



Seasons

at

ST. THOMAS



ADVENT 2021



CHRISTMAS 2021

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2023: FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

This line from the Song of Mary is our theme for Advent 2023. Throughout the song, Mary remembered the generations who had come before her and those who would come after.

From this day, all generations will call me blessed.

You have mercy on those who fear you from generation to generation.

Mary recognized that she was part of a long line of people who had seen the power and mercy of God at work in the world and in their lives. God's faithfulness in the past gave Mary hope for the future.

Like Mary, we are part of a long line of faithful people who have known and served God throughout the world and particularly as part of St. Thomas. Throughout this season, we will give thanks for what we learned and received from previous generations and consider what we hope to pass on *from generation to generation*.

Blessings,
Grace

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT A GLANCE

- Wednesday, November 29** - Make Advent Wreaths at 6:30.
- Sunday, December 3** - First Sunday of Advent - Special guest at 9:30 adult formation (see inside).
- Mondays: December 4, 11, and 18** - Advent lunches at noon: Promise and Hope within the Promised Land.
- Wednesday, December 6** - Visit from St. Nicholas for children & youth, and service project for teens in foster care.
- Sunday, December 10** - Welcome Sunday. Welcome Breakfast at 9:30. Confirmation at the Cathedral in Atlanta at 4 pm. Contemplative Healing Service at 5 pm.
- Wednesday, December 13** - Carol Sing at 6:30. Youth pack bags for WNN. Children's pageant practice.
- Sunday, December 17** - Lessons and Carols and Nativity Pageant at 4:30, followed by Wassail Party.
- Sunday, December 24** - Morning worship (Advent IV) in the Chapel at 8:30 (Rite I) and 10:30 (Rite II).
- Sunday, December 24** - Christmas Eve services at 4:30 and 10:30.
- Sunday, December 31** - One service at 10:30 in the Nave. No nursery or children's chapel.
- Sunday, January 7** - Epiphany breakfast at 9:30. Baptisms at 10:30 service. Confirmation services at Trinity at 2 pm.

LOVE GOD: WORSHIP



Worship in Advent

A new Church Year begins on December 3, the First Sunday of Advent. The year is Year B in the Revised Common Lectionary, with a focus on Mark's Gospel. We begin each Sunday in Advent with prayers around an Advent wreath led by new members of St. Thomas.

Our **8:30 Eucharist** will be Rite I, the older language of the church, to help us center ourselves in a different way in this season. Our **10:30 Eucharist** will continue to be Rite II.

Wednesday Eucharist will continue at 5:30 through December 20 and will resume in 2024 on January 10.

First Sunday of Advent - December 3

Prepare for the Season

Dr. Denny Clark, former Parish Theologian of St. Thomas, joins us at 9:30 am to talk about what he has been doing since he moved away earlier this year. One of his new interests is the Tri-Faith Initiative in Omaha, a joint venture of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian congregations.

Advent devotions and candles for the Advent wreath will be available this morning. Sign up online by November 26 to reserve candles. Or, join us on Wednesday, November 29 to make a wreath from greenery. We hope you will decorate wreaths at home and share pictures.

Second Sunday of Advent - December 10

Welcome New Members & Contemplative Worship

At both services on this day, we will welcome and introduce new members of St. Thomas and pray for you in worship that morning. The Very Rev. Matthew Grunfeld, who grew up at St. Thomas is the preacher for the day. Between services we will gather for a Welcome Breakfast in the Parish Hall at 9:30 and hear a panel reminisce about earlier times at St. Thomas. If you have not yet joined St. Thomas but would like to, complete the form on the website at stthomascolumnbus.org/joining-st-thomas or email the church office.

Also, Diocesan Confirmation services will be offered on this day at the Cathedral of St. Philip (2744 Peachtree Road in Atlanta). Those wishing to be Confirmed or Received into the Episcopal Church should arrive by 3:15. The service is at 4 pm and will conclude by 6 pm. We will organize a carpool for those who wish to take part.

Join us at 5 pm in the Chapel for the Contemplative Healing Service to listen, listen, listen -- to hear and be a part of Taizé chant, to listen for the Spirit in scripture, to pray and pray, and most of all, to listen to God.

Third Sunday of Advent - December 17

Lessons and Carols & Christmas Pageant at 4:30 pm

The St. Thomas Choir will offer a beautiful service of Lessons and Carols while the Episcokids present a Christmas Nativity Pageant during the Carols. Following the service, join us for a Wassail Party in the Parish Hall and a children's Christmas Party in the Youth Room. Bring a favorite sweet or savory dish to share at the Wassail Party. Sign up with Mrs. Heather to participate in the Pageant and/or attend the children's Christmas Party.

