

FALL/WINTER | ISSUE NO 19

The Clarion

TRI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



WORSHIP, STUDY, FRIENDSHIP, COMPASSION



ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL
CHURCH + SCHOOL

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS



ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL
CHURCH + SCHOOL

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Worship Service Schedule

SUNDAYS

8:00am: Holy Eucharist Rite I

10:00am: Holy Eucharist Rite II &
Children's Church

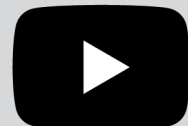


WEDNESDAYS

12:00pm: Holy Eucharist Rite II

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Mission:

**To experience the love of God
through worship, study, friendship,
and compassion to encounter and
transform our city**



**Watch our live-streamed
services on YouTube.**
www.youtube.com/c/tom1604

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@tom1604church



@tom1604church

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for this publication.
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ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL
CHURCH + SCHOOL

FALL FESTIVAL

**GAMES • CRAFTS • FOOD
TRUNK OR TREAT**

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

4PM – 6PM

in the Woehler Family Center

**WE NEED YOU TO MAKE IT HAPPEN!
WE'RE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS AND CREATIVE
TRUNKS TO HELP BRING THE FUN TO LIFE.
SIGN-UP AVAILABLE SOON!**



GOD IS FAITHFUL

A Message from the Rector, Rev. Mike Michie

*"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end; they are
new every morning; great is your faithfulness."*
- **Lamentations 3:22-23**

This scripture verse shines like a light in one of the darkest books in the Bible. Lamentations was written while Israel was in exile in Babylon: far from home, overwhelmed, and lost. Living into the reality of being banished from the Promised Land, Jeremiah (the writer) holds on to his hope. The Lord's faithfulness is great.

This is an encouraging word to us in any circumstance of life. Our common life at St. Thomas is far from what Israel was experiencing. In fact, God is blessing us in wonderful ways. I'd like to take this space to update you on just a few of the things that are happening.

St. Thomas continues to grow in both membership and attendance. Our in-person Sunday attendance is up over 2% from this time last year – we see 275 a week. Our online attendance is quite extraordinary. We post the livestream of the 10am service in its entirety, the sermon and the children's sermon out each week. (When discipleship hour is back, we post my teaching sessions too.) Our livestream and sermon view counts together are over 200 a week. Interestingly, my children sermon videos are almost always viewed more than 500 times. We've had a few of them get up over 5000 views! God is faithful.

By now you know that we have paid off our debt on the Woehler Family Center. That was our second goal in our "A Future with Hope" capital drive we did last year. (The first goal was replacing the roofs.) Our third big goal was restoring \$250,000 to our savings. We had paid ourselves back for the capital drive consultant and expenses and have also now restored our Rainy-Day fund. We are quite close to our goal of restoring the \$100,000 gift we received to start an endowment. After that, we will work toward our renovations of our Christian Education Wing which will be exciting.

At this writing we have collected \$1,617,515 from the "A Future with Hope" campaign. Your generosity has restored and blessed this congregation in generation-changing ways. Not having the debt opens up a lot of great possibilities for our budget and having our savings restored sure will allow us to sleep better at night. I like instilling the discipline of savings for our church. Building a habit of saving is something I want to instill in our common life — we will continue to add to both our Rainy-Day fund and our maintenance reserves.

In the coming months I hope to be able to share how you might be able to participate in our endowment fund. Our generation of leaders should establish this too. Have you considered remembering St. Thomas in your will? Let us know how we can help you with that. That is a terrific final way to bless this place that has been a blessing to so many of you.

I encourage you to read our Minister of Music, Ryan Becker's thorough update on the organ project. We are excited about this and grateful that it has been funded as a memorial gift. God is faithful! We hope to take the opportunity of the installation to spruce up the sanctuary a bit as well.

BIBLE STUDY WITH FR. MIKE

Thursdays at 9:30am via Zoom

Contact the Church Office for Zoom Link.



I wish I could give you a better report on the Associate Rector search. We have not had any viable candidates so far. This has to do with the lack of clergy in the Episcopal Church nationally and in our diocese locally. We have the job posted in the right places and the Diocese has an eye out for us, too.

It could be that we will need to settle in for an extended time without a second clergy person. I had certainly thought that we would have had someone by now. Join me in prayer that God would send the right person to come and help us. The good news is that we are ahead on our budget for 2026. My thanks to The Rev. Chuck Woehler for his help on Sundays and for covering my vacation.

Our Children's Minister, Kellie Phares has agreed to help us on organizing and leading youth activities. She and her husband Caleb (who is our livestream technician) are a blessing! You can read what she has planned for our youth in her article in *The Clarion*.

We are bracing ourselves for the retirement of our faithful Sexton, George Guerra. After decades of service to our church and school, he'll be starting his well-deserved retirement in February. Our efforts are underway to hire his replacement. We think several months of overlap will be good for us and we'll be

expanding the role to be more like a Facilities Manager. I'll let you know when that hire happens, it will be soon.

I'm looking forward to the discipleship hour classes, Advent Dinners, and sermon series we'll have this fall. Teaching is one of my favorite things to do, and it is important that we put the "study" in worship, study, friendship, and compassion. I have started turning my sermon series and classes into personal devotional guides and small group resources. When I have a new one ready, I'll let you know. If you'd like to have the "This Changes Everything" or "Learning to Pray" resource (or both!) reach out and we'll send it to you.

God is faithful. Thank you for your generosity, prayers, attendance, and support. God's mercies are new every morning! May the Lord bless you and your walk with our Lord and may God bless our beloved St. Thomas.



ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL
CHURCH + SCHOOL

THANKSGIVING EVE WORSHIP AND PIEFEST

November 25
7:00pm

Worship begins at 7:00pm.
After worship all are
welcome to the Parish Hall
for a slice of pie.

A SEASON OF GRATITUDE AND HOPE

A Message from Senior Warden, Kristine Thomas



As we enter the beautiful seasons of fall and winter at St. Thomas, I find myself reflecting on what an honor it has been to serve on the Vestry over the past three years and as your Senior Warden for the last two. This role has given me a unique opportunity to witness the faith, generosity, and love that make St. Thomas such a special place. I am deeply grateful for the privilege of serving this parish family.

