

ST. THOMAS

St. Thomas Presbyterian Church
The Messenger — February, 2012

Our Mission: *To lead people to a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.*
Our Vision for 2012: *Transformed by faith; transforming through service.*

SUNDAYS

AT

ST. THOMAS

Sunday School for all Ages:

9:30 a.m.

Coffee Connection:

10:30 a.m.

Worship Service:

11:00 a.m.

**Communion — 1st Sunday
morning of the month**

CARING FOR EACH OTHER IS WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC OF ST. THOMAS

The Vision for 2012 states: "...nurtures the intellectual and emotional needs of our individual members and our congregation." Long before these words were written, St. Thomas was a church with a large caring heart and continues to be so today. Caring for each other takes place in a large variety of ways.

The formalized ministries of Stephen Ministry, Shepherds and Angels provide a framework for the caring that takes place at St. Thomas. Stephen Ministers work in a one-to-one confidential relationship with persons who are experiencing extreme stress in their lives. A large number of our members have been trained as Stephen Ministers, and even though not actively serving in that role currently, they use their skills in more informal ways. The Shepherds provide more tangible help to persons who are experiencing a time of crisis or transition. Their activities often include meals, rides, visits, phone calls, holiday or get well cards, emails during the difficult time. The Angels are ongoing St. Thomas friends, especially for persons who are not able to attend services regularly. Angels provide encouragement and support through phone calls, letters, notes, lunch and outings, rides, cards, and other creative ways as appropriate.

The pastoral care list is coordinated by the Membership Committee. Hospital visits, calls, emails and other contacts are made by the pastor and Director of Congregational Care. When appropriate, persons are listed in the bulletin and newsletter, especially when hospitalized, bereaved or recuperating at home for an extended time. Persons may help us keep this list current by contacting the church office when they or another member is ill, having surgery, or other issue which would benefit from pastoral care.

A surprising amount of the care and support at St. Thomas is given informally by its members. All possible means of showing support and encouragement are used creatively to demonstrate concern for each other. Coffee Connection on Sunday mornings provides an opportune time for members and visitors to connect and listen to each other's joys and concerns. Prayers, phone calls, notes and cards, emails, rides, food, and hospital visits, abound. Caring conversations take place in the hallways, after committee or small group meetings, in the parking lot, in local supermarkets or shops, any place that St. Thomas people come in contact with each other. We even have a team that moves persons from one residence to another.

This article includes highlights of the way St. Thomas cares for its members, visitors, and community friends. You are encouraged to watch for other kinds of caring acts around the church as you extend encouragement and concern to others.

Inside this issue:

Pastor's News, Prayer Corner	2
Church Life	3
Youth	4
Children	5
Church Life	6
Mission	7
Pastoral Joys & Concerns	8

PRAYER CORNER

THREE CATEGORIES

No matter how you organize prayer requests, make sure to pray for three categories of things.

First, pray for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world.

"Lord, hallowed be Your Name. Your name is holy. May Your name be worshiped and honored by Your people everywhere."

We also need to pray for other people.

"Lord, would You give wisdom to the President?"
 "Please give the pastor courage to do Your will and do it in Your strength."

Then we need to be praying for ourselves.

"Please guard my motives and my attitudes."
 "Help me to love you with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength."
 "Lead me with humility."

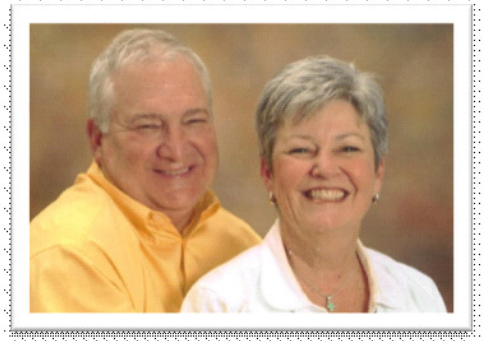
If your praying is sporadic or seems unbalanced, why don't you try this pattern?
 Pray for His kingdom, others, and then yourself.