Fourth Sunday of Advent - December 24

Every so often, the fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve fall on the SAME day. We will celebrate both. Both morning services will be in the Chapel at 8:30 (Rite I) and 10:30 (Rite II) so that preparations for Christmas Eve may begin in the Nave earlier in the week. Nursery and Children's Chapel will be available during the 10:30 service.

Christmas Eve Services

4:30 pm | Eucharist,
The Christmas Story, & Candlelight
with Children's chapel and nursery
available

10:30 pm | Eucharist, The Christmas
Story, Candlelight & Incense

Christmas Season Worship

Christmas Eve Services - 4:30 and 10:30 pm.

Two nearly identical services with Eucharist, candlelight, and the Christmas story. Children's chapel and nursery care are offered at the 4:30 service only. Incense will be used at the 10:30 service only. The 4:30 service will be livestreamed.

LOVE GOD: WORSHIP



A Little Advent (and Christmas) Music

Have you ever wanted to be part of the choir and sing those descants? Come join us for Advent and Christmas. Rehearsals have just started- Wednesdays 6:45-8:30 pm and Sundays at 9:30 am. Lessons and Carols on December 17 at 4:30 pm followed by our church-wide party. Call Rick or email rick@stthomascolumbus.org for details.



Contemplative Healing Service

November 26 & December 10
5 pm in the Chapel

We've got the good opportunity for two services before year's end. Night falls earlier in this time, and we are invited to spend gifted hours together in quiet and holy reflection. Join us to listen, listen, listen -- to hear and be a part of Taizé chant, to listen for the Spirit in scripture, to pray and pray, and most of all, to listen to God. God's got a lot to say to you. Pass the word about this distinctive service in which you are held lovingly in the light of Christ, and are welcome to receive healing prayers, and anointing. Holy Eucharist, candlelight, God, and you.



Our Next Baptism Sunday

January 7, 2024

Baptism of our Lord

As we remember the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, we also welcome all to be baptized on this day. Contact Rev. Grace to schedule Baptism.

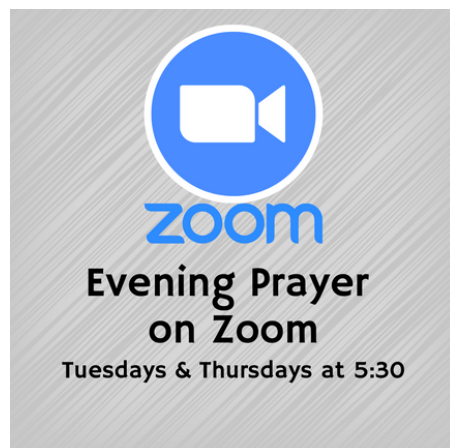
Also on this day, at 2 pm Bishop Wright will be at Trinity Episcopal Church in Columbus for a Confirmation service for our Convocation. All who desire to be Confirmed or Received are invited to do so on this day.



Children's Chapel

during 10:30 service

During the hymn before the gospel lesson, children follow the petite cross and leaders to the Chapel for Children's Chapel where they continue to follow the service order and have an interactive worship experience. Children set their own altar, interact with scripture, and ask questions. Each week the children are encouraged to pray, think deeply, and have fun. Children also receive a bulletin made by Illustrated Ministry.



Zoom Evening Prayer

Tuesdays & Thursdays from 5:30 to 5:45 or so on Zoom

We continue to gather on Tuesdays and Thursdays online at 5:30 throughout this season. Join us for a brief time of prayer in the evening. The link is available on our LinkTree.

Prayer Group

The St. Thomas Prayer Group meets weekly to offer all kinds of prayers, including Prayers of the People shared on Sunday mornings. We also pray for those who have asked for prayers but wish them to be private. This list is confidential to the Prayer Group. Contact the church office to request prayers or to find out about being a part of the Prayer Group.

Parish Hall Service

Sundays at 10:30

If you find yourself looking for a different way to participate in the 10:30 service, consider joining a small group in the Parish Hall where the live stream is shown. Coffee, snacks, and plenty of room to move freely are available. Those worshipping in the Parish Hall are invited to the nave for Communion if you wish.

LOVE EVERY PERSON: FELLOWSHIP & WELCOME



PROMISE
AND HOPE
WITHIN THE
PROMISED
LAND

St. Thomas Advent
Lunches



Promise and Hope within the Promised Land St. Thomas Advent Lunches

**December 4, 11, and 18
Noon to 1 in the Parish Hall**

The hearts of people of many faiths are breaking as we watch devastating conflict unfold in the Middle East. Several St. Thomas parishioners asked for an opportunity to learn more about the history of the region and look at the current conflict from the perspective of faith, rather than partisan and political points of view. Join us for these informative sessions presenting a variety of perspectives on this complex challenge. May greater understanding lead to greater peace in our world.



