



2020 Annual Report



St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Columbus, GA

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2020 KEY DATES

JANUARY

5 - The Three Kings visited A Simple Gathering for Epiphany.

FEBRUARY

23 - St. Thomas Choir presented Vivaldi's Gloria as a benefit for WNN.

26 - Ash Wednesday

29 - Leap day! St. Thomas Youth won Best Theme at the VIP Bed Race.

MARCH

11 - Trees Columbus led a tree walk on our property. We didn't know it would be our last Wednesday dinner for the year.

14 - St. Thomas Day School announced cancellation of in-person classes.

15 - First services on YouTube Live, streamed from Chapel and Nave.

16 - Launched Daily Spiritual Adventures newsletter, prayer group met on Zoom for the first time, and first service of Evening Prayer online.

18 - First Choir Call check-in.

APRIL

1 - Mailed Holy Week @ Home packets with service orders, activity sheets, and a palm cross. Jonathan Walz selected art for the bulletins.

2 - Boxwood FANN started meeting at St. Thomas due to closure of Boxwood Rec Center. They later moved to Carver Heights Presbyterian Church.

3 - Bishop Wright issued a directive allowing no activities on church property other than essential services. Fortunately, we finished filming Holy Week services from the Nave a few days prior.

5 - First virtual choir performance on hymns for prerecorded parts of the service.

5-12 - Holy Week and Easter @ Home, with prerecorded services for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, the Great Vigil, and Easter Sunday and live services for Palm Sunday at 8 am, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.

12 - First Easter Hymn Sing from the McKnight home.

15 - WNN re-opens to serve clients after only having to be closed for one week.

19 - Began pattern of 8 am live worship led by Rev. Grace (from the rectory at first) and 10:30 am prerecorded worship led by many, including former members of St. Thomas.

MAY

6 - Teacher Appreciation Drive Thru event at Brewer Elementary.

15 - Chromebooks delivered to Path to Shine Students.

27 - First Lunch and Neighbor Check-In at East Carver Heights.

JUNE

14 - Summer study of Genesis: The In-Between Texts began, led by Mike Nichols, Perrin Nicolson, and Jonathan Walz.

17 - Vestry launched Renewal Fund with a challenge gift.

19 & 20 - 25th Anniversary TAP boxes packed at St. Thomas for delivery.

28 - CVEM launched Striving for Justice movie nights.

JULY

2 - Conference Call Bible Study began, led by Rev. Dr. Cindy Cox-Garrard.

13-17 - Camp Compassion Online VBS with messages, music, yoga, and compassion crafts and activities.

AUGUST

17 - East Carver Heights Neighborhood Community Development Corporation was officially incorporated

17 - St. Thomas Day School started the 2020-2021 school year in-person.

23 - First livestream of the 10:30 service.

SEPTEMBER

1 - Fr. Edward joined the staff.

13 - Bishop Wright's virtual visit.

20 - First service at the labyrinth, with new benches installed around the path. The Altar Guild got busy supporting in-person services.

OCTOBER

4 - Drive thru Pet Blessing.

11 - First communion service at the labyrinth.

21 - First noon Eucharist outside.

NOVEMBER

1 - All Saints' Day and Children's parade. Learning and Eucharist on the Lawn launched at 9:30 on Sundays.

8 - Pledge packet and casserole pick up.

22 - Advent pick up.

29 - First Sunday in Advent, with daily devotions written by parishioners.

DECEMBER

13 - The Merry Organ - Online concert by musicians of the American Guild of Organists.

20 - Convocational Lessons and Carols online.

21 - Longest Night labyrinth walk and online service acknowledged the grief of this year.

24 - Christmas Eve Pilgrimage, Drive thru communion, online pageant and service, and outdoor service under the stars.

31 - New Year's Eve Communion outside. Remember what 2020 taught us.

2020 PARISH DATA

30 NEW MEMBERS:

Joe Akyempong

Messina Akyempong

Beth Barr

Marty Barr

Molly Barr

Sarah Barr

Ginny Barr

Joanna Brunson

Austin Connery

Grayson Connery

Barbara Ellis

Emery Griffin

Matthew Griffin

Oliver Griffin

Penelope Griffin

Allyson Grossman

Kim McAfee

Benjamin Mills

Charlotte Mills

Kevin Mills

Henry Morrill

Chloe Olive-Allison

Austin Pistorio

Kalynn Pistorio

Kevin Pistorio

Laraia Pistorio

Robert Pistorio

Verona Pistorio

Nancy Prescott

Brendan Printup

6 Baptisms:

Austin Connery

Grayson Connery

Henry Morrill

Chloe Olive-Allison

Verona Pistorio

Brendan Printup

2 Marriages:

Allyson Young & Mitch Grossman

Reggie Brushwood & Bill Lacy

8 Deaths/Burials

Jack Blalock

Frank Eslinger

Marge Henly

Harvey Hisaw

Randolph Jones

Connie McEwen

Lee Nalley

Laura Ward

RECTOR'S REPORT



The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

We've seen the truth of this promise. To say 2020 was difficult is an understatement. We encountered challenges we never expected. We had to learn to do almost everything differently – worship, learn, serve, communicate, share communion, pray, give, care for the facility, care for our neighbors, care for one another.

But God remained faithful. You remained faithful. The light of Christ continued to shine around us and through us.

The reports that follow tell the story of a remarkable year in the life of St. Thomas. We asked ministry leaders to describe how each ministry became a light in the darkness in 2020. We tried to go into a lot of detail because we do want to remember. As you read these reports, offer a prayer of thanksgiving for all that God accomplished through us.

I give thanks to God as well for the faith and flexibility you demonstrated in 2020. While many congregations bristled under Covid restrictions, or struggled to talk about the challenges of racism, or resisted adapting to the moment, St. Thomas members seized this unexpected season as an opportunity to learn and grow. Your most common response - in spirit if not in these exact words - was "I will, with God's help." I am so proud of all of you.

I want to offer a special word of thanks to all of our Vestry members and to our Senior Warden, Tanya Edwards-Jones, our Junior Warden, Mike Smith, and our Treasurer, Karen Lord. These leaders did not know they would be leading St. Thomas through a crisis that would require more meetings and weightier decisions. They all approached the work thoughtfully, carefully, and prayerfully. We were blessed with marvelous leaders to guide us through this season.

Thanks also to our extravagantly talented church staff. They all leaned in to the challenges of this season and found creative ways to do what needed to be done. God gave us the right team for this time, whose abundant but differing gifts complement one another and build up the whole.

It has always been a privilege to serve among you, but that was especially true in 2020. We look ahead to 2021 in hope.

Blessings,
Rev. Grace

ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S REPORT



I first arrived in Columbus in the middle of July, 2020 and reached out to Rev. Grace shortly after settling in. Though I did not imagine it then, she had a position in mind for me that has been more than I could have hoped.

The past four months working at St. Thomas have been full of changed plans, outdoor Eucharists, video recordings and Zoom meetings, but they have also been full of the very kind and gracious welcome this community has extended to Charley and me. I am so thankful for the many ways in which you all have reached out to us, to support us and welcome us to St. Thomas!

I began work with St. Thomas as a supply priest on August 30th and then full-time beginning September 1st. Though Rev. Grace and I agreed that we would share the load for

general priestly duties like preaching, celebrating the Eucharist, and pastoral care, I was to focus especially on updating our phone tree system, provide pastoral support for our youth ministries, and develop a slate of adult education offerings for our Sunday morning Zoom hour. In the process of engaging each of these ministries, as well as the many other ministries with which I have worked, I have been able to meet and get to know many of you, especially when we began meeting more often in person.

The care, engagement and, above all, compassion of the St. Thomas community have deeply impressed me in my short time here. To have a thriving congregation is notable these days; to continue growing in a time of pandemic is a testament to the faith and witness of this community. It has been a privilege to work with our other staff members here and with all of you in various ministries of the church.

I look forward to the coming months of co-ministry in the year ahead!

Faithfully,
Fr. Edward

SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

**Senior Warden: Tanya Edwards-Jones (3rd), Junior Warden: Mike Smith(3rd),
Ray Capo (3rd), Larry Dooley (2nd), Jon Ezzell (1st), Michelle Mullen (1st),
Malinda Shamburger (2nd), Brian Schwartz (1st), Ron Wirt (2nd)**

(Each member serves a 3-year term.

The year of each vestry member's term follows his/her name.)

Rector: Grace Burton-Edwards

Clerk: Sarah Ginter

The vestry of St. Thomas began 2020 with a balanced budget and a growing congregation. Vestry met on the second Monday of each month and began each meeting with a short study on the book, *Liturgical Life Principles* by Ian S. Markham, led by a different vestry member each month. In March, along with the rest of the world, vestry was faced with the Covid-19 pandemic. Meetings continued, no longer in person, but via Zoom. As the pandemic became more of a reality, vestry discussions and decisions turned to center around how to operate safely and effectively. There were many decisions made on keeping the people of our St. Thomas community protected while staying connected. The group asked many hard questions and worked to follow the regulations of our diocese while seeking creative ways to keep all parishioners included.

The vestry remained united in their decisions despite the uncharted territory. Some of the major vestry items were:

- Approving plans for St. Thomas Day School to maintain students at the school while keeping them safe
- Adding the position of an assistant rector and hiring Fr. Edward
- Completing the much-needed renovations begun in the office areas
- Continuing to support staff during the pandemic
- Finding creative ways to worship in person that followed the ever-changing guidelines
- Supporting Outreach
- Supporting Property Committee as they continued to maintain our 60+ year old building
- Trusting and adhering to the advice given by the Finance Committee
- Launching the Renewal Fund to support our ministries in this time of transition
-and so much more

We end the year with renewed hope for a season when we are able to safely return to in-person worship in our beautiful church home. Until that time comes the vestry continues to be grateful to govern such a dynamic and loving people. We want to thank all of you who gave generous donations, fulfilled pledges, gave countless volunteer hours, and offered precious prayers.

May the peace of God be with you all; it has been an honor to serve.

Tanya Edwards-Jones
Senior Warden 2020

JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

“Stars and shadows ain't good to see by.”
— Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

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Our theme this year is Light Shining Through Darkness and it is apt. Focusing on the light prevents you from losing your way, from striking hidden obstacles, or from stumbling along your journey. All of these and more presented risks and challenges to our Church in this very trying year. But at each step along the way, we had God's guidance and comfort.

We faced an unprecedented crisis in having to dispense with in-person worship in mid-March. The Day School suspended operations. We began online services for the first time. We resumed limited in-person outdoor services. We got better at online services. The Day School was able to reopen consistent with Diocesan guidance and good medical judgment. We hired an assistant priest. We had lots and lots of meetings online using something with the uncouth name of “Zoom”. Improvisation became a byword.

When doing new things, you never get everything right all at once. But when we saw opportunities to improve things, we learned and adapted. But for me, I would say that the greatest blessing we received this year--and we received many--was that focusing on all the new made us all the more aware of the fundamentals of our Church and our Community, and particularly of the Spirit which animates them both. As Huck Finn might say: “That ain't a bad thing.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Junior Warden this year. It was an honor and a privilege to work with everyone and something upon which I will always look with fondness and joy.

Mike Smith
Junior Warden 2020

TREASURER'S REPORT

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.