As I reflect on all God has accomplished at St. Thomas, I am especially grateful for the faithfulness and generosity of our parish family through the *A Future with Hope* Capital Campaign. Because of your commitment, we were able to pay off the Woehler Family Center debt nearly two years ahead of schedule and begin restoring our rainy-day fund with the gifts collected so far. What an incredible testament to our shared vision and stewardship. The remaining campaign funds will help support the much-needed renovation of our Christian Education Wing, creating welcoming and functional spaces for formation and fellowship for generations to come. Thank you for investing in the future of St. Thomas and helping ensure that our church remains a vibrant place of worship, learning, and community.

I would also like to offer a special thank you to Kellie, our Children's Minister, for the tremendous work she has done refreshing and organizing the nursery. The space is brighter, more inviting, and better suited for our youngest members and their families. If you have not visited recently, I encourage you to stop by and take a look. Be sure to thank Kellie for the care, creativity, and effort she has invested in making the nursery such a welcoming environment.

The months ahead will be filled with many opportunities to gather in worship, fellowship, and celebration. I look forward to seeing many of you at our Blessing of the Pets. I'll certainly be there with my fur baby as we give thanks for the animals who bring so much joy to our lives.

Our Fall Festival will be another wonderful opportunity to come together as a community and welcome friends and neighbors onto our campus. As Thanksgiving approaches, I am already looking forward to our PieFest and the chance to share food, gratitude, and fellowship.

The Advent season holds a special place in my heart. While every Advent service helps prepare us for the coming of Christ, my personal favorite is Lessons & Carols. There is something truly moving about hearing the story of redemption unfold through scripture and song as we anticipate the celebration of Christmas. Then, before we know it, we will gather to celebrate Christ's birth and welcome a new year together at St. Thomas.

As we begin 2027, we will also mark an important transition in the life of our parish. Our Sexton, George, will be retiring after many years of faithful service to St. Thomas. George has cared for our campus with dedication and commitment, often working behind the scenes to ensure that our church remains a welcoming and beautiful place for worship and fellowship. Please take a moment to thank George for his years of service when you see him. We wish him every blessing in his

well-deserved retirement. At the same time, I hope you will extend a warm St. Thomas welcome to his successor once that person joins our parish family.

St. Thomas is truly a special place. It has been my church home for many years, and every time I walk through its doors, it feels like family. As we continue to welcome new faces to our parish, I hope each of us will be intentional about extending hospitality, introducing ourselves, and helping others feel at home. A smile, a conversation, or an invitation can make all the difference. Together, we can ensure that St. Thomas becomes not just a church people attend, but a family where they belong.

May God bless you and your loved ones throughout this fall and winter season. I look forward to worshiping, celebrating, and serving alongside you in the months ahead.

ST. THOMAS VESTRY

Kristine Thomas,
Senior Warden

Joel Martin,
Junior Warden

Lloyd Norris,
Treasurer

Rusty Biechlin,
Chancellor

Stacey Arantes
Lara de Leon
Keller Drozdick
Bill Frerichs
Geoff Morgan
Mike Kershaw
Robb Swain
A'Lann Truelock
Katy Urias



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A Message from Kent Gates and Judy Thompson Community Outreach Ministry Leaders

First a brief recap of the Community Outreach ministries this summer.

- In May, St. Thomas provided an end-of-year thank you breakfast for the teachers and staff at Harmony Hills Elementary School.
- Eight volunteers served at the San Antonio Food Bank on the morning of July 18th, sorting and evaluating 13,800 pounds of donated food for future distribution.
- In August, several pairs of men's blue jeans were purchased and donated to Christian Assistance Ministries.
- A huge thank you to everyone who generously provided 50 backpacks and school supplies for the children at Santa Fe Episcopal Church.
- The Grocery Gang continued supporting the food pantry at Santa Fe Episcopal Church through their ongoing deliveries.

This fall we have six tutors who will begin volunteering in September at Harmony Hills Elementary School to mentor in reading and math. We're continuing to work with teachers to find more opportunities.

In October, in partnership with Christian Assistance Ministries (CAM), we will have our annual Cold Weather Clothing Drive to benefit those at risk this winter. We will also volunteer in December at CAM's Christmas Store where parents can shop for gifts for their children.

In November, there will be an opportunity for children and youth to volunteer at the San Antonio Food Bank. More details will be announced this fall. This is a wonderful opportunity for our children and youth to earn service hours while giving back to the community.

In December, we will put up the Angel Tree for several children from Santa Fe Episcopal Church and Harmony Hills Elementary School. St. Thomas has been incredibly generous in years past, helping to create a blessed and joyful Christmas for these children. We look forward to continuing this wonderful tradition of giving and making a difference in the lives of local children and families.

The Grocery Gang continues to deliver and help distribute food at Santa Fe Episcopal Church's Food Pantry each month. Details can be found in the *Thursday Notes*, and we always welcome anyone who would like to help.

Our monthly service at Haven for Hope on the second Monday of each month also continues to be a blessing to those we serve and to all who have the opportunity to be a part of this meaningful ministry.





ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL
CHURCH + SCHOOL



ADVENT

Family Night

NOVEMBER 29
5:30PM-7:30PM



FOOD, CRAFTS, AND FAMILY FUN
WOEHLER FAMILY CENTER

STAFF NEWS



Ready, set, go... There are so many exciting things happening in our music ministry at St. Thomas this fall. In September, the adult choir, children's choir, and bell choir will resume their regular

rehearsal schedules. If you are interested in joining any of these musical groups, now is a great time to join us!

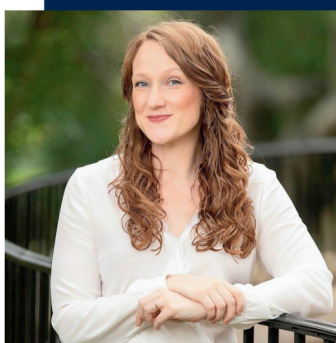
Children's Music Ministry

I want to highlight our incredible children's music ministry. St. Thomas is so blessed to have a wealth of physical resources such as Orff instruments, African drums, tone chimes, boom-wackers (my favorite), that are available for our children to use as they learn and grow. There are very few churches in this country that have all the resources that we have. We are truly blessed.