...Nancy Leigh deMoss



News from Nora

It's a time for new beginnings—a New Year, a new pastor for you, and a new church for me. It was an unforgettable moment for me when we worshiped together on that very first morning of the New Year, January 1, 2012. I am grateful that New Year's Day fell on Sunday and we could begin 2012 together at St. Thomas Presbyterian Church. A special thank you goes to all of you who were present in worship on that first Sunday morning.



All of you have done a splendid job of making both Jim and me feel welcome at St. Thomas. Several helped move my boxes into the office and unpack them—thanks! The reception after worship on Sunday, January 8 was great—thanks! And of course, the barbeque lunch on Sunday, January 15 was way above and beyond anything I could imagine. Thank you to all the people who helped make the lunch so very special and especially to John Funk!!!

It is an honor to be called as the Designated Pastor at St. Thomas Presbyterian Church. I look forward to serving you and the Lord with all my heart and soul and mind and strength. Last summer when I filled in at St. Thomas, Jim and I recognized and agreed that St. Thomas is a wonderful church blessed with a wonderful congregation. I am really looking forward to getting to know each of you better. One of the great blessings of being a pastor is to be able to walk with others during the good times in our lives as well as in the difficult times. Please feel free to call me at the church 281-497-4846 ext. 204 or at home 281-741-0598. Please call my cell 713-494-1623 for emergencies. As many of you know, Jim and I (and our dog Izzy) live in Lake Olympia subdivision in Missouri City. It is the subdivision with the sort-of-cheesy bronze ball at the entrance. Our address is 2119 Parkview Ln., Missouri City, TX 77459 and by driving on the Fort Bend Parkway and Beltway 8, it takes about 20-25 minutes to drive from our house to St. Thomas. Thanks for a wonderful new beginning and God's blessings to each of you.

Grace, peace, and love, Nora



Thank you to our St. Thomas elders, Class of 2011: David Goodall, Susan Grant, JC Woodhouse, Vicki White & Patty Koontz.



Val-

entine's Potluck

Sunday, February 12th

Soup, Sandwiches & Chocolate Fountain

Sign Up In Fellowship Hall!



Welcome, Nora & Jim Fitch!



Nora Fitch with granddaughter, Olivia, Petie Meyer, Jim Fitch and Leigh Anne and Josh Bishop.

Enjoying the barbecue lunch!

Don't Miss Adult Sunday School in February!

Join us at 9:30 on Sunday mornings as we continue **to seek illumination and insight** from Jesus' teaching in **The Parables of Jesus** led by Boone Vastine and Dennis Cornwell in **Room 7**. Seek to help each other apply the biblical principles of **fairness, integrity, honesty, and human dignity** to improve our relationships by utilizing the book **The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families** in conjunction with supporting scripture passages in a class led by Missy Goodall and Theodora Pounds in **Room 10**. We hope to see you there!

Coming Soon!

The Road to the Cross, led by Dennis Cornwell and beginning **March 4**, will explore the scripture passages that portray the days preceding Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem that culminated in his crucifixion. The class offers a special opportunity to focus on our **king who stepped down from his throne** (as the lyrics to the song describe) and followed a path that led to suffering and pain before God vindicated him in the resurrection and the triumph we celebrate at Easter.



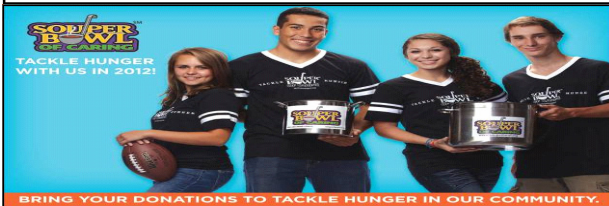
Youth Ministry



BRING YOUR DONATIONS TO TACKLE HUNGER IN OUR COMMUNITY.