In 2020 the budget for St. Thomas has been reviewed and revised several times to take into account the changing financial climate during Covid and the loss of in-person worship. Thanks to a great deal of work by Patty Slembariski, St. Thomas was able to obtain a PPP grant that was instrumental in allowing us to keep staff. A successful fund raiser within the Parish that began with a generous donation from a parishioner helped provide for the purchase of equipment and additional resources to strengthen an online presence and the ability for us to be the church through online worship, zoom coffee hour, hymn sings from home, and continued online gathering for youth and the Episcokids. Although meeting in person was no longer an option, those serving in this ministry continued to meet faithfully through Zoom meetings.

Those serving on the finance committee are Karen Lord, Norm Easterbrook, Mike Morrill, Steven Slater, and Frank Feagle. Instrumental in providing pertinent information and directing the work were Rev. Grace Burton-Edwards and Patty Slembariski.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Lord, Treasurer

MINISTRY REPORTS

We invited ministry leaders to summarize their activities in 2020 by responding to these questions:

- What is this ministry?
- How has this ministry been a light in the darkness in 2020? Did this ministry have to adapt in 2020? If so, how?
- Who participated in 2020?

Acolytes

Erin Redden, Children's Formation Director

Acolytes serve carrying the petite cross, or torches, and also serve as crucifer. Acolytes assisted with worship each Sunday as we met in person and also special worship services. Serving as an acolyte is a wonderful way for our children and youth to participate in worship and serve our church. This year we also adapted and highlighted "Acolytes of the Day" in online worship. Acolytes were invited to submit pictures of themselves holding a candle and those pictures we included in worship services online.

This year the following children and youth served as acolytes:

Esi Akyempong
Molly Barr
Elyse Dahlgren
Lindsey Dempsey
Tristan Dempsey
Will Dempsey
Ian Dooley
Will Ezzell
Darla Farrow

Delilah Farrow
Wilson Ford
Asha Hostetter
Vivian Hostetter
Gideon Jones
Kelly McFalls
Tommy Meeks
Riley Mullen
Sam Olive-Allison

Hugh Redden
Mary Scribner
Katie Spencer Sealy
William Sealy
Stephen Slater
William Slater
Martha Wade
Ruthie Wade
TaKira Williams

Adult Formation

Meg Olive-Allison, Adult Formation Director

Adult Formation ministries at St. Thomas seek to provide a variety of opportunities for adults to learn, serve, worship, and have community with one another. All of these things are a part of what forms us as followers of Christ and form an important part in our life together. Like most things, the way we think about adult formation at St. Thomas was adapted in 2020. Beginning in March, all of our adult formation moved online.

- We continued Sunday morning sessions on Zoom with topics such as Creation Care led by Art France; Faith and Humor; Covid 19 Survival Kit; St. Benedict's Rule; Genesis: The In-Between Texts led by Mike Nichols, Perrin Nicholson, and Jonathan Walz; Christian Theology, Church Life and Practice, and Piety in General led by Fr. Edward; discussions of Lectionary texts led by a team, and Iconography of the Nativity in Western Art led by Jonathan Walz.
- The Tuesday Study Group continued meeting throughout the year online.
- Rev. Grace met with The Parents Group several times for check-in and sharing.
- Saints and Sinners met several times through the year by conference call for prayer and connection.
- Cindy Garrard began leading a lectionary-based Bible study on a conference call line each Thursday morning.
- Several mailings including Holy Week devotionals, Blessings at Meals, backpack blessings, Advent devotional books were sent to the Parish
- Opportunities for fellowship such as Coffee Hour, Hymn Sings, and Christmas Carol singing offered time for community building and connection.

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 with about five members each. In normal times, each team 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 Friday 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.

2020 participation:

Team 1. Sue O'Dell, Carole Hill, Malone Moore, Pat McMahon, Charlie Snipes and Beverly Gordy

Team 2. Darlene Everritt, Angelia Davis, Paula Evans, Becca Nicolson and Brian Schwartz

Team 3. Jo Cates, Lisa Herring, Marianne Sheehan, Sandi Pauli and new member in 2020 Julie Barbaree's son Nicholas Foster.

As is the case for all St. Thomas ministries, the Altar Guild has been forced to adjust drastically in 2020. Following a few months of no in-person gathering, the Diocese allowed resumption of small group activities held outside. Eucharist was held on Wednesdays at noon and 5:30 just outside the Nave and on Sunday evenings at the labyrinth. Our procedures are different but we have adapted in order to help provide a light in the darkness of 2020.

Through the closeness of working together, our Altar Guild members have developed deep friendships and mutual respect for each other. 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. There is no greater privilege for a lay person in the church than to faithfully and reverently prepare the altar for the Eucharist. When we are able to resume a semblance of normal circumstances, we need and would wholeheartedly welcome new members and our hope once again is to add a fourth team.

Boxwood Soccer

Greg Herring, Coach

The year began with much anticipation. Our Under 12 team had finished the previous season within an eyelash of a championship (losing in double overtime in the semis to eventual champs). Unfortunately, the spring season was canceled after one game due to Covid-19. One of the premises of our starting the soccer program was that through the program we would get to know the kids, through the kids we would get to know the families, and through the families we would get to know the neighborhood. After seven years in the neighborhood, St Thomas was in position to help when jobs were lost and food and supplies were hard to get. When a couple of our moms contracted the virus, St. Thomas was there for them. Martha Robert of CVEM provided a resource sheet that provided information for outside resources as they became available. We were able to distribute that and other information through our team managers text groups. The team text morphed into resource sharing group as team members began texting information to one another along with support. There was a real sense of unity.

As spring gave way to summer, preparations for the fall season began. Safe protocols were put in place and followed, and we were able to have a soccer season without incident. Thirty-eight children ages 5-12 participated. Our teams all had winning records with our Under 10 and Under 12 teams finishing in

the top 4 of their respective leagues. Much of what had occurred during the spring continued with the sharing of information and support for one another.

One of the highlights of the year was St. Thomas providing hot cooked meals to the neighborhood in partnership with Carver Heights Presbyterian. Seth went above and beyond to prepare gourmet meals which were much appreciated by the neighborhood.

Another highlight was the Christmas Party. St Thomas parishioners individually donated 50 winter coats for the children's Christmas presents. The real Santa (Dan Ginter) was there to meet the kids, which brought many a smile.

It has been a challenging year, but also a remarkable year. A year that will not soon be forgotten. But in the end, I think it will be mostly remembered for the kindness shown by so many.

Boxwood Path to Shine

Lisa Herring, Coordinator

Path to Shine – Columbus is an affiliate of a Diocese of Atlanta ministry, Path to Shine. We serve children in elementary school as mentors. We met at the beginning of 2020 in our usual way with one or two students per mentor at East Carver Heights Presbyterian Church outreach building with a team of St. Thomas Episcopal Church members serving as snack volunteers. Path to Shine starts with a snack, then help with homework or reading, and closes with a curriculum lesson. This ministry has helped students in East Carver Heights and focused on students at Brewer Elementary School.

This ministry was a “light in the darkness” in 2020 by adapting and changing goals to meet the needs of parents and students during Covid. The first change was shutting down meeting in person in March and students being sent home from school with packets of work to do. Path to Shine realized the needs of parents and helped with refurbished Chromebooks for each student, grocery cards to help with food, and help with internet access for families at home. Through Path to Shine families received five Chromebooks, two MiFi devices and over \$1,000 in grocery gift cards. Path to Shine Columbus delivers a monthly supply bag with school supplies, books, lessons and flash cards. Each student in Path to Shine receives a monthly snack bag supplied by St. Thomas volunteers with fruit, snacks, easy small meals and juice.

This fall Path to Shine met by Zoom. We also have scheduled conferences with teachers and the biggest success this past year was helping two students with learning disabilities take advantage of a grant for this type of education through the Campus Academy. We paid for deposits. The students enrolled there are thriving.

Path to Shine mentors: Margo Easterbrook, Chad Keene, Malinda Shamburger, Perrin Nicolson, Mary Jane Whisnant, and Lisa Herring, Affiliate Coordinator.

Jennifer Fletcher has organized snack bags, and this includes St. Thomas volunteers: Donna Sharp, Vicky and John Partin, Nelia Partain, Jessica Ezzell, Mike Edmondson, Sherry Wade, Martha Robert, Ruth Nichols, Jenny Holder and Celia Page.

Boxwood FANN

Lisa Herring, St. Thomas Liaison

Boxwood Family and Neighbors Network is a group of about 14 families who are connected in some way to our ministries. These families have issues with food insecurity that include unemployment, underemployment, single parents, and women on fixed incomes caring for grandchildren and with health issues. Most of our families live in the area. This group met at the Boxwood Recreation Center and had fees paid by members. Members unloaded and sorted food. In January 2020 we had speaker Duthier Jean Pierre talk about healthy eating with more vegetables in your diet. We usually met every two weeks with a speaker, prayers and celebrating birthdays.

This ministry was a “light in the darkness” in 2020 by adapting and changing to meet our challenges. The Boxwood Recreation Center closed and our bins, freezer, and our meeting space were not available. The Columbus F.A.N.N.s met by phone with Nancy Yarnell, President, Food Security for America and decided how to proceed. Many agreed that the need for food would be greater. We agreed to waive all fees and try to keep the F.A.N.N.s together. We started out in the outreach center and moved outside to the parking lot at St. Thomas Episcopal Church. We asked East Carver Heights Presbyterian Church about space to sort when it got very hot. They agreed to let us sort at the church which is closer to the community. Those that can help do so with masks and hand sanitizer but pick up is outside and drive up. Boxwood F.A.N.N. members load bins into trunks of cars. We added more families and share with other families in need. We have seen a huge need in food this year due to unemployment and students staying at home.

Another “light in the darkness” is helping to supply members with hard to purchase in bulk but needed items this year like toilet paper, hand sanitizer, tissues, wipes, cleaners, laundry detergent and dish soap. The church donated some of this and some we purchased. Families are always grateful for these items. We also got a great variety of fruit and vegetables from Feeding the Valley. We hope to start meeting by Zoom since members miss contact with each other and would like to hear speakers.

Boxwood F.A.N.N. was originally directed by Marie Brown. Now Lashanda Thomas is coordinating volunteers and members. Maureen Allen, East Carver Heights Presbyterian Church has been our go between with the Presbyterian Church this fall. Volunteers are Greg and Lisa Herring, Malinda Shamburger, the entire Brown family: Marie, Benny, Deshawn, Deamon and Anthoni Brown. To get an idea of what these people do they have loaded and unloaded pallets of heavy food in boxes from Feeding the Valley, taken it to East Carver Heights Presbyterian Church, then unloaded it, sorted loose vegetables into bags and frozen meat and canned goods into bins and then carried them to cars. It is a lot of work but is helping to keep families fed!

Brewer Elementary School Partnership

Margo Easterbrook

This ministry supports the students, teachers, and staff of Brewer Elementary School. Our goal is to improve the educational experience of at-risk students living in the low income area of East Carver Heights.

In past years, our primary activity has been to maintain a weekly tutoring program for at-risk students, in addition to creating and maintaining the Brewer Uniform Closet, providing thank you meals to teachers and staff, and providing volunteers for various activities throughout the school year.

While we have not been able to continue our tutoring program, which was suspended abruptly in March 2020 due to Covid 19, we have been able to support the students, teachers, and staff at Brewer Elementary in many ways. Some highlights include:

- Teacher Appreciation Boxed Lunches from Jason's Deli in May 2020
- Back to School Welcome Boxed Lunches for teachers and staff in August 2020
- Back to School Supply Drive which resulted in over 500 masks being delivered to the school as well as individual hand sanitizers and tissues. In addition, 10 backpacks were given to the school counselor to distribute as needed.
- 15 cases of water bottles and 48 pencil cases were donated to help meet Covid 19 protocols.
- Reorganized and maintained the Uniform Closet.
- Provided volunteers at the annual Thanksgiving and Christmas meal giveaways

A highlight of the year for me is the appreciation expressed by teachers for the lunches we have provided. I was told by a teacher (we were both wearing masks and socially distanced) that we have really let them know they are not alone.

