolson	Jonathan Walz
Micheal Owen (came out of retirement for Christmas Eve)	

# Welcome Committee

## *Sara Ginter and Nelia Partain, co-chairs*

As members of the Welcome Committee, we provide a friendly welcome and act as liaisons to ensure that our visitors are comfortable and included. In 2023 we welcomed more than 130 visitors to worship at St. Thomas. The committee meets monthly to review visitor contact status and assign new visitors to an individual committee member. Members follow up and maintain contact with the visitor(s); inform them of activities in which they have shown an interest; help them with any special needs they may have (particularly accessibility to our building); encourage visitors to become involved in the many activities and service opportunities; make sure that they are added to our email list; and, when appropriate, provide information on how to join. This year Nelia and Meg developed a spreadsheet which allows for contact with visitors to be updated continually. We have also provided support by attending the One Small Step gathering, welcome classes, new member breakfasts, and confirmation services.

During this year, a brochure was developed: "A Brief Guide to Worship with St. Thomas Episcopal Church". It is especially helpful for those new to Episcopalian traditions and worship service. We believe that this information will help our visitors feel more comfortable and included in our service. Participants in the Welcome Committee this past year were Ashley Becker, Barbara Brandenburgh, Grace Burton-Edwards, Reggie Brushwood, Sara Ginter, Beverly Gordy, Roxane Gwyn, Ena Hunt, Lisa Herring, Susan Leigh, Taylor Mack, Faye Melton, Rick McKnight, Meg Olive-Allison, Nelia Partain, Susan Sealy, Malinda Shamburger, and Jane Wilson.

## Women's Group

### *Ellen Free & Susan Sealy, Convenors*

Our goals are friendship and fellowship for those who identify as women at St. Thomas. We alternate meeting as a group for lunch or dinner at various restaurants around town. Our group had about 15 participants monthly, except when we did not meet in December. We will continue to love every person by welcoming and accepting all who attend/participate.

## Women's Lectionary Bible Study

### *Cindy Cox Garrard*

#### **What is this ministry?**

This free ministry provides a Bible study of the subsequent week's lectionary passages. It is offered to all women (do not have to be members or constituents of St. Thomas) during the school year. It has a Zoom component as well as a live component. I write a researched handout which is emailed to each participant the week ahead of class. We read the scripture passages aloud.

#### **Who participated in 2023?**

We generally have around 25-30 women in attendance, with 45 on the roster. They are United Methodist, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, and Anglican. They live locally as well as in DC and Huntsville, AL (zoom participants). Here's a sample of attendance from one week: Cindy Garrard\*, Annette Adams, Kathy Frost\*, Donna Sharp\*, Nancy Pedersen, Emily Johnson, Susan Lockwood, Mary Bass, Mary Williams, Donna Kemp, Kim Etchison\*, Debbie Lane, Ruth Nichols\*, Mary Lewis Walsh\*, Ruth Brown\*, Carol Boers\*, Ann Burr\*, Luise May\*, Faye Melton\*, Ena Hunt\*, Alice Barlow\*, Martha Ruth Whatley, Charlotte Bowman, Marie Massey\*, Jane Wilson\*, Sandra McCann\*, Bobsie Swift\*, Elizabeth Ogie\*, Donna Hand, Robin Fitzhugh. Zoom: Courtney Reed, Tammy Ridley.

\* These women are members or constituents of St. Thomas.

#### **How will this ministry Love Every Person in the years ahead?**

We support girls in the MCSD by providing menstrual pads to be delivered to hygiene closets in the district. We pray for the needs of participants. We are open to all women.

# Worship Committee

*Rev. Grace Burton-Edwards*

## What is this ministry?

Worship is the heart of everything we do together. We gather to give thanks to God, be nourished by Word and Sacrament, and go out to serve. We were delighted to welcome many newcomers into our life of worship during 2023.

## Who participated in 2023?

In person worship attendance increased dramatically over the year, while online worship participation held steady. Here is our average attendance for each month of 2023. Online numbers are based on longest unique views during the first 24 hours (YouTube) or 48 hours (Facebook).