Sunday, February 5th After the Worship Service

The Youth Group will be collecting money and canned goods as part of the national food drive that was started by a Presbyterian Youth Group in South Carolina! Donations will go towards the St. Thomas Food Pantry.



BRING YOUR DONATIONS TO TACKLE HUNGER IN OUR COMMUNITY.



Time for the Presbytery Youth Conclave!!!

There will be games, worship, good eats, live music, Bible study... and more! At Camp Cho-Yeh in Livingston.

Middle School & High School Youth Conclave

March 2-4, 2012

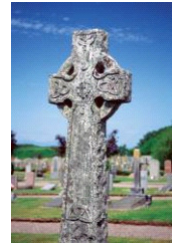
Remaining \$75 due February 19

****We need an adult male to chaperone!****

Extracurricular support

Parents please remember to give me your performance, game, and special event spring schedules as soon as possible! I want to be able to show support to as many of our kids as possible by attending special events, and having things on my calendar well in advance will be a big help. Thank you!

Youth Ministry's Calendar of Events



- Feb. 5 9:30 Sunday school, 11am Worship
SouperBowl of Caring
- Feb. 12 9:30 Sunday school, 11am Worship
Noon: 2nd Sunday Lunch Bunch
Valentine Lunch; Fellowship Hall
5-7pm Youth Group
- Feb. 19 9:30 Sunday school, 11am Worship
5-7pm Youth Group
- Feb. 26 9:30 Sunday school, 11am Worship
5-7pm Youth Group
- Mar. 2-4 Presbytery Conclave @ Cho-Yeh
- Mar. 4 9:30 Sunday school, 11am Worship
No Youth Group:
(Conclave weekend)



The Sunday Morning Scoop

For 6th–12th Graders, the Youth Sunday school class will continue to use the "Dive" curriculum. The theme for half of February is "What's the Covenant All About?" We will be diving into the Bible to explore God's plan for His people, and us as individuals.

The second half of February and into March we will study "Who God Is", as a faithful God, the Trinitarian God, as Creator, and as provider.

February Scripture Memory Verse

"How great is the love the Father has given us so freely! Now we can be called children of God. And that's what we really are!"

1 John 3:1

Let's help the children make a Joyful Noise!!!



It would be WONDERFUL to once again have a Children's Choir at St. Thomas! It fits the Vision for 2012, it involves the children in worship leadership, it provides for faith educational opportunities, and bonus... it can be tons of fun!

Anyone interested in leading or assisting (as a choir "parent"), please talk to Nora Fitch or Christy Gurley.

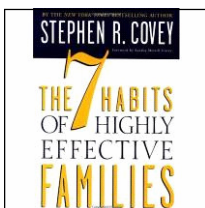


Children's Worship

On Second Sundays...

On February 12 after the Children's Sermon, Elementary-aged children will be invited to continue to Worship in a setting and style that will be geared for helping them to understand and participate more fully in Worshipping our amazing God!

Then after Worship we will enjoy fellowship together for LUNCH BUNCH! This month we will share a Valentine's Luncheon in the Fellowship Hall!



Adult Sunday School Parenting Class
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families, by Stephen R. Covey.

Children Ministry's Calendar of Event



Feb. 5 9:30 Sunday school, 11am Worship

Feb. 12 9:30 Sunday school, 11am Worship Children's Worship in Room #4 Second Sunday LUNCH BUNCH: Valentine Lunch; Fellowship Hall

Feb. 19 9:30 Sunday school 11am Worship

Feb. 26 9:30 Sunday school, 11am Worship

Sunday Morning Scoop 9:30—10:30 am

Preschool & Elementary aged children will continue to use the "Wonder" curriculum.



In February and half of March, they will continue to wonder about God's Daring Mission and Jesus' Surprising Power, by exploring several of his healing miracles.