Volunteers in 2020 have included Lisa Herring, Sara Ginter, Jennifer Fletcher, Ruth Nichols, Vicky Partin, Donna Sharp, Darlene Everritt, Nelia Partain, Celia Page, Jenny Holder, Jamie Netherland, Martha Jones, Grace Burton-Edwards, Norman Easterbrook, and Margo Easterbrook

We offer special thanks to longtime volunteers Marianne Baxter and MaryJane Whisnant who have retired this year.

Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministry

Martha Robert, Director

For 40 years, the Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministry has worked in communities throughout the region to care for neighbors who are suffering from the burdens of poverty and marginalization and to build positive relationships across differences of race, culture, socio-economic status, religious practice, and the many ways we are divided. CVEM has been a way for Episcopalians and our neighbors throughout the valley to affirm the dignity of each and every human being and work toward God's dream of Beloved Community.

In 2020, our ministry remained active even after the pandemic hit and has been a source of light in the darkness to hundreds of economically devastated families—providing financial assistance for essential needs and connecting them with other resources; creating safe spaces to discuss justice issues, especially racial justice; and maintaining meaningful connection with children/youth and their families across faith traditions and communities throughout the region.

2020 highlights include:

- Meg Olive-Allison, Darius Sudayi, and Cindy Garrard serve on CVEM's board of directors
- The parish's financial support includes its annual pledge of \$18,000 plus \$32,645 in individual donations from parishioners
- Direct Service to neighbors in need never stopped—we pivoted over a weekend in mid-March from in-person to remote contact by phone
 - Linda Prince has done yeoman's work throughout the entire year helping to assist hundreds of families; Jack Tice, Malinda Shamburger, and Kristie Sholtis have also assisted with intake
 - Received over \$97,000 in un-budgeted grant funding for direct assistance to both GA and AL neighbors in the region, \$65K of which coming from the Community Foundation's Coronavirus Response Fund

- Assisted more than 360 unduplicated households with over \$105,000 in direct assistance payments for housing, utilities, and other essential transportation, medical, education, employment, and household costs (Our original 2020 budget for direct assistance was \$40K)
- 20 of those households were assisted with essential expenses more than once and 21 households received Christmas gift cards including gift card contributions from the children's St. Nicholas outreach project
- With the leadership of Debbie Anderson, 19 adult volunteers - including April Jacobs, James Decker, Vicky & John Partin - made our summer Thompson-Pound Art Program 2020 possible by safely creating, producing, and delivering a keepsake box of TAP activities and items to 85 children and 27 teens, the 2018 and 2019 participants
 - Thanks to St. Thomas for use of the parish hall to assemble the keepsake boxes (all within diocesan/CDC guidelines); a special thanks to Frances Woolfolk for her dedication to cleaning/sanitizing our work area before and after each assembly shift
 - While postponing our 25th anniversary celebration of TAP, we are thrilled to announce the renaming of the program as the Thompson-Anderson-Pound Art Program in recognition of the dynamic leadership of Debbie Anderson
- Our servant leadership program for teens, Infusion—led by Malinda Shamburger and including participant Riley Mullen—wrapped up last school year on Zoom. Issues of social distancing and increased screen-time for all led to consensus among students, parents, and leadership to “push the pause button” on Infusion with a 2021 check-in
- Striving for Justice, monthly film conversations around justice issues, began in June with discussion of ‘Just Mercy’
 - the film discussions will continue in 2021 on the fourth Sunday of each month at 5 pm on Zoom
 - register at www.cvemjubilee.org/racial-justice for the Zoom link; ALL ARE WELCOME

More about all of CVEM's programs and events can be found on our website at www.cvemjubilee.org and on Facebook and Instagram.

The St. Thomas folks who participated in the life of the ministry in some way in 2020--not previously named and with hopes of not inadvertently omitting anyone—include: Lawrence Akyempong and family, Sarah Gray Barr, Barbara Billings, Sonya & Gerry Boyd, Angie Braid, Rinda Brewbaker, Joanna Brunson, Seth Burgamy, Ann Burr, Taylor Burton-Edwards, Raymond Campbell, Martha Carlsen, Jo & Paul Cates, Nicole & Jack Ceccato, Pat Daniel & Steve Hodges, Denny Clark & Toni Fisher, Christine DiFelicianantonio, Ian Dooley and family, Margo Easterbrook, Mike Edmondson, Robin & Alex Ericksen, Mary Etchison, Paula Evans, Delilah Farrow and family, Pam & Frank Feagle, Neal Fenter, Jennifer Fletcher, Michelle Folta, Monica Fortson, Kathy & Art France, Mary Free, Spencer Garrard, Cindy Godwin, Beverly & Allen Gordy, Linnea Grosse, Lisa & Greg Herring, Carole Hill, Katie Holbrook, Anne & Ashley Huie-Strong, Ena Hunt, Melinda Hunter, Tommie Hunter, Anna Jonas, Gideon Jones, Kona Cogle and family, Ann Johnston, Joe Mills & Jim Rutland, Renee & Bob McAneny, Sandy & Martin McCann, Libby & Mike McFalls, Marquette & Rick McKnight, Pat McMahan, Charlene & Randy Moore, Malone & Robert Moore, Jim Morpeth, the Mullen family, Ruth & Mike Nicholas, Mandy Ochoa, the Olive-Allison family, Celia Page & Jenny Holder, Sandi & Bill Pauli, Jan Pittman, Erin & Roger Redden, Libba & Joe Russell, Brian Schwartz, Mary and Deborah Scribner, Susan & Spence Sealy, Donna Sharp, Steven and William Slater and family, Patty, Chris, and Anna Slembariski, Bennett and Laura Stoltz, Bernie and Molly Sutter, Bobsie & Clifford Swift, Esther Thomas, Debbie & Dick Tompson, Holle Tubbs, Linda & Dan Van Kley, Sherry & Tom Wade, Kevin Waldrup, TaKira Williams and family, Ralph Wimberly, Susan & Ron Wirt, Molly Wright, and Michelle Young

Thank you, St. Thomas, for shining your light in the darkness and sharing your light with CVEM!

Communications

Meg Olive-Allison, Director

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 2020:

- Holle Tubbs joined the communications team at St. Thomas taking over the website, media, and most graphic design
- In March we began sending Spiritual Adventures daily instead of weekly. Most weeks had a particular theme and included writings by church members and/or staff. Topics included: learning about the prayer book, understand the Holy Trinity, exploring different Bible translations, learning about labyrinths, the psychological impact of the pandemic, various church seasons, celebrations and saints, and reflections on voting. Daily Spiritual Adventures became a tool for formation in addition to a way to share news and events. At the end of 2020, the newsletter list had 499 email addresses.
- A printed version of Monday's Spiritual Adventures is mailed each week to those who cannot access email
- We began using Zoom, Eventbrite, and conference call line to better connect from home
- We began sharing "Celebrations and Sorrows" by email each week. This allowed us to share Sorrows and Celebrations with the Parish - trying to stay a little more connected while we were physically separated.

Creation Keepers

Christine DiFeliciano, Chair

Highlights from 2020

- Creation Keepers continued to partner with Georgia Interfaith Power and Light (GIPL) whose mission is to engage communities of faith in stewardship of Creation as a direct expression of faithfulness. In January Christine and Anne attended the GIPL Green Summit to ignite our commitment to environmental activism.
- We helped plan the Lenten adult formation around ECO-RECONCILIATION: A Study on the House of Bishops' Pastoral Teaching for the Environment. Wednesday evening programming supported the theme. Covid interrupted the last half of Lent.
- The 50th Earth Day was marked in the daily Spiritual Adventures.
- In July Christine, Anne, Mick, and Art participated in the GIPL-sponsored Sacred Activism workshop with a theme of a sustainable, just, and peaceful world for all. Energized, we submitted a grant application for an environmental project to benefit owls and grow St. Thomas and community awareness of the importance of their habitat.
- In August, Ann, Mick, the Partins, Anne, Linda, and others participated in the Great GA Pollinator Count, documenting pollinators for UGA's database the current status of our bees and butterflies.
-

- Collaboration with Cherry Street continues to refine needed information for St. Thomas to convert to solar energy. The increased commitment for carbon reduction for our planet aligns with the Lenten focus on the 2011 House of Bishops Pastoral message and the GEMN. Covid has slowed the momentum to seek Vestry and Diocesan approval.
- Episcokids are the recipients of the benefits from Creation Keepers' AMBASSADOR level membership with Oxbow Meadows for their "Adopt-a-Critter" program. Episcokids will get a "behind the scenes" tour when the pandemic constraints lift. The adopted critter is the TREE FROG.

SACRED ACTIVISM Project Goal: To spiritually reawaken congregants' intrinsic love for God's winged creatures and the trees they inhabit. Connecting with the birds in their natural habitat will heighten our awareness of trees with their breathing, sheltering, and shading functions. Additionally, the majestic inspiration of raptors should remind us of our mutual dependence on clean air and water and our civic responsibility to hold elected officials accountable to sustainment policies. This project is a networking opportunity with Trees Columbus and Oxbow Meadows. A raptor box / nesting box will be outfitted with a camera and installed in a tree on the property. Intent is to capture video feed from the camera and make available to witness the wonder of God's creation and to inspire sacred activism. Access via computers and phones to connect 24/7 could increase traffic to our website and the sites of our green partners and provide "virtual" science educational opportunities for children.

East Carver Heights Community Development Corporation

Greg Herring

Boxwood Ministries began seven years ago with a \$10.00 soccer ball on an overgrown field and two boys (Ben and Ricardo). Our community now includes 40 children ages 5-12 competing on four teams along with their families, coaches and team managers, Path to Shine children and mentors, and the fifteen families of the Family and Neighbors Network. We looked around one day and realized we had grown beyond a "Mom and Pop" ministry, and needed to transform to a non-profit organization that could continue to expand our ever growing community.

We were able to complete the legal process of starting a new 501C3 organization and established corporate officers and board of directors.

East Carver Heights Board of Directors
 City Councilman "Pops" Barnes
 Marie Brown
 Reverend Grace Burton-Edwards
 Margo Easterbrook (Vice President)
 Lisa Herring (Secretary)
 Greg Herring (President)
 Paul Hostter
 Sebastian Villa (Treasurer)
 Executive Director Malinda Shamburger

One of the casualties of Covid was the closing of Valley Interfaith Promise (VIP) headed by Malinda Shamburger. It is truly a shame that VIP was forced to shutdown, but for us it turned into a blessing. We were able to purchase their bus at an affordable price. More importantly Malinda became available to join us as Executive Director.

All that we have done in the past, all that we were able to do this year and all that we hope to accomplish in the future is made possible by the generous financial and spiritual support of St Thomas.

I have to say that it is with some nostalgia that we close the Boxwood Ministry chapter. But we start a new chapter with great anticipation, faith and hope.

