

St. Thomas LifeLines

Volume 33, No. 10

October 2026

Dear St. Thomas family,

I love October. Besides being my birth-month, the changing leaves, cooler mornings, and harvest season remind me that God is always at work in cycles of growth, change, and renewal. In the midst of busy schedules and a world that feels uncertain, this season invites us to pause and notice the signs of God's presence all around us.

October also brings us deeper into the rhythm of our life together at St. Thomas. Worship, study, fellowship, and service are not simply activities on our calendar. They are the ways we grow as disciples of Jesus Christ and strengthen the bonds that unite us as a parish family. I am continually grateful for the faithfulness, generosity, and compassion I see throughout this congregation. Whether you are serving at the altar, helping with outreach ministries, participating in educational offerings, preparing meals, caring for our property, or simply offering a welcoming smile to a newcomer, you are participating in the work of God's kingdom.

This month, we also look forward to celebrating the Feast of St. Francis and our annual Blessing of the Animals. St. Francis reminds us that all creation reflects the glory of its Creator and that our call to stewardship extends beyond the walls of the church. In a world that can often seem divided, care for God's creation offers a powerful witness to our shared responsibility and hope.

As we continue our journey through the fall, I encourage you to remain grounded in prayer. Prayer is not merely something we do when life becomes difficult. It is the foundation of our relationship with God, shaping our hearts and opening us to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Whether your prayers are spoken in church, offered quietly at home, or whispered during a walk through the countryside, trust that God hears them and is present with you.

Finally, I invite each of us to consider how God may be calling us to deepen our discipleship during this season. Perhaps it is through a renewed commitment to worship, an act of service, a generous gift, or a simple act of kindness toward a neighbor. Small acts of faithfulness often become the means by which God's grace is revealed in the world.

Thank you for the many ways you contribute to the life and ministry of St. Thomas Episcopal Church. It is a blessing to serve alongside you. May this season of autumn bring you peace, joy, and a renewed awareness of God's abundant love.

Yours in Christ,
Mark

Birthdays!

10/1-Robert Gibson
 10/2-Vera Small
 10/6-Ryan L.-from Green Cottage at Boys Home
 10/12-John Priddy, Paul Stalvey
 10/16-Adrienne Holbrook, Natalie Miller
 10/20-Fr. Mark, Gio-from Green Cottage at Boys Home
 10/21-Akan Ndem
 10/22-Amy Frazier
 10/29-Justin-from Green Cottage at Boys Home
 10/31-Graham Swinfen



Joewel from Green Cottage at Boys Home with his birthday card from Chris Witt.

Anniversaries!

10/15-Bob & Joanne Stauffer
 10/22-Jim Chamberlain & Cindy Ptak

St. Francis of Assisi Sunday & Blessing of the Animals

This year, St Francis Day falls on Sunday, October 4th. The readings and prayers for the 10am Holy Eucharist service will focus on the ministry and legacy of St Francis of Assisi.

The Blessing of the Animals will take place in the church gardens at 3pm. All are welcome!

New River Valley Walk—Out of the Darkness

Ann Alexander will be participating in an Out of the Darkness Walk on Saturday morning, October 17, in Dublin at Randolph Park. This event is sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The walk starts at 10:00 am and is 1-3 miles long. If you are interested in joining her or want more information, send her a text or call her at (540) 230-1802.

Montgomery County Christmas Store

Our collection of jars of peanut butter and cans of fruit for the Montgomery County Christmas Store continues through October. This year the need is greater than ever. Thanks so much for your contribution!

Hospitality Sunday

Join in fellowship and enjoy some refreshments after church on the first Sunday of the month. Everyone is invited to bring a dish of finger food to share!

The next hospitality Sunday is October 4th.

A New Way to Sing the Gradual Psalm

As you know, I swap up music things regularly, to keep us engaged during worship, explore the rich diversity of Episcopal/Anglican worship, and just for fun. I initially intended to introduce **responsorial psalms** over the summer, but I never got around to it then. However, the new start date is **October 11**.

To give you a heads up, responsorial psalms are set as groups of psalm verses followed by a refrain (antiphon), similar to how a popular song might use verses and a chorus. For our practice:

- 1) John plays the complete refrain solo.
- 2) The choir sings the complete refrain to John's accompaniment.
- 3) The congregation joins the choir in singing the refrain.
- 4) Then the choir chants the first group of psalm verses--until the refrain is indicated.
- 5) At this point, the choir and congregation together sing the refrain, after which the choir progresses to intoning the next set of verses.
- 6) and so on, until the psalm is complete.

That's it -- easy peasy! Thanks for joining in! Let me know what you think about responsorial psalms!

