Annual Report for the year 2019

St. Thomas Episcopal Church | Terrace Park, Ohio
Rector’s Message

Who We Are and What We Do!

2019 has been a milestone year in many ways, both for the life and ministry we share here and even personally for my family. I have been in parish ministry for over 22 years now; 2019 saw the 20th anniversary of my ordination and now my tenth year serving with you as your rector. 2019 has been an exciting new chapter for the story of what God is doing through us in St. Thomas and beyond!

This has been a year of tremendous growth and an opportunity to prayerfully consider what God’s yearning is calling us to engage with next and how best to realize our mission. We have welcomed over 20 new families this year alone! With this growth comes the invitation to hear and explore what continues to attract people to St. Thomas and how we might best support their own ministry and walk with God. Answers vary but tend to reflect two central themes: people and community. Some of our newcomers ask in response what I consider makes St. Thomas so special in terms of the various kinds of ministry and connections. Building on what our newcomers themselves have identified, I would offer that it is about people, community and what it means to be a community rooted in faith, part of the Body of Christ. It’s all about who we are and what we do.

Our parish is far more than simply a place, a building or single person; we are a living and dynamic community of faith – not an arena, theater or mall but a place where God’s love is made known by who we are and what we do – what we offer and what we practice and how we serve others in Christ’s Name. We are the Church because of how we live into this identity by what we each offer and how we invest our time, talent and treasure. As you read on, the Annual Report is one occasion to celebrate this fact and take notice as to what we have been able to do in Christ’s Name here and beyond. Thank you for what you have been able to offer and practice yourself as we share in this mission!

The Rev. Darren R. S. Elin
Rector, St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Terrace Park, Ohio
(513) 831-2052 ext. 60
darren@stthomasepiscopal.org
To make God’s love known by who we are, what we practice, and how we service others in Christ’s name.
St. Thomas Episcopal Church

Annual Meeting Agenda

Sunday, January 26, 2020
9:00 a.m.
St. Thomas Parish Hall

8:00 a.m.  Breakfast Served

9:15 a.m.  Opening Prayer

Procedure & Records:

Action: Recording Secretary to the Annual Meeting
Action: Minutes from last Annual Meeting (as presented herein)

Presentations:

Appreciation of Retiring Vestry Member
Dianne Lytle

Rector’s Cross Award of Recognition for Witness & Ministry

Business:

Report: Right to Vote & Process of Election
Report: Nominating Process & Nominated Class

Nominees for Vestry Class of 2023 (elect four)
• Beth Benson (additional term)
• Jim D’Wolf (additional term)
• Jamie Flerlage (additional term)
• Terri Moorhead

Nominees for Vestry Officers (elect one of each category)
• Senior Warden: Jim Davis
• Junior Warden: Jonathan Saxton
• Treasurer: Nate Prather
• Secretary/Clerk: Linda Rockaway

Action: Election of Vestry & Officers
Report: Treasurer’s Report & Presentation of the Budget
   Nate Prather

Warden’s Comments:
   Jim Davis

Rector’s Comments:
   The Rev. Darren Elin

Action: Adjournment, Blessing, & Dismissal

10:15 a.m.  Celebration of the Holy Eucharist
2019 Annual Meeting Minutes

Sunday, January 27, 2019
9:00 a.m.
St. Thomas Parish Hall

9:00 a.m. Breakfast Served

The Rev. Darren Elin thanked all of the hard-working people headed by Liz Frederick, who provided breakfast. The Rev. Darren Elin opened with prayer. The Annual Meeting of St. Thomas Parish was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

Procedure & Records:

- It was moved, seconded and approved that Linda Rockaway be appointed as Secretary to the Annual Meeting.
- Minutes from the 2018 Annual Meeting were approved as presented in the Annual Report.

Presentations:

- Fr. Elin expressed appreciation for the service of outgoing Treasurer Chris White. Chris was praised for his outstanding leadership and hard work for 13 years. He was presented with the “Rector’s Cross” and is the first person to receive this outstanding award.
- Jim Davis, Sr. Warden, presented Chris with the Who band’s compilation of complete works. The band is Chris’s favorite. Chris thanked Fr. Elin, Jim Davis and the congregation. He commented that the Church’s finances are doing well, and it is a good time to make a transition.

Business:

- Report: Right to Vote & Judges of the Election – Fr. Elin Baptized and confirmed members of the Parish over the age of 16 years have a right to vote. Wardens serve as judges if there is a challenge from the floor.
- Report: Nominating Committee - Fr. Darren

The Committee consists of the Rector, Wardens, and retiring Vestry members.

It was moved, seconded and passed to accept the Nominating Committee recommendations.

Nominees for Vestry Class of 2022:

- Joe Dumont (additional term)
- Amy Elberfeld (additional term)
- Bea Filimonov (additional term)
- Karen Long (additional term)

Fr. Darren noted that it was the first time that an entire class had chosen to extend for an additional term.

The slate was closed.

Election of Class of 2022 - It was moved and seconded that the nominations be accepted.

Nominees for Vestry Officers presented:

- Senior Warden: Jim Davis
- Junior Warden: Jon Saxton
- Treasurer: Chris White
- Secretary/Clerk: Linda Rockaway

Election of Vestry Officers – It was moved and seconded that the nominations be accepted and that the vote be by acclamation.

- Report: Treasurer’s Report & Presentation of the Budget - Chris White

In passing his duties to Nate, Chris pinned the Episcopal Shield on Nate’s coat lapel to denote that he is now the St. Thomas Episcopal Church Treasurer. He also presented Nate with some “tools” to help him with his new duties that included: a calculator and pencil (always); ibuprofen (for bad days); Episcopal Beverage (Irish whiskey – for really bad days)

Chris thanked his committees and noted that this is his last report:

- The Church ended in the positive column by a little over $33,000. This was due to the strength of the congregation’s commitment and the leadership of St. Thomas in meeting the financial goals of the church.
- It was noted that this past year’s revenue was on a par with 2017 but expenses were lower overall.
- 2018 saw no distribution from the Reserve Fund (a huge accomplishment).
- The Reserve Fund is noted in the Annual Report on page 12.
- The Endowment Fund provided $38,000 to the operating budget as part of the planned annual distribution using the established rate of 4.5%. This yielded a higher amount due to Fund performance over the year. The 4.5% distribution in 2019 could be lower due to the market fluctuation.
- FFPF Endowed Fund distributed $7,000 that was used in the operating budget (also using the same distribution rate of 4.5%). The Fund is owed $60,000 due to earlier utilization and it is expected to be fully repaid in 2019.
- St. Thomas Housing Corporation Endowment distributed $23,000. The money was used on the TW campus.

Chris presented the Budget as a balanced budget. He noted that the Mission Share in 2019 will be 14% of the budget while it was 13.5% in 2018. St. Thomas is the 4th largest parish in the Diocese and thus has to meet a larger portion of the Diocese’ budget.

Motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report and receive the Operating Budget was made, seconded. Passed.

Warden’s Comments – Jim Davis

- Jim thanked the Parish on behalf of the Vestry for a tremendous Stewardship Campaign. The Vestry had asked for a 5% increase in pledges but the increase exceeded 10%. It speaks to the strength of this congregation and its commitment to the church. Jim also thanked the Vestry for their commitment and hard work. He also thanked Nate Prather for accepting the position of Treasurer and Chris White for his years of service now that he is stepping down. Chris will remain on the Finance Committee and the Endowment Committee. The year was a very positive year and he looks toward a very positive future. He was very pleased to note that concerning pledges this year, there were 143 pledges that have pledged over $645,000 in total and he expects the goal of $650,000 to be met. New pledges were made by 18 families which is outstanding. There are 16 long-standing pledges to be followed-up with and a loss of only three pledges overall.

Rector’s Comments – The Rev. Darren Elin

- Fr. Darren spoke on Grace and Discipline that bless our ministry. Grace with unforeseen challenges and Discipline to meet the challenges.
- Thomaston Woods – Due to the coordinating efforts of Paul Lorenz, a new basketball court was installed. There are new educational opportunities for Thomaston Woods’ residents. A scholarship fund is being endowed with $100,000 that will provide annual scholarships totaling $5,000 to be used at UC Clermont or any of the UC campuses.
- Stephen Ministries – The program is growing and has 5 new ministers.
- Fr. Darren thanked the congregation for their enthusiasm and service and also thanked them for entrusting him with the privilege of serving.
- Questions & Answers followed.

Action:

Adjournment, Blessing and Dismissal at 10:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Rockaway,
Secretary & Clerk
The *Faith, Family, Future Initiative (FFFI)* is a special project that enables the parish to address objectives and needs that move far beyond our General Operating Budget and Annual Giving, both as a one-time major campaign and even more as part of an overall strategic vision. What began in conversation moved into prayerful consideration of what was shared and then an intentional campaign was engaged with the parish pledging a combined total of nearly $2 million. There are three focus areas from the campaign of the *Faith, Family, Future Initiative*:

I. Establish endowed funding for Youth & Family Ministry
II. Build a new organ for our nave & sanctuary as part of the vision for our Music Ministry
III. Make capital repairs & refurbishment to our building & grounds in critical areas

For the Capital Campaign, we did not seek to build any new structures so much as to repair and strengthen what we already have been entrusted with. Similarly, with funding, what is pledged and what is already received is what we are working with in all three focus areas. This is the principal reason why, when faced with additional unanticipated expenses related to building repairs, a decision was made to refocus the implementation phase. Since 2015, we have experienced issues with our building that were unexpected, and thus not planned for or included in the budget. These issues included a boiler failure, phone system failure, and required repairs for the water treatment sand filter. In total, these failures have cost $66,000 already and final projected corrective costs identified since we began the FFFI total over $200,000. Simply put, when you combine the balance for the organ, along with the required building maintenance and electrical update, there were not enough funds available. We have undertaken two subsequent reviews and reallocate projected expenses and raise further funds needed, thus the timeline of the project overall was extended to 2022. The Stewardship Executive Team, Finance Committee, and the Vestry, continued to make progress towards the “gap” and we announced last June that this “gap” has been met! Since then, we continue to be “on track” an additional pre-scheduled payment has been made to the organ builder, who has already begun procuring the materials needed for the new organ. There’s a lot more to share within these next two years, so stay tuned!