Endowment Committee

Mitch Grossman, Chair

The St. Thomas Endowment committee did a good job this year sharing more information about what our endowment is and how you can impact it. In February we had a visit and sermon from Rev. Canon Lang Lowrey, and the Episcopal Community Foundation talked about planned giving and long-term sustainable ways that we can help our parish and the least among us. We participated in ECF webinars to learn more about endowment resources and completed a video welcoming our parish to think about how they might like to direct monetary gifts to the long-term support and growth of St. Thomas. The committee meets quarterly via Zoom to discuss how our endowments with SunTrust Advisory Services are performing financially and how we can best educate and grow legacy giving here at St. Thomas.

The 2020 committee includes dedicated members Ann Burr, Marianne Richter, Michael Ankerich, Robert Moore, Beverly Gordy, Allen Gordy, Marcel Meijer, Spencer Sealy, Grace Burton-Edwards, and Chair Mitch Grossman. We look forward to sharing more information about our endowments and how you can become a member of the Legacy Society by planning for a lasting contribution to help the church continue to shine the light in the darkness.

Episcokids

Erin Redden, Children's Formation Director

Nursery - In 2020 we moved many of our toddlers into children's programming so our Nursery had fewer in attendance. Our three employees, Diane Berson, Khania Taylor and Taquanula Williams welcomed our youngest members each week. This year we started a rotation and each Wednesday night, one of these ladies assisted Ms. Erin with children's programming. The Rockers and Rollers Committee consists of Sue O'Dell, Susan Sealy, Julia Slater and Linda Van Kley. When the nursery is open, once a month these committee members volunteer in the nursery to rock, bounce, sing and read to the youngest members of our church family.

After the pandemic as we closed our building, we secured 2 of our 3 nursery workers and utilized them for help with outdoor services.

Shine Time - Every Sunday morning at 9:30, approximately 15 children between the ages of 3 years old and 5th grade met in the Outreach classrooms for formation. We offered a toddler/PreK class led by Kelli Leak and Kristie Ridgeway. We had an early elementary class led by Margo Easterbrook and Michelle Mullen. Finally, we offered an upper elementary class led by Erin Redden as needed.

Since the pandemic, we offer Shine Time lessons at 9:30 on Facebook Live. One example of the curriculums used is The Beatitudes by Illustrated Movement. The average attendance is 10-15.

Children's Chapel - Using the lectionary readings, our Chapel volunteers Libby McFalls, Marquette McKnight, Erin Redden, Madison Redden, Katie Spencer Sealy, Julia Slater and Steve Slater shared the Gospel with as many as 25 children every Sunday when we met in person. The Gospel is shared simply, and designed to stir children's imaginations and spirituality.

Since the pandemic, Rev. Grace and Fr. Edward, offer a moment of reflection for children that offers activities to engage children during online worship. *Sunday Paper* activity sheets are shared in the Sunday at St. Thomas newsletter for parents to print and share at home.

Children's Choir - Our Children's Choir Director is Katie Holbrook. Also a member of the St. Thomas Choir, Katie met with the children on Wednesday evenings at 6:15 in Outreach. Classes are 45 minutes. She led the children in music games, vocal exercises and techniques and learning anthems to perform. The choir has approximately 18 participants.

Since the pandemic the Children's Choir has been unable to meet. Katie has assisted with or led children's activities on Zoom on Wednesdays.

Episcokid Faith Formation - Erin Redden, our Christian Formation Director, and several volunteers, including nursery staff, plan and implement seasonal workshops each Wednesday night from 7:00-7:30 for our children in the Outreach Center.

Since the pandemic, Katie and Erin have moved to Zoom on Wednesdays from 6:00-6:30 and have implemented Faith at Home, seasonal activities for children and their families.

Highlights of 2020 during :

- Holy Week @Home Kits
- Virtual Flowering of the Cross
- Zooms with Ms. Erin on Tuesday and Thursday during the summer
- Pentecost @ Home Bags
- Vacation Bible School, Compassion Camp, was intergenerational and online! Everyday we offered a guest storyteller, Yoga, crafts, and messages from both Erin and Rev. Grace. At least 12 adults participated by filming segments.
- Back to School mail out for students and teachers
- Pet Blessing Drive Thru
- Trek or Treat - 57 participants
- Virtual All Saints Presentations & Procession - 19 participants
- 2 Baptisms
- Advent/St. Nicholas @Home Kits
- St. Nicholas Virtual Visit
- St. Nicholas Outreach partnership with CVEM
- Virtual Christmas Pageant - 25 participants
- Pageant collaboration with Voices of the Valley
- Silent Night sharing of the light - 14 participants
- Virtual Wisemen Visit - 14

As we continue to grow in our faith and live into our baptismal promise we want to continue to provide opportunities to expand our ministries both virtually and in person (when directed by diocese) like VBS and our annual Pet Blessing by sharing the Good News to our neighbors and members of our greater community.

Foyers

Barbara Brandenburgh, Chair

Foyers is an opportunity to become better acquainted with one another while sharing a meal together. We gather informally--one is under no obligation to host a meal in their home, but rather can coordinate a gathering at a restaurant.

Foyers kicked off as usual in the Fall of 2019 with 36 church members participating this year. Many have participated for over ten years. Like so many other activities, Foyers gatherings stopped with the pandemic. The Foyers Finale normally held in June was canceled. One virtual Foyers gathering, however, took place over the summer.

Foyers is always looking for creative ways to gather and hopes to have some new approaches implemented in the Fall of 2021. Interested to sign up in the Fall of 2021? Look for a sign-up sheet in August through Spiritual Adventures.

Folks who signed up this year include: David & Barbara Brandenburgh, Taylor Burton-Edwards, Martha Carlsen, Jack & Nicole Ceccato, Sara & Dan Ginter, Allen & Beverly Gordy, Mitch & Allyson Grossman, Ena Hunt, Donna & Kevin Kelly, Ruth Nichols, Perrin & Becca Nicolson, Vicky & John Partin, Laura Perkins and Terry Shaughnessy, Linda Prince, Martha Robert, Ceci Shirley, Christine & Darius Slusher, Molly & Bernie Sutter, Linda & Dan Van Kley, Kevin Waldrup, Mary Jane Whisnant, Evelin & Matthew Yardley and Candice Young.

Flower Guild

Ralph Wimberly, Chair

Who knew what 2020 would bring to us and the world! The Advent of 2019, a time of expectations waiting and preparation. The Flower Guild calendar was filled up. We then celebrated Christmas and then March 2020 came. The church building as we know and love was closed due to Covid- 19. It ended March 8 one week before Palm Sunday. From Advent 2019 to March 8 flower guild had 13 Sundays before the shutdown.

The Flower Guild Calendar became blank.

From a personal perspective I became lost and sad. Suddenly Holy Week was going to be filmed. This was a challenging time for me for me personally and liturgically. We filmed Holy Week ending with Maundy Thursday. I remember extinguishing the sacristy candle and leaving the church and driving home not knowing when I and the Flower Guild would be back. I became lost when I was not sure when my team and I would be able to go and create in our Holy space.

It seemed like forever before I was able to come back into the church building. The Flower Room was just like I left it after Maundy Thursday filming. Just to be able to do the Altar and change paraments provided some sense of normalcy to my life and hopefully you watching in the virtual world were able to feel it. Some days I had no motivation. I just stood there wondering what to do. I couldn't do it all by myself but God pushed and encouraged me to keep going.

Advent 2020 was coming. I suffered a fall resulting in a total hip replacement. Once again time stood still. Many thanks to Jo Cates for caring for the Altar décor during my absence. I came to terms that I would be able to be back before Advent started. I was determined to be back and I was.

I was able to do a Christmas altar with mixed emotions. No greening of the church and other traditions that came with Christmas Eve. I was unable to do an Easter altar. The first one in 8 years.

I know this sounds all about me this year. Flower Guild members provided flowers from their gardens, Christmas greenery and much support. It makes me sad and I cry at times that my amazing team were unable to be a part in person but their spirit was there. Hopefully we will be back soon and the calendar will be full again. Stay strong my amazing team! Many thanks for your ministry in spirit this year. Flower Guild members include: Sara Ginter, Jo Cates, Ceci Shirley, Christine Slusher, Sherry Wade, Anne Huie-Strong, Nelia Partain, Jenny Holder, Celia Page, Dawn Farrow, Nora Ngo, and Ralph Wimberly- chair.

Grounds

Martin McCann, Chair

The Grounds Committee is concerned with upkeep of the grounds not covered by contracted environmental services. Generally, it organizes Saturday Workdays, in which volunteers do weeding, pruning, pine strawing, and pick up of debris. On occasion, work inside of the church is accomplished. We had workdays in the spring and fall (socially distanced of course). Some volunteers work on areas that they feel comfortable upkeeping on their own schedule.

Other notable projects were the building of a shed for storing mowers and implements. This was done by Dan Dawson, Dan Ginter, and Justin Selway. Fred Romanus did a fine job of pressure washing the Columbarium and walkways around the church. Vicky and John Partin and a team of volunteers continue to prepare the Labyrinth, which is now being used for Sunday services.

We look forward, as the pandemic subsides, to workdays where more people feel it is safe to participate.

Kitchen

Seth Burgamy, Kitchen Manager

The first couple of months the kitchen staff and volunteers provided delicious and nutritious dinners on first Sundays for A Simple Gathering and Wednesday evenings as well as a traditional breakfast on Sunday mornings. Since then, with the help of volunteers, we provided over 500 hot meals to the community of East Carver Heights. For the fall pledge drive, frozen casseroles and cookies were prepared and shared with the Parish. The kitchen also provided family dinners and breakfasts throughout the year to those that were burdened, troubled or mourning.

Labyrinth

Vicky Partin, Chair

Our beautiful labyrinth nestled outdoors near the entry to St. Thomas certainly came alive in 2020! For many it became the best quiet place for prayer and worship, celebration and thanksgiving, discernment and discovery, healing and reconciliation.

In August it became the focus in Spiritual Adventures, giving its history in the world; its history at St. Thomas dating back to the first walks in 2001 on New Year's Day; ways of walking the path; and how the turns in the labyrinth mirror our sacred journeys.

As the pandemic continued in 2020, Grace and the vestry agreed in August to begin a worship service outside. A team including Jessica Ezzell, Ann Johnston, Dan Ginter, Dan Dawson, Justin Selway, Martin McCann, Rick McKnight and Patty Slembarski enhanced the area with eighteen wooden benches, a music platform and the audio equipment. The first service was held at 5 PM on Sunday, September 20. And those services continue in good weather.

The most recent event was held on December 21, the Feast of St. Thomas and the longest night, to consider a time of grief and sadness and in confidence that God walks with us. Allison Mills-Long with Empowered by the Source played her singing bowls. Approximately twenty people attended and kept their distances!

Events that had been planned did not happen due to Covid-19 include a Simple Gathering on March 1, a Lenten series, "The Way of Wisdom" organized by Sara Robinson Chambliss of Trinity, and Creation Keepers events focusing on Earth Day.