	8:30 in person	8:30 online	10:30 in person	10:30 online
January 2023	21	36	167	61
February 2023	23	21	170	56
March 2023	21	22	184	64
April 2023	56	33	203	58
May 2023	30	22	181	46
June 2023	26	22	160	41
July 2023	26	27	157	46
August 2023	29	25	176	48
September 2023	23	24	157	46
October 2023	30	27	176	51
November 2023	26	27	178	82
December 2023	24		224	

The Worship Committee consists of Dan Ginter (chair of Ushers), Rick McKnight (organist and Director of Music), Sue O'Dell (chair of Altar Guild), Ralph Wimberly (chair of Flower Guild), Brian Walker (Vestry representative), Wilson Ford (Acolyte Director), and all of our Vergers – Tanya Edwards-Jones, Paul Hostetter, Perrin Nicolson, Mike Owen, Malinda Shamburger, Katie Underwood, Travis Wade, Jonathan Walz. Rev. Grace leads the committee. Meg Olive-Allison coordinates schedules for worship leaders.

## How does this ministry Love Every Person?

By gathering to celebrate the love of God made known in Jesus, we are reminded of God's love for us and empowered to share that love with others. Continue to invite people into the life of worship we share at St. Thomas.

# Wynnton Neighborhood Network

*Mary Lou Jarrell, WNN Board Chair & Libba Russell. St. Thomas Liaison*

## What is this ministry?

Wynnton Neighborhood Network started in 1985 (38 years old) by some of the same individuals who started Feeding the Valley. We are comprised of (currently) eight different congregations who work together to share resources to meet the needs of those in our community who are food insecure and/or struggling to pay their electric or gas bills.

In our Network are the following congregations:

Allen Temple AME

Epworth UMC

Living Grace Church

St. Paul UMC

St. Thomas Episcopal

Shearith Israel

Temple Israel

Wynnton Methodist Church

### Who participated in 2023?

During 2023, Wynnton Neighborhood Network served food assistance to of 6,430 families which included 19,681 individuals of which there were 8,325 children (18 and under). All of these numbers are a new record and represent a 30% increase in individuals from 2022 (which was a 48% increase from 2021). In the last two years (2021 to 2023), we've had an increase of 81% in number of families, 93% in number of individuals and 103% of children. Utility assistance of \$60,047.16 was given to 637 households. Both of those stats are new records also.

We have a total of almost 100 volunteers from our Network congregations as well as other organizations. We could not do what we do for this community without them! We love our volunteers!

### How will this ministry Love Every Person in the years ahead?

Wynnton Neighborhood Network will continue to serve those in our community in need with food and utility assistance, sharing God's love to all.

## Young Adults (YACT)

### *Taylor Mack, Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries*

YACT is a fellowship group for young adults 21-40. The primary focus of this ministry is to provide fellowship opportunities that allow young adults to build a community that supports their spiritual, mental, and physical health. YACT held monthly socials in the Columbus community including Coffee get-togethers at Iron Bank Coffee Co., dessert tasting at Saltcellar, Axe Throwing at Columbus Axe, and Bowling at Stars and Strikes.

The following individuals participated in YACT: Ashley Becker, April Brown, Ro Brown, Celi Cannon, Tom Cannon, Evan Collins, Joanna Collins, Ben Daniels, Brittany Daniels, Ian Dooley, Wilson Ford, Korie MacDougall, Jeremy Mack, Taylor Mack, Riley Mullen, Maddie Redden, Anna Slembariski, Ezekiel Slimmelink-Hamterman, Tori Torsiello, Chaz Wagner, Elissa Wagner, Brian Walker, Hannah Walker, Ric Ward, Anna Williams, and Chris Williams.

## Youth

### *Taylor Mack, Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries*

The St. Thomas Youth, affectionately known as the Thommies, serves as a community for middle school and high school students at St. Thomas. We encourage youth to begin forming their own opinions about scripture, developing their own personal relationship with God, and solidifying their place within the Church. Within an environment that fosters healthy friendships, quality dialogue, and meaningful mentorship, youth are able to sow the seeds of a strong and steadfast faith. Additionally, the new St. Thomas Tweens ministry seeks to provide older children and younger youth with the opportunity to learn and fellowship together.