For *Youth & Family Ministry (YFM)*, we have already been able to enjoy the benefits of an annual planned distribution, albeit on a smaller scale accordingly. Planned and major gifts can help this fund grow further in the coming years. 2019 saw us continuing to make considerable progress of reaching more families in ever creative and efficient ways. A major thanks is due to the efforts undertaken by our new Associate Rector, The Rev. Heather Wiseman and her new team that continue to lead these initiatives.

Music continues to grow and expand how we reach and serve more people. The second FFFI focus called for a new organ to be built in our church nave & sanctuary. The extraordinary work of our organ committee brought the Vestry a recommendation to enter into a contract with Paul Fritts of Tacoma, Washington, arguably the finest voicing specialist for tracker pipe organs. While Dr. Monroe and any of the committee members can point out the many musical virtues that working with Paul Fritts brings, I can add that this selection once again speaks to effective stewardship of our resources – both musically and financially. I believe St. Thomas will be well served literally for the next century with this new instrument and it will be one more way in which we can serve the wider community. The new organ is, however, one aspect of the larger vision that we continue to cultivate with our music ministry, as well as the overall FFFI.

Just as a reminder, submitted FFFI contributions that have been designated by the donor for a specific purpose, are considered to be restricted, which forbids the Vestry to use such funds for any other use. The FFFI contributions that have been made with no designation, can be used by the Vestry for any project within the FFFI.

As always, I thank you for your commitment and support for St. Thomas.

—Submitted by Jim Davis, Senior Warden
Treasurer’s Report

Annual Report to the Parish for 2019

Summary

Total Net Income for 2019 was $1,037,898. This is dramatically favorable to last year’s net loss. This is largely attributable to the following:

• Restricted donations of $1,096,257 that are to be utilized for the Faith, Family, and Future initiative and improvements to the buildings and grounds of the parish.
• Annual Giving Pledges and other donations of $645,672 up slightly from last year. These donations are utilized for program, worship, staffing, building & grounds, fellowship and formation as well as some non-operating expenses such as outreach and mission.
• Investment income of approximately $366,169 associated with the return on the investment monies in the Reserve Funds as well as Endowment Funds (with an annual distribution rate of 4%-6%).
• Strong discipline regarding the management of our expenses for which non-staffing related expenses were lower than the prior year by $13,492. Overall, Expenses rose only 4% from the prior year.

Total Unrestricted Income used to support the ongoing operations of the parish and totaled $758,403.
The Total Operating Expenses totaled $878,558.

Restricted Other Income and Restricted Expenses had a positive variance of $1,158,798.

Financial Statement Highlights

• Investment income was above the prior year by $461,807.
• Unrestricted pledges and donations were ahead of the prior year by $5,604.
• Restricted donations were higher than the previous year by $451,718.
• Staffing expenses were higher than the prior year by $81,918, due to the addition of our Associate Rector, staff development including cost of benefits and other related-expenses.
• All other expenses combined were below the prior year by a combined total of $13,492.
# Income Statement Summary

## Income Statement Summary

### Current vs Prior Year Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ordinary Income/Expense</th>
<th>Jan - Dec 19</th>
<th>Jan - Dec 18</th>
<th>$ Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNRESTRICTED</td>
<td>652,736</td>
<td>652,652</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets Released</td>
<td>105,667</td>
<td>109,226</td>
<td>(3,559)</td>
<td>(3)%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>758,403</td>
<td>761,878</td>
<td>(3,475)</td>
<td>(1)%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross Profit</strong></td>
<td>758,403</td>
<td>761,878</td>
<td>(3,475)</td>
<td>(1)%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAFF</td>
<td>532,034</td>
<td>450,115</td>
<td>81,919</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; COMMUNICATIONS</td>
<td>72,430</td>
<td>82,571</td>
<td>(10,141)</td>
<td>(12)%</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUSIC</td>
<td>35,189</td>
<td>33,374</td>
<td>1,815</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>VESTRY</td>
<td>1,464</td>
<td>2,245</td>
<td>(781)</td>
<td>(35)%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORSHIP</td>
<td>3,105</td>
<td>3,997</td>
<td>(892)</td>
<td>(22)%</td>
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<td>CHRISTIAN FORMATION/EDUCATION</td>
<td>14,085</td>
<td>8,775</td>
<td>5,310</td>
<td>61%</td>
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<td>BUILDING &amp; GROUNDS</td>
<td>146,736</td>
<td>145,819</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHURCH WIDE HOSPITALITY</td>
<td>8,567</td>
<td>9,745</td>
<td>(1,177)</td>
<td>(12)%</td>
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<tr>
<td>OUTREACH</td>
<td>64,948</td>
<td>109,113</td>
<td>(44,165)</td>
<td>(41)%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expense</strong></td>
<td>878,558</td>
<td>845,753</td>
<td>32,805</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Ordinary Income</strong></td>
<td>(120,155)</td>
<td>(83,874)</td>
<td>(36,280)</td>
<td>(43)%</td>
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<td><strong>Other Income/Expense</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS</td>
<td>366,169</td>
<td>(95,638)</td>
<td>461,806</td>
<td>483%</td>
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<tr>
<td>RESTRICTED DONATIONS</td>
<td>1,096,285</td>
<td>644,539</td>
<td>451,746</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Income</strong></td>
<td>1,462,453</td>
<td>548,901</td>
<td>913,552</td>
<td>166%</td>
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<td><strong>Other Expense</strong></td>
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<td>NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTION</td>
<td>303,656</td>
<td>268,040</td>
<td>35,616</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<td>OTHER EXPENSES</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>291,840</td>
<td>(291,840)</td>
<td>(100)%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Expense</strong></td>
<td>303,656</td>
<td>559,880</td>
<td>(256,224)</td>
<td>(46)%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Other Income</strong></td>
<td>1,158,798</td>
<td>(10,979)</td>
<td>1,169,777</td>
<td>10,655%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Income</strong></td>
<td>1,038,643</td>
<td>(94,853)</td>
<td>1,133,496</td>
<td>1,195%</td>
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## 2020 Operating Budget and Restricted Funds

### 2 Year Trend Analysis

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<td><strong>Net Ordinary Income / Expense</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNRESTRICTED</td>
<td>652,652</td>
<td>740,000</td>
<td>652,736</td>
<td>770,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>847,000</td>
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<td>480000 - Net Assets Released</td>
<td>109,226</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>105,667</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>(20,000)</td>
<td>-33%</td>
<td>48,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>761,878</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>758,403</td>
<td>810,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>895,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gross Profit</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expense</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>STAFF</td>
<td>450,115</td>
<td>510,502</td>
<td>532,034</td>
<td>551,714</td>
<td>41,212</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>579,300</td>
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<td>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; COMMUNICATIONS</td>
<td>82,571</td>
<td>72,550</td>
<td>72,430</td>
<td>73,050</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>75,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSIC</td>
<td>33,374</td>
<td>27,400</td>
<td>35,189</td>
<td>27,500</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>28,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>VESTRY</td>
<td>2,245</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1,464</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORSHIP</td>
<td>3,997</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,105</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3,120</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHRISTIAN FORMATION/EDUCATION</td>
<td>8,775</td>
<td>16,350</td>
<td>14,085</td>
<td>15,150</td>
<td>(1,200)</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>15,756</td>
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<td>BUILDING &amp; GROUNDS</td>
<td>145,819</td>
<td>135,608</td>
<td>146,736</td>
<td>134,078</td>
<td>(1,530)</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>139,441</td>
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<td>CHURCH WIDE HOSPITALITY</td>
<td>9,745</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>8,567</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>OUTREACH</td>
<td>109,113</td>
<td>124,316</td>
<td>64,948</td>
<td>113,500</td>
<td>(10,816)</td>
<td>-9%</td>
<td>119,175</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expense</strong></td>
<td>845,753</td>
<td>897,726</td>
<td>878,558</td>
<td>926,492</td>
<td>28,766</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>970,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Ordinary Income</strong></td>
<td>(83,874)</td>
<td>(97,726)</td>
<td>(120,155)</td>
<td>(116,492)</td>
<td>(18,766)</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>(75,204)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other Income / Expense</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS</td>
<td>(95,638)</td>
<td>129,000</td>
<td>366,169</td>
<td>134,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>134,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESTRICTED DONATIONS</td>
<td>644,539</td>
<td>294,300</td>
<td>1,096,285</td>
<td>184,900</td>
<td>(109,400)</td>
<td>-37%</td>
<td>145,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Income</strong></td>
<td>548,901</td>
<td>423,300</td>
<td>1,462,453</td>
<td>318,900</td>
<td>(104,400)</td>
<td>-25%</td>
<td>279,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other Expense</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTR</td>
<td>268,040</td>
<td>272,600</td>
<td>303,656</td>
<td>202,100</td>
<td>(70,500)</td>
<td>-26%</td>
<td>202,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER EXPENSES</td>
<td>291,840</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Expense</strong></td>
<td>559,880</td>
<td>272,600</td>
<td>303,656</td>
<td>202,100</td>
<td>(70,500)</td>
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Housing Ministry