Reflections by St. Thomas parishioners in August:

"I have the privilege of maintaining the labyrinth and spending my meditation time there sweeping and pulling tiny flowers and weeds." *Vicky Partin*

"The labyrinth to me represents everything that is mystical and medieval about prayer and meditation. I appreciate it for its history as well as its functions. I also enjoy being a part of the community of volunteers that cares for our labyrinth. It is always a spiritual experience to be there, even if only to rake it or to pull weeds." *James Decker*

"I stepped on the labyrinth. I wasn't expecting anything more than a meditative experience, but immediately I found myself in a profoundly sacred space. As I walked, I did some deep grieving and felt a sense of healing." *Barbara Thompson Danner*

"The Thompson Pound Art Program (TAP) has used the labyrinth for most of its 25 years as a tool for teaching children about meditation, gratitude, prayer, and self-worth. We have walked the labyrinth to recognize that we are all children of the Light. We have blessed our artwork, prayed for peace in the world, and remembered loved ones who have died. It is a powerful ritual that children connect to easily. I am personally grateful for the rich and deep meaning the labyrinth has brought to TAP's work and to my life." *Debbie Anderson*

"We've enjoyed many experiences on labyrinths in America and abroad. Two come to mind bringing different reactions. A Catholic Church in Miramar Beach, Florida has built a most contemplative space of perfectly placed stones, plants, and contentment. Too many tourists crowded in disrespect on a cobblestone labyrinth in a small French town on the Rhone River. We felt deprived of a serene meditation." *Jack and Nicole Ceccato*

"I walk the labyrinth to seek the serenity of walking in the beauty of nature...we follow the ancient path into peace and to talk with God." *Pat McMahon*

"The labyrinth has been a valuable teacher in the last few months. It reminds me to pause when I reach an unexpected turn, take a deep breath, and continue to prayerfully walk forward while seeking the Holy in the midst of uncertainty." *Jessica Ezzell*

Lay Eucharistic Ministers & Readers

Meg Olive-Allison

Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEMs) and Lay Readers were vital to in-person worship at the beginning of 2020. These volunteers have dedicated their time and talent to serve everyone in this parish, in addition to serving in weddings and funerals. LEMs wear vestments and participate in the entire service. Processing in with acolytes and Priest, LEMs hold the Gospel in the processional and for the Gospel reading. The LEMs assist the priest in serving communion.

Lay Readers do one of the readings (First Lesson, Epistle or Prayers of the People) and do not have to vest. At the 8:00 am service the server serves as both the LEM and the Lay Reader.

Since we have begun worshipping online many Lay Readers have continued to serve by recording themselves reading at home and sharing with worship planners to be included in online worship services.

Lay Eucharistic Visitors

Donna Sharp, Coordinator

The Lay Eucharistic Visitors (Homebound Visitors) offer an extension of our Eucharist table. We take communion and visit with homebound members and with parishioners who are in the hospital until they are able to return to church. This ministry extends our church so all parishioners are able to receive the bread and wine of Christ.

The Lay Eucharistic Visitors have served 22 home communions during January and February of 2020. In March of 2020 the Pandemic ebbed so Bishop Wright stopped all visits. We continued this year with the imposition of ashes for the homebound who desire it on Ash Wednesday which was the last visit before the Pandemic.

Although we were unable to visit our homebound members, we made calls, sent cards and prayed for our homebound members. We tried even during this time to show they are important members of our church. They shine a light during our darkness.

We are blessed with a dedicated team: Michael Ankerich & Charlie Snipes, Carole Hill, Ena Hunt, Tanya Edwards-Jones, Martin McCann, Daniel Mitchell, John Partin, Donna Sharp, and Rev. Grace Burton-Edwards. Ann Burr fills in when the need arises. Gardner Wright was a dedicated member who moved to be close to his family. We will miss his loyal service. We have also added two members Beverly and Allen Gordy.

McCann African Mission

Sandy McCann, Coordinator

Martin and I have been home from Africa for four years, but we continue to support both our medical and theological missions in Tanzania. For this reason, we continue to be extremely grateful to St. Thomas for keeping open the African Mission Fund account where donors can send their monetary gifts. This account allows donors to not only avoid the high cost of individual wiring but also to get a tax-deductible donation. The fact that St. Thomas keeps open this account allows both St. Thomas donors and various other donors to continue to easily support medical and seminary educations for the many in Tanzania that cannot afford them.

We are delaying buying computers for the seven first year degree students at Msalato Theological College. Covid has wreaked havoc with the college schedule, and they have no capacity to do virtual schooling. We plan to send the seven computers after the first of the year, hoping to get a better deal after the end of 2020 but having them there in time for the beginning of in-house classes in mid-February.

The cost of buying and shipping will be in the range of \$5,000.00-\$5500.00 with \$3,000.00 coming from the church's mission budget. The remainder will come from undesignated donations to the African Mission Fund. The gift of a computer is nearly beyond the comprehension of a poor student in Tanzania, where the prayer "give us this day our daily bread" is not a spiritual request. For theological students to have any hope of keeping up with the world, especially in a land where almost no one can afford books, a computer is a library and a lifeline to the outside world.

\$8,000.00 from the African Mission Fund was sent to the Diocese of Mara in northern Tanzania where a trusted classmate, fellow teacher and friend of Sandra, the Right Reverend George Okoth, is the bishop. This is to provide food, housing and staff for the 108 pastors of the diocese to attend a one-week theology conference at the Bible College. There has never been any post-seminary education in Mara as funds have never been available. I know from experience that the pastors in the far-flung fields of Tanzania are hungry for additional education, and I know how desperately it is needed and appreciated. Virginia Seminary has been providing this for Msalato Theological College for the last ten years, and the pastors consider this the highlight of their year.

We commend Patty Slembariski for her meticulous record keeping and her unfailing graciousness. We thank St. Thomas for continuing to keep open this account that allows the church to stay in communion with our Christian brothers and sisters around the world.

Media Ministries

Holle Tubbs, Director

The St. Thomas Media Ministry exists to:

- allow the St. Thomas community to worship safely during the Covid-19 pandemic
- expand our congregation's impact by putting our content online
- grow our community by engaging on social media

2020 saw us move to online worship services and formation opportunities. Our community rose to a series of challenges in learning new technology and adapting to a new way of social connection. Our response to the pandemic has been to contract with Columbus Tape & Video for the installation of a livestream system, and the part-time hire of Nick Williams (St. Thomas choir member and recent CSU graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Music and a minor in Audio Technology) as support for our livestream and musical recordings.

The entire community has been extraordinarily flexible as we've moved to an online worship format. St. Thomas members have contributed as cantors, soloists, lectors and greeters.

Our vision for media ministries in 2021 includes the following goals:

- continue to grow and improve our livestream and prerecorded services
- when possible, move to a visually engaging hybrid service (for when we're able to meet in-person)
- define and develop a unique and engaging brand to help us with messaging
- update the layout and design of our website
- reimagine our use of social media as a way to reach new people

Memorials Committee

Ann Johnston, Chair

This committee is responsible for receiving and maintaining memorial gifts. We are also responsible for purchasing items with memorial monies when needed. We help to decide on appointments used in renovations and improvements. We helped to choose the carpet and paint colors used in the improvements to the offices and hallway in the administration area. We have begun the work of choosing art work for the parlor.

The committee members are: Ann Johnston, chair, Lynne Hahn, Nelia Partain, Jonathan Walz, and Ralph Wimberly.

Men's Group

Paul Hostetter and Spence Sealy

The 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.

We have offered service opportunities for our members that have been uplifting, but moreover through this pandemic, social opportunities that have created deeper connections at a time when friendship and faith are more important than ever.

Who participated in 2020:

Ray Capo, Mike Dempsey, Larry Dooley, Frank Feagle, Greg Herring, Paul Hostetter, Mike McFalls, Roger Redden, Spence Sealy, Mike Smith, and Ron Wirt

Music

Rick McKnight, Organist & Choir Master

We started off the year with a wonderful presentation of the music of Vivaldi with a string orchestra guest conducted by CSU professor Dr. Ianthe Marini.

The middle of March closed down in-person worship. The biggest shift for the music ministry was going from almost 100% choral music to almost 100% solo singing. We have done a lot of pre-recording and live streaming. The choir did not meet for the rest of the year in person. However, we have searched out ways to stay connected:

- Recording hymns to be broadcast in pre-recorded services. Which involves a lot of detail!
- Trying hard to keep connected we have a Choir Zoom call every Wednesday night- in fact 40 in 2020. This has been a wonderful pastoral way to keep up with each other.
- At the beginning Marquette recorded me playing a piece from home. That turned into a piano piece performed at home with accompanying video and commentary - even making Facebook stars of our pups, Bibb and City. We have done over 270.
- Beginning Easter afternoon I led 6 "Hymn Sings from Home" which featured very familiar hymns.
- During the summer we delivered bags of peaches to the choir along with a distanced 'front porch visit.'
- We used over 40 different solos during the year.
- We invested in cameras and audio equipment and were thrilled to have Nick Williams transfer from being a Choral Scholar to a Audio Visual Technologist helping us record and broadcast.
- St Thomas sponsored "The Merry Organ" - a presentation by the local AGO chapter recorded in our nave and premiered on the church's Facebook and YouTube pages.

- We served as executive producer of “Convocational Lessons and Carols” - featuring all the parishes of our convocation - musicians and clergy. The premiered on our Facebook and YouTube pages on December 20.
- I was pleased to be able to share toasted pecans with the choir members and get a short visit in for Christmas.

2020 St. Thomas Choir Roster

Debbie Anderson	Elizabeth Hostetter	Martha Robert
Amaan Atkins	Seyi Isijola	Eva Robinson
Chris Barbee	April Jacobs	Adleyn Scott
Raymond Campbell	Brian Jones	Louise Tulloh
Gini Davidson	Chad Keene	Kevin Waldrup
Angelia Davis	Karen Lord	Addie Walton
Joe Fischer	Marquette McKnight	Chris Walton
Michelle Folta	Emily Moore	Nick Williams
Cindy Garrard	Hunter Mullen	Ralph Wimberly
Corey Griffin	Payne Newsome	Ron Wirt
Christine Hansen	Ruth Nichols	Susan Wirt
Isiah Harper	Josh Partridge	Molly Wright
Katie Holbrook	Mary Ann Rahm	

Outreach Council

Celia Page, Chair

The Outreach Council guides St. Thomas in its’ ministry with poor and marginalized persons here and around the world. Our mission is to lead the parish in Christian response through charity, empowerment and advocacy by partnering with various ministries to help transform lives.

Our Outreach ministries have adapted to serve people safely in spite of and often because of the pandemic. The assistance offered by the ministries was a blessing and a light in the lives of many who struggled in 2020.

The following persons served on the council as liasons to these ministries:

Jennifer Fletcher and Jo Cates - Wynnton Neighborhood Network

Rev. Sandra McCann - African Mission

Malinda Shamburger - Valley Interfaith Promise

Martha Robert - Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministry

Florence Wakoko - Episcopal Relief and Development

Christine DiFeliciantonio - Caring for Creation

Vicky Partin - Diocesan Jubilee Officer

Lisa Herring - Path to Shine & Boxwood F.A.N.N.

Greg Herring - Boxwood Soccer

Margo Easterbrook - Brewer Partner in Education

Dan Van Kley - Dismantling Racism

Meg Olive-Allison - Communications

Michelle Mullen - Vestry Liaison

Rev. Grace - Spiritual Director

For highlights and details of the various ministries, please refer to the individual ministry reports.

Parish Life

Ann Johnston, Chair

We in the Parish Life committee are a large group of dedicated volunteers who enjoy hospitality. We coordinate with Seth in the kitchen to make possible parish dinners, funeral receptions, and special events in the life of the parish. All are invited and welcomed to join in. Unfortunately, as you all know, we were unable to work together through most of the year. We all hope for this year to be different so that we can work together and welcome everyone to the table.

Pastoral Care Committee

Donna Sharp

The Pastoral Care Committee serves the congregation by supporting, visiting, praying, and communicating with the St. Thomas congregation in times of crisis or need.