Thommies met throughout the school year on Wednesday evenings. During weekly programming, they participated in a variety of activities that fostered community building and faith formation. These gatherings were facilitated by Taylor Mack with help from volunteer Barbara Billings. In addition to weekly gatherings, youth were able to enjoy several special events including Youth/Graduation Sunday, Chattahoochee Valley EYC Back to School Luau, Lunch and Games at the Rectory, and the Teens and Tweens Pool Party. Several youth participated in gatherings hosted by the Diocese of Atlanta Episcopal Youth Community including New Beginnings Retreats 45 and 46, Happening Retreat 77, and Atlanta Hunger Walk/Run. Toward the end of 2023, seven youth committed to participating in Confirmation Classes with Rev. Roxane to explore the meaning of their Baptism and deepen their faith.

Thommies were committed to service throughout 2023. Many sought to give back to the St. Thomas community by serving as Acolytes, volunteering to lead children's Sunday School, acting as shepherds for Vacation Bible School, facilitating the drive-through Pet Blessing, volunteering at Trunk-or-Treat, and packing holiday distribution bags for Wynnton Neighborhood Network. Four high school youth also joined Taylor Mack and Maddie Redden on a summer service trip to Charlotte, NC organized by CROSS Missions. Participants fully committed to the trip's theme, Joyful Justice, by working with eight different service organizations in the Charlotte area.

Youth also hosted two fundraisers in 2023: Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper and Youth Car Wash. The annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper Fundraiser included a special performance by Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts Jazz Band and a Silent Auction filled with goods and services provided by youth and other members of the St. Thomas community.

In August of 2023, St. Thomas introduced Tween Time on Sunday mornings. This new Tween ministry at St. Thomas bridges the gap between children and youth ministries, allowing 4th and 5th graders to join middle school youth for weekly formation centered on hearing and understanding scripture. High School youth were given the opportunity to volunteer in the Children's Sunday School class, sing in the choir, and participate in Adult formation.



# 2023 FINANCIALS

OPERATING ACCOUNT	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	
<b>REVENUE</b>				
<b>Contribution Income</b>				
Pledges	592,745.00	576,032.70	643,348.00	97% of pledges
Gain/Loss - Stock Gifts	0.00	(192.33)	0.00	
Member Givers	85,719.00	113,946.26	101,284.00	3 year average
Post-Campaign Pledges	1,500.00	6,325.00	1,500.00	
<b>Total Contribution Income</b>	<b>679,964.00</b>	<b>696,111.63</b>	<b>746,132.00</b>	
<b>Other Income</b>				
Transfer From Designated	43,807.00	52,730.35	22,000.00	
Diocesan Support	0.00	0.00	23,000.00	
Endowment Draw -Unrestricted	84,486.00	84,486.12	85,710.00	4% of 3yr avg
Miscellaneous Income	29,800.00	29,855.70	19,800.00	
Use of Building	0.00	250.00	0.00	
Webstore Income	250.00	363.66	250.00	
Baird Draw	22,983.00	22,981.84	23,199.00	4% of 3yr avg
Desig.funds transfer-Boxwood	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Desig.funds transfer-Baird Ed	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Desig.funds transfer-Children	0.00	1,714.41	0.00	
Desig.funds transfer-Flowers	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Desig.funds transfer-Music	0.00	4,765.95	0.00	
Desig.funds transfer-Youth	0.00	131.47	0.00	
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>181,326.00</b>	<b>197,279.50</b>	<b>173,959.00</b>	
<b>Special Income</b>				
Capital Income for Financing	0.00	0.00	73,360.00	
Day School	24,000.00	24,000.00	24,000.00	
Renewal Fund	25,000.00	0.00	39,113.00	
Utility Reimbursement	6,000.00	6,285.00	6,000.00	
<b>Total Special Income</b>	<b>55,000.00</b>	<b>30,285.00</b>	<b>142,473.00</b>	
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>916,290.00</b>	<b>923,676.13</b>	<b>1,062,564.00</b>	

