

For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

Nelson Mandela

The Lamplighter

July 2021

[Upcoming Services at Thomas Presbyterian](#)

June 27 Hospitality, Abraham, Mary and Martha

Many times we can be overcome by the 'doing' of hospitality. We are worried about cleaning our house, getting the groceries, preparing the meal, and making sure everyone is taken care of as a guest. Most often, we miss out on the true gift of hospitality which is being present and enjoying the company of guests. Can we make room for both?

July 4 Church Conflict, Freedom, Fruit of the Spirit

In the early church, there were many conflicts on how to follow the 'rules' of Christ. Have early Christians moved from slavery of those in power to slavery of Christianity? They seek freedom. Freedom in the scriptures, however, does not mean that I am free to do whatever I want. Freedom in scripture means I am free to love others as Christ loves me.

July 11 The Lord's Prayer

How do we pray? This Sunday's scripture reflects prayer as an active relationship with God. There are many adjectives you might use to describe these prayers: speaking and listening, questioning yet hopeful...familiar, loving, trusting. Take the time this week to really think about your prayers and how they reflect your relationship with God.

July 18 Faith and Hope

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrews 11:1

God is in a covenant relationship with us, even when things change around us...God remains steadfast. Even when we fail and turn away from God...God remains steadfast. This week we remember our faith in God and that our faith leads us to hope in our future.

July 25 The Steadfast Love of God

Hebrews was written to encourage the early church community. They seemed to be tired of discipleship. The early church was reminded (as we are now) of the power of our human faith in the world and God's abundant love for us. Jesus reminds us to 'fear not' as we embrace our faith and hope in a God who loves us. We can practice this with almsgiving and by active participation in the 'Kingdom of God' here on earth.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

at

THOMAS CHURCH

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:00 AM

SUNDAY WORSHIP

10:00 AM

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN

Ages Preschool—5th Grade

Meets in Room 7

following the

Children's Message

during Worship

COMMUNION

The first Sunday of every month

DEADLINE: Information to be included in the *Lamplighter* must be received by the 20th of the month. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for content and space.

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JULY MONTHLY MISSION

This month's mission is the Board of Deacons. Deacons are the hands and heart of the Church in our ministry of caring.

The Deacons' hearts go out to those in distress, to members who have suffered loss, to neighbors in the hospital, to friends who have lost their jobs, to new members who need a word of welcome, to members who are shut-in and lonely and cannot leave their homes, to people in the community who have lost their way and can no longer find God, to those who are economically oppressed and do not have adequate places to live or enough to eat, to any people who need to experience the love of Christ in concrete ways.

The Board of Deacons might be described most generally as "the caring arm of the church." Most of us are incredibly busy and may forget to regard one another with genuine concern and love. It is a regrettable fact that in churches of all sizes, members and friends can be absent from worship without being missed or can go through an illness, a family tragedy, or a financial crisis without getting the comfort and attention they need. At such a times it is often necessary for the deacons to step forward in an organized way to marshal the love and concern of the whole congregation to help members endure pain and tragedy.

With decline in COVID cases and the increase in the number of people that have been vaccinated, the Deacon have become more active in fulfilling their caregiver roll. The Deacon this have helped some families with their food needs and medical expenses. The Deacons have also sent care packages at Christmas and on Valentines Day to our college students and members of the military.

In June, the Deacons have started serving home communion to the homebound members of our church family. The plan is to serve the homebound communion once per quarter. The servers do clear the visit and wear masks, As the Book of Order puts it, "The office of deacon as set forth in Scrip-

ture is one of sympathy, witness, and service after the example of Jesus Christ. This month's mission is the Board of Deacons. Please give so this important ministry can continue to be the caring arm of the church.

Adopted Staff from Pine Springs

Now that Pine Springs Camp is up and operating, Thomas Presbyterian Church is overjoyed to be able to provide prayer support and encouragement for two of the staff. The Mission Team invites you to participate in one or more of the following ways:

1. Pray daily for Ellie Herrle and Carter Shearer. Both young ladies are 1st-year counselors and will be attending Grove City College in the fall.
2. Four or more people are needed to send personal notes of encouragement to Ellie and Carter during the last week of June, and the last week of July. Cards and notes should be addressed to the staff member, Pine Springs Camp, P. O. Box 186, Jennerstown, PA 15547.
3. All are invited to bring item(s) from the following list to make up care packages for Ellie and Carter. All items for the shoe-box-sized care packages need to be at the church no later than July 4th for timely shipment to Ellie and Carter.
 - gift card to Sheetz with a note
 - gift card to Eat-n-Park with a note
 - gift card to Subway with a note
 - gift card to Chili's with a note
 - small devotional book with a note
 - hard candy and gum with a note

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL

Curriculum: "The New Testament You Never Knew – Exploring the Context, Purpose, and Meaning of the Story of God" -

- 7/11 – The Ministry of the Apostle Paul
- 7/18 – The Early Christians and the Church
- 7/25 – The Mission of the Church
- 8/1 – The Creation of the New Testament

The class will meet from 8:45 – 9:45 AM in the Fellowship Hall. Masks and social distancing will be required.



Car Cruise

It is car cruise season. We are going to bring back our car cruises for mission. We think we can do it safely because we will be outdoors and most of the people who will be attending will have been vaccinated.