Part of Who We Are and What We Do
Thomaston Woods, Thomaston Meadows, & Habitat for Humanity

What started back in 1988 as a dream by parishioners quickly evolved into an idea: to help break the cycle of poverty and contextual homelessness for families by providing safe, sanitary and affordable housing with services needed to move ahead and take the next step towards a positive transformation that will last. From this came the idea for St. Thomas Housing Corporation and Thomaston Woods, which serves families with 100 apartments. Fast forward to 2006 and the start of Thomaston Meadows, our Affordable Living Community for Seniors with 13 additional apartments. All this was made possible by the dedicated prayerful efforts of our parishioners and key partnership within our greater community. 2014 saw the next major milestone with a complete renovation of Thomaston Woods and the return to shared ministry model with key partnerships. All told the renovation and redevelopment constituted well over $6M. In 2018 we continued to make marked improvements to Thomaston Woods with updates to playgrounds and improved lighting, but these communities are so much more than simply bricks and mortar. It is the ministry and services which help keep Thomaston Woods and Thomaston Meadows so vibrant and thriving as a great model for ministry.

This past year is no exception. Now into our third year with Episcopal retirement Services (ERS-Affordable Living) as our management partner, they are the direct management team for both Thomaston Woods and Thomaston Meadows. ERS has been our development and ministry partner with St. Thomas Housing Corporation since 2014 when we began the renovation with The Model Group and Brickstone Properties. Now with ERS-AL as the managing partner, all services are offered “in-house” with our two related mission agencies serving our communities. It’s great!

The addition of Tammie Armstrong, the new Service Coordinator & Administrative Support person for Thomaston Woods has already become a great blessing in so many ways. Our own Judy Gardner and Kelli Radloff also contribute to the ministry, services and support of our communities. As blessed as we are with the professional staff team at Thomaston Woods & Thomaston Meadows, it is with the volunteers that we can really shine and make that extra-special difference. Thank you for your help in making this past year so meaningful for the residents we serve at both Thomaston Woods and Thomaston Meadows.

2019 saw some remarkable growth in the amount and depth of services we provide our residents – whether to age-in-place gracefully through our ministry support at Thomaston Meadows or to move towards a truly transformative change as a family with Thomaston Woods.

Congratulations Financial Peace University Graduates!
This spring marked the completion of Dave Ramsey’s Financial Peace University in which four of our families successfully completed all the requirements and are now committed to a new path toward financial security and how to break-free from debt! Upon graduating, each of these families had an instant ‘return’ on their investment by receiving $250 from our Program Fund from St. Thomas Housing Corporation. Even better, some of our residents have embarked upon the path to home ownership! Congratulations to the Furtwengler, Kersey, Taylor and Walls families – we’re proud of your accomplishment and even more, excited about your future! Our congratulations also to our other residents who have recently become homeowners, including the More and Turner families; and two more families this summer already! How we can establish an even more accessible path to home-ownership is what we are already thinking about and look forward to involving more input!

Helping our Residents Experience Transformation through Education
As many people are already aware of, St. Thomas Housing Corporation established a Scholarship Fund over ten years ago to assist our residents in greater access to further education and the path towards a new career. In the past several years, we found the greatest success by working more directly with UC Clermont and form a great partnership. This has been a project which required us to fund annually out of our regular program budget and fund raising, such as the Thomaston Golf Classic in the past. At our Pentecost Breakfast & Town Hall Meeting, we presented a check to UC Clermont’s Dean, Jeff Bauer and Development Director Dana Parker for $89,000. This amount is the final installment necessary to now establish a permanent scholarship fund, creating several endowed scholarships that are now in perpetuity. Established through the UC Foundation, these scholarships will help our residents with a more generous grant that can now be used at any UC campus, so as they continue their studies, our support goes with them! The next step now is to find ever more ways on a one-to-one basis of encouraging even more residents to take their next step.
Each year, the St. Thomas parish family “adopts” the children, youth and seniors of housing communities to help with the spirit of Christmas in our **Stockings and Bells Gift Program**. This is an opportunity to help make Christmas special by providing a gift. In addition to supporting the children & youth of Thomaston Woods, this year we were the recipient of a special grant through Clermont Senior Services to adopt each of our seniors. This also allowed us to therefore provide a special gift for our seniors of Thomaston Meadows to share: a new refrigerator & freezer for the community room!

**Community Improvements**

2019 saw additional improvements made to outdoor play and community spaces, which included a new basketball court (thanks to a grant from the Ohio Contractors' Association), new safety fences for the main playground and play space behind the community center, as well as picnic tables, benches and enhancements to the early childhood learning spaces at the community center.

**Children & Youth and Community Programs**

Meeting weekly throughout the 2018-2019 year, programs for children & youth were coordinated by Jessica Knoehlmann with help & support from Camden Cavill and other volunteers from the Thomaston Woods community. Our continued partnership with Clermont Recovery Services and their programs helped make the year special. With our staff’s direct involvement, we were able to better organize and evaluate current programs and further learn how to involve more parents and families. Tammie Armstrong, the new Service Coordinator & Administrative Support person for **Thomaston Woods** further enhanced to this effort. Building upon this work, Judy Gardner went to work this summer developing a new team ministry for the midweek program which started this Fall. This summer, Thomaston Woods had special events with visits from the Central Fire and EMS units with their own “Touch a Truck”, as well as the Cincinnati Zoo, Clermont Park District – discovering more about the animals and habitat in own backyard, as well as a special class from the Cincinnati Circus – teaching kids how to juggle and other small circus acts. All this along with the new basketball court, playground and community Dinners made this summer fun for all!

**Study Buddy Program**

Wednesday afternoons and evenings, in particular are full of fun, noise, food and homework. We have an average of 10-12 kids who join us every Wednesday after school for crafts and games right off the school bus. Melissa Kaezel-Cole, from Clermont Recovery Center helps with this portion of the program most Wednesdays. We join together for dinner at 5:15 p.m. and the Study Buddies arrive between 5-5:30 p.m. The Study Buddies are adults and high school students who work one-to-one with a student on homework, reading or math. They play games together and share time as friends. At 6:30 p.m. the kids go home.

**Child Focus and Head-Start Has Returned to Thomaston Woods!**

After an absence of over six years, we are thrilled to be welcoming Child Focus back to Thomaston Woods. More than simply another site for Head-Start, Child Focus was instrumental in the design of the Community Room addition over fifteen years ago and also ran a regional office for their services from Thomaston Woods. With a new grant, Child Focus is now offering two extended-day/extended week early childhood programs, along with a “Pre-Head-Start” program to work with parents throughout the year.

As great as these each are they speak more to what we are preparing to be about in the coming years ahead. Whether it is by your help in hosting the monthly community dinners, cookouts, special events and gatherings and all our ongoing programs, it is by our participation that makes all the difference! In in past years, we also have been able to continue and strengthen our partnerships for health services and additional children’s programs. We are seeing ever greater participation with Bible Study at Thomaston Meadows and the monthly Community Dinner (the last Sunday of the month). We can always make room to welcome a few more hands to join the fun and help with games and fellowship that evening – perhaps that could be you and your own family joining us?

2019 saw even more volunteer hours, and there is still plenty of room to grow. The harvest is plenty and we would love more laborers to join this great ministry. Here are some ways you can help:

**Volunteer Opportunities in 2020 include, but are not limited to:**
- Special Events throughout the year
- Community Dinner and Fellowship (last Sunday evening of the month)
- After School Program & Study Buddy Program (Wednesdays 5p-6:30p)
- Fellowship and Bingo with our seniors at Thomaston Meadows
- Join us for our Monthly Lunch for Thomaston Meadows (3rd Wednesday of the month)
- Participate in Bible Study with our seniors (Wednesdays 12:30p)

There are opportunities to help in just about any and all areas and we’re always looking to develop more services to help our mission of transforming the lives of individuals and families one household at a time. You can begin to consider how you can help by contacting Fr. Darren by email at Darren@stthomasepiscopal.org or call the church office at (513) 831-2052.
Class of 2023 Vestry Candidates

Jamie Flerlage, Candidate for Vestry

Jamie, his wife, Kristine, and their two daughters, Samantha (16) and Grace (13), have called Terrace Park and St. Thomas “home” since 2003. Jamie holds the distinction of serving four unexpired Vestry terms from 2003-2012, volunteering in various capacities. We are honored that he feels called to rejoin Vestry now. Throughout the years Jamie has been in leadership, he has been an active part of reconstituting our Finance Committee, organizing an advisory board for St. Thomas Nursery School, and serving as Chair for both. In addition, Jamie has served in various ministry, including our Liturgical, Christian Formation, Outreach, and Music ministries. In addition to time with family & friends, Jamie also enjoys drumming, writing, and fishing.

“It is honor to be called to an elected Vestry term; with the help of God, our priest team, and my Vestry colleagues, I hope to use my previous experiences to serve the spiritual, emotional, and temporal needs of our parish.”