There are also very few churches that have a vibrant children's music program like ours. The main reason for this is our leaders. I am grateful to PJ Waite for working with me over the past few years to create this program. As PJ passes the torch, we are blessed to have two incredibly gifted people taking the helm.

Meet our Director of Children's Music

Laurel Christensen is excited to begin another season and step up as our new Director of Children's Music. She holds both Bachelor and Master of Music



degrees in Music Education and has taught students of all ages. Prior to moving to San Antonio, she served for seven years as a Middle and High School choir teacher in Virginia where her choirs earned distinction for their performance and sight-reading skills. She has also sung in professional choirs, taught private lessons, and composed choral works

that have been published and performed by ensembles across the United States. In her teaching, Laurel emphasizes healthy vocal technique, music literacy, and joyful music making. Inspired by St. Augustine's assertion that "[those] who sing, pray twice," she believes that children of all personalities and abilities can find a means of worship, growth, and belonging in choir.

Meet our Assistant Director of Children's Music

Myles Gonzalez is excited to join the children's music ministry as Assistant Director of Children's Music. Myles will primarily be leading our Cherub Choir. A music director, educator, and professional baritone from Atlanta, Georgia, he holds a Bachelor of Music Education from Mercer University. Myles has conducted numerous choirs and musical theater productions. He also teaches private voice and beginning piano lessons. He currently serves as a music educator with IDEA Public Schools, where he is helping establish the school's first fine arts program! Passionate about music education and ministry, Myles is dedicated to helping children discover the joy of music while inspiring a lifelong love of learning and singing.



Parents, if your child is not already participating in this program, I hope you consider having your child join us. Children are welcome to join at any point throughout the year. There are rarely learning opportunities of this quality offered for children that are completely free! It is an experience that will truly benefit your child for the rest of their lives.

Why does this need to be completed before the organ is installed?

When a pipe organ is installed, each pipe is specifically voiced for the room it is in. Our organ will have approximately 1700 pipes. Clearly, this is a lengthy and expensive process. As they say, time is money. If we wait and do the work in the church after the organ is installed, the organ will need to be revoiced once the work is completed. This would be very costly and a waste of money.

If everything goes as planned, Charles Kegg will begin the construction of the organ at his shop in October of 2027. The organ should be completed in the shop by February 2028. Once completed, it will be delivered, installed, voiced, and ready to use by April 2028.

If you have any questions or would like to contribute to this exciting chapter in the life of our church, please contact me at rbecker@tom1604.org.

Save the Date

On Sunday, November 1st at 4:00pm the adult choir and the senior choristers will be presenting a choral evensong for the Feast of All Saints. As part of this beautiful liturgy, those attending will be invited to light candles and place them on the altar in remembrance of loved ones who have passed.

May the souls of all the faithful-departed rest in peace and rise in glory.

On Sunday, December 20th at 10:00am we will be presenting the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.

Thank you for supporting me and our music ministry at St. Thomas. It is an honor for me to be part of this great community. These are exciting times!

In Christ,
Ryan Becker
Minister of Music

"Music is the one art we all have inside. We may not be able to play an instrument, but we can sing along or clap or tap our feet. Have you ever seen a baby bouncing up and down in the crib in time to some music? When you think of it, some of that baby's first messages from his or her parents may have been lullabies, or at least the music of their speaking voices. All of us have had the experience of hearing a tune from childhood and having that melody evoke a memory or a feeling. The music we hear early on tends to stay with us all our lives." -Mr. Rogers

"Studying the arts and humanities, especially music, makes us better people, better communities, and a better nation." -Mr. Becker

Organ Update

We are getting closer to seeing the dream of having a pipe organ come to fruition. In the coming months, the organ committee will be meeting to discuss the items that need to be completed in the church before the organ is installed. The most important changes are replacing the carpet with a solid (but not slippery) material in the aisles and in the chancel (the area where the lay readers, acolytes, and clergy sit during worship) and raising the floor in the choir area to the same level as the chancel.

The following two questions are the most common questions that I am asked.

Why are these changes necessary?

These changes will improve the acoustics (and the aesthetics) in the church. This, in turn, will improve the sound of the organ and congregational singing. Unlike other instruments, the space a pipe organ is in is as important as the organ itself. The space becomes part of the instrument, and the instrument becomes part of the space. For a successful outcome, the two are inseparable.







STAFF NEWS

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY UPDATE

Our Nursery underwent a wonderful "revamp" this summer. Thank you to everyone who generously purchased items from our Nursery Wish List. Updating our toys, furniture, and supplies makes a meaningful difference in the worship experience for our young families.

Starting September 20th, the Nursery will introduce a digital check-in system integrated directly with our church membership portal to keep registration quick and secure. Thank you for your continued support of the St. Thomas Nursery.

Rainforest Falls Vacation Bible School was an incredible success. With over 130 children and 50 dedicated volunteers, we spent a memorable week celebrating God's creation and learning about His unfailing love. Thank you to everyone who gave their time, energy, donations, and sponsorships to make it such a joyful experience.

Discipleship Hour kicks off September 20th! Children ages 3 through 5th grade will explore major stories of the Old Testament through engaging lessons, creative crafts, videos, and hands-on activities designed to help them connect Scripture to their everyday lives.

Following Father Mike's Children's Sermon at the 10:00am service, children ages 3 through 5th grade are invited to attend Children's Church across three age-appropriate classes. Grounded in our Episcopal liturgy, this curriculum helps kids explore the weekly Gospel readings together in a deep and memorable way.

Mark your calendars for our annual Fall Festival on October 25th. Join us for Trunk-or-Treat, carnival games, bounce houses, crafts, and fellowship with the St. Thomas community.

Many hands make this event a success—be on the lookout for ways to help by hosting a trunk, serving snacks, or supervising a craft table.

Kick off the Christmas Season with us at Advent Family Night on November 29th. We will have Advent wreaths, Christmas crafts, and take-home activities for you and your family to remember and celebrate the Advent season together. Mark your calendars for holiday fun and fellowship for the whole family.

Keep our Christmas Pageant in mind as you make your holiday plans. Children from newborns through teens are welcome to participate as we share the story of Jesus' birth. We will hold one rehearsal on December 19th to fit costumes and run through the service together. The pageant will take place on Christmas Eve at 3:00pm. All are welcome, so invite your friends, grandchildren, and extended family.