Mark your calendars now for the next Vacation Bible School! We will explore a deeper faith with Daniel in Babylon!

June 18—21

Monday—Thursday Evenings



Join the



We all really enjoy our Coffee Connection every Sunday, and now you have an opportunity to be a part of this great weekly event. The Fellowship Committee is creating teams of people to prepare for and clean up after Coffee Connection. Each team will be headed with a captain and will be responsible for Coffee Connection for one month on a rotation basis. No experience is necessary as training will be provided. Both regular team members and substitutes are most encouraged to join. If you are willing to join a team, please let Leona Bernard know by signing up after church in Fellowship Hall or contacting her at (281) 493-2560 or at leonabernard@ix.netcom.com.

Wall/Stairwell of Crosses at Houston Presbytery Center

The new Cross Wall at the Houston Presbytery Center was unveiled at the December 8th Christmas Open House. The installation was two years in the making. Renovations on the building, including a new colorful palette of wall paint, first had to be completed. The collecting of crosses from busy churches, categorizing, photographing, and positioning them was time consuming, but the end result is impressive. Four panels of crosses adorn an 18' stairwell near the foyer of the Center.



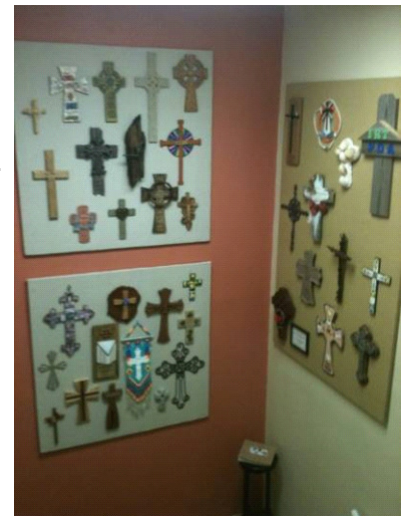
An album listing the crosses and their contributing churches sits nearby. The Cross Wall was the imaginative project overseen by Garry Schoonover, Former Moderator and member of Grand Lakes Presbyterian, working in conjunction with Allyn Dukes, member of St. Thomas. Allyn also created the cross that represents St. Thomas on the Wall. It is composed of wood that was "saved" from the demolition of the original St. Thomas church which became known as the "white building". The St. Thomas vision statement is adhered to the center of the cross, which has been whitewashed from the center out signifying sanctification and adorned with butterflies (purchased from the Brookwood Community) signifying renewal/transformation and our concern for God's creation.



Invite a friend and maybe they'll see something in our fellowship that will make them want to know more...

Our monthly **Ladies Night Out** will be on **Wednesday, February 8** at Brio Tuscan Grill in City Center (12808 Queensbury Lane). Our evening of fun and fellowship will begin **at 5:00 p.m.** (we're meeting early this month to avail ourselves of their happy hour food and drink specials). If you want to carpool, please meet in the church parking lot in front of Fellowship Hall at 4:45 p.m. For more information or for a ride, please contact Theodora Pounds at 281-851-2682.

Our monthly **Ladies Luncheon** will be on **Wednesday, February 15 at 12 noon** at Genghis Grill - The Mongolian Stir Fry at 9766 Katy Freeway (just west of Bunker Hill on the north side of I-10). For more information or for a ride, please contact Barbara Whitton at 281-497-7679.



Christmas Party at Meadow Wood Elementary School

The new Meadow Wood Campus opened just in time for the Mentors and their students to hold their annual holiday party in the new science lab on December 13th. In fact, we were the first group to use that beautiful new room! There were 17 mentors from St. Thomas, Christ Memorial Lutheran and the community at large last semester and we welcome two new mentors this semester. It is never too late to sign up. Contact Allyn Dukes 281-531-9997 or dukesa@earthlink.net.