Terri Moorhead, Candidate for Vestry

St. Thomas has been our church home for over 30 years. Earl and I love being part of the fabric that makes up our St. Thomas community. Our three children, having grown up at St. Thomas, were active in Sunday school, youth programs and Mountain Top. I have always been involved in our church, serving as a representative on a Diocesan committee, teaching Sunday School, and going to Mountain Top (3 times). Most recently I have served as an usher, in Hospitality, Martha Guild, leading our Altar Guild and The Christmas Caper. I feel blessed to be part of St. Thomas and for the many friendships I have here. I am looking forward to serving on Vestry.

Jim Davis, Candidate for Senior Warden

Jim, his wife Jenny, and son Ryan have been members of St. Thomas since 2010 and Jim has been a life-long Episcopalian. In addition to his leadership on the Vestry, Jim and his family have been active in St. Thomas’ involvement with Habitat for Humanity, as well as Sunday hospitality and serving as an usher & greeter at the 8:00 a.m. service and have been involved with Youth & Family Ministry and Christian Formation.

“I am honored to continue serving our parish as a member of the Vestry and as your Senior Warden. I have understood our work to be grounded by the Holy Spirit, to participate in the strategic thinking of the Vestry which is chartered for the continuation and improvement of growth and leadership. This is not just limited to the financial welfare of the church but also to the spiritual welfare of the parish. As your Senior Warden, I pledge to faithfully serve the core issues that affect St. Thomas. I also pledge to embrace change, as the Vestry looks at ways to improve: the health of the congregation, the community within the parish, and the health of the community outside of the church’s doors through outreach.”
Beth Benson, Candidate for Vestry

Beth joined St. Thomas in 2003 with her young daughter, welcoming her baby brother later that year in baptism, and was happily remarried here in 2010. Through all those years, the music ministry has been her joy, a sense of community, and the chance to renew her faith through song every week. Beth has also been involved with the Christmas Caper and has represented St. Thomas on the Inter Parish Ministry board and helped with the Faith, Family & Future Initiative. Currently she also serves on the Bach Ensemble of St. Thomas Advisory Board. Beth has dedicated her career to the nonprofit sector, specializing in communications and branding. In 2016, she made a transition after many years with The Greater Cincinnati Foundation to Habitat for Humanity Greater Cincinnati, leading fundraising and communications.

“I am a lifelong Episcopalian, the daughter, niece, and granddaughter of Episcopal priests, but I am active in the Church today by choice, not inheritance. I do not know who said, “God does not call the equipped; he equips the called,” but I feel confident that I will be equipped for this call by God and the grace of the people of St. Thomas.”

Jim D’Wolf, Candidate for Vestry

Jim is no stranger to our parish, nor the Vestry to which he has served before. Jim attributes St. Thomas as being at the center of his family’s spiritual growth for most of their family life and he and his wife, Collette have raised their four children in and through St. Thomas. From MTOP to Sunday School, EfM to hospitality, serving as a Chalice Bearer to now Stephen Ministry, Jim as well as his family has participated in numerous ministries and opportunities to serve our faith community as well as our larger communities.

“The vitality and future of St Thomas is very important to me and I am honored to serve on Vestry for the upcoming term. Many hands are needed to make a faith community prosper and I consider a role on Vestry to be an essential ministry. As I look forward to a new term on Vestry I think about this verse: ‘Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.’” (cf. 1 Peter 4:10 NIV)

Jon Saxton, Candidate for Junior Warden

Jon, his wife Patti and children Jonathan, Julia and Jennifer began attending St. Thomas shortly after moving to Terrace Park some 18 years ago. All three children attended St. Thomas Nursery School before going onto Mariemont Schools. Jon has been serving on Vestry for two terms before being asked to undertake the role of Junior Warden. A practicing trial attorney for over 25 years, Jon is also an active volunteer with YMCA Swimming, serving in a national role with age group and Masters swimming.
Ministry Reports

Associate Rector’s Report

Christian Spiritual Formation
from Infants to Adults

Why is spiritual formation necessary for the life of a parish? Spiritual formation from toddlers to senior adults is what informs us and grounds us in our faith. Spiritual Formation includes several elements, among them are:

• Growing into Christ-likeness,
• Building Relationships,
• Being Missional,
• Enhancing Spiritual Learning,
• Developing Community
• Intentionality and,
• Dependence on the Holy Spirit

From a child’s first experiences as babies and toddlers in our nursery, through our adult lives we have the opportunity to cycle through all of these elements, each step bringing us deeper into our common life as Christians.

Youth & Family Ministry

This has been an exciting year of new beginnings for our Youth and Family Ministry. We have an exceptional Youth and Family Ministry Team, including:

• Linda Swensson, Pre-K – Grade 2 (lindaswen294@gmail.com)
• Judy Gardner, Grades 3-6, Youth Confirmation (JGardner@stthomaseiscopal.org)
• Kim Baumgartner, Youth and Family Ministry (KBaumgartner@stthomaseiscopal.org),
• Youth Mentors Olivia Sherwood and Hadyn Smith.

This team oversees the elements of Spiritual Formation for children from pre-K through High School. Elements of Godly Play and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd are used for our PreK through grade 6. We are in the process of evaluating our programs with the intention of offering something new and exciting in 2020-2021. In addition to our Sunday programs, there are opportunities for formation, fellowship, fun and dinner on Thursday nights as well as outreach opportunities for youth and families.

Thomaston Woods After School Program – Kids’ Club including fun, games and life skills in partnership with Clermont Recovery Center, is led by Judy Gardner.

Adult Spiritual Formation

• Sunday 9:15–10:00 includes 2 options-a lectionary based Bible Study led by Darren Elin and Illuminated Life by Sr. Joan Chittister, book study led by Heather Wiseman.
• Adult Inquirer’s Confirmation Class
• Mondays – Women on the Journey Covenant Group–The Faith Club-Exploring the three Abrahamic Faiths: Christianity, Islam and Judaism
• Tuesday Study Group led by Wes Hinton
• Quiet Days

In all these offerings, we seek to understand God working in our lives not only in the major things/events but also in the mundane everydayness of our lives. We encourage all members of the congregation to find a place within the current offerings for Spiritual Formation as well as offer suggestions for future programs.

—Submitted by the Rev. Heather Wiseman

Diaconal Ministry

The Rev. Dcn. Gary Givler

Gary is longtime attendee of the National Storytelling Festival that meets in Jonesboro, Tennessee.

Gary has a Bachelor’s degree in Social Science, and a Master’s in Pastoral Counseling. His counseling internship was served at Catholic Social Services in Montgomery, Ohio. Most of his ministry has been spent working with the individuals that God sends his way every day, telling tales to church and school groups and, working with organizations that serve the poor.

Gary and his wife, Susan, have two sons, two grandsons, three granddaughters and a one-year old great granddaughter. Gary said, “I am pleased to be with you all at St. Thomas.” We are thrilled to welcome Gary to the Clergy Team of St. Thomas. Gary has joined right into the full life of the St. Thomas community and beyond – not only with our worship life, but assisting with pastoral care and serving as our chief networker for some of our outreach efforts, including Inter Parish Ministry, Thomaston Woods and Habitat for Humanity, working with our volunteers and strengthening our leadership team. Gary’s gifts and experience are a valuable blessing to our staff & clergy team!

—Submitted by the Rev. Darren R. S. Elin
Altar Guild & Flowers

FOCUS
The Altar Guild is a special community of service that works as a team under the guidance of our Rector to prepare and care for the holy elements, vessels and linens used during the weekly church services. The Altar Guild also assists with weddings, funerals and baptisms.

The Altar Guild also orders and arranges the flowers on the altar throughout the different seasons of the church. Members of Altar Guild interested in flower arranging may choose to participate in this service and devotion. Members arrange the flowers or greens on the altar every Sunday per the church seasons and direct Altar Guild in decorating the church for holidays such as at Christmas and Easter. Any church member interested in learning how to arrange flowers or wanting to contribute their artistic talent of flower arranging are welcome.

The Altar Guild also coordinates the delivery of flowers from the altar to shut-ins, parishioners, or neighborhood friends. The flower ministry is currently coordinated by four Altar Guild members. Beyond the tangible work done by Altar Guild, we pray together, enjoy fellowship, and find joy in doing these simple services behind the scene to prepare our community for worship.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2019
Altar Guild continues to be an active, vibrant community within St. Thomas, welcoming new members. We currently have 36 Altar Guild members and continue to grow! Other accomplishments include needlework and replacing of the alms basins. Altar Guild also donated for the first time a large raffle basket to the Christmas Caper.

HOW CAN YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN 2020?
New members are always welcome! Members of Altar Guild serve on a team of 6-10 parishioners, 3 months out of the year. There are monthly business meetings on the first Thursday of each month and quarterly Altar Guild fellowship. New members serve their first year shadowing an experienced member, so there are many opportunities to practice.

The Flower Ministry is funded entirely through donations. Anyone who wishes to celebrate a special occasion or remember a loved one on a Sunday may contribute funds to purchase flowers for the altar. Special fund raising occurs at Christmas and Easter to purchase flowers for these celebrations and for the rest of the year. Flower donation cards are found in the pocket on the back of pews in the sanctuary.

Contact: Nancy Spears ((513) 453-3524 cell or nmspears@twc.com) to learn more about Altar Guild or if interested in serving with this most rewarding group.

—Submitted by Nancy Lorenz & Kay Pope
MISSION STATEMENT
The Mission of Music at St. Thomas is to change lives by bringing people closer to God through the divine gift of music, both in and beyond our church.