Our growing ministry relies on 22 dedicated adult and youth volunteers each month—and as we grow, we need your help! We have open positions for both lead teachers and assistant helpers during the 9:00am Discipleship Hour and 10:00am worship service. If you have a heart for our kids and want to get involved, please contact Kellie Phares at kphares@tom1604.org.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support of our Children's Ministry at St. Thomas!

YOUTH MINISTRY UPDATE

It's been a wonderful summer, and our St. Thomas Youth Group is thriving. Our teens spent the season building community through monthly gatherings in our Youth Room—enjoying movie nights, game nights, and rich fellowship—while many also served as vibrant volunteers during Vacation Bible School.

The youth at St. Thomas are passionate about studying Scripture, serving our neighbors, and growing together in faith. These priorities mirror our parish mission: *"To experience the love of God through worship, study, friendship, and compassion to encounter and transform our city."* This mission directly guided our planning for the fall semester.

Youth in grades 6th and up are invited to join us every Sunday at 9:00am for Bible Study. Beginning September 20th, Kellie Phares will lead our Youth Discipleship Hour with units on *Identity & Belonging*, *Faith in Action & Justice*, and *Gratitude & Advent Expectation*. Grounded in Episcopal liturgy, these engaging lessons will offer practical wisdom for our teens' daily lives.

Our youth will complete over 15 service hours from August through December. Outreach projects include painting local sidewalks, sorting donations at Haven for Hope, and assisting with major St. Thomas parish events. We look forward to seeing our teens draw closer to God and one another as they serve both San Antonio and our church family.

Alongside weekly study and service, we'll host monthly social events both in the Youth Room and off-site. Youth can look forward to open study halls, video games, movie nights, craft sessions, and a festive end-of-semester Holiday Party.

Please email kphares@tom1604.org to sign up for Youth Group events. We will get you connected to our group message for reminders and updates. We are deeply grateful for our teens and excited for a fall semester filled with worship, study, compassion, and friendship as we grow in God's love together.

Blessings,
Kellie Phares
Children's Minister

MEMBERSHIP AND GROWTH

Fall is in full swing and with that comes a lot of church-wide events that I encourage you to attend! Whether you are brand new or have



been coming to St. Thomas for decades, there is always an opportunity for you to make a connection with a church member. It was great to see so many of you attend our Church Picnic in September and I hope you used it to meet someone new or strengthen an existing bond.

Our Discipleship Hour is up and running and we are excited to see so many new faces in the groups. In addition to classes there are also many groups that exist within our church, both large and small. If you don't already belong to a group or organization, I encourage you to join one as it can make a difference in your walk with Christ as well as foster relationships within St. Thomas. During these last few months of the year there seems to be a church event just about every week! I encourage you to attend one that suits you best.

Something to consider as we enter the last few months of the year is to use our many upcoming activities as avenues to invite friends or family members to St. Thomas. As an example, I plan on inviting some of my close friends to the upcoming Fall Festival and hope that some of them come on Sunday too! You never know where God is calling on your heart to make a positive, welcoming impact.

Finally, if you would like to volunteer to be on the Welcome Team on Sunday mornings, please email me at sanderson@tom1604.org.

Blessings,
Sarah Anderson
Member & Growth Coordinator

PARISH CALENDAR- WORSHIP

SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:00am

Holy Eucharist Rite I
in person only

10:00am

Holy Eucharist Rite II & Children's Church
in person and live streamed

Children's Church:

Children ages 3 through 5th grade are invited to come forward for the children's sermon and then follow our Children's Church Leader to a classroom down the hallway in our Christian Education Wing. After the Exchange of the Peace, children are ushered back to their seats.

WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

12:00pm

Holy Eucharist Rite II & Anointing for Healing
Chapel of the Cross, in person only

BLESSING OF THE PETS

Sunday, October 4th, 4:00pm in the Courtyard
All pets welcome! Pets must be on a leash or in a crate for safety.

ALL SAINTS' EVENSONG

Sunday, November 1st, 4:00pm

Join us for Solemn Evensong for the Feast of All Saints. You will be invited to light candles and place them on the altar in remembrance of loved ones.

THANKSGIVING EVE WORSHIP AND PIEFEST

Wednesday, November 25th, 7:00pm

St. Thomas invites you to an evening of worship and pie. Worship begins at 7:00pm. After worship, all are welcome to gather in the Parish Hall for pie and fellowship. Please bring a pie to share.

HOPE AND HEALING

Thursday, December 17th, 7:00pm

Are you grieving a loved one this Christmas? Is this time of year hard for you? Join us for this special service of healing and remembrance.

SUNDAY SERMON SERIES

Unshakable: Joy & Peace for Anxious People
September 20th–October 11th

What if your peace didn't depend on your circumstances? Through Philippians, we'll discover a joy that circumstances can't steal and a peace that guards our hearts and minds because both are found in Christ.

Moses at the End

October 18th–October 25th

What do we do when the journey is coming to an end, but the promise is still just beyond our reach? As Moses stands at the end of his journey, we'll see how his longing for God's glory and his glimpse of the Promised Land point us to the faithfulness of God and the promise fulfilled in Christ.

Hope That Holds: Comfort for the Grieving
November 1st–November 15th

What does Christian hope look like in the middle of grief? Scripture reminds us that grief is not a failure of faith and that we do not grieve without hope—because God meets us in our sorrow and gives us comfort that holds.

Comfort, O Comfort

November 29th–December 13th

What does it mean to be comforted by God when we're longing for Him to come? Through Isaiah and the witness of John the Baptist, we'll hear the promise of a God who comes near, gathers the weary, and brings good news to the brokenhearted.

