

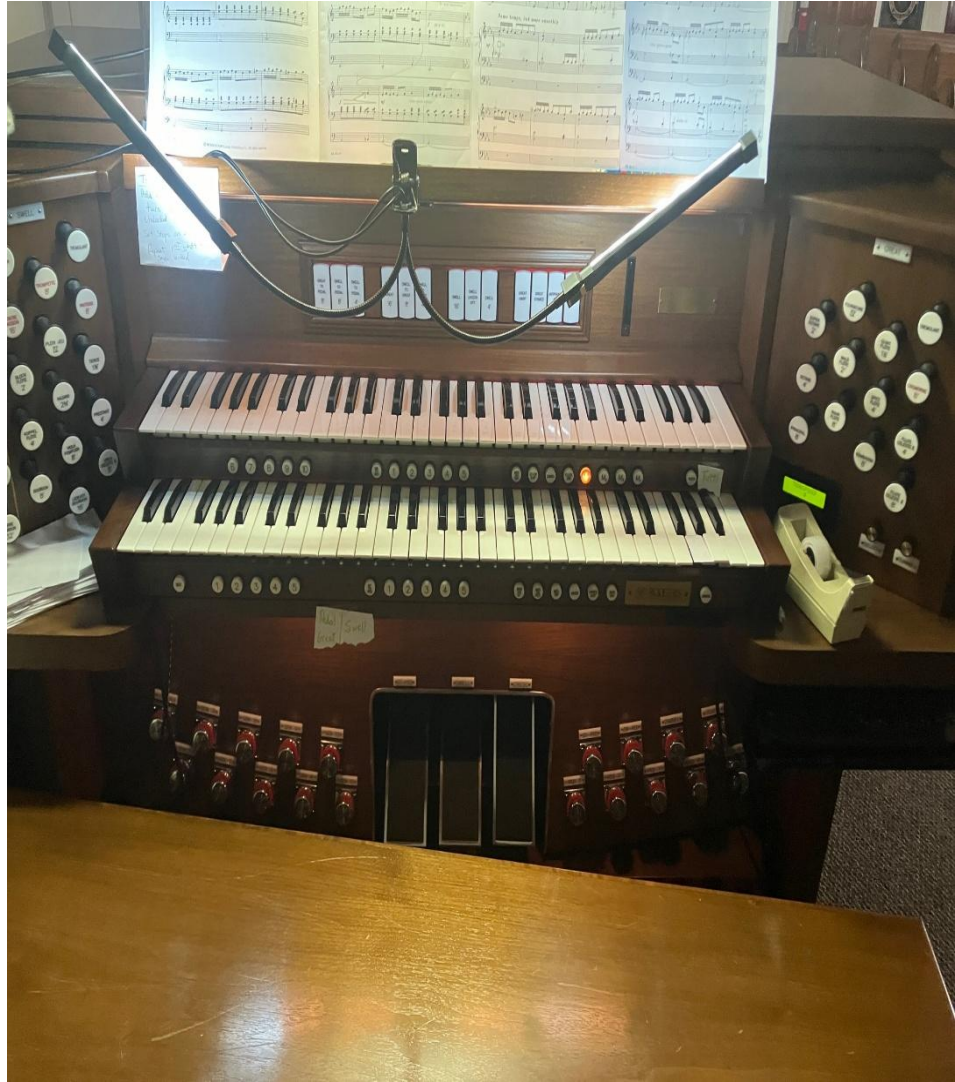


St. Thomas Speaks

December 2024 Issue #5

Gone but not Forgotten

After many years of grand service, cantatas, pageants, choir sings, choir practices, hymns and so, so many services, our old organ has moved on to other pastures and the new (to us) organ is here. With some minor adjustments by several people here at the church, the speakers have been tweaked, the sound has been turned down so the offering plates don't rattle and Betsy has a huge smile on her face. Of course, you can't see her face but you can certainly enjoy the beautiful music coming from this gift. A big thanks to the donor who stepped up to bless the church with new sound.