VISION STATEMENT
The vision of the St. Thomas Music Program is centered on three foundational concepts:

• Worship—Inspiring a worship life at St. Thomas that flourishes with diverse but authentic styles and remains committed to the preservation and continued revitalization of our tradition of Anglican worship.
• Community—Enriching the artistic life of our community through supporting the performance of sacred music at the highest and most profound levels, both by amateurs and professionals.
• Education—Sharing the profundity and beauty of our worship tradition to a new generation of musicians and congregants, and in doing so, helping to preserve the artistic spirit as an essential aspect of humanness.

HOW DOES OUR CURRENT PROGRAM FULFILL THIS VISION?

Worship
• Choirs and musical opportunities for all ages (Kindergarten to Seniors)
• 8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I—traditional worship with hymns
• 10:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II—traditional worship with choir and hymns
• Bach Vespers: Evening Prayer with the music of J. S. Bach
• Taizé Prayer: A meditative service of evening worship chants, readings, and silent prayer

• Special Services: Choral Evensong, Lessons and Carols, Requiem for All Soul’s, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week

Community
• Thursday Evenings at St. Thomas: choral rehearsals, Chorister Formation and dinner, monthly non-music programs for children and adults
• Choral Scholar Program
• CCM Preparatory—private music instruction and summer arts camps
• Bach Ensemble of St. Thomas—associations with CCM, CSO, May Festival Youth Choir, other community music ensembles
• Pre-Bach Vespers lectures with Xavier faculty member, Douglas Easterling
• Featured interviews on Bach Vespers on WGUC
• Super Singers—community choir for older adults led by Pat Matchette
• Messiah Sing-Along

Education
• New Young Artist Program for the Bach Ensemble
• Joyful Noise & Chapel—Nursery School Music Ministry
• Choral Scholar program
• Voice for Life Chorister Program—Royal School of Church Music affiliation
• CCM Preparatory Department

Instruments
• Organ—Wicks Opus 4573 (1965)—3 divisions, 29 ranks, 2 manuals
• Baldwin Grand Piano (Parish Hall)
• Wurlitzer Grand Piano (Choir Room)
• Yamaha Upright (Nave)
• Harpsichord
Ensembles
• Parish Choir—42 adults and young adults including Choral Scholars
• Choristers—20 children grades 3-6
• Allegro Choir—10 children grades K-2
• Brass Ensemble of St. Thomas
• Bach Ensemble of St. Thomas
• Summer Choir

Staff
• Carlton Monroe, DMA
  Director of Music
• Jason M. Gunnell
  Associate Director of Music & Organist
• Spencer Bartley
  Assistant for Music Ministries
• Choral Scholars: Olivia Sherwood, Hayley Maloney, Maria Miller, Sam Krausz, Joseph Rau, Hayden Smith
• Sarah Folsom
  Taizé Cantor

Areas of Focus for 2020
• Organ Education Project for our community
• Continue our work towards the completion of our organ project
• Strengthen and develop Bach Ensemble Board
• Residency at Washington National Cathedral in June
• Update Music Library

—Submitted by Carlton Monroe
Christian Spiritual Formation Overview

2018-2019 CHILDREN’ MINISTRY (AGES 0-6TH GRADE) OF ST. THOMAS

Our Children are Wonderful! And we love them all. We offer many ways for them to foster a relationship with God and each other in a community of respect, unconditional love, compassion, kindness and learning.

All children are welcome all the time! Parents are welcome to drop in on any Sunday to lend a hand, observe and maybe even learn something new! Consistency is important in building friendships and promoting community within these classes.

On Sunday mornings beginning at 10:00 a.m., from September to May, Sunday School is in session: (The children are then brought to the 10:15 service in time to share Communion with their family.)

- The Nursery is open for babies up to 3 years old. They are nurtured and loved in a clean, safe and attractive environment on the third floor. Open during the 10:15 a.m. Worship Service until 11:30 a.m. and staffed by Joy Hammons and Rhonda Boulares.
- The Smaller Atrium (another word for sacred learning space) is open to three-year olds to second graders with Ms. Linda Swensson. Linda provides a welcome and attractive environment with many hands-on manipulatives sure to capture the interest of the children. She provides Godly Play lessons – which are short and visually interesting. Then the children are provided a space to explore the materials in the room which may look like play but is often prayerful and meditative in nature. Children close their time together with a community time at the Prayer Table, sharing prayer concerns, news and short songs.
- The Larger Atrium is open to 3rd – 6th graders with Ms. Judy Gardner. We use multiple learning techniques and styles to help the children learn about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and how it all fits into their worlds. This Fall the children explored Prayer – the different kinds of Prayer, different ways to pray, reasons for prayer and if our prayers are heard. One of the favorite things we do weekly is have some “Big Questions” for the children to answer. These are posted on white paper on the hallway doors and give the children an avenue for expressing their concerns, fears and successes. They also have a Prayer Circle Time to share highs and lows of their lives. We also strive to have art expression time for these children as they often need to process what has been discussed and to catch up with each other as a community. We use Carechesis of the Good Shepherd, Godly Play and Lectionary Based learning tools. As Maria Montessori says: The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child’s own natural desire to learn.
- The Nursery is open for babies up to 3 years old. They are nurtured and loved in a clean, safe and attractive environment on the third floor. Open during the 10:15 a.m. Worship Service until 11:30 a.m. and staffed by Joy Hammons and Rhonda Boulares.

On Sunday mornings from May-September at 10:00 a.m. Children of all ages are welcome to join either Ms. Linda or Ms. Judy for Summer Stories. These are stories usually based on the Gospel lesson of the day and often include free time for art or crafting time. Children are delivered to the 10:15 a.m. Worship Service to meet up with their families.

On Sunday mornings all year long 4th-6th graders are invited and encouraged to be Readers and Acolytes at the 10:15 a.m. Worship Service.

CHILDREN CHOIRS AND MUSIC

On Thursday evenings 5:00 p.m. from October through April/May there is instruction and rehearsal for the Choristers (third – 6th graders) and Allegro Choir (kindergarten – third grade).

- Choristers have a 40-minute lesson about the Psalm they will be singing in the service. This covers many aspects of Christian life – respect for self and others, responsibility and love of the music and traditions of our faith. Then they practice with the Choir Director.
- Allegro Choir members begin practice at 5:15 p.m. with the Choir Director. Then Ms. Linda Swensson takes them to the large muscle room in the preschool to let out some of the wiggles.
- Everyone convenes for a community dinner together in the Parish Hall. These dinners are prepared and provided by the children’s parents. The children love it when their parents serve and are excited to share this news with their friends.
- Allegro Choir members are released to parents at 7:00 p.m.
- Choristers practice with the Parish Choir until 7:30 p.m.
- Choristers preform in the 10:15 a.m. Worship Service on the first and third Sunday of each month.

The annual Christmas Pageant is a homegrown production and is assisted by many wonderful parents and other church friends. It is a wonder and delight to enjoy at 4:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

Contact Dr. Carlton Monroe cmonroe@stthomasepiscopal.org or 513.831.2052 for more information about these programs.
2018 – 2019 Youth Ministry for 7th-12th Graders.

This group strives to find the answers to how to be an Episcopalian Christian in today’s world. We wrestle with the deep questions of Faith, Friends, Social Media, school/grades, sports, hobbies and family life. It’s not always easy to find God amid our confusing and hurting world. We build community by having fun, playing games, and doing things together as friends, even though these teens attend many different schools.

Sunday mornings from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. are spent in Youth Group in the Guild Room. There is always food to eat and food for thought and challenging discussions.

This Fall we delved into the overall situation of Poverty in its many forms. Discussions were deep and thought provoking. A creative presentation on ‘Who are the Poor’ by The Reverend Gary Givler was both disturbing and relative. Kristy Anderson, Social Worker from Children’s Hospital, presented the nuts and bolts of families living in poverty – their choices – their difficulties with everyday gifts that we take for granted.

The Sunday programming is led by Ms. Kim Baumgartner, Olivia Sherwood and Hayden Smith. The topics for discussion are provided by a curriculum called “Real and Relevant.”

Currently, lunch is also included on the 2nd and 4th Sundays and shared with the teens preparing for Confirmation.

Outreach is a big component of our youth programming – Teens are ready and mostly willing to stretch out into the world and make a difference. Opportunities abound: Habitat for Humanity; Christmas Caper, Thomaston Woods monthly dinner and weekly Wednesday, Thomaston Woods Kids Club and Study Buddy 3:15-6:30 p.m., Thomaston Meadows/Meadows Basket Run.

Parish Service is also a component of our Youth Program. Acolyting at the 8:00 & 10:15 a.m. worship services; Reading at the Worship Services; Being Ushers and Greeters; Helping with the Children’s Sunday School; Hosting coffee hour and Singing in the Choir.

Thursday evenings from 5:00-6:30 p.m. is Youth Fun and Games time. We play games, check in with one another, invite each other to our games, plays and productions. We also eat snacks and develop close friendships and compare Middle and High School dramas! This is open to all teens! It’s a fun time – Hayden is hard to beat on the Wii.

Parents, we need you to encourage your teens to attend and contribute to the community aspect of this program. We have wonderful opportunities and fun to offer but need more teens bring to diversity and depth to our fun and discussions. Parents are always welcome to join us, suggest activities, chaperone and drive. Our numbers are small, and our teens are busy, we understand! We also know that life gets harder as the teens grow and prepare for college and the real world. We can give them a foundation of a God relationship to call on when life gets tough. We have all experienced, as adults, the times we felt lost, afraid and alone. The relationship with God lasts a lifetime and fills the soul to allow us and them weather the tough times in life.