THE FESTIVAL OF LESSONS & CAROLS

Sunday, December 20th, 10:00am

We invite you to join us for the Festival of Lessons and Carols. This service will be music and Scripture readings. No sermon or communion. If you would like communion, please attend the 8:00am service on this day.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC AND FLOWER DONATIONS

November 19th - December 13th
Online link available beginning November 19th.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Thursday, December 24th at 3:00pm

Pageant Rehearsal:

Saturday, December 19th, 9:00am
Children of all ages are invited to participate in the Christmas Pageant on Christmas Eve. The Christmas Pageant is a beautiful opportunity for our children to share the story of Jesus' birth with our church family. This is a great occasion to invite cousins, grandchildren, and friends to participate. Registration available online in November.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Thursday, December 24th
1:00pm - Holy Eucharist Rite I
3:00pm - Holy Eucharist Rite II
and Children's Christmas Pageant
7:00pm - Festival Holy Eucharist Rite II
(prelude begins at 6:30pm)

VESTRY AND DIOCESAN COUNCIL NOMINATIONS

December 3rd - January 1st
Forms available online starting December 3rd.

PARISH ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, January 10th, 9:00am in the Church
Join Fr. Mike for the St. Thomas Parish Annual Meeting. He'll be giving an update on the church's finances, a review of 2026, and share our plans for 2027.

HAND BELL CHOIR REHEARSAL

Tuesdays, 6:00pm-7:00pm
Contact Minister of Music, Ryan Becker,
rbecker@tom1604.org for more information.

ADULT CHOIR REHEARSAL

Wednesdays, 6:30pm - 8:00pm
Contact Minister of Music, Ryan Becker,
rbecker@tom1604.org for more information.

LAY EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS NEEDED

Lay Eucharistic Ministers needed to serve at both the 8:00am and 10:00am services. Duties include reading the lessons, psalm, and prayers of the people, and administering wine during communion. If you are interested, contact the church office at stthomaschurch@tom1604.org.

ACOLYTES NEEDED

Students in rising 3rd grade through rising 12th grade are invited to join our Acolyte Ministry and assist with Sunday morning worship. No experience needed! For more information contact the church office at stthomaschurch@tom1604.org.

ST. THOMAS HEALING MINISTRY

The St. Thomas Healing Ministry offers prayers in the Chapel of the Cross on Sundays during the 8:00am and 10:00am service. We encourage everyone in need of additional prayers to visit a prayer minister in the Chapel. If you are interested in joining our ministry, learning about healing, or in need of prayer, contact the church office at stthomaschurch@tom1604.org.

THE ORDER OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE KING

The Order of the Daughters of the King (DOK) is a women's Order of Prayer and Service to the church, community and the world. We pray daily and study the Bible. Our Epiphany Chapter, the chapter at St. Thomas, serves the Parish at funeral receptions and other church receptions. Our chapter meets monthly for prayer, study and fellowship. New members are always welcome to our Order. There is a seven-week training and discernment period to learn about the Rules of Prayer and service. Women interested can speak to any of the Daughters for more information of our chapter. Should you have any questions about The Order of the Daughters of the King, or are interested in the training, please contact the church office at stthomaschurch@tom1604.org. Our monthly meeting dates and times are posted in the weekly *Thursday Notes*.

JUNIOR DAUGHTERS OF THE KING

Junior Daughters of the King (JDOK) provides young women ages 7 to 21 with the opportunity to grow in their love and knowledge of Jesus Christ while serving their church and community. Junior Daughters make a promise, or pledge, of daily prayer and service. They meet under the guidance of a senior Daughter. Junior Daughters grow in their relationship to Jesus Christ through personal and group prayer and Bible study. They also serve their church and community through outreach projects. If you are interested in becoming a member, email the church office at stthomaschurch@tom1604.org.

VIDEO PRODUCTION MINISTRY

Sundays at 10:00am

We are looking for a team to help with our Sunday live stream production. Interested? Contact Video Production Manager, Caleb Phares, at cphares@tom1604.org.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

October 12th

November 25th - November 27th

December 24th - December 25th

December 31st - January 1st

*December 28th - December 30th -limited hours, please call the church office at (210) 494-3507 before coming in to confirm that someone will be available.



ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL
CHURCH + SCHOOL

Christmas Eve WORSHIP DECEMBER 24TH

1:00PM – HOLY EUCHARIST RITE I

3:00PM HOLY EUCHARIST RITE II & CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

7:00PM FESTIVAL HOLY EUCHARIST RITE II (PRELUDE BEGINS AT 6:30PM)

PARISH CALENDAR- STUDY

DISCIPLESHIP HOUR SUNDAYS AT 9:00AM

Adult Bible Study

in the Parish Hall led by Fr. Mike

Teach Us to Pray:

The Collect as Window into the Church Year

September 20th - October 11th

Join us for this four-week discipleship class as we explore how the Collects of the Book of Common Prayer teach us to pray and deepen our understanding of the Christian year.

Together we'll discover how these beautiful prayers shape our faith through every season.

Teach Us to Number Our Days:

A Deep Dive into Psalm 90

October 18th–November 1st

What can Psalm 90 teach us about living faithfully in the face of our mortality? We'll explore Moses' prayer as it moves from the eternity of God and the brevity of life to the weight of sin and, finally, the hope of restoration and lasting meaning.

Christ the King:

The Reign of God in Scripture and Tradition

November 15th–November 22nd

What does it mean to call Jesus King? We'll explore the biblical vision of Christ's reign and the story behind the Feast of Christ the King, discovering why this celebration still matters for how we understand Jesus and His kingdom today.

The Voice in the Wilderness: John the Baptist

November 29th–December 20th

Who was John the Baptist, and why does his story matter beyond preparing the way for Jesus? From his prophetic calling and ministry at the Jordan to his imprisonment, doubt, and death, we'll discover how John's life and witness continually point us to Christ.

Discipleship for Moms

in Room 111 led by Paige Martin

A welcoming space for moms to pause, connect, and grow in faith together. This fall we're walking through *Abide* by Jen Wilkin, a study of John's letters and the call to remain in Christ's love. As we gather around Scripture, prayer, and conversation, we'll encourage one another and make room to listen for God's presence during everyday life.

DISCIPLESHIP HOUR SUNDAYS AT 9:00AM

Children's Sunday School

Ages 3 - 5th grade, in Room 112

Children are invited to join us each Sunday as we journey through the Old Testament. From creation and Noah to Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets, children will discover the exciting stories of God's people and see how God was with them every step of the way.

Through Bible stories, prayer, hands-on activities, and meaningful conversations, kids will grow in their faith, discover God's love, and build friendships as they learn what it means to follow Jesus.