Quarterly immunization clinics continue in 2012 – starting on **FEBRUARY 21!**

St. Thomas is excited to continue our partnership with Children's Foundation Care Van Program to provide free immunizations for newborns through 18 years old. If you are interested in helping with this great outreach opportunity, please sign up in the fellowship hall or contact Theodora Pounds at 281-851-2682.

The clinic hours have changed slightly to 4:00 p.m.



until 6:30 p.m. We need volunteers for two shifts (3:15 to 5:00 p.m. and 5:00 to 6:45 p.m.) to help with check in, registration, copying, providing sandwiches for volunteers, runners for the nurses, and water stations. Can't help this time? Mark your calendars for May 15, August 21 and November 13. Prayers also always needed!

Meadow Wood Re-Opens!



The New Meadow Wood Elementary School campus opened on December 12, 2011. It is a beautiful, open, well lighted space for the children to learn. The office and instructional staff are thrilled to work in such an inviting place, well worth the wait in the transitional school. For an online tour of the facility go to:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=T-95JmrZqf0

For an up close and personal experience, there will be a **Grand Opening Celebration on Thursday February 2, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.**

4-4:30 p.m.—Grand Opening and Library Dedication Ceremony

4:30-5:30 p.m.—Open House – tours of the new school

5:30-6:30 p.m.—Family Fun Night and dinner for sale by the teachers.



St. Thomas Presbyterian Church
The Messenger — February, 2012

14100 Memorial Drive
Houston, TX 77079
Phone: 281-497-4846
Fax: 281-497-3412
24-Hour Prayer Line: 281-759-PRAY
Office Hours: Monday-Thursday-8:00—4:00 p.m.
www.stthomaspc.org
March Newsletter Deadline: Feb. 17, 2012

ST. THOMAS STAFF

- Kay Cronk, Director of Congregational Care
- Rev. Dr. Nora Fitch, Pastor
- Christy Gurley, Director of Family Ministries
- Dr. Richard Hazelip, Organist
- Wendy Ostien, Director of Music
- Jan Simmons, Administrative Manager
- Brent Ward, Director of Contemporary Music



Ripps restaurant is now open on Sundays! If you bring your church bulletin in, you will receive 10% off your order!! They are located at the corner of Kirkwood and Memorial, 14008F Memorial Drive ♦ (281) 531-7550, www.rippsgrille.com

Pastoral Joys & Concerns



Please keep in your prayers:

Recently ill/hospitalized: Gay Johnson, Tom Morgan

Deaths: Nancy Henson's sister (C.J. Warren's aunt), died on January 11, 2012.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: February

02/03 Bredan Mwaura
02/04 Sandra Butler
02/05 Wendy Kirkle
Jacob Folh
02/10 Wayne Mackley
02/11 Luke Ward
02/12 Barbara Whitton
02/15 Marshall Pounds
02/19 Evan Garber
02/27 Cliff Dukes
02/29 Fran Burrows



**With joy, The Presbytery of New covenant
and**

St. Thomas Presbyterian Church

Invite you to the installation of

Nora Fitch

As Teaching Elder (Designated Pastor)

on

Sunday, February 19, 2012

4:00 p.m.

St. Thomas is Good Neighbor to Spring Branch ISD

You may have noticed the banner displayed in the Fellowship Hall that indicates St. Thomas is a SBISD Good Neighbor. There are over 200 non-profit, business and faith based organizations as well as many individuals who have been recognized by Spring Branch ISD as being an essential part of their efforts to foster collaboration, dialogue and action for the betterment of our youth, our schools and our community. These efforts also fall right in line with the St. Thomas vision and essential elements.

St. Thomas qualified for this distinction by mentoring, offering after school homework help, assisting the school nurse, creating and maintaining a native garden/outdoor environmental learning place and offering immunization clinics that have benefited Meadow Wood and Thornwood Schools and the district as a whole. For more information go to the following link: <http://www.springbranchisd.com/partners/gn/2011Booklet.pdf>

Congratulations and Thanks to all those who have participated in these programs!