For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the greatness of his government there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his Kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. Isaiah 9:6-7

December Birthdays

- 1 – Tammy Morgán
- 2 – Debra Hopple,
Dorothy Bomgardner
- 4 – Samuel Schmidt
- 6 – Devin Howell
- 8 – Barbara Brassell
- 9 – Mike Sobkowski
- 13 – Sharon Smith,
Stephanie Hench
- 14 – Robert Yingst
- 15 – Linda Barlieb
- 20 – Curtis Smith
- 27 – Linda Hanawalt,
- 29 – Thomas Snyder



The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High...Mary said “I am the Lord’s servant. May your word be fulfilled.” Luke 1:29-31



2024 Member Anniversaries

- 10 Years Nancy Tumas, Larry Moore, Woodall
- 20 Years Anna Mae Mumma, Adam Oberholtzer
Troy Oberholtzer, Barbara Boggan, June Moore
Harriet Farling, Julie Forrester, Anna Forrester,
Shirley Kratzer, Derrick Zimmerman, Cody Gilbert
- 30 Years Erich Bair, Keralee Bair, Deanna Snyder,
John & Cathy Kissinger, Jim Klinefelter,
Dean Zimmerman
- 40 Years Betsy & Curtis Smith, Dominic Bartholomeo,
Patti Hanawalt, Deborah Hepler, Tom & Virginia Trite

50 Years Kathie Gifford

60 Years Cathy Yingst



From the Deacons:

Christmas Gift for St. Thomas

As you’re reflecting on God’s blessings this year, consider a Christmas gift to St. Thomas UCC. Holiday cards will be in the foyers for sharing a message to your St. Thomas friends. Enclose your Christmas gift and place it in the offering plate. Cards and messages will be displayed in the new year, and gifts will go to the General Fund. This special donation can also be made via your regular offering envelope (write *Christmas Gift* on the “other” line) and through the online portal.

Our partner, **The Midwest Food Bank** reports that 40% of food in the U.S. is wasted every year. Hear are some tips to help cut down that waste.

1. Cut down on portion sizes; serve smaller portions and go back for seconds if needed.
2. Make the most of leftovers; get creative with sandwiches, salads or a new meal.
3. Compost.
4. Donate or share food; share your surpluses with friends, family or a local food bank.
5. Plan your meals and shop with a list to avoid unnecessary purchases.
6. Purchase loose produce; buying in bulk tends to create waste.
7. Make stock; use vegetable scraps and bones to make homemade stock.
8. Only purchase items on sale if you'll use them. Avoid buying sale items that might spoil before you can use them.

By cutting down on waste we help the environment and help insure that surplus food reaches food banks who distribute to our neighbors who are food insecure.

Forgotten Cookies

(Meringues)

- 2 large egg whites, at room temperature
- 2/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 pinch fine salt
- 1 cup pecans, finely chopped (optional)
- 1 cup semisweet mini chocolate chips(optional)

Gather the ingredients. Preheat the oven to 350 F and line a cookie sheet with parchment paper. Beat **2 large egg whites** until foamy using a hand mixer or a standing mixer on medium speed. Gradually add **2/3 cup granulated sugar** and continue beating the egg whites until they hold stiff peaks. Add **1 teaspoon vanilla extract** and **1 pinch fine salt**. Blend well. Using a spatula, fold in **1 cup pecans** and **1 cup semisweet chocolate chips** by hand.(Optional) Drop dough by teaspoonfuls onto the prepared cookie sheet.

Put the cookies in the preheated oven and then turn the oven off. Leave the cookies in the oven overnight, keeping the door closed so the heat doesn't escape too quickly, for about 10 hours.

It's important to store leftover forgotten cookies in an airtight container. Meringue likes to suck moisture from the air making the cookies sticky. Keeping them in a tight container helps keep moist air out.



Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. Matthew 1:20-21

Tops

Join us for affordable, effective Weight-loss support!
Where: St. Thomas UCC, Fellowship Hall
When: Wednesday at 9:30 am weigh in
10:30 am Meeting
Need more info: 717-652-24-1 pt 717-652-0625
TOPS PA 0147 Harrisburg PA

Real People. Real Weight Loss.



Our dulcimer group is playing the Christmas concert at Fort Hunter on December 11 at 6:30 PM in the Barn (Don't worry it's warm in there). This year we are featuring Christmas throughout Europe. We play a 40-minute concert then a short break followed by a singalong for about 15 minutes. Won't you join us and ramp up your holiday season?

Joseph and Mary head to Bethlehem

He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. Luke 2:5-7



My Christmas Card List By Victoria J. Kuyper

My Christmas list is more than just a way to keep track of all the special people who have filled my life with love.

It's like a treasured scrapbook filled with happy memories of all the times my life's been touched by friends and family.

It may have happened years ago or even yesterday, but every person on my list has changed my life someway.

Through simple conversation, a warm hug or a shared meal, every person on my list has helped me grow or heal, or laugh or learn or dance or smile.... my list would never end if I named how I've been loved by family and friends.

So please know this greeting is more than a Christmas wish, it's a heartfelt "thank you" to each person on my list.

We Speak

Community Impact

*Openings for the Linglestown **Christkindlmarkt** Living Nativity in Dec. Our time slot is 11:30-12:15. Don't take our word for how much fun it is; ask those who have participated in past years. It really is fun! Save the date, 12/14/24.

The St. Thomas Cookie Elves will once again be visiting our shut-ins over the holidays delivering good cheer along with some baked goodies. If all of our wonderful bakers in the congregation when baking could just bake an additional dozen cookies to donate, we can have a nice selection for our goodie bags. We plan to collect all cookies by Dec. 21st. We will sort during Friendship Cafe on Sun., Dec. 22nd and would appreciate help. Our seniors look forward to these. Our visitation team will be delivering, and you are welcome to join in delivery.

The food drive continues through the Christmas and New Years holidays. Nonperishable canned or boxed food can be placed in the collection bin located in the West Foyer. Items needed include potatoes, corn, green beans, yams, fruit, evaporated or boxed milk.

Your Community Impact Team wishes to thank the congregation for all the support you have given to our community throughout this past year. And the church thanks this amazing team for leading us down this path.

Shepherds

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. You will find a baby wrapped in clothes and lying in a manger.

Luke 2:11-12

THANKS for the overwhelming response to our appeal. Because of your generosity, a Christmas gift will be presented to each of the 87 + residents of Kindred Place. Each gift will be individually assembled, wrapped and presented by St. Thomas team members, Shirley Kratzer, Elaine Cassel, Jack and Marilyn Beistel. Thank you in advance and Christmas Blessings from all the residents of Kindred Place.

A BIG Thank You to all who contributed. If you happened to miss this opportunity, the HELPING HANDS AUCTION is coming up on May 10, 2025 and I will be soliciting your help again to provide auction items to raise funds for the UCC HOMES BENEVOLENT FUND.

Your UCC HOMES representative
Marilyn Beistel

Save the Date

December 8 – Advent Pageant & Festival 9a

December 6 – Aveanna Gifts due

December 10 – Lifeline Screening

December 11- Dulcimers at Ft. Hunter, 6.30p

December 14 – Christkindlmarkt, 10-4

December 15 – Adult Forum

December 25 & 26- Office closed

January 1 – Office closed

Christmas Around the World

The Yule Goat has been a **Swedish** Christmas symbol dating back to ancient pagan festivals. According to the official website, the goat is more than 42 feet high, 23 feet wide, and weighs 3.6 tons.

Every year, the city of San Fernando in the **Phillipines** holds *Ligligan Parul* (or Giant Lantern Festival) featuring dazzling *parols* (lanterns) that symbolize the Star of Bethlehem.

The tradition in **Japan