Youth Group Sunday Series:

6th - 12th grade, in Room 109

Identity & Belonging

September 20th – October 11th

Who are we when the world is constantly telling us who we should be? Through Scripture, conversation, and shared experiences, we'll explore our identity in Christ and what it means to live as beloved children of God, grounded in a community where we truly belong.

Faith in Action & Justice

October 18th – November 15th

Faith is more than what we believe—it shapes how we treat others and respond to the world around us. Together, we'll wrestle with what it means to seek justice, practice mercy, love our neighbors, and have the courage to speak up when something isn't right.

Gratitude & Advent Expectation

November 22nd – December 20th

What if we made space to notice the good, even while we're still waiting for what's next? As we journey toward Christmas, we'll explore gratitude, hope, peace, and joy, learning to recognize God's presence in both ordinary moments and the anticipation of Christ's coming.

WEDNESDAY ADVENT DINNER SERIES

December 2nd - December 16th

Wednesdays in the Parish Hall

6:00pm—Dinner Served

6:30pm-7:30pm—Program Series

Gather around the table this Advent for three evenings of food, fellowship, and the story of Christmas told through art, music, and imagination. From Mary's great "yes" to the Nativity and the journey of the Magi, we'll explore familiar stories in new ways, with Handel's Messiah woven throughout each evening.

BIBLE STUDY WITH FR. MIKE

Thursdays - 9:30am via Zoom

Email the church office for Zoom link, at stthomaschurch@tom1604.org.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Tuesdays - 7:00am

in Room 111

GRIEF SHARE: GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Wednesdays at 10:00am

in the Parlor

GriefShare is a caring, faith-based support group designed to help you navigate the journey of grief. Each week includes a helpful video with insights from grief experts and real-life stories, followed by a time of discussion and support. Come find comfort, hope, and healing among others who understand.

Access to the Parlor: Participants may enter through the courtyard gate near the flagpole or church office building—please buzz in for entry.

CHILDREN'S MUSIC PROGRAM

Give your child the opportunity to grow in faith and music! In a fun and supportive environment, children will sing, play, and explore the joy of making music together while building confidence, creativity, teamwork, and a lifelong love of music. Most importantly, they will learn to use their voices to sing God's praise and discover His love through music. For more information, contact Director of Children's Music, Laurel at laurel@tom1604.org. Register using the QR code below.

Cherubs

Ages Kinder - 1st Grade

Wednesdays, 5:00pm-6:00pm

Junior Choristers

Ages 2nd - 5th Grade

Wednesdays, 4:30pm-6:00pm

Senior Choristers

Ages 6th Grade - 12th Grade

Sundays, 11:00am - 12:00pm



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DOWNLOAD THE CHURCH APP

Members can access the directory on the go, view the Sunday bulletin and other publications, catch up on Sunday sermons, and more, all from your phone or tablet. Stay connected, informed, and engaged anytime, anywhere.

Scan the QR code to download today!



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PARISH CALENDAR- FRIENDSHIP

YOUTH GROUP SUNDAY HANGOUT: MOVIE NIGHT

Sunday, September 27th
4:00pm - 6:00pm, in the Youth Room
6th - 12th grade
Come hang out, relax, enjoy a great movie, and have a great time together. We'll provide the snacks! Bring a friend and come ready for a fun afternoon.

YOUTH GROUP SUNDAY HANGOUT: STUDY HALL & SNACKS

Sunday, October 4th
4:00pm - 6:00pm, in the Youth Room
6th - 12th grade
Need a place to catch up on homework, get organized, or check something off your to-do list? Come hang out with friends, get some schoolwork done, and enjoy plenty of snacks along the way. Bring your homework, a friend, and come ready to get things done!

FAMILY NIGHT OUT

Thursday, October 22nd and November 5th
5:00pm-7:00pm
Big'z Burger Joint - 2303 N Loop 1604 W.
Join us at Big'z Burger Joint for food, fun, and fellowship. Big'z Burger Joint offers gourmet burgers, fries, shakes, with outdoor dining. Bring your whole family!

ST. THOMAS FALL FESTIVAL

Sunday, October 25th
4:00pm - 6:00pm in the Woehler Family Center
There will be fun for all ages including our annual Trunk or Treat, bounce houses, food, and more. Bring a friend, wear a costume, and join in on the fun.

VETERANS DAY BREAKFAST

Sunday, November 8th
9:00am in the Parish Hall
Let us gather to honor our veterans.

YOUTH GROUP SUNDAY HANGOUT: FRIENDSGIVING

Sunday, November 15th
4:00pm - 6:00pm, in the Youth Room
6th - 12th grade
What's better than good food and good friends? Come celebrate Friendsgiving with us for an afternoon of food, laughter, and time together. Bring a friend, bring your appetite, and come ready to celebrate.

ADVENT FAMILY NIGHT

Sunday, November 29th
5:30pm – 7:30pm
in the Woehler Family Center
Kick off the holiday season with St. Thomas! We invite you to join us for an evening of crafts, pizza, fellowship, and family fun.

LADIES, LET'S HAVE LUNCH!

Dates and locations announced in the *Thursday Notes*
Ladies Let's Have Lunch meets the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month at 1:00pm. This is a great way opportunity to meet up with old friends, make new friends, and enjoy getting together with each other. We would love for you to join us. An email reminder is sent out the week of the lunch with the name of the restaurant we will be gathering at. If you are interested in receiving reminder emails about these lunches , please contact the church office at stthomaschurch@tom1604.org.

SEWING GROUP

October 10th, November 14th, December 12th, and January 9th
9:00am-3:00pm in the Parish Hall
Connect with friends while working on quilting, crocheting, knitting, embroidery, or any craft you love. Work at your own pace, share skills, use available sewing machines, and explore the "free" table for supplies. All are welcome to come, create, and enjoy fellowship.

MEN'S MEAT BURNING

October 15th, November 19th, January 21st
6:30pm, location announced in the
Thursday Notes

The Men's Meat Burning Group gathers monthly to grill, share a meal, and enjoy fellowship. Bring your choice of meat and a \$6 donation for sides, drinks, and dessert. All adult men are welcome, feel free to invite a guest!

ICE CREAM AFTER CHURCH

Cool off and enjoy a sweet treat with us. Join us every Sunday after church for ice cream and fellowship in the Courtyard.