Contact Kim Baumgartner for more information kbaumgartner@stthomasepiscopal.org or 513-233-3734. Make sure we have your email and your teens cell phone number for weekly updates.

Family Fun and Outreach opportunities are available throughout the year. The Cookie Caper, Thomaston Woods basket Run, Thomaston Woods/Meadows last Sunday of every month dinner, Wednesday’s Thomaston Woods Kids Club and Study Buddies, Advent Wreath Making, delivering meals to the sick, Donating items for IPM and serving in worship together (hosting a coffee hour; Being readers and Oblation Bearers etc.). Making Church a family affair strengthens children’s faith.

Contact Judy Gardner for more information 4judygardner@gmail.com OR 513-608-4225.

Crafts and games are provided from 3:15-5:15 p.m. with the help of Melissa Cole from Clermont Recovery Center. Then dinner is served -mostly pizza, chips and fruit at 5:15 p.m. Study Buddies arrive at 5:30 p.m. to work with their specific child on homework or reading practice or just playing a game together. The bonds between these Study Buddy pairs is growing strong and they look forward to spending time together each week.

Help is always needed in the form of new easy to read books, family and learning games, and donations of cookies or treats (given for a job well done), and volunteering as a Study Buddy – you can actually make a positive impact in a child’s life. We’d also love to have you come and demonstrate a special skill or hobby the children might find informative.

Contact Judy Gardner for more information 4judygardner@gmail.com OR 513-608-4225.

—Submitted by Judy Gardner
Ministry Reports

Ministry Focus: Youth & Family Ministry

As the Youth and Family Ministry kicked off the program year in Fall 2019, we did so with a small, yet consistent group of youth. We meet every Sunday (except holidays) and on the 2nd & 4th Sundays we begin with a family meal and lively discussion before breaking out into the youth gathering and separate confirmation group preparing for Spring confirmation. This year we have added Youth Mentors, Olivia Sherwood and Hayden Smith, from the St. Thomas Choir to ensure they have young adults as role models and someone closer to their age with whom to communicate.

What is the focus of this ministry?
To nurture the spiritual life of the children, youth, and their families, while encouraging the participation of friends and other in the greater St. Thomas community.

What were the accomplishments of this ministry in 2019?
Offering a youth fellowship component on Thursdays prior to Choir, led by the Youth Mentors, simply to be together and have fun. Participating in Parish breakfasts, i.e., Advent Wreath-Making, preparing lunch for Habitat for Humanity volunteers, and making treats for Christmas Caper. Inviting guest speakers to talk about poverty and outreach opportunities. Providing youth spiritual formation through the Making it Real & Relevant curriculum. Encouraging youth to consider participating in worship as Acolytes, Ushers, and Readers.

What do you see as your goals, needs, and challenges in 2020?
Our greatest challenge is that we compete for our youth's time and talent with many other attractive programs and activities. We need to have a consistent group of youth who show up to be able to make progress and schedule outreach and fun activities. We are looking forward to the 4th thru 6th graders in our Children's Ministry growing and joining our small group. We always welcome more parent involvement, but most importantly, we need more parent commitment to lovingly encourage their children to attend church and formation programs on a regular basis so that relationships, connections, and community can develop.

How can people become involved?
Join us on Sunday mornings at 11:30 am as a visible means of supporting our youth. As mentioned previously, encourage your youth and family to regularly attend and participate in our services and programs. Find at least one volunteer opportunity you can do together as a family, i.e., participating in a church ministry as ushers, greeters, hospitality for Sunday coffee or special events, bake together for Christmas Caper, help out with Vacation Bible School, Study Buddies at Thomaston Woods, outreach volunteering, etc. For more information, contact Kim Baumgartner at kbaumgartner@stthomasepiscopal.org or (513) 233-3734.

—Submitted by Kim Baumgartner
Ministry Reports

Spiritual Formation for Children

The Christian Spiritual Formation program for the children of St. Thomas Church is centered on Godly Play, which is an imaginative approach to working with children. This approach supports, challenges, nourishes, and guides the children’s spiritual quest. During January through August of 2019, we met as a combined aged group on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. Children from ages 5 through 12 met for lessons, fellowship, and art work. We learned about the person of Jesus and His teachings for our lives.

In September of 2019, the children were split into two classes—age 5 through the second grade met with Linda Swensson each Sunday and the third grade through the sixth grade met with Judy Gardner. Volunteer parents helped with both classes during the fall. Our curriculum followed Godly Play and the Good Shepherd.

We always welcome visitors and helpers to our classes! For more information, contact Linda Swensson at (513) 658-3274 or email at lindaswen294@gmail.com.

—Submitted by Linda Swensson

Acolytes

What is the focus of this ministry?
Provide liturgical leadership by opening and closing the service through candle lighting and processions, assisting clergy with gospel reading, and preparation of the altar for Eucharist.

What were the accomplishments of this ministry in 2019?
Acolytes were scheduled and serving at most services. A few acolytes were added to the roster throughout the year.

What do you see as your goals for this ministry in 2020?
We intend to “reach down” into Children’s Ministry to identify potential acolytes. We encourage interested youth from the 3rd grade/age 9 and up to try it out and consider serving on a monthly basis. We strive to work around school and family events. Simple training will be scheduled on a Sunday following the 10:15 a.m. service as needed.

How can you become involved in?
Please contact Susan Maruca in the Church Office on Monday and Friday afternoons at (513) 831-2052 or smaruca@stthomasepiscopal.org.

—Submitted by Susan Maruca

The Martha Guild members are men, women, and children who are eager to have a sparkling kitchen where folks can prepare wonderful goodies for us. We want to keep the kitchen tidy and shelves/preparation surfaces clean. It is not hard work—about 2 hours commitment—and you work with a partner. We try to do an all hands clean in August to prepare for the Fall Start-up. We would like to have more volunteers for spring and early summer. Please consider helping! Contact the church office or Joan Smith, (513) 732-6775.

—Submitted by Joan Smith
**What is the focus of this ministry?**

Stephen Ministry is a program in which trained and supervised lay people provide one-on-one Christian care to individuals facing life’s challenges and difficulties. Stephen Ministers are not counselors; they are trained lay caregivers. Their role is to listen and to care, not to give advice, solve problems, counsel, or preach. They are trained in the fine art of active listening as well as in other areas such as confidentiality, mental health issues, maintaining boundaries, process-oriented caregiving, and dealing with losses. Care Receivers might seek a Stephen Minister to help with issues such as grief, divorce, illness, relationship problems, financial/employment difficulties, aging, loneliness or other problems. SM’s are trained to recognize when a person’s needs go beyond what a Stephen Minister can provide, and they are always supervised by the SM leaders. They are continually learning and training with their peer SM’s and with professionals in various fields. Initially, Care Receivers and Stephen Ministers meet face-to-face once a week at a mutually agreeable time and place. The frequency of the meetings may change depending upon the needs of the care receiver as the relationship progresses. Women meet with women, and men with men.

**What were the accomplishments of this ministry in 2019?**

Following their commissioning in late 2018, five new Stephen Ministers, Marty Corbin, Shana Elgabri, Dave Haushalter, Joan Hoskins-Nogg, and Elizabeth Reynolds, joined the SM team, bringing the number of trained Stephen Ministers at St. Thomas in 2019 to 20. Fourteen of those individuals are currently active Stephen Ministers, while 4 are temporarily inactive for various reasons. More than 50 care receivers have benefited from relationships with Stephen Ministers since the program became active in 2015. Also in 2019, one of the newly commissioned Stephen Ministers, Joan Hoskins, attended the national Stephen Ministry Leaders’ Training Program and is now, along with Rosalee Campbell and Bea Filimonov, one of the Stephen Leaders at St. Thomas. Most Care receivers in 2019 were from the St. Thomas community; however, some CR’s were from the wider Cincinnati area. The Greater Cincinnati Stephen Ministry Network (GCSMN), an organization of other churches in the Cincinnati area who also have a Stephen Ministry program, provides extended outreach for education and referral.

**What do you see as your goals, needs, challenges in 2020?**

In 2020, we will continue ongoing training focusing on the topic of “Aging.” As part of this focus, the group will read and discuss the book “Being Mortal” by Atul Gawande during the winter and early spring. We will also begin recruitment of a new class of Stephen Ministers, with a goal of intensive training in late spring and early summer. Those with gifts of compassionate listening and confidential caring for others are encouraged to prayerfully consider joining the Stephen Ministry team. Additionally, Fr. Darren and the Stephen Leaders are always open to discussing whether or not a Stephen Minister is appropriate in a given situation.

**How can people become involved?**

If the mission of Stephen Ministry appeals to you or if you have questions, brochures placed around the church offer answers. Team leaders are also happy to answer questions. Contact: Father Darren at darren@stthomasepiscopal.org/513.831.2052; Rosalee Campbell at rmrc4344@aol.com /513-368-6164; Bea Filimonov at filimonovbea@yahoo.com /513-377-8915; or Joan Hoskins-Nogg at farleyjbh@gmail.com /513-600-2405. Who is Jesus calling?