Lay Eucharistic Visitors have continued to try to stay in contact with the homebound members. Bereavement Care continues to send a set of 4 booklets during the year that follows the loss of their loved one. Steve Scott does a wonderful job in this ministry. He sent a set of booklets to 24 families in 2020 and a total of 97 individual booklets this year with a personal note in each. Prayer Group has continued to meet throughout 2020.

Lay Eucharistic Visitors, Bereavement Care, and the Prayer Group comprise the members of the Pastoral Care Committee

Phone Tree/St. Thomas Shepherds

Father Edward

Many parishes continue to maintain Phone Trees in order to maintain contacts and relationships with more vulnerable and isolated individuals in their community. Such communication networks can be used for routine updates and information as well as for pastoral care and support. Furthermore, Phone Trees encourage lay church members to practice pastoral care with one another in times of need, exemplifying to the community that all baptized Christians have a common responsibility and ability to serve Christ in all persons.

Prior to the pandemic, St. Thomas had an informal network in place that would keep up with people in the parish. When the pandemic hit and the need for more regular out-of-church communication became clear, the Phone Tree was organized. Originally, this network included all members to the parish, some visitors and newcomers.

As the pandemic dragged on, however, it became clear that not everyone needed a regular phone call. Many parishioners followed parish ongoing through the church website, Facebook page, and through other informal methods of information sharing. Others stayed in touch by email and text, not feeling like they needed an individualized contact on a regular basis from the church. In order to more conscientiously tailor our efforts to those who needed regular personal contacts and to those who simply wanted them, we pared down our Phone Tree list and reorganized as the St. Thomas Shepherds. The Shepherds program will seek to keep up with all parishioners who want and/or need personalized messages and connections. Furthermore, the program provides pastoral support to parishioners while serving as a helpful conduit of information between parishioners and our clergy. The Shepherds program is still developing at this time but will officially roll out its work in the beginning of January, 2021.

Who participated in 2020?

Ann Burr, Ray Capo, Nicole Ceccato, Larry Dooley, Norm Easterbrook, Tanya Edwards-Jones, Jon Ezzell, Pam Feagle, Dan Ginter, Sara Ginter, Beverly and Allen Gordy, Jenny Holder, Paul and Elizabeth Hostetter, Ena Hunt, Rick McKnight, Michelle Mullen, Meg Olive-Allison, Nelia Partain, Vicky Partin, Erin Redden, Brian Schwartz, Malinda Shamburger, Donna Sharp, Mike Smith, Tom Wade, Holle Tubbs, Ron Wirt.

Prayer Group

Donna Sharp

The Prayer Group takes time to pray together for our parishioners, our neighbors, our church, and the world. We meet each Monday at 11:30AM. We pray from a public list and private list. The names on our private prayer list and the reasons are held in confidence. All are welcome.

During this Pandemic, the prayer group continued to meet weekly together. In March, we changed from the Chapel to Zoom. Technology blessed us with the ability to continue praying together. This year even those that travel to other homes for the summer were able to join our prayer group weekly. Such a light in the darkness.

Sonya Boyd, Ann Boyd, Nicole Ceccato, Sara Ginter, Lynne Hahn, Malinda Shamburger, Donna Sharp, and others lift up the needs of our parishioners, friends of the parish, and the needs of the world. We are blessed to have three new members this year, Joanna Brunson, Renee McAneny, and Pat McMahan.

Property Committee

Frank Feagle and Ann Johnston, 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 2020 were Ann Johnston, Chair; Frank Feagle, Co-Chair; Dan Ginter, Dan Dawson, Justin Selway, Lynne Hahn, Joe Akyempong, Martin McCann, Tanya Edwards- Jones, and Marianne Richter.

During the year, the committee engaged in on-going maintenance and repair projects, such as scheduling and managing Landscape activities and workdays, supervising repair of heating and air conditioning equipment, roof leaks and plumbing and electrical problems. Following are some of the more stand-alone accomplishments:

- Completion of the office renovations begun in prior years as part of the 60th Anniversary Capital Campaign.
- Installation of new audio-visual equipment for conduct of on-line services.
- Construction of a small structure to house landscaping equipment.

Regathering Committee

Martin McCann, Chair

A regathering committee was called together in late May of 2020. The idea, of course, was to formulate plans for in person worship at St. Thomas. Persistence and resurgence of the Covid-19 virus has been a challenge to this. However, due to the tremendous efforts of Rev. Grace and Fr. Edward, worship continues. Rick McKnight and the choir have been wonderful. With vaccinations and continued safety measures, in person church services will resume, under the guidance of the Atlanta diocese.

The work of the committee has been divided into three areas.

- **Worship:** in which protocols are formulated as to numbers of congregants, spacing, timing, and personal sanitizing. Dan Ginter, representing Ushers and the Flower Guild have helped with this.
- **Facilities:** protocols for cleaning and sanitation. Frances has done a marvelous job with this.
- **Outreach and outside groups:** how and when they can meet.

Highlights during this pandemic are as follows. Sunday services via Youtube and Facebook have continued. Audio visual equipment for this has been updated. UV lighting has been installed in the air ducts and air exchanges and humidity has been optimized. Outdoor meetings of groups of fifty or less than one hour and fifteen minutes are permitted.

The first outdoor worship began September 20th at the Labyrinth. Drive-Thru Pet Blessing, October 4th. In church services by pilgrimage (10 people at a time are permitted) were done Christmas Eve.

The Regathering Committee looks forward to 2021 as a time when we can meet in the usual fashion with full use of the Nave, Chapel, and Parish Hall. Where we can see old friends, meet new friends, and worship to the fullest. This will be gradual and incremental though, so stay tuned to parish notes for updates.

Renewal Fund

Patty Slembariski, Parish Administrator

The fund was launched with a gift of \$50,000 with the hope that donations from the congregation would match or exceed that amount. The fund was used to

- Support our staff - Create a reserve fund to help maintain staff salaries
- Enhance worship - Install live stream equipment to allow us to offer online worship and in-person worship simultaneously. The fund was also used to purchase sound or other equipment needed for outdoor worship.
- Prepare our facility - Purchase extra cleaning and safety equipment and finish painting and carpeting offices in this quieter time.
- Care for our neighbors - Designate 10% of donations for outreach

Total received for the Renewal Fund = \$100,075

DONORS TO THE ST. THOMAS 2020 RENEWAL FUND

Susan Anderson
 Marty & Elizabeth Barr
 Barbara Billings
 Deidre Bohannon & Lauren Copes
 Gerald & Sonya Boyd: *In memory of James Redden*
 Ann Burr
 Grace & Taylor Burton-Edwards
 Raymond Campbell: *In honor of James & Celia Decker's 34th wedding anniversary*
 Ray Capo
 Jack & Nicole Ceccato
 Shannon Dunaway
 Mike Edmondson: *In memory of Herman & Ruth Edmondson*
 Tammy Edwards
 Alex & Robin Ericksen
 Paula Evans
 Jon & Jessica Ezzell
 Frank & Pam Feagle
 Neal Fenter
 Art & Kathy France
 Spencer & Cynthia Garrard
 Dan & Sara Ginter
 Cindy Godwin
 Allen & Beverly Gordy
 Mitch Grossman
 Kenny & Mickie Hall
 Christine Hansen
 Sam & Linda Harmon
 Steve Hodges & Pat Daniel
 Anne & Ashley Huie-Strong
 Ena Hunt: *In memory of Jack & Virginia Guy*
 Lowell & Norma Jergens
 Paul & Ann Johnston
 Lewis & Lori Kent
 Tom Lanham & Deborah Bordelon
 Doug & Peggy Martin
 Robert & Renee McAneny
 Mike & Libby McFalls
 Rick & Marquette McKnight
 Charles & Pat McMahon
 Joe Mills & Jim Rutland
 Daniel & Lauren Mitchell
 Andrew, Pamela & Kaitlin Moye
 Tom & Michelle Mullen
 Kathleen Mullins
 Mike & Ruth Nichols
 Perrin & Becca Nicolson
 Sue O'Dell
 Meg & Susie Olive-Allison
 Celia Page & Jenny Holder
 John & Vicky Partin
 Bill & Sandi Pauli
 Carlene Pawlowicz: *In memory of her cousins Bill, Bob & Ray; and in memory of Marge Henly & Connie McEwen*
 Jan Pittman
 Sid & Heidi Regan
 Marianne Richter
 Martha Robert
 Joe & Libba Russell
 Brian Schwartz
 Donna Sharp
 Chris & Patty Slembarski
 Darius & Christine Slusher: *In honor of their granddaughter Charlotte Shirley who is an ICU nurse*
 Mike & Lynn Smith
 John Studstill & Florence Wakoko-Studstill
 Bernie Sutter
 Clifford & Bobsie Swift
 Julie Van Meter & Fred Romanus
 Tom & Sherry Wade
 Travis & Mitchi Wade
 Kevin Waldrup
 Ron & Susan Wirt
 Maryjane Wrenn
 Molly Wright
 Anonymous

Stewardship Committee

Norm Easterbrook, Chair

The Stewardship Committee is responsible for securing pledges from the parish to meet the annual operating budget for the coming fiscal year as approved by the elected Vestry. The committee coordinates a schedule of activities, produces narrative and budget materials and works with our Rector to assist members of the parish in discerning their financial commitment to the general operation of the church and its related ministries.

This year the committee, like all other committees, faced the daunting challenges presented by the Covid-19 crisis. Suffice it to say that the Love of Christ shines brightly in the response from our parishioners.

The committee focused on the essence of its mission which is to convey to the parish the needs defined by the Vestry to sustain the operations and ministries of the parish. The goal this year was to maintain the total of pledges that were made in the previous year. In light of the devastation and uncertainty caused by Covid and the volatility of the economy, there were no goals set to expand programs or services for the coming year.

With the generosity of our congregation, the campaign was successful in securing total pledges in the amount of \$490,106 which is 95% of the pledges needed to support the goal of \$512,760 set forth by the vestry. This is a decrease of \$22,654 in commitments made in our last fiscal year.

As is always the case, the stewardship season is a time to reflect upon life changes that have taken place in our parish in the previous year and this was an extraordinary year. We are grateful for those making first time pledges and to those who continued or increased their commitments to support the work of the church for the coming year. We all have reason to and should celebrate this campaign as successful.

The committee will continue to work to stress the importance of every member making a pledge commitment to St. Thomas. We were pleased to have increased the number of committee members this year. As our congregation grows and we emerge from the Covid crisis, the need for substantial, qualified staffing and infrastructure capacities will grow to support to restore programming and continue to support new ways for parishioners near and far to worship with St. Thomas. It remains that the work of stewardship is easy and rewarding. We encourage any who are interested to engage with the committee as we steward resources to fulfill the vision of our congregation beyond 2020.

Stewardship is purely a function of our congregation. It is our expression of faith and trust in the ministries of our parish, our Rector and our elected Vestry. To that end we thank the Vestry for their guidance and especially thank Grace for her thoughtful, compassionate and excellent guidance in our work. This year's committee was made up of Deidre Bohannon, Lauren Copes, Norman Easterbrook, Tanya Edwards-Jones, Malinda Shamburger and Ron Wirt.

St. Thomas Day School

Kym Futch, Interim Director

The mission of St Thomas Day School 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. We were delighted to celebrate sixty years of St Thomas Day School in 2019. We are focusing on our strong traditions and offering a play-based environment that allows our students to flourish and grow a sense of independence and to be kindergarten ready when they graduate from our Prekindergarten program.