# 2023 FINANCIALS

<b>EXPENSES</b>				
<b>Admin/Payroll/Benefits</b>				
Administration	48,340.20	47,292.06	52,645.00	
Payroll/Benefits	558,448.50	553,653.77	612,603.00	
<b>Total Admin/Payroll Benefits</b>	<b>606,788.70</b>	<b>600,945.83</b>	<b>665,248.00</b>	
<b>Christian Education</b>				
Adult	1,500.00	1,557.87	1,500.00	
Children	3,750.00	5,464.41	3,750.00	
Episc. Campus Ministry	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	
Young Adult/College	1,750.00	1,880.45	2,000.00	
Youth	3,750.00	3,751.02	3,750.00	
<b>Total Christian Education</b>	<b>10,750.00</b>	<b>12,653.75</b>	<b>14,000.00</b>	<i>Excess covered from designated funds</i>
<b>Diocesan Pledge &amp; Expenses</b>	<b>66,352.00</b>	<b>66,397.07</b>	<b>71,840.00</b>	
<b>Evangelism</b>	<b>4,250.00</b>	<b>5,063.50</b>	<b>4,500.00</b>	
<b>Outreach</b>	<b>52,839.30</b>	<b>52,839.30</b>	<b>57,500.80</b>	<i>10% pledges minus Dioc. commitmnt</i>
<b>Parish Life</b>	<b>18,000.00</b>	<b>16,737.50</b>	<b>13,000.00</b>	<i>Donations for meals in designated income</i>
<b>Capital Imprvmnts Financing</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>73,360.00</b>	
<b>Properties</b>	<b>112,000.00</b>	<b>118,696.29</b>	<b>117,726.00</b>	
<b>Capital Reserve</b>	<b>12,000.00</b>	<b>12,000.00</b>	<b>12,000.00</b>	
<b>Stewardship</b>	<b>2,000.00</b>	<b>1,913.64</b>	<b>2,000.00</b>	
<b>Music</b>	<b>19,310.00</b>	<b>24,075.95</b>	<b>19,310.00</b>	
<b>Worship</b>	<b>12,000.00</b>	<b>12,353.30</b>	<b>12,000.00</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>916,290.00</b>	<b>923,676.13</b>	<b>1,062,484.80</b>	
<b>(OVER) UNDER ACTUAL</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>79.20</b>	

# 2023 FINANCIALS

## DESIGNATED ACCOUNT

By the canons (rules) of the church, all designated gifts are used for the purposes for which they were designated. The Vestry is charged to oversee all financial transactions of the parish.

DESIGNATED ACCOUNT	2023 Actual	Special Outreach Collections	
Beginning Balance	486,838.55	African Mission	11,450.00
Revenue & Credit adjtmts	1,671,275.13	Brewer Elem.	4,000.00
Expenses (inc. transfers into)	(1,940,629.28)	CVEM	7,719.25
12/31/22 Cash Balance	217,484.40	Rctr's Bnvlnc	3,420.00
		WNN	5,049.00
Total gifts and pledges to Vision Campaign	2,949,402.00	Total	31,638.25
Total cash on hand for Vision Campaign	1,183,810.00		

## ENDOWMENT ACCOUNTS

January 1 - December 31, 2023	Beginning Blnc	Ending Blnc
Unrestricted (Wilkins)	2,031,316.52	2,122,317.30
Restricted (Baird)	529,110.55	580,304.03
ESG	0.00	108,477.83

## Major Gifts

The third of four planned undesignated gifts of \$250,000 from Clifford & Bobsie Swift was received in 2023. Thanks to Bobsie for her loving generosity to St. Thomas by extending her pledge through 2026.

## Endowment Fund Gifts

By vestry resolution, half of all undesignated memorial gifts are deposited in the memorial fund and half in the endowment fund. We received \$657.50 in memorial gifts to the endowment in 2023.

## Legacy Society

The following persons made a legacy gift to the St. Thomas Endowment upon their deaths or have shared their intention to do so. Please let us know if your name is missing from our records. Thank you to all who bear witness to their faith by supporting St. Thomas during this life and in perpetuity.

Michael Ankerich & Charlie Snipes	Ena Hunt	Travis & Mitchi Wade
Margaret Baird	Lewis & Lori Kent	Georgia Wilkins
Max & Ann Burr	Martin & Sandra McCann	Ralph Wimberly
Grace Burton-Edwards	Randy & Charlene Moore	Gardner & Judy Wright
Rusty Callaway	Perrin & Becca Nicolson	Ruth Wright
Julie Chandler	Celia Page & Jenny Holder	Belle Zimmerly
Shannon Dunaway	John & Vicky Partin	
Roscoe Duncan	Murphy Pound	
Mike Edmondson	Marianne Richter	
Tanya Edwards-Jones	Donna Sharp	
Neal Fenter	Mike & Lynn Smith	
Allen & Beverly Gordy	Clifford & Bobsie Swift	
Mitch Grossman & Allyson Young	Marge Tidmarsh	
Judy Harding	Alice Turley	
Carole Hill	Tom & Sherry Wade	