—Submitted by Bea Filimonov
**Friends of the Groom**

**What were the accomplishments of this ministry in 2019?**
In 2019, we traveled nearly 25,000 miles, performing and leading workshops to reach over 6,000 people across the United States and abroad—with about 20% of performances aimed at children and youth, and over 40% offered for free or for a reduced rate. As always, our aim is to reveal the love of Christ in a creative way and empower others to do the same. The group led the Vacation Bible School program at St. Thomas this past summer, as we have for the last 19 years. We also presented the Passion Narrative on Palm Sunday, and performed a Christmas production in the Parish Hall in December. Beyond St. Thomas, the company started monthly workshops at a local behavioral care facility for adults and journeyed to Asia to work with women coming out of human trafficking.

**What do you see as your goals, needs, challenges in 2020?**
In 2020 we are celebrating our 40th year of ministry—which we hope to observe with a series of special events and performances in the months ahead. Of course, we’ll also continue our regular schedule of performances, workshops and retreat weekends; and we’re exploring ways to continue our work with marginalized populations—using theater techniques to empower individuals to tell their stories in a positive way. Friends of the Groom continues to face significant financial challenges in the coming year as our focus continues to shift from paid bookings to more unpaid outreach efforts.

**How can people become involved in 2020?**
Friends of the Groom always needs volunteers to help with mailings, to assist with Vacation Bible School, to serve as readers for the Palm Sunday presentation of the Passion Narrative, and occasionally, to help with sets, costumes, and props. Please contact Tom Long or Jocelyn Sluka if you would like to help at: (513) 831.2859 or fog@fuse.net.

—Submitted by Tom Long

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**Super Singers**

The Super Singers meet every other Friday at 10:30 a.m., year-round! We are a group of 30 men and women who love to sing. There are 12 from St. Thomas and 18 from several other churches and venues. The group established in 1997 by director Pat Matchette meets to sing a varied seasonal selection of choral music, for fun, but also to perform several times a year, at SEM Terrace for its residents, and at the Christmas Caper.

Membership is open if you like a casual, but hard-working, hour of singing. To join, contact Pat Matchette, at (513) 831-2250 or at patmatch@juno.com.

—Submitted by Pat Matchette
The Columbarium Committee is charged with keeping our policies and procedures up to date and maintaining current applications and records of interment. Our brochure is in the narthex.

We will continue to make sure that families have correct information in the files of their loved ones who are interred. We are in the process of storing this information electronically. We also work on ways to assure perpetual care of the Columbarium.

There are 55 niches that have not been purchased. Contact the church office or Joan Smith (513) 732-6775 for information.

—Submitted by Joan Smith

The purpose of the Sacred Stitchers is to use our knitting projects to spread God’s love and caring to those who are experiencing illness, grief, loss, loneliness, or any other need and to celebrate life’s joys.

In 2019 our projects included Prayer Shawls, lap robes, baptismal blankets, chemo caps, scarves, hats, mittens, and headbands. Our outreach this year included: Stephen Ministry, Habitat for Humanity, Thomaston Meadows, and children in foster care.

We meet the 2nd & 4th Monday each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. All supplies are furnished and new knitters are always welcome.

—Submitted by Anne Cherry
Ministry Reports

Christmas Caper

Thank you to the many volunteers who made the 2019 Christmas Caper a success! In addition to the wonderful fellowship cultivated by the Christmas Caper, the money raised is donated to Inter Parish Ministries and the St. Thomas Discretionary Fund.

On the second Saturday in December, the Parish Hall becomes a holiday wonderland for St. Thomas and our surrounding communities. Along with the many holiday sweets, such as homemade cookies, candies, biscotti, sweet breads, and pirogies, the hall is filled with Christmas carols sung by The Super Singers, crafts and face painting for children, a Christmas village complete with model trains, plus a café serving lunch. Additionally, this year we had homemade canned items, puzzles depicting St. Thomas from the Terrace Park Historical Society, and pottery made by local artist Bonnie Mitchell.

Our top raffle prize was a beautiful hand crafted side cabinet by Gerry Michaud. As well other raffle donations came from Aglamesis and Dianne Lytle, Bonnie Mitchell, Jim Davis and Friends, Chip and Debbie Graeter, the St. Thomas choir, Sacred Stitchers, Altar Guild and the Pre-school.

From cookie bakers to cookie buyers, a huge thank you to everyone who helped make this amazing event a success. With your assistance, we raised $9,000.00 to support Inter Parish Ministries and the St. Thomas Discretionary Fund.

Next year mark your calendar for this wonderful event. Whether you want to hone your candy making skills with workshops lead by Lou Scott, learned to make and decorate short bread cookies with parish experts in the St. Thomas kitchen, learn the intricacies of pirogi making with Zoe Giraza, or share your own favorite cookie recipe, there are many opportunities to participate.

Look for Terri Moorhead or reach out at tc.moorhead@gmail.com or (513) 884-1339 if you want to learn more.

—Submitted by Terri Moorhead

St. Thomas Dinner Club

The St. Thomas Dinner Club is a group of parishioners and friends who meet the second Wednesday of every month and enjoy fellowship and lovely dining in the quiet atmosphere of the Terrace Park Country Club.

Social time begins at 6 p.m. and dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. Two entrée choices are offered each month. Please check the Sunday Bulletin to discover the choices. Cost is $23.50.

A check, made out to St. Thomas Church, should be mailed to Lou Scott, 696 Milford Hills Dr., Milford 45150 to make your reservation. (513.831.4353)

We look forward to your joining us!

—Submitted by Lou Scott
Sisters of the Holy Grail

What is the focus of this ministry?
Sisters of the Holy Grail is an adult women’s formation group that gathers on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall for fellowship, education and good fun. Attendance on any given Wednesday has averaged about fifteen adult women of all ages. We break bread together- we start with a light potluck meal of appetizers and desserts and “fill our cups” both literally and figuratively. We feed our spirits through our relationships with one another and by participating in a variety of activities - some contemplative, some purely recreational.

What were the accomplishments of this ministry in 2019?
We have grown a sisterhood of nearly 40 women. We have developed relationships with one another while participating in a variety of activities:
- Learning about St Thomas’ stained glass windows
- Sharing ideas to make a meaningful Lenten season
- Enjoying popcorn and movie night
- Nourishing our souls with God’s word while planting succulents
- Selecting a “fruit of the spirit” to guide our intentions
- Hearing our inner voice through soul collage
- Practicing “The Power of Self Care”
- Forest bathing to improve our well being
- Using Lectio Divina to receive God’s word in a personal, meaningful way
- Enjoying Friends of the Groom Christmas presentation

What do you see as your goals and needs for this ministry in 2020?
- Grow the sisterhood and deepen our relationships.
- Provide additional opportunities for nourishing our spirits.
- Have fun!!!

How can people become involved?
Join us on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. If convenient, bring a small dish to share. Our time together is about connecting with God through our connection with one another.

No Stress - No Commitment
Know the love of Jesus
Love each other as I have loved you.

—Submitted by Dianne Lytle

Prayer Team

The prayer team offers and anointing with blessed oil during communion on Sunday. We pray with you for thanksgivings, healing, guidance, comfort, general health, strength, and any other need for yourself or others.

Jesus said, “ For when two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” (Matt 18:20) We would love to have more folks to join us in praying with others and supporting our prayers. Please contact the church office to join us.

—Submitted by Joan Smith
**Ministry Reports**

**Lay Eucharistic Visitors**

Lay Eucharistic Visitors take the Sacrament from the altar to shut-ins who are unable to attend regular services for an extended period of time. The parishioner, friend, or relative can call the church office to arrange for this visit. The visit is usually made from Sunday services, but can be made from any regular Eucharist. It is a once a month commitment. We NEED more volunteers to join us. You will be blessed and our shut-ins will get to know more folks in the parish. Contact the church office or Joan Smith (513) 732-6775 for more information and to help.

—Submitted by Joan Smith

**Buildings & Grounds**

**What is the focus of this ministry?**
Buildings and Grounds is responsible for continuing inspection of the physical facilities at St. Thomas and determining/prioritizing significant maintenance and repairs, both inside and outside the structure. Work within the annual planned budget is completed as needed. Emergency or unexpected work is assessed and either handled as part of the contingency budget or referred to Vestry for a specific project approval prior to initiating the work.

**What were the accomplishments of this ministry in 2019?**
Along with the ongoing maintenance concerns, there were several major projects undertaken in 2019. First and foremost was a comprehensive “Reserve Study,” which looks at the state of all the structures and systems inside and outside of the facilities, identifies the estimated lifespan as well as the cost of replacement.

We can use this information for planning and budgeting purposes over the next 20+ years, determining how best to address maintenance on a proactive basis.

Outdoor lighting was enhanced this year along the Miami Avenue side of the campus. Extensive window maintenance was undertaken for the first time in the life of the new building which was no small feat, given the challenges of the differing terrain and accessibility (windows on the 4th floor are still yet to be accessed in this way which remains a challenge).

We were able to have determined the scope of the water problem we have experienced through the years on the terrace off the Hearth Room and have been exploring the best pathway to a permanent remedy. This work is led by Mike Pritz, our very gifted facilities manager. Mike and his team were also able to renovate the Extended-Day Room of the Day School.

**What do you see as your goals, needs, and challenges in 2020?**
Planned work for 2020 includes the terrace floor to correct the chronic leaks we’ve experienced and address the design flaw. We are also now using the Reserve Study to timeline maintenance proactively based on estimated lifespan/replacement schedule that has been determined. As part of this, we must also continue to monitor the HVAC compressor system that is aging. Finally, our work will also focus on the preparation needed for the renovations called for as part of the Faith, Family, Future Initiative in 2022, including the upgrading the lighting in the nave in addition to the organ installation and accessibility enhancements.