MEN'S LUNCH BUNCH

Tuesdays at 11:30am

Location announced in the *Thursday Notes*
An email reminder is sent out each week. If you are interested in receiving reminder emails about these lunches, please contact the church office at
stthomaschurch@tom1604.org.

Episcopal Church Women

Sundays in the Parlor

following 10:00am worship

Dates announced in the *Thursday Notes*

ECW brings together women of all ages who love God and want to do His work. Join us for monthly fellowship, coffee, and connection—a wonderful way to make new friends and reconnect with old ones.

PARISH CALENDAR- COMPASSION

COLD WEATHER CLOTHING DRIVE

This October, St. Thomas is collecting new or gently used coats, sweaters, gloves, and socks for all ages. Donations will support the Christian Assistance Ministry (CAM). Help keep our neighbors warm this winter.

HAVEN FOR HOPE

October 12th, November 9th,

December 14th, and January 11th

2:30pm or 3:30pm, meet in the St. Thomas Parking Lot to carpool

Join the Community Outreach Ministry at Haven for Hope as we serve dinner to people in need. After volunteering, stay and connect with volunteers as we gather for dinner.

SANTA FE EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANGEL TREE

Spread some holiday joy! Stop by Gosnell Hall this December to pick an Angel from the tree and sign up. Each Angel includes a child's name, age, and gift request. Help make Christmas special for a child in need.

GROCERY GUYS & GALS FOR SANTA FE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Second and Fourth Fridays of the month
8:30am meet at Santa Fe Episcopal Church
Connect with us as we volunteer to collect and sort food for the Santa Fe Episcopal Church Food Pantry.

UNITED THANK OFFERING

The United Thank Offering is a ministry of the Episcopal Church that provides a way for men, women, and children to give daily thanks to God. Through UTO, individuals are invited to embrace and deepen a personal daily spiritual discipline of gratitude. UTO encourages people to notice the good things that happen each day, give thanks to God for those blessings and make an offering for each blessing using a UTO Blue Box. UTO distributes what is collected to support innovative mission and ministry throughout The Episcopal Church. You can pick up your Blue Box in Gosnell Hall.



ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

A Message from the Head of School, Allison Newman

THROUGH THE TUNNEL: HELPING CHILDREN NAVIGATE BIG EMOTIONS

As parents, grandparents, teachers, and members of our Episcopal community, we all share a natural desire to protect the children we love. When babies cry, we pick them up and soothe them. As children grow older, we might try to distract them or quickly solve whatever is causing their sadness, anger, or frustration. These responses stem from a place of love. However, in our desire to shield children from difficult emotions, we may unintentionally hinder them from learning a vital lesson: big feelings are a natural part of life, and we can learn to navigate through them.

In an article by Katie McLaughlin, she presents a powerful analogy for difficult emotions, comparing them to a tunnel and suggesting that we are like trains traveling through it. We must continue moving through the darkness to eventually reach the calm and peaceful light on the other side. This analogy deeply resonates with me.

As well-meaning adults, we sometimes try to pull children out of the tunnel too quickly. We might tell them not to cry, reassure them that everything is fine, distract them, or rush to solve their problems. It's painful to watch someone we love struggle. However, our role is not always to eliminate difficult feelings; sometimes, it's simply to walk alongside them.

Children need to understand that they are safe when they are sad and that they are still loved when they are angry. They need to learn that disappointment will not last forever, and that difficult emotions are temporary. The way we

speak to our children can shape their inner voice as they grow. When we respond with patience, empathy, and calm, we teach them to eventually offer those same qualities to themselves.

Now that my children are teenagers, I still need to keep the train analogy in mind. Statements like "you need to move on," or suggestions that they're "better off" after a friend has hurt their feelings do not give them a chance to self-regulate and process their emotions, ultimately hindering their resilience.

As parents, our instinct is to make things better for our kids. The train analogy doesn't contradict this instinct; it simply alters how we approach it. We build strong, confident children by allowing them to push through their emotional tunnels. We teach this by stepping back and avoiding the urge to fix everything immediately when they stop crying.

This is where faith can provide comfort. We are reminded that we do not walk through difficult seasons alone. God does not promise us a life without struggle, but He assures us of His presence through every season. The same is true for the children in our lives. We do not have to fix every problem or remove every difficult emotion. We can offer something equally meaningful—our calm and caring presence.

We can listen. We can empathize. We can help children feel seen and heard. Sometimes, we can simply sit beside them as they navigate their tunnel.

Instead of constantly rescuing children from challenging feelings, we can empower them to navigate through those emotions. We can stand strong beside them in the darkness, trusting that the light is ahead. While there's no magic formula for parenting, instilling this vital lesson in our kids is essential. Although it may be tough for everyone involved, our dedication and their efforts will lead to meaningful rewards in the long run.

My hope and prayer for all of us is to remember that experiencing intense emotions is not a sign of failure; rather, it is a part of being human. When children learn that they can feel emotions without fear—and that difficult feelings eventually pass—they begin to build the resilience that will carry them throughout their lives.