Amy Frazier, Choir Director

**RATT.... Room at The Table**

On Tuesday, September 15, the St. Thomas RATT crew came together at Christiansburg Presbyterian Church to prepare 110 meals to distribute in our community. The Taco salad meal consisted of seasoned ground turkey, shredded cheese, lettuce, tomato, salsa/sour cream, a large flour tortilla. Applesauce and a chocolate chip cookie rounded out the meal. A BIG SHOUTOUT goes to the chefs! Thank-you Ruth & Harold Ashworth, Tom Bland, Kathy Fowler, Fr. Mark, and Crystal Priddy. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Danielle Bland, danielle_bland@yahoo.com.

It's Christmas in October??

When it comes to pushing seasons, retailers have nothing on choir directors! For example, currently I'm in the midst of planning the music for Christmas Eve. So let me know if you have any **favorite carols or other pieces** you'd like to sing during that service. I'm not promising I'll program them--sorry Anna, no Twelve Days of Christmas: it's just too long, and it would sound weird if we only sang 4 verses. But I'll see what I can do! Amy Frazier, Choir Director

Food Bank Sunday

On the first Sunday of the month we collect donations of non-perishable food for the food bank which are taken to MCEAP later in the week. Food donations can be put in the baskets at the entrance to the church. If you would like to make a monetary donation, be sure to mark "Food Bank" on your check or envelope.

In September we collected 28 items and \$10!



Backpack Program

The first backpack packing party of the school year took place on Wednesday, September 9. 500 bags were assembled in record time.

The bags contain breakfast, lunch/dinner items for 3 meals. The demand for them keeps increasing. The granola bars that St. Thomas collects is one of the items that goes into each bag every month. Come on out and help put together these much-needed meals. The next backpack packing party will take place on October 7 at 5:45pm in the gym at the Bridge Foursquare Church in Christiansburg. For more information, please contact Danielle Bland.

In September we collected 27 boxes of granola bars!

St. Thomas Parish Retreat

The St. Thomas parish retreat is Sunday, October 25th, at Alta Mons in Shawsville (2842 Crockett Springs Rd). The day starts with service at 10am and follows with a potluck lunch. We will be in the Dining Hall for service and lunch. Then enjoy the afternoon hanging out, hiking the trails, or playing games. You can learn more about Alta Mons on their website, <https://www.altamons.org>, or Facebook page, AltaMons. *There will be no service at the church.*

Wilderness Trail Festival Booth

Saturday, Sept. 19th was a beautiful day and many people stopped by our booth at the Kiwanis Wilderness Trail Festival!



Guest Speaker

Sunday, Oct. 11, we will have a guest speaker, Nick Moga, who is the Diocesan Episcopal Relief & Development Coordinator. ERD faithfully administers the funds that it receives from the church and raises from other sources. It provides relief in times of disaster and promotes sustainable development by identifying and addressing the root causes of suffering. Find out more at <https://www.episcopalrelief.org>.

October Server Schedule				
	4	11	18	25
Altar Guild	Kathleen Fowler Kathryn Pollard	Karen Bronaugh Gail Leist Crystal Priddy	Karen Bronaugh Gail Leist Crystal Priddy	Ruth Ashworth Lora Beeken
Announcements	Kathleen Fowler	Joel Hagen	Bill Kennan	Harvey Leist
Chalice Bearer	Val Tweedie	Danielle Bland	Landon Cairns	Anne Curry
Lay Reader	Jennifer Miller	Mark Priest	Val Tweedie	Bill Kennan
Ushers	Joe Straub Chris Witt	Joe Straub Chris Witt	Harold Ashworth Kathleen Fowler	Joel Hagen Bill Kennan
Zoom Operator	Joel Hagen	Val Tweedie	Mark Priest	Val Tweedie

October 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 1 pm Watercolor Class 7 pm Evening Prayer on Zoom	2 8 pm NA	3
4 St. Francis of Assisi Sunday Food Bank & Hospitality Sunday 10 am Holy Eucharist 3 pm Blessing of the Animals	5	6 6:30-7:45 pm Choir Rehearsal 7 pm NA	7 8 pm NA	8 1 pm Watercolor Class 7 pm Evening Prayer on Zoom	9 8 pm NA	10
11 20th Sunday after Pentecost 10 am Holy Eucharist	12	13 6:30-7:45 pm Choir Rehearsal 7 pm NA	14 8 pm NA	15 10:15am Daughters of the King 1 pm Watercolor Class 7 pm Evening Prayer on Zoom	16 8 pm NA	17 10 am NRV Walk – Out of the Darkness
18 21st Sunday after Pentecost Loose Plate Offering ~ Rector's Discretionary Fund 10 am Holy Eucharist 11:30 am Vestry Meeting	19	20 6:30-7:45 pm Choir Rehearsal 7 pm NA	21 8 pm NA	22 1 pm Watercolor Class 7 pm Evening Prayer on Zoom	23 8 pm NA	24
25 22nd Sunday after Pentecost 10 am Parish Retreat at Alta Mons	26	27 6:30-7:45 pm Choir Rehearsal 7 pm NA	28 8 pm NA	29 1 pm Watercolor Class 7 pm Evening Prayer on Zoom	30 8 pm NA	31

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