**How can people become involved?**
Volunteers should have a technical or project management background and an interest in understanding, maintaining and improving our facility systems. For more information, contact Mary Malotke at (513) 248.0012.
Ministry Reports

Habitat for Humanity

Volunteers from St. Thomas participated in two Habitat for Humanity builds in 2019 through the Eastside Coalition of churches. The first was in Cincinnati's Bond Hill neighborhood, built in partnership with Alexis and her family. Like all Habitat homebuyers, she put in 250 hours of sweat equity on her home (sometimes after working her third shift job!), completed homeownership and financial classes, and closed on her house with an affordable mortgage.

We also worked on the first Habitat home to be built in the Village of Lincoln Heights in more than a decade. Habitat has a long history in the community but had stopped building there for a variety of factors. The community welcomed Habitat back with open arms and six houses are underway or planned, including Jordan's home, built with help from St. Thomas volunteers. Jordan closed on the purchase of her new home on Dec. 31, starting a new year in her new home!

—Submitted by Beth Benson

Office Volunteers

WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF THIS MINISTRY?
Our goal is to offer assistance to the office staff, primarily in the area of phone communications. There are also several weekly duties that are accomplished on specific days of the week, and regular volunteers know to make those duties a priority. In addition, there are periodic tasks to be done, and all volunteers are encouraged to accomplish those tasks on an “as needed” basis. Volunteers serve either of two time slots: 9 a.m. – Noon or Noon – 3 p.m. Substitutes make a valued contribution to this ministry, as regular volunteers travel and go on vacations and have occasional calendar conflicts, of course.

WHAT WERE THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THIS MINISTRY IN 2019?
We continued to be well served by a faithful corps of willing volunteers! A few of our team have been doing weekly or bi-weekly duty for over 10 years!!!

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS YOUR GOALS AND NEEDS, FOR THIS MINISTRY IN 2020?
In 2019, we tried having a few afternoons without a volunteer at the desk, but for 2020 we decided to return to having a volunteer every morning and every afternoon except on Mondays & Fridays when we need only a morning volunteer. Therefore, we currently have some openings for Tuesday & Thursday afternoons, as well as a need for some additional substitute volunteers who have been super helpful covering open time slots when they are able.

HOW CAN PEOPLE BECOME INVOLVED?
Over the years, we’ve been blessed with dozens of wonderful St. Thomas parishioners who are gratified to lend a hand in the church office when they can. Having substitutes available to help out when regularly scheduled volunteers are on vacation or otherwise unable to fill their time slot is of extreme importance. We warmly welcome anyone interested in becoming involved to the extent he or she desires to do! Anyone who is interested, please call Barbara Buchholz at (513) 290-6909.

—Submitted by Barbara Buchholz
 Ministry Reports

St. Thomas Nursery School

What is the focus of this ministry?
The focus of St. Thomas Nursery School is to provide an outstanding preschool experience for children and their families in a nurturing Christian environment. Our ministry works to provide a wide variety of experiences that will enhance the children’s cognitive, social, emotional, physical and spiritual development. We recognize the importance getting to know each child on an individual basis, and structure our classes so they can more readily meet the needs of all the children. In recent years, we have broadened the scope of our ministry to include parents, allowing time in our day to discuss the wide range of challenges new parents face and offer suggestions. Sometimes, just a hug and the words “This too shall pass” and “Yes, this is typical behavior for a three year old” is all that it takes help calm an exhausted and worried parent. We consider the children and their families the “Monday through Friday” congregation of St. Thomas, and benefit greatly by having the resources and staff of St. Thomas Episcopal Church available to help our families.

What were the accomplishments of STNS in the last School Year?
STNS had a 96% retention rate of our currently enrolled students in the 2018-2019 school year. The students who did not return to us did so because they moved out of the area, had special needs and required special care, or parents wanted their children to attend the same school. All public schools and local private schools offer pre-school programs, so there are times when the older child in the family “graduates” from STNS, and the parent will enroll the younger sibling at the new school as well in order to have them both at the same school. It is often much less expensive to attend a public preschool, because they (unlike us) receive state and federal funds. We feel that our high retention rate shows that many of our families value the experiences they have at STNS, and so are willing to pay a bit more and deal with the inconvenience of children being at 2 different schools.

The transformation of our playground and the side of the hill has greatly enhanced the experiences and activities available for the children. (Who knew that salamanders like to live under wood “cookies”... the children are excited to turn them over each day and watch the salamanders scatter) and we were able to add some additional materials during the summer of 2019. We added 2 wall mounted basketball hoops, a working “digger”, and made an interactive Music Wall. (We also kept all the new plants alive over the summer… no small feat because I do not have a green thumb!).

The Nursery School served 148 children, offered 12 different programs for students ages 2-5. Students also had the opportunity to participate in special enrichment classes, including Art, Music, People and Places, Kids in Motion, Discovery Friday, Extended Day, and Lunch Bunch. We enjoyed visits from the Cincinnati Zoo, Sunrock Farm, Terrace Park Fire and Polices. We provided $8400 in scholarships and our STNS Care Team once again provided meals and resources to different STNS families who needed a little support.

What do you see as your goals, needs, or challenges in 2020?
An ongoing challenge the Nursery School continually faces is keeping our enrollment strong. More and more preschools are “competing” for the same children (there are currently 16 preschools in the 5 mile radius from where we draw our families). This saturated market keeps us mindful that we must continue to offer a superior preschool experience at a competitive rate. Another challenge we face is offering a fair and competitive wage to our teaching staff. The demand for excellent preschool teachers is great, and one of our goals is to compensate our teachers at the same level as other top quality schools.

How can people become involved?
Tutors in the classroom are always very helpful. Children benefit greatly from one-on-one time to practice their writing skills, identify letters, play games, be read to, etc. We also use volunteers at our family events (Pumpkin Carving Night, Cookies with Santa, Open House and Ice Cream Social) to help set up decorations, serve food, sell raffle tickets, etc. The best way to brighten your day is to spend time with happy, live-in-the-moment children and we would love to have you. We have opportunities to work one day a year, one week a year etc…. whatever works for you. Please contact Emily Keiser at (513) 831-6908 or stns@stthomasepiscopal.org.

—Submitted by Emily Keiser
**Ministry Reports**

**Chalice Bearers & Lay Readers**

**What is the focus of this ministry?**
Both Chalice Bearers and Lay Readers demonstrate, visually, that the entire church community participates in the worship service. While members of the clergy lead us in worship, all of us assist in facilitating the flow of the service: Ushers, Chalice Bearers, Lay Readers, Choir, and Congregation. For Chalice Bearers particularly, service at the altar IS their worship.

**What were the accomplishments of this ministry in 2019?**
We continue to add members to the “teams” as others retire, so the numbers involved remain relatively consistent. This is important when one realizes how many services are held each Sunday, and how many additional services are added during major seasons of the church year.

**What do you see as your goals, needs, and challenges in 2020?**
It would be wonderful to have more young people become involved in both these ministries; i.e., older acolytes who might wish to become more involved/active in the worship service as Chalice Bearers. There is always a need for additional individuals to become more active participants in the services.

**How can people become involved?**
Parishioners who might feel called to either ministry should contact any member of the clergy, or Debby Pendl at deb.pendl@gmail.com. Any member of either ministry will be happy to share the responsibilities, training, and time commitment of their ministry, and we always need more volunteers, especially at the 8:00 a.m. service!

—Submitted by Deb Pendl

**St. Thomas Library**

**What is the focus of this ministry?**
The St. Thomas Library offers a wide variety of materials for adults and children related not only to the Episcopal Church, but to other religions, the history of Christianity, prayer, stewardship, healing, and life lessons, such as introspection, health, family, marriage and work.

**What were the accomplishments of this ministry in 2019?**
Just a few new books have been ordered this past year. We continue to have several periodicals, including the Christian Century and the Anglican Journal. We have also received many donations of excellent books. All purchased materials are cataloged in our online database, librarything.com, and reside on the library shelves.

**What do you see as your goals, needs, and challenges in 2020?**
I am happy to see its increased use. Library patrons are encouraged to take advantage of the library service, and encouraged to return materials within 60 days of checkout if possible so others can use these books. Some books are years overdue!

Our star patrons for 2019 were Linda Swesson & Shana Elgabri!

**How can people become involved?**
Parishioners who might feel called to either ministry should contact any member of the clergy, or Debby Pendl at deb.pendl@gmail.com. Any member of either ministry will be happy to share the responsibilities, training, and time commitment of their ministry, and we always need more volunteers, especially at the 8:00 a.m. service!

—Submitted by Helen Hurley
Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for being our real heroes during VBS week and committing your time and talent to be with our wonderful group of 42 VBS kids. Everyone seemed to have a good time and I know they experienced the love of Jesus through each of you. Tom and I feel blessed during the week by our volunteers (about 24 this year) and we couldn’t do VBS without you – it is a community/team effort and each of you contributed to the miracle of “Table for…Five Thousand.”

Special thanks to Zoe Gizara (the creative mind behind the set) who spent several hours getting our picnic “grass” ready and to St. Thomas and the St. Thomas Nursery School for their space, resources, and support. Special thanks to Kelli Radloff, her son, and Elizabeth Elin for helping behind the scenes. Each of you are an example of how “SMALL THINGS DONE WITH GREAT LOVE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD!”

Thank you for being our heroes of courage, responsibility, love, and respect for the week!

Peace, love, and joy!

Tom and Karen Long