Come and enjoy the fellowship, hear some good music, eat some good food.

The remaining cruise schedule for this year is as follows:

July 3, July 17, July 31 and August 14
We would then like close out the season with our Pig Roast/Car Show on August 28.

If anyone can help work any of these cruises it would be greatly appreciated. We can use the help. If you are interested and have questions contact Pat Butto 724-743-1987.



Thank You

Edna Meldrum and the family of John Meldrum would like to thank the congregation of Thomas for all of your support and prayers. He loved his church family at Thomas. Please feel free to stop by the table in the Sanctuary to read John's full obituary and his funeral card at your convenience.

FROM THE PRESBYTERY:

MIGHT YOU BE WILLING TO SERVE? The Nominating Committee is looking for folks to serve on presbytery committees. If you are an elder in good standing (do not have to be currently on session), please take a look at the committee descriptions (in your Times email) and prayerfully consider serving with one of these groups. If you have questions or have found a committee that interests you, please be in contact with David Leslie at dcleslie@comcast.net, chairperson. Thank you.

ELDERS' ENRICHMENT FOR SERVICE is an important part of the design of our *Inter-Presbytery Leadership Formation* program. Ruling Elders are urged to find out more about this fall's workshop offerings, and well as the Introduction to Reformed Theology course that will take place one Saturday morning in each month, August thru December. Call or [e-mail](mailto:office@washingtonpresbytery.org) the Washington Presbytery Offices for more information. 724-222-1500 or office@washingtonpresbytery.org

WASHINGTON PRESBYTERY BY THE NUMBERS – June 14, 2021 There's a pandemic...right? We are anticipating strained budget in the local church and a consequent drop in support for the needs of the presbytery's ministry. But...

Per Capita Giving Received, 2019 - \$159,002.56

Per Capita Giving Received, 2020 - \$193,206.54

Unified Mission Giving, 2019 - \$56,819.85

Unified Mission Giving, 2020 - \$59,659.11

Looking back on 2020 we are profoundly grateful that churches exhibited a bedrock presbyterian principle – that in a manner of speaking, 'We are all in this together!' And you made sure as churches that your giving sustained, strong and true, our connectational way of being Christ's people. Thank you!

THOMAS STAFF

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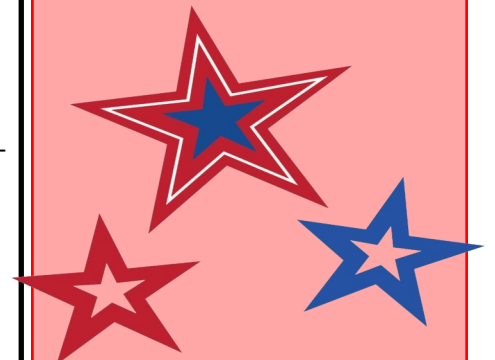
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June 21, 2021 Session Meeting Highlights

Long-Range Planning: Session Retreat Notes, June 5, 2021 were presented and discussion was held about the next steps. Jim Hixon, Stephanie Modar, Kathi Durkin, and Pastor Debbie will begin working on a new administrative structure.

COVID Task Force: It was noted that Thomas Church is fully open. The task force will present any information, as necessary.

Capital Campaign: Update on the capital campaign was presented by Jim Hixon. Presently have 31,000+ cash on hand from pledges for the campaign.

Building and Grounds: Plans have been made to “declutter” the church facilities. Notice will be given to have individuals, groups, etc. asking them to clean out their clutter between July 31 and August 7. A dumpster will be available August 7 to collect all items that will be thrown away.

Christian Education: Kathi Durkin reported that plans are in progress to provide a “to-go” Vacation Bible School program to children in the community. The materials will be distributed at the July 17th Car Cruise. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to elect Peggy Flynn as the chair of the Thomas Preschool Board.

Hospitality Team: Will begin serving beverages.

Mission Team: Approved a request to grant the use of the Thomas Church parking lot for the Washington County Food Bank’s Food Helpers program during September, December, March and June.

Worship Team: Motion was made, seconded, and approved to move the monthly Communion from the first Sunday of August and September to August 15 and September 12.

2021 Monthly Mission Offerings

MONTH	MISSION	AMOUNT CONTRIBUTED
January	<i>Family Promise</i>	\$145
February	<i>Health For Her</i> <small>(formerly Pittsburgh Women’s Clinic)</small>	\$145 + diaper collection
March	<i>Pine Springs Camp</i>	\$405
April	<i>One Great Hour of Sharing</i>	\$252+ food drive
May	<i>Pentecost</i>	\$315
June	<i>Habitat for Humanity</i>	
July	<i>Deacons</i>	
August	<i>City Mission</i>	
September	<i>Peace & Global Witness</i>	
October	<i>Domestic Violence Services</i>	
November	<i>Adopt-a-Family</i>	
December	<i>Christmas Joy</i>	

THOMAS CHURCH’S COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT SPECIAL MISSION PROGRAMS CONTINUES

Each month Thomas Presbyterian Church designates a particular mission to be the recipient of the monthly mission offering. With the exception of the mission programs designated by the Presbyterian Church, the congregation chooses the mission programs that will receive these offerings. The chart to the right provides information on the 2020 mission programs and the church’s response.