Like most things, The Day School had to close in March 2020 because of Covid-19. When the school reopened for the school year in August, plans, procedures, and precautions were in place to keep students, families, and School staff as safe as possible. The Day School has continued with our procedures to ensure we are being as safe as possible while providing students and families the highest quality pre-school education possible.

Highlights in 2020 include:

- Trees near the side of the building were cut down in order to remove roots that were dangerous on the playground
- The Day School Annual Fund has gone out with a great response. There is still time donate!
- Decluttering of the sheds has given us more accessible storage

Goals for the future include:

- New fencing
- Bathroom updates and upgrades
- Kitchen and laundry room updates

Day school enrollment for the 2019-2020 school year is currently at 66 children in 7 classrooms. Our classroom age groups are infant, toddlers (A & B), two's (A&B), three's and Pre-Kindergarten. We also have 7 lead teachers, 6 assistant teachers and a director. October of 2020 saw a transition of leadership from Jodi Saunders serving as Day School Director to Kym Futch stepping in as Interim Director, while continuing to be the lead teacher in the PreK classroom. Our Board of Directors continue to build on the strong base that was established in 2017 with the board consisting of Rev. Grace, three church members (Debbie Anderson, Pauline Marth, and Meg Olive-Allison, the school director and three school parents. Our current Board Chairperson is Callie Hecht. The school maintains its membership with NAES (National Association of Episcopal Schools).

St. Thomas Readers Book Group

Sonya Boyd, Convener

The Saint Thomas Readers Book Group, a ministry of Saint Thomas Episcopal Church, began in 2005. During the years since then the purpose of the group has continued to be an exploration of works of fiction and non-fiction. These may feature conflicts in spirituality, and/or moral dilemmas. Although not exclusive, Episcopal authors feature prominently.

In past years we have met eight to nine times per calendar year. We vary the dates and times, although a majority of the meeting arrangements have been monthly at 3:30 Wednesdays in the parlor at St. Thomas. We also meet at a public library and at the home of Pat McMahan. An informal and impromptu discussion of reading sometimes occurs on the conference phone call, and during the fellowship portion, of Saints and Sinners .

The Book Group supports literacy among both children and adults and has contributed to numerous book drives and to the Friends of the (Public) Library and to the annual Saint Thomas Sale. We are regular contributors to the Saint Thomas Little Library, a structure near the entrance to the Wynnton

Neighborhood Network. The Little Library is open to everyone in the community and accepts donations from persons who are not part of the Saint Thomas Book Group.

The Book Group participates in the annual The Big Read and will do so in 2021. Further information on this activity will be announced by the sponsoring agency: The Chattahoochee Valley Regional Library.

Like other groups during 2020, the Saint Thomas Book Group has not been able to meet since the beginning of the Pandemic. We met in January at the home of Pat McMahon, and, lastly, at the North Columbus Library in February. At the latter, Amie Torok conducted a discussion which was part of The Big Read, a community effort sponsored by the Chattahoochee Valley Regional Library. The focus of 2020's The Big Read was *When We became Human* by the Poet Laureate of the United States, Joy Harjo. Unfortunately, after those two early gatherings, we were forced to cancel all of our scheduled meetings. This included a June discussion of Rick Bragg's *The Best Cook in the World*, a tribute to his mother. Pegi Taylor had agreed to present a food preparation demonstration for us at the Springlake Bath and Tennis Club in North Columbus. This would have continued a tradition of hosting guests, including authors, to speak before the Book Group.

The challenge of keeping the group together has not lessened as the year has passed. Although we have not participated in Zoom programming, we have maintained contact and, hopefully, continued to be a light in the darkness. Earlier this year, several of the readers, along with some of our parishioners and friends, responded to a request by the convener to contribute titles of books that they had read during the time of the Pandemic. The convener submitted the list to the North Columbus Library staff and the list was placed on their Facebook Page.

There are plans to submit our reading list to Columbus State University's Archives, to be included among the activities of the Pandemic. The Saint Thomas Book Group is highlighted in the January-February 2021 issue of *Columbus and the Valley Magazine*, in a story by Callie Sprague, featuring book clubs and book groups in the area. We are pleased to be included.

Our numbers prior to the Pandemic averaged seventeen persons per meeting. Earlier numbers varied with some attendance as high as twenty-four. There are a number of Readers who have been part of the group since 2005, seven in all. Several Readers are members of other denominations.

The Saint Thomas Book Group looks forward to meeting again, hopefully in early 2021, when it becomes safer to do so. We welcome everyone to join us, and we are grateful for the continued support of the clergy and staff of Saint Thomas Episcopal Church.

Ushers

Dan Ginter, Captain

The St. Thomas ushers had the opportunity to usher seventeen times from January to March 2020 before the Covid-19 virus pandemic and the safety guidance from the Bishop halted services inside the church. We started with twenty-four ushers and ended the year with twenty-one. Jamie and Louis Netherland moved to North Carolina and Neal Fenter "retired" after years of service.

The following is a list of ushers in 2020:

Angie Braid	Greg Herring	Deborah Scribner
Michael Dempsey	Lisa Herring	Spence Sealy
Skip Farrow	Tommie Hunter	Malinda Shamburger
Dan Ginter	Bob McAneny	Ceci Shirley
Allen Gordy	Renee McAneny	Christine Slusher
Beverly Gordy	Mike McFalls	Dan Van Kley
Mitch Grossman	Steve Scott	Kevin Waldrup

Valley Interfaith Promise

Malinda Shamburger, Former Director

In October of 2006, Vicky Partin, Helen Long, and I were among about 50 plus people gathered at 1214 3rd Avenue. We were all there to hear about a new ministry Valley Interfaith Promise. The organization was a part of a national organization that helped homeless families. The unique twist to this organization was that instead of sheltering in a facility lined with beds they were going to partner with church congregations to shelter the families. Of course, St. Thomas was one of the churches in the original group. Over the years, churches came and left, but St. Thomas stayed the course.

I was there in the beginning and I was there in the end. On December 31, 2020, VIP closed its doors, one of the many countless businesses impacted by the pandemic. One thing is for sure we were witnesses to something amazing, watching families go from homelessness to homes. In our fourteen years VIP helped over 100 families find employment, cars, and of course homes. Some even became home owners. There are several families that stayed in touch over the years and they have never forgotten how we fed, clothed, and cared about them. One mom told me she was so ashamed to be in that situation, she thought that everyone would judge her, but, every person that she met made her feel like a whole person and that to her was priceless.

Thank you all for your support of this unique ministry.

Vergers

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

- Touch base with lectors, 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.
- Activate the sound system and make sure the microphones are working.
- Light the candles on the altar.

The work of our vergers allows Rev. Grace 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.

Vergers faithfully carried out this ministry from January - March of 2020 when in-person worship was postponed. Our Vergers also serve on our Worship Committee

2020 Vergers
 Michael Ankerich
 Tanya Edwards-Jones
 Paul Hostetter
 Joe Mills
 Perrin Nicolson
 Michael Owen
 Malinda Shamburger
 Rin Van Kley
 Travis Wade
 Jonathan Walz

Welcome Committee

Pam Feagle, Chair

During “normal” years, the Welcome Committee’s purpose is to follow up with visitors, particularly those who have filled out and turned in a visitor’s card. We contact them, offer information, encouragement, and answers to their questions. We stay in touch until they have joined or no longer attend. The usual tasks during “normal” years also include hosting twice yearly Newcomers Parties for visitors and new members. Newcomers classes are typically held once or twice a year, and we participate in those, as well as offer encouragement to attend. Twice a year, new members are recognized by Rev. Grace during a morning worship service.

Also, during a “normal” year, we had three sub-committees:

1. Snacks for social time following the 10:30 worship service on a rotating schedule - the first three months of 2020, until services were canceled, Paula Evans, Susan Henderson, Mike Edmondson, Pam Feagle, Jenny Holder, Celia Page, Libby McFalls, Linda VanKley, Penny Wise, and Sara Ginter provided these refreshments.
2. Pew Cards – this group organized the visitor’s cards, pencils, doodle cards, and offering envelopes on a weekly basis in the Nave. John Partin, Pam Feagle, and Sara Ginter were able to fulfill that responsibility for the first three months of the year.
3. Name tag board – maintained routinely by Deborah Tucker until we were no longer meeting inside in person.

Our normal plan is to meet in person once a month, typically the second Wednesday of each month. During 2020, beginning in April, we continued to meet together, but on Zoom. This worked out well for us. Unfortunately, of course, we were not able to offer Newcomers Parties. While visitors were unable to fill out a visitor’s card in person, a way to fill out one on the St. Thomas website was provided. We did have several people do that, although nowhere near as many as normal. We also had several people join online. It very helpful to the committee to be able to share with our visitors that opportunity.

Our committee members have done an outstanding job of keeping up with the visitors assigned to them. Active members during 2020 were Ann Burr, Barbara Brandenburgh, Pam Feagle, Sara Ginter, Beverly Gordy, Jenny Holder, Nelia Partain, Malinda Shamburger, and Rev. Grace.

Worship Committee

Rev. Grace Burton-Edwards

The ministry of worship includes Sunday and weekday services of Eucharist and the Daily Office. When we began the year, our Sunday pattern was an 8 am Rite I Eucharist in the Chapel, a 10:30 am Rite II Eucharist with music in the Nave, and an evening Eucharist on the first Sunday of the month called “A Simple Gathering.” The Prayer Group met on Mondays at 11:30 in the chapel, and we offered Evening Prayer with Eucharist and a healing rite at 5:30 on Wednesdays.

The challenges of 2020 greatly affected worship at St. Thomas. No longer able to gather in person, we learned to worship online. We launched a daily Evening service of prayer via Zoom that became a source of strength for many.

Our first online Sunday services were on March 15. We began by livestreaming Morning Prayer to YouTube. Thankfully, Holle Tubbs started working full time as Director of Youth, Young Adults, and Media on March 7. She helped us prepare a series of worship videos for Holy Week. We mailed Holy Week bulletins, an activity packet for children, and a palm cross to every household and worshipped together from home.

For the next several months, we offered a live service of Morning Prayer at 8 on Sundays and a prerecorded service at 10:30 am composed of many different voices. We chose not to livestream Eucharist, preferring to reserve the celebration until we could gather and commune together.

The prerecorded services took thirty to forty hours each week to edit, not counting the time to record. We knew we could not do this forever. We also knew we would someday gather for worship in person again and would want to share our worship online. Thanks to the congregation's gifts to the Renewal Fund, we were able to install live stream cameras in the nave and chapel. In late August, we began offering hybrid worship – most live with some prerecorded readings and music.

Other special online worship events in 2020 included Back to School blessing on August 16, Bishop Wright's virtual visit with us on September 13, the children's All Saints Parade on All Saints' Sunday, and beautiful Christmas Eve Pageant and service on December 24.

We were able to resume in-person worship on September 20 and launched an evening service at the labyrinth on that date. We experimented with other in-person options and ended the year with additional Eucharists at 9:30 am on Sundays and noon on Wednesdays.

The Worship Committee includes Dan Ginter (ushers), Rick McKnight (Organist and Choirmaster), Sue O'Dell (Altar Guild), Ceci Shirley and Ralph Wimberly (flowers), Ron Wirt (Vestry), and all of our Vergers – Michael Ankerich, Tanya Edwards-Jones, Paul Hostetter, Joe Mills, Perrin Nicolson, Malinda Shamburger, Michael Owen, Travis Wade, and Jonathan Walz. Rev. Grace leads this committee.