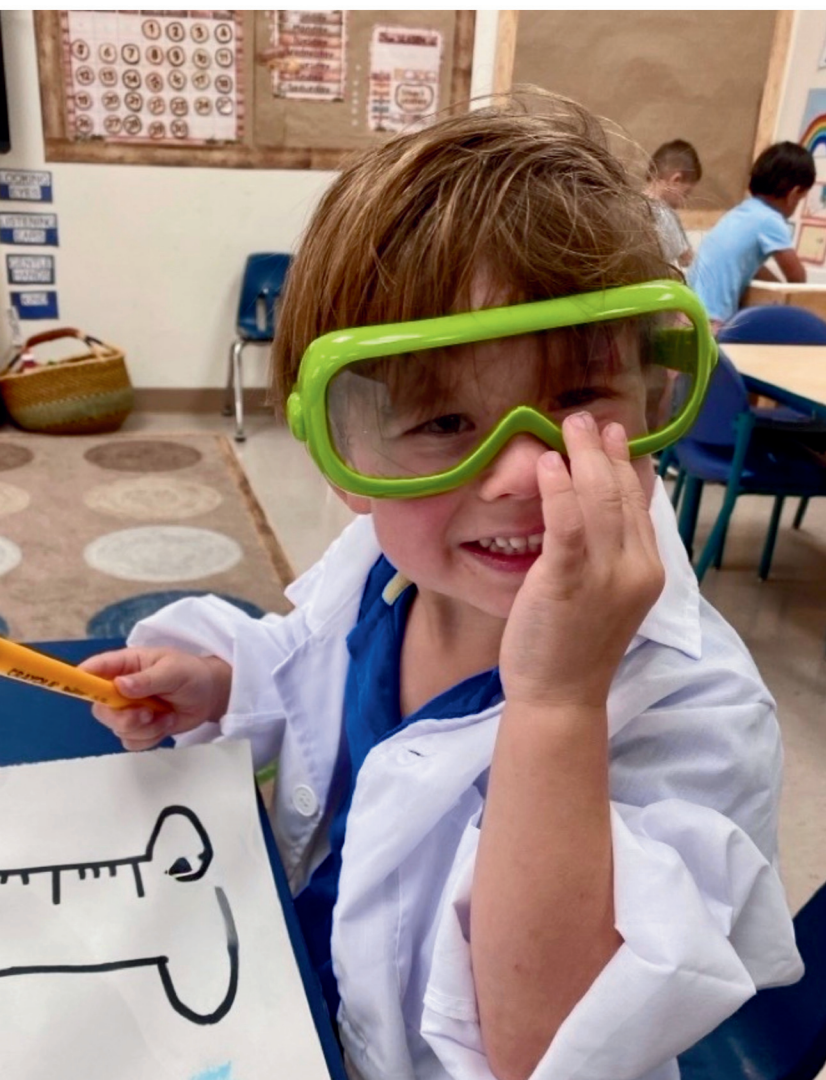
STES is a community that understands the importance of allowing emotions to pass through the tunnel, and we honor the range of feelings we encounter on our individual life paths. We are fortunate to start our school year with new families and dedicated returning families. Some of these families are sharing their last year with us, while others are alumni bringing their children back to experience the St. Thomas community, which has thrived for over 52 years. We are STES: where children grow, learn, and lead.

**Train up a child in the way he should go:
and when he is old,
he will not depart from it.
*Proverbs 22:6***



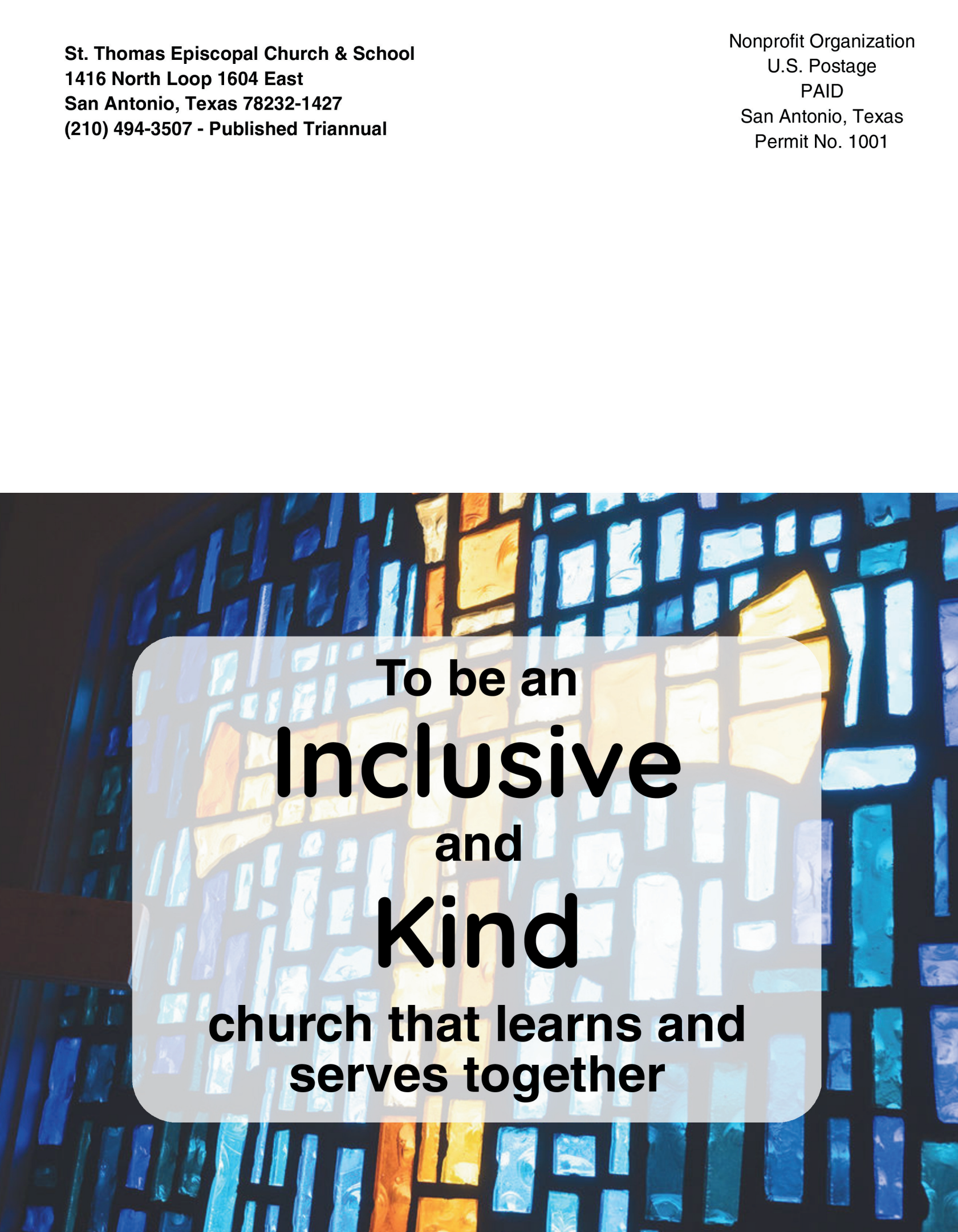
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A background image of a stained glass window with a grid pattern. The glass is primarily blue and white, with some yellow and orange accents. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white rounded rectangle in the center.

To be an
Inclusive
and
Kind
church that learns and
serves together