# 202 PLEDGES & GIFTS

## 161 PLEDGES

David & Paula Acton	Sammy & Amy Hatfield
Joe & Messina Akyempong	Judy Heider
Debbie Anderson	Kathy Herren
Max Anderson	Greg & Lisa Herring
Susan Anderson	Carole Hill
Michael Ankerich & Charlie Snipes	Steve Hodges & Pat Daniel
Fred & Alice Barlow	Paul & Elizabeth Hostetter
Beth & Marty Barr	Ena Hunt
Ashley & Josh Becker	Tommie Hunter
Barbara Billings	Seyi & Nike Isijola
Carol Boers	April Jacobs
Deidre Bohannon & Lauren Copes	Paul & Ann Johnston
Rosanna Borders	Tom Jones & Tanya Edwards-Jones
Gerry & Sonya Boyd	Rebekah Kreyling
David & Barbara Brandenburgh	John & Kayron Laska
Jerry & Ruth Brown	Keith & Susan Leigh
Reggie Brushwood & Bill Lacy	Tracy Leopard & Penny Wise
Ann Burr	Tony & Theresa Lewis
Grace Burton-Edwards	Karen Lord
Raymond Campbell	Jeremy & Taylor Mack
Ray Capo	Steve & Pauline Marth
Jack & Nicole Ceccato	Marsha Mason
Bob Chitwood	Marie Massey
Susan & Ami Connery	Luise May
Paul Dahlgren & Ellen Free	Bob & Renee McAneny
Michael & Hunter Dempsey	Martin & Sandy McCann
Christine DiFelicianantonio	Toby & Virginia McCullough
Larry & Donna Dooley	Dan & Ann McDuffie
Norm & Margo Easterbrook	Mike & Libby McFalls
Bonnie Ellis	Rick & Marquette McKnight
Mike & Barbara Ellis	Andrew & Chelsea Meeks
Marcia English	Eric & Bryce Meeks
Paula Evans	Steve & Faye Melton
Darlene Everritt	Joe Mills & Jim Rutland
Jon & Jessica Ezzell	Daniel & Lauren Mitchell
Frank & Pam Feagle	Randy & Charlene Moore
Neal Fenter	Mike & Eliza Morrill
Brantley Ford & Lon Hodges	Tom & Michelle Mullen
Tom & Monica Fortson	Jerry & Martha Mullinax
Art & Kathy France	Kathleen Mullins
Mary Free	Ruth Nichols
Kathy Frost	Suzanne Nicolais
Spencer & Cindy Garrard	Perrin & Becca Nicolson
Ed & Anne Gay	Sue O'Dell
Dan & Sara Ginter	Mike & Elizabeth Ogie
Cindy Godwin	Meg & Susie Olive-Allison
Allen & Beverly Gordy	Michael & Allison Owen
Mitch Grossman & Allyson Young	Celia Page & Jenny Holder
Roxane Gwyn	G. L. Page
Susan Hansbarger	Nelia Partain

## TOTAL = \$663,246

John & Vicky Partin
Bill & Sandi Pauli
Fran Poole-Carpenter
Julio Portillo
Nancy Powell
Linda Prince
Maryann Rahm
Mike & Charlene Rallo
Roger & Erin Redden
Sid & Heidi Regan
Marianne Richter
Libba Russell
Brian Schwartz
Steve & Adley Scott
Susan Sealy
Malinda Shamburger
Donna Sharp
Mark & Marianne Sheehan
Ceci Shirley
Steve & Julia Slater
Chris & Patty Slembariski
Christine Slusher
Mollie Smith
Mike & Lynn Smith
Jennifer St. John
Bernie Sutter
Bobsie Swift
Sonny Taunton
Dick & Debbie Tompson
Steve & Deborah Tucker
Louise Tulloh
Katie Underwood
Dan & Linda Van Kley
Julie Van Meter & Fred Romanus
Garrett & Timothy Vance
Ronald Veasey
Tom & Sherry Wade
Travis Wade
Florence Wakoko
Brian & Hannah Walker
Argy Wargo
Del & Joann Weeks
Dan & Stefania Wilcox
Chris & Anna Williams
Dave & Jane Wilson
Ron & Susan Wirt
Mary Jane Wrenn
+10 Anonymous