December 4 - A History of Differing Promises and Hopes

Dr. Denny Clark, our beloved former Parish Theologian, returns to begin the series. He will share an overview of how the promises and hopes of many peoples have shaped the region over the years and provide insight into what hope might look like today. Denny and his wife Toni Fisher were involved in the Bethsaida Excavations Project in Israel for 26 years, spending 1-4 months per year in Israel/Palestine for about half of those years. They now live in Blair, Nebraska, where Denny volunteers with the Tri-Faith Initiative, a cooperative effort of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian congregations in Omaha.



December 11 - Jewish Perspectives on Promise and Hope

Rabbi Beth Schwartz, Rabbi Emerita of Temple Israel in Columbus, will speak about what the Promised Land has meant over 3,000 years of Jewish presence within the region, varying ways of understanding that promise over time and across many Jewish communities, and current perspectives today.



December 18 - Promise and Hope within the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

Rev. Judy Quick, a Deacon with our neighbors in the Diocese of Alabama, has served for several years on the board of the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, which includes many ministries among Arab Christians living in Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. She will speak about the ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem past and present and about their hopes for the future.

*From
Generation
to
Generation*

Advent 2023



Meditations for Advent: From Generation to Generation

This line from Mary's song of praise is our theme for the Advent season, recalling God's faithfulness in the past that gives us hope for the future. We are inviting parishioners to write brief meditations for the season based on this theme. How has God been faithful to you in the past? What message of hope do you have for the future? Meditations should be 250 to 300 words and include a picture of you. Meditations are needed by December 1. They will be shared by email. Contact Meg in the office for more information or to let us know you're planning to contribute.

LOVE EVERY PERSON: FELLOWSHIP & WELCOME



Wednesdays in Advent: Intergenerational Activities to mark the season

Eucharist in the Chapel at 5:30
Dinner in the Parish Hall from 5:30 to 6:15
Prayers around the tables at 6:25
Activities from 6:30 until you want to leave!

November 29 - This is the rare year when the first Sunday of Advent is NOT over the Thanksgiving holiday, giving us more time to prepare. All are invited to gather on Wednesday evening to make Advent wreaths out of greenery for use at home. Please sign up for this activity so that we know how many materials to have on hand. Bring extra greenery to share.

December 6 - Children, youth, and adults will hear about St. Nicholas and prepare for his visit. All children and youth are encouraged to wear holiday PJs! Children will have a chance to try on their Nativity Pageant costumes as well. We will also share in a service project filling bags with stocking stuffers for teens in foster care in our community. Look for a list of needed items in upcoming email newsletters and bring what you can!

December 13 - As it gets closer to Christmas, we will warm up our Christmas voices. Join us for an informal carol sing. We will take requests from Hymnal 1982 that evening. If you want to sing a hymn that is not in Hymnal 1982, please send it to office@stthomascolumbus.org by Sunday, December 10. Also this evening, youth will pack bags for WNN, and children will prepare for their Nativity Pageant.

No Wednesday dinner or activities on December 20. However, Eucharist will still take place in the Chapel at 5:30, in celebration of the Feast of St. Thomas the next day.

ST. THOMAS FAMILY PROGRAMS	
WEDNESDAYS IN ADVENT	
NOV 29TH	DEC 6TH
FAMILY ADVENT WREATH MAKING ACTIVITY (ALL AGES)	PAJAMA NIGHT & ST. NICHOLAS VISIT FOR ALL CHILDREN/YOUTH
DEC 13TH	DEC 20TH
CAROL SING FOR ALL AGES, CHILDREN'S PAGEANT REHEARSAL, & YOUTH SERVICE PROJECT	NO WEDNESDAY DINNER OR PROGRAMING
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT STTHOMASCOLUMBUS.ORG	



Wassail Party

Sunday, December 17 following Lessons and Carols

Join us for a time of fellowship around the Wassail Bowls (one with rum and one without). Please bring a sweet or savory dish to share. Volunteers are needed to help with set up, serving, and clean up. Contact Seth to let him know you can help.

During the Wassail Party, the children will have their own Christmas Party in the Outreach Center with Mrs. Heather including an ornament exchange!



Epiphany Breakfast

January 7 at 9:30 in the Parish Hall

Join us for Breakfast with the Magi - be sure to get your photo with them. In addition, we will share in the custom of Blessing Homes at Epiphany. This custom developed because the Magi visited Jesus at his house. We will share kits for blessing our homes and inviting Christ to dwell with us throughout the year.