Wynnton Neighborhood Network

Mary Lou Jarrell, Board Chair

Wynnton Neighborhood Network, made of eight congregations, including St. Thomas, works to help those in need with food and utility assistance. Gratefully, we are housed in the back of St. Thomas and are open 5 days a week, from 10:00 - 12:30. We are a completely volunteer organization with many of our volunteers coming from St. Thomas.

During the challenges of Covid-19, Wynnton Neighborhood Network adapted to keep volunteers and those we serve (clients) safe by wearing masks, cleaning our pantry/offices/storage areas daily (thanks to St. Thomas), limiting number of volunteers within the space, keeping clients in their vehicles (instead of coming into the building), and changing policies on number of visits and amount of financial help available for utility assistance.

Our year end numbers of those served are as follows:

- 3602 families received food assistance in 2020.
 - These families were made of 10,388 individuals, including 4354 children.
 - Of the families served with food, 88% came only once or twice. Only 2% came more than 4 times (one of the changes we made due to pandemic was to not limit families to 4 times a year). Only one family needed food assistance 9 times.
 - New to us in 2020 were a tad less than 50% of the number of those served. We have not tracked this data before but this seems more than usual.
- Utility assistance was given to 353 families for a total of \$26,792.19.

WNN Volunteers from St. Thomas include: Jo Cates, Jennifer Fletcher, Carole Hill, Martin McCann, Mike Nichols, Linda Prince, Libba Russell, and Mary Jane Wadkins.

Youth

Holle Tubbs, Director Youth, Young Adults & Media

Our ministry currently includes youth (grades 6-12) and a few young college students. This year, we've focused on being a safe, low-pressure space for students to connect with their faith and community in the middle of a trying year.

This has included:

- competing in the VIP Bed Race (pre-pandemic) and winning Best Theme for our bed;
- continuing our weekly Wednesday night Check-In (primarily on Zoom, although we did meet in-person a few times before the holiday spike);
- starting a new tradition of online Game Nights where we've played Minecraft, Quiplash, and Jeopardy;
- starting a new tradition of the Powerpoint Party, in which students create a 2-3 minute presentation on a topic of their choice (past topics have included sloths, spies in the American War for Independence, and the 90s sitcom Frasier);
- several students created tutorials around commonly used technology as a way to help make online church accessible to all;
- continuing our tradition of making Christmas candy bags for Path to Shine students.

We've had consistent youth participation (depending on the event) of anywhere from 3-12 students. Additionally, Barbara Billings and Maddie Redden have continued to be a positive presence for the youth (Barbara and her mother have consistently sent really kind cards to us throughout the entire pandemic).

We've also been fortunate to have Fr. Edward participate in our meetings, and the students have enjoyed his contributions of presence, leading us in Compline, and wiping the floor with us whenever we all play Jeopardy.

Our vision for youth in 2021 includes the following goals:

- continue to invite students to deepen their relationships with God, our community, and each other;
- provide safe in-person gathering options for students as appropriate;
- begin to structure the existing program into three separate groups: middle school, high school, and college;
- continue to develop our relationship with other youth groups and leaders in the Diocese of Atlanta.

2020 FINANCIALS

OPERATING ACCOUNT	2020 Budget (Revised)	2020 Actual	2021 Budget	
REVENUE				
Contribution Income				
Pledges	492,249.00	469,788.66	470,501.00	<i>96% of pledges</i>
Gain/Loss - Stock Gifts	(207.49)	(314.24)	0.00	
Member Givers	45,000.00	59,207.20	66,873.00	<i>3 year average</i>
Post-Campaign Pledges	8,400.00	8,400.00	1,500.00	
Total Contribution Income	545,441.51	537,081.62	538,874.00	
Other Income				
Transfer From Designated	14,217.00	23,630.79	20,000.00	
Endowment Draw -Unrestricted	66,036.00	22,228.37	66,612.00	
Miscellaneous Income	2,552.00	2,606.52	0.00	
Use of Building	688.00	988.10	0.00	
Baird Draw	18,060.00	5,636.34	18,309.00	
Desig.funds transfer-Boxwood	0.00	145.84	0.00	
Desig.funds transfer-Baird Ed	1,695.00	0.00	1,695.00	<i>For young adult ministry</i>
Desig.funds transfer-Flowers	475.00	475.00	0.00	
Desig.funds transfer-Music	250.00	250.00	0.00	
Total Other Income	103,973.00	55,960.96	106,616.00	
Special Income				
Gift for Loan principal	0.00	40,000.00	0.00	
Day School	16,500.00	16,500.00	24,000.00	
Renewal Fund	0.00	0.00	50,128.00	
Utility Reimbursement	4,430.00	4,430.00	3,600.00	
Total Special Income	20,930.00	60,930.00	77,728.00	
TOTAL REVENUE	670,344.51	653,972.58	723,218.00	

2020 FINANCIALS

EXPENSES			
Admin/Payroll/Benefits			
Administration	38,254.00	32,528.70	38,600.00
Payroll/Benefits	331,595.00	397,650.74	423,544.00
Total Admin/Payroll Benefits	369,849.00	430,179.44	462,144.00
Christian Education			
Adult	2,000.00	991.04	1,500.00
Children	4,500.00	3,723.39	3,500.00
Young Adult/College	1,695.00	0.00	1,695.00
Youth	4,500.00	3,014.94	3,500.00
Total Christian Education	12,695.00	7,729.37	10,195.00
Diocesan Pledge & Expenses	59,428.00	59,403.00	62,085.00
Evangelism	4,000.00	3,825.50	3,500.00
Outreach	43,332.00	43,477.84	40,892.00
Parish Life	11,600.00	5,773.02	3,600.00
Properties	91,992.00	104,485.13	98,300.00
Capital Reserve	13,000.00	13,000.00	23,000.00
Stewardship	1,500.00	2,138.55	2,000.00
Music	19,095.00	16,962.64	8,500.00
Worship	10,500.00	9,524.17	9,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	636,991.00	696,498.66	723,216.00
(OVER) UNDER ACTUAL	33,353.51	(42,526.08)	2.00

10% pledges minus Dioc.commitmnt

Note: St. Thomas received a PPP loan in 2020 of \$77,565, which converted to a grant. It is not considered operating income. The expenses covered are not reflected in the revised 2020 budget but are reflected in 2020 operating expenses. That is why we appeared to have a deficit in 2020.

2020 FINANCIALS

DESIGNATED ACCOUNT

Designated funds include contributions to African missions and other parish, community & world ministries. 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	2019 Actual
Beginning Balance	145,755.41
Revenue & Credit adjtmts	619,930.09
Expenses	(451,277.15)
12/31/20 Cash Balance	314,408.35

Special Outreach Collections	
African Mission	7,460.66
CVEM	6,022.00
Rctr's Discr.	19,836.27
WNN	7,010.00
Total	40,328.93

ENDOWMENT ACCOUNTS	Dec.31 Balance
Unrestricted (Wilkins)	2,166,221.63
Restricted (Baird)	596,874.86

60th Anniversary Property Improvement Plan	
Total pledged	145,188.00
Pledges & Gifts received	147,189.48

Renewal Fund	
Pledged	100,255.00
Received	100,075.00
To r'cv in 2021	180.00

EXPENSES	
Property project expenses	66,770.31
Total Expenses	66,770.31

Renewal Fund Purpose	
Livestream (30%)	30,076.50
Property (10%)	10,025.50
Outreach (10%)	10,025.50
2021 Salaries (50%)	50,127.50
Total	100,255.00

In 2020 60th anniversary funds paid for painting the Admin hallways and offices which completed the Office/Hallway/Bathroom renovation project

2021 PLEDGERS

139 PLEDGES

TOTAL = \$490,106

Debbie Anderson	Sam & Linda Harmon	John & Vicky Partin
Max Anderson	Sammy & Amy Hatfield	Bill & Sandi Pauli
Michael Ankerich & Charlie Snipes	Greg & Lisa Herring	Carlene Pawlowicz
Royce & Tamara Ard	Carole Hill	Laura Perkins
Marty & Beth Barr	Steve Hodges & Pat Daniel	Jan Pittman
Barbara Billings	Paul & Elizabeth Hostetter	Nancy Prescott
Deidre Bohannon & Lauren Copes	Ena Hunt	Linda Prince
Gerry & Sonya Boyd	Seyi & Nike Isijola	Maryann Rahm
Angie Braid	April Jacobs	Roger & Erin Redden
David & Barbara Brandenburgh	Lowell & Norma Jergens	Sid & Heidi Regan
Joanna Brunson	Paul & Ann Johnston	Marianne Richter
Reggie Brushwood & Bill Lacy	Tom Jones & Tanya Edwards-Jones	Kristie Ridgeway
Ann Burr	Lewis & Lori Kent	Martha Robert
Grace Burton-Edwards	Tom Lanham & Deborah Bordelon	Joe & Libba Russell
Raymond Campbell	Kelli Leak	Brian Schwartz
Ray Capo	Keith & Susan Leigh	Steve & Adley Scott
Paul & Jo Cates	Tracy Leopard & Penny Wise	Spencer & Susan Sealy
Jack & Nicole Ceccato	Karen Lord	Malinda Shamburger
Denny Clark & Toni Fisher	Edward Lowe & Charley Falletta	Donna Sharp
Susan & Ami Connery	Steve & Pauline Marth	Mark & Marianne Sheehan
Dennis & Karen Cook	Bob & Renee McAneny	Ceci Shirley
Murray Craig	Martin & Sandy McCann	Michele Shumpert
Dan & Sandy Dawson	Freeman McCluskey	Steve & Julia Slater
Michael & Hunter Dempsey	Mike & Libby McFalls	Chris & Patty Slembariski
Steve & Christine DiFelicianantonio	Rick & Marquette McKnight	Darius & Christine Slusher
Larry & Donna Dooley	Charles & Pat McMahan	Mike & Lynn Smith
Norm & Margo Easterbrook	Andrew & Chelsea Meeks	Mollie Smith
Mike Edmondson	Marcel & Catrina Meijer	Bernie Sutter
Tamara Edwards	Joe Mills & Jim Rutland	Clifford & Bobsie Swift
Barbara Ellis	Robert & Malone Moore	Sonny Taunton
Paula Evans	Mike & Eliza Morrill	Bill & Mary Jane Thomas
Darlene Everitt	Kaitlin Moye	Dick & Debbie Tompson
Jon & Jessica Ezzell	Tom & Michelle Mullen	Holle Tubbs
Frank & Pam Feagle	Kathleen Mullins	Deborah Tucker
Neal Fenter	Robert & Sharon Murad	Louise Tulloh
Joe Fischer	Kerry & Amy Nelson	Dan & Linda Van Kley
Art & Kathy France	Mike & Ruth Nichols	Julie Van Meter
Mary Free	Perrin & Becca Nicolson	Tom & Sherry Wade
Spencer & Cynthia Garrard	Virginia Nixdorf	Travis & Mitchi Wade
Dan & Sara Ginter	Sue O'Dell	Del & Joann Weeks
Cindy Godwin	Mandy Ochoa	Ralph Wimberly
Allen & Beverly Gordy	Meg & Susie Olive-Allison	Ron & Susan Wirt
Mitch & Allyson Grossman	Michael Owen	Molly Wright
Lynne Hahn	Celia Page & Jenny Holder	+ 2 Anonymous
Kenny & Mickie Hall	Nelia Partain	
Judy Harding		