# VISION CAMPAIGN PLEDGES & GIFTS

## 133 PLEDGES & GIFTS

**TOTAL = \$1,079,240**

Julie Alexander  
Debbie Anderson  
Susan Anderson  
Fred & Alice Barlow  
Ashley & Josh Becker  
Carol Boers  
Deidre Bohannon & Lauren Copes  
Gerald & Sonya Boyd  
David & Barbara Brandenburgh  
Jerry & Ruth Brown  
Reggie Brushwood & Bill Lacy  
Shara Bryan-Torsiello  
Katie Buckley  
Ann Burr  
Grace Burton-Edwards  
Raymond Campbell  
Ray Capo  
Jack & Nicole Ceccato  
Bob Chitwood  
Susan & Ami Connery  
Betsy & Rick Covington  
Paul Dahlgren & Ellen Free  
Michael & Hunter Dempsey  
Christine DiFelicianantonio  
Norm & Margo Easterbrook  
Tammy Edwards  
Kimberlea Etchison  
Jon & Jessica Ezzell  
Frank & Pam Feagle  
Neal Fenter  
Summer Flinn  
Mike & Mandy Flynn  
Brantley Ford & Lon Hodges  
Art & Kathy France  
Mary Free  
Kathy Frost  
Alice Gammage  
Spencer & Cindy Garrard  
Dan & Sara Ginter  
Cindy Godwin  
Allen & Beverly Gordy  
Mitch Grossman & Allyson Young  
Roxane Gwyn  
Susan Hansbarger  
Judy Harding  
Isiah Harper  
Sammy & Amy Hatfield

Judy Heider  
Greg & Lisa Herring  
Paul & Elizabeth Hostetter  
Ena Hunt  
Tommie Hunter  
April Jacobs  
Melissa James  
Chris & Marlea Jeffries  
Paul & Ann Johnston  
Wayne & Kyle Joiner  
Tom Jones & Tanya Edwards-Jones  
Lewis & Lori Kent  
David & Kris Keske  
Rebekah Kreyling  
John & Kayron Laska  
Keith & Susan Leigh  
Tracy Leopard & Penny Wise  
Phillip & Millie Lewis  
Tony & Theresa Lewis  
Karen Lord  
Jeremy & Taylor Mack  
Laurie Mahon  
Steve & Pauline Marth  
Marie Massey  
Luise May  
Bob & Renee McAneny  
Martin & Sandy McCann  
Freeman & Randy McCluskey  
Dan & Ann McDuffie  
Mike & Libby McFalls  
Mac & Ansley McKnight  
Rick & Marquette McKnight  
Andrew & Chelsea Meeks  
Eric & Bryce Meeks  
Steve & Faye Melton  
Joe Mills & Jim Rutland  
Shana Monteith  
Mike & Eliza Morrill  
Tom & Michelle Mullen  
Jerry & Martha Mullinax  
Kathleen Mullins  
Ruth Nichols  
Suzanne Nicolais  
Perrin & Becca Nicolson  
Sue O'Dell  
Jeffrey Oakman  
Mike & Elizabeth Ogie

Meg & Susie Olive-Allison  
Celia Page & Jenny Holder  
Nelia Partain  
Bill & Sandi Pauli  
Fran Poole-Carpenter  
Nancy Powell  
Linda Prince  
Jan Pylant & Judy Jenks  
Bill Rahm  
Maryann Rahm  
Mike & Charlene Rallo  
Madison Redden  
Doyle & Nancy Register  
Marianne Richter  
Brian Schwartz  
Steve & Adlyen Scott  
Susan Sealy  
Malinda Shamburger  
Donna Sharp  
Ceci Shirley  
Steve & Julia Slater  
Steve Slater Jr.  
William Slater  
Chris & Patty Slembarski  
Christine Slusher  
Amy Smith  
Mollie Smith  
Mike & Lynn Smith  
Sue Smith  
Nathan Smock  
Jennifer St. John  
Bobsie Swift  
Margaret Terrell  
Jack Tice  
Louise Tulloh  
Katie Underwood  
Julie Van Meter & Fred Romanus  
Ronald Veasey  
Tom & Sherry Wade  
Travis Wade  
Brian & Hannah Walker  
Chuck & Argy Wargo  
Chris & Anna Williams  
Dave & Jane Wilson  
Ralph Wimberly  
Ron & Susan Wirt  
Mary Jane & Bruce Wrenn  
+ 4 Anonymous