LOVE EVERY PERSON: FELLOWSHIP & WELCOME



Making Room for All: St. Thomas Vision Campaign

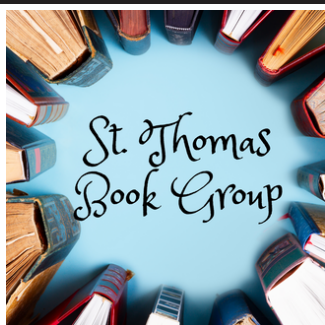
We are in the midst of our *Making Room for All Vision Campaign* to improve accessibility on our campus.

We plan to

- Provide closer handicapped parking
- Eliminate steps to the altar rail
- Move the choir downstairs
- Add ramps to the sacristy and flower room and eliminate steps from these spaces to the altar

Thanks to all who have already made a pledge to help us Make Room for All. We ask that pledges be made by January 15.

Several named giving opportunities are available, and the names of all who contribute will be included on a plaque to remember this campaign. In addition, we invite Christmas gifts to this project in honor or memory of individuals. Gifts and memorials received by December 20 will be included in the Christmas Eve bulletin.



St. Thomas Book Group

First Fridays at 11
am

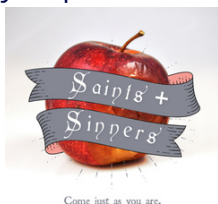
The St Thomas Book Group met on Friday, November 3rd for a lively discussion of *Bridge of Scarlet Leaves* by Kristina McMorris. The next meeting is Friday, December 1st for a discussion of *Book of Lost Friends* by Lisa Wingate. The group meets the first Friday of each month in the St. Thomas library at 11 am. The book for January 5th is *Hello Summer* by Mary Kay Andrews. It's an informal group where everyone is welcome. Call Martha Mullinax or Alice Barlow for further information.



YACT Christmas Party

December 15th at 6 pm

Taylor and Jeremy Mack will host a holiday gathering for YACT, the St. Thomas young adults group, at their home. Bring a wrapped gift (under \$20) to play White Elephant. Both established and new members are welcome! Please RSVP to Taylor if you plan to attend.



Saints and Sinners

December 7, 11:15 am

Saints and Sinners will meet for a brief Eucharist, fellowship, and potluck lunch on Thursday December 7 at 11:15. Following Eucharist at 11:30, the group will share a potluck lunch in the Parish Hall. Bring a dish to share! Everyone is welcome to join! This is a great way to meet folks at St. Thomas.



Excursion to Columbus Botanical Garden:

Shine, A Garden that Glows!

December 1, Columbus Botanical Gardens Celebration of nature and wonder. Fire and s'mores, Walk of Stars, Kids' Craft Stations, Holiday Market, Bioluminescence Maze, live entertainment, and more. Only on December 1, the Columbus Ballet will be present to perform scenes from their upcoming production of *The Nutcracker* under the shimmering lights of SHINE. Buy tickets at

columbusbotanicalgarden.org/shine AND please let Roxane know you'll be there so we can meet at the entrance and enjoy this magical evening together. Be sure to sign up for the 6:00-7:30 time slot, and know that children are encouraged at this Excursion. Kids \$8 and adults \$15, member discount available.



LEARN TOGETHER



Sunday Morning Formation at St. Thomas

9:30 - 10:15 am

Come for fellowship and formation as we dive deeper into scripture, theology, and faith. There is a group for everyone!

- Shine Time - Preschool-3rd Grade Children - Outreach Center
- Tween Time - 4th Grade-Middle School Tweens - Youth Suite
- Adult Formation - All Life-Long Learners - Library and Welcome Classes

Sunday Mornings for Adults this Season

(More info about each of these offerings is available in this newsletter)

- **November 26** - Welcome Class in the Parish Hall and TheoEd session in the Library
- **December 3** - Welcome Class in the Parish Hall and session with Dr. Denny Clark, former Parish Theologian of St. Thomas, in the Library
- **December 10** - Welcome Breakfast in the Parish Hall
- **December 17** - TheoEd session in the Library
- **December 24** - No Sunday morning formation
- **December 31** - No Sunday morning formation
- **January 7** - Epiphany Breakfast in the Parish Hall



Welcome Classes

Sundays at 9:30

Continue until December 3
Welcome Classes are for people new to St. Thomas and for those who would like to learn more. They serve as preparation for Confirmation or Reception by our Bishop for those who are ready to take that step.

November 26 - Welcome to our Facility: A tour of several areas on our campus along with a description of the ministries that take place in these spaces.

December 3 - Welcome to Ministry and Life Together: Our Baptismal Covenant, what it means to be Confirmed or Received, and how to get involved.



Sunday Adult Formation: Theology Class with TheoEd

November 26 and December 17

Like TED talks, but about God! This online resource presents recordings of thoughtful Christian leaders giving "the talk of their lives to spark conversations about God, religion, and the power of faith to change lives and communities." This is a chance to learn from many teachers and grow together. Gather in the library to watch a brief talk and learn with and from others in the room.



Sunday School for Children & Tweens

Sundays, 9:30-10:15

Shine Time and Tween Time will continue to meet on December 3rd, 10th, and 17th at 9:30-10:15am in Outreach (Shine Time) and the Youth Room (Tween Time). We will finish up our *Manna and Mercy* study December 3rd. We will study the meaning and practices of Advent on December 10th & 17th. There will be no Sunday School programming on Christmas Eve or New Years Eve.

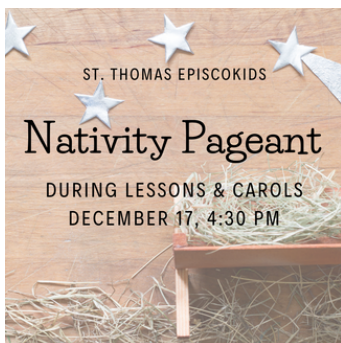
Parents and parishioners are also encouraged to volunteer with our classes. We would like our children growing and learning with our community's help. If you would like to volunteer please contact Mrs. Heather for more information. Heather@stthomascolumbus.org. Classes offered are:

Children ages 3-5 meet in the 3-4 year-old class just past the Nursery

Children grades 1-3 grades meet in the large classroom in Outreach

Tweens grades 4-8 meet in the Youth Room





Children's Nativity Pageant

Sunday, December 17, 4:30 pm

Children are invited to participate in the Children's pageant during our Lessons and Carols service on December 17. Sign up on the website to let us know you plan to participate. Parents will be contacted with the role their child best fits. We will have a costume fitting in Outreach on December 6 and December 10 and a dress rehearsal in the Nave on December 13th. Please contact Mrs. Heather for more information.

Nursery Notes

- Nursery care is available during Lessons and Carols and the Wassail Party on Dec. 17th.
- Nursery care is available on Sunday morning, Dec. 24 during the 10:30 service.
- Nursery care is available during the 4:30 Christmas Eve service.
- No nursery or child care on Sunday, Dec 31.



Episcokids Christmas Party

Sunday, December 17, During the Wassail Party

During the Wassail Party, the children will have their own Christmas Party in the Outreach Center with Mrs. Heather including an ornament exchange! Bring an ornament (\$5 or under) to swap with friends!

Youth Parent Meeting

Wednesday, January 10th at 6:30 PM

Youth and their parents are invited to join Taylor Mack in the Youth Room for an informational meeting on January 10th, following Wednesday Night Dinner. This meeting is essential for youth interested in attending the summer trip to the Episcopal General Convention in Louisville, KY and other youth events/trips this year.



Diocesan Youth Events

Diocesan youth retreats and events are a great way for St. Thomas Youth to connect with peers from across the diocese and develop their individual faith in a supportive and loving environment. For more information on the events listed below, please visit eycdioatl.org.

- **DYC Winter Camp Retreat** - January 12-14, DYC is a weekend camp for middle school and high school students that packs the inclusive love of Jesus that youth experience at summer camp into an abbreviated winter camp session.
- **Happening 79 at Camp Mikell** - February 16-18, Happening is a spiritual renewal weekend for high schoolers led by high schoolers. Participants are encouraged to deepen their relationship with God and others throughout this fun and reflective retreat. Taylor will attend and provide transportation for youth.
- **New Beginnings 47 at Camp Mikell** - March 1-3, New Beginnings is a spiritual formation retreat for middle school students. Participants will enjoy a weekend full of fun including small group activities, music, games, and skits.

Youth WNN Service Night

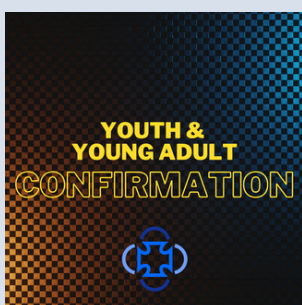
December 13, 6:30 pm, Outreach Center

St. Thommies have a long tradition of packing bags of holiday groceries for Wynnton Neighborhood Network each year. For our final gathering of 2023, youth will meet in Outreach at 6:30 to pack holiday distribution bags for Wynnton Neighborhood Network.



Confirmation Classes

Young adults from 7th grade through college freshman have joined together in confirmation classes the last few weeks. We are grateful for your prayers for us, our adult mentors, our teacher, and our growing spirits as we work diligently through a curriculum based upon the Baptismal Covenant. "Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? I will, with God's help!" Be sure to plan ahead for January 7, at 2 pm at Trinity, when Bishop Wright will offer confirmation for us and others in our convocation.



SERVE TOGETHER



St. Nicholas Night Service Project

In honor of St. Nicholas and in his spirit of giving, we will work together on an intergenerational service project on December 6. This year The Village Foster Care and Adoptive Ministry will serve more than 230 children and teens in foster care in the Chattahoochee Valley with new gifts for Christmas. We asked how we can help and they specifically asked for **donations of stocking stuffers for teens and tweens**.

We're collecting small items for teens and will bag them for foster families to pick up as they "shop" for gifts later in December. Items such as fun socks, lotion, fidgets, candy, journals, cheap jewelry and hair accessories, body spray, etc. will be collected. We hope to pack 75 bags. Look for a complete list of needed items in email newsletters and deliver items to the church office by December 4. Then join us on December 6 as we put the bags together. The Village is also collecting new toys and gift cards as larger gifts for children. For more information about The Village Foster Care and Adoptive Ministry and their Angel Tree project, check them out on Facebook at facebook.com/TheVillageFosterCareAndAdoptiveMinistry or ask Meg in the church office.



Wynnton Neighborhood Network

WNN will serve 200 families (100 each day) for Christmas. Christmas distribution dates are December 18 & 19, starting at 8:30 each day. Donations are welcome to support their additional work this holiday season. Below you will see a list of needed items for weekly distribution and as well as items needed specifically for Christmas.

Weekly Items Needed for the Pantry

- Canned Vegetables (green beans, baked beans, carrots, mixed veggies, or any other type of veggie)
- Canned Meat (tuna, chicken, spam, ham, chili with meat, lasagna, etc.)
- Canned fruit (any type)
- Canned Tomato Products (diced tomatoes, tomatoes, tomato sauce, etc.)
- Macaroni and Cheese
- Spaghetti Sauce and Noodles
- Jelly
- Peanut Butter
- Soup (any kind, including ramen noodles)
- Rice - boxes or bags, any kind
- Breakfast cereal
- Toilet paper
- Bar soap
- Laundry Detergent (pods)

Items Needed for Christmas Distribution

(Need at least 200 of each)

- Cranberry Sauce
- Yams
- Jelly
- Brownie Mix
- Evaporated Milk
- Corn bread mix
- Green Beans
- Cream of Mushroom Soup
- Pumpkin pie mix
- Corn
- Chicken broth (cans or boxes)
- Mac and cheese
- Stuffing
- Peanut butter

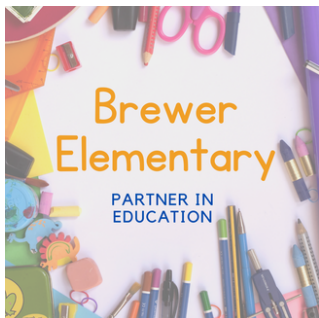
Welcoming a Refugee Family

St. Thomas is working with the IRC to welcome a Guatemalan family of three to our area as official refugees. The family has some contacts in Columbus and have asked to be resettled here. We anticipate their arrival on November 25. We have secured housing for them and almost everything we need to furnish their home. We are excited to have the opportunity to assist the family with learning about community resources, transportation, ESL classes, healthcare, job searches and more. If you would like to assist in some way - big or small - please contact Meg in the church office - especially if you speak Spanish! You can also make a financial gift to support this work.



Our first move-in day with wonderful volunteers!

SERVE TOGETHER



Brewer Elementary School Buddy Pack Project

We are SO excited about our newest Brewer Elementary School Partnership Project because it directly impacts the lives of the children we serve. The Brewer Buddy Packs Project puts food into the backpacks of 80 children living in food-insecure households on a weekly basis. Here's how it works: Brewer Elementary School teachers and counselors

have identified 80 students living in food-insecure households. St. Thomas Episcopal Church then purchases a month's supply of Buddy Packs from Feeding the Valley Food Bank at \$3.50 each. (That's 3.50 x 80 for \$280 per week x 4 weeks for a total of \$1,120 per month. For a 10 month school year that comes to \$11,200 per year.)

The on site United Way representative at Brewer then distributes Buddy Packs to teachers who discreetly place them in student backpacks on Friday afternoons. Buddy Packs include such things as easy to open cans of food items, granola bars, and juice boxes.

In this way, children whose most reliable source of meals is from school breakfasts and school lunches are also provided help with meals over the weekends. This costs us a little over \$125 per child. This program helps to reduce the stress of children living in hunger and not only improves the quality of their lives but their school performance as well.

Here's what you can do to help:

Donate. Please write a check or donate online to St. Thomas Episcopal Church Brewer Buddy Pack Program. Just specify Online or note on your check that your donation is for the Brewer Buddy Pack Program. \$14 supports one child for a month. \$125 supports one child for a year. \$280 supports 80 children for a week. \$1,120 supports 80 children for a month. Any amount helps. ***Consider giving a year's worth of Buddy Packs to a student in honor of a loved one for Christmas!***

Volunteer. Volunteers are needed one Tuesday a month to pick up Buddy Packs from Feeding the Valley and deliver them to Brewer Elementary School. We meet at Feeding the Valley at 9:00 am and are finished at Brewer by 10:00 am. The next dates to volunteer are December 5 and January 9. Please sign up on the St. Thomas website

This Brewer Buddy Pack Project between St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Brewer Elementary School, Feeding the Valley Food Bank and the United Way shows what we can do to change lives when we work together. Thank you all for supporting our work!

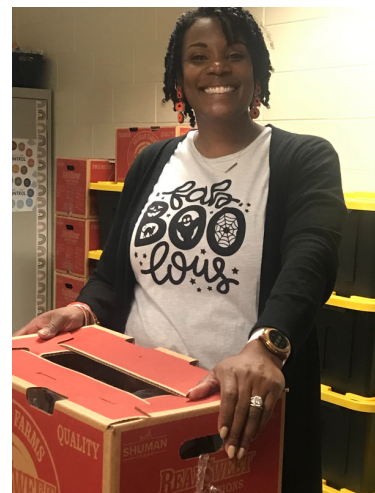
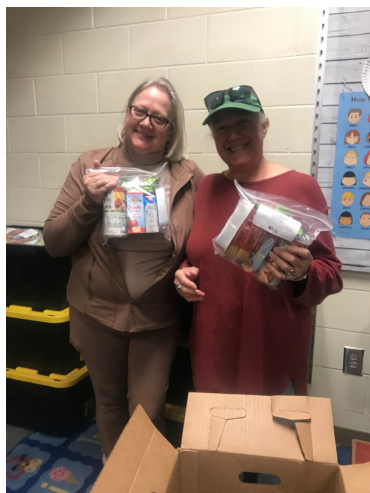
Please contact Margo Easterbrook or Libba Russell for further information.



CVEM News

Thank you to all of you who support CVEM and our programs. For many years, CVEM has offered Christmas cards at Christmas. It has been a beautiful tradition and we appreciate all of you who have requested them through the years. Unfortunately, this year, we will not be offering Christmas cards, but we will share stories with you about our programming in hopes that the things we are doing are still things you want to support. In the coming weeks, please look for our stories. If you are not subscribed, please visit our website and sign up at cvemjubilee.org. Wishing you a reverent Advent and a Merry Christmas.

-Malinda Shamburger,
Director



SERVE TOGETHER



EAST CARVER HEIGHTS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

East Carver Heights Community Development Corporation had another great **Boxwood Soccer** season this fall. U8s and U10s had fun learning about soccer. U12s made the semi-finals of the playoffs. U14 Tsunamis won the league title, were undefeated and won the U14 playoffs. U19 Hurricanes had a great first year and placed second in the region. Thank you St. Thomas for the water, snacks and prayers that sustained players and coaches.

We have five soccer teams and would like to give a coat or jacket to four teams. Traditionally, we give **coats at a Christmas party** with Santa and crafts. Our families look forward to this fun event. Please consider purchasing a coat for a player this year. We need the coats by December 15th. Please choose a player from our website at eastcarverheights.org.

Path to Shine is busy teaching about fall and thankfulness. Please pray for our mentors and students. Thank you to those who prepare the snacks. We also had fun with St. Thomas parishioners who helped carve pumpkins and those who participated in Trunk or Treat. It was great fun for the families and children.

Thank you for supporting the **Boxwood F.A.N.N.** Food security is a big issue for families in poverty and we are proud to support 11 families. The families celebrated November with a Friendsgiving celebration where they cooked and brought food to share for fellowship.



St. Thomas Yard Sale

Save-the-Date

February 10

Items will be received in the parish hall beginning Sunday, February 4, 2024. Start saving now. Contact Linda Prince if you would like to volunteer. We're looking for these types of items for donations: Clothing: Less than 3 years old on hangers, Coats, Athletic Wear, Gently-worn Shoes, Children's Clothing, Household Items: Branded mugs/bottles like Starbucks, Sports Team Gear, Books, Artwork, Working Appliances and Tools, Housewares, Furniture, Gently-used Toys, Sports Equipment, Games, Holiday Items, and Jewelry.



Christmas Music and Flowers

Donations for Christmas Music and Flowers are being received. These gifts may be made in honor or memory of someone and a listing of names will appear in the Christmas Eve bulletin. *Gifts and names are needed by December 20 in order to be printed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. A gift of \$35 per name is suggested.*



An Invitation from St. Paul UMC

Dealing with Grief

November 29 and December 6

6:30 to 7:15

The holiday season can be challenging for many. Earl Nichols, a counselor with Pastoral Institute and an expert on grief and grief recovery, will speak at St. Paul United Methodist Church on these two Wednesdays. Following his presentation, he will stay for a time of Q & A. The community is invited.

Year-End Gifts to St. Thomas

St. Thomas welcomes year-end gifts of cash or stock transfer to help us end the year on a strong footing. Gifts to the St. Thomas Endowment are also welcome and will have an impact on ministry at St. Thomas for years to come. Contact Patty Slembariski in the church office with any questions: 706.324.4264 or patty@stthomascolumbus.org. Contributions for 2023 must be received in the office or postmarked by December 31, 2023.



St. Thomas Creation Keepers have been asked by our partner Georgia Interfaith Power and Light (GIPL) to put our faith into action. We're being asked to call on the Columbus City Council to voice support in the protection of the Okefenokee Swamp. At issue is a bid to mine titanium. Email keepourcreation@gmail.com to more information on the threat to the Okefenokee Swamp.

This is an opportunity for the City of Columbus to voice support for this valuable treasured ecosystem. A possible negative impact to our area is the potential threat of burning peat on our air quality.

Email keepourcreation@gmail.com, SUBJ LINE: OKEFENOCKEE if interested in receiving information about:

1. Signing a petition to protect the Okefenokee Swamp;
2. Contacting your City Council person to voice your concern about the mining proposal;
3. Attending a future Columbus City Council meeting advocating with Creation Keepers when we're able to get on a future agenda.

Our coastal neighbors need our help to protect this fragile ecosystem!

Creation Keepers also shared these five ways to celebrate the holidays while still being environmentally friendly:

1. Gift meaningfully and shop locally. Consider the environmental impact of the gifts you want to give. By focusing on quality over quantity of gifts, you can reduce the waste of unwanted items. Consider gifting an experience or donating to an organization that means something to them. If gifting experiences isn't your style, explore local shops to find the right gift – you'll maybe even have a chance to get it customized. Shopping locally reduces vehicle pollution from transporting your gift to you, so shop from local sellers near you, on Etsy, or on social platforms.

2. Wrap gifts with materials other than traditional gift wrap. One of the easiest eco-friendly swaps for the holiday season is to use alternative materials as gift wrap. Make the wrap a part of the gift by packing in items you already have around the house but aren't using, like a reusable tote bag, mason jar, or home storage basket. Fabrics like scarves, bandanas or burlap are quite the look when tied around the gift. If you stick to using paper, wrap the gifts with old newspapers, compostable wrapping paper, or even paper grocery bags.

3. Plan for food sourcing and storing. The best part of the holidays is undoubtedly the food and, with a little bit of planning, it can also be part of your sustainable holiday routine. When deciding on the menu, go for local and seasonal ingredients to ensure a low carbon footprint as they won't have travelled as far to get to your table. When packing leftovers, instead of tinfoil and plastic, try using beeswax and reusable containers. Food waste is not unique to the holidays, but since we're indulging and most likely cooking a bit more during this time, see if guests are able to bring their own reusable containers to take leftovers.

4. Decorate your home with sustainable lights and trees. Lighting uses a ton of energy, and traditional holiday lights create a spike in electricity generation. As a more sustainable alternative, use LED lights to decorate inside and outside, setting up a timer so they are only on when they need to be. For the holiday tree, look for containerized or potted trees in place of artificial trees so they can be planted outside once the holidays are over. Artificial trees need to be used for around 20 years to offset the impact they have when they are produced, making them the less sustainable option compared to real trees.

5. Set your home up for energy savings while you're out. If you won't be home for the holidays, make sure you conserve energy while you're away. Smart thermostats allow you to set a heating schedule and control your energy use from anywhere.

This holiday season, spread the holiday cheer sustainably in any way you can depending on your budget and capacity. Every small act counts to reduce the waste and pollution that accumulate at this time of year.

Next Edition of *Seasons*

Our next edition of this newsletter will cover the short season of Epiphany at St. Thomas. The deadline for inclusion is January 8. We will distribute on January 14.

Church Office Schedule

The church office will be closed on November 22 at noon, November 23-24, December 25-26, and January 1.



**QR
CODE!**

Use the camera on your smart phone to scan the QR code to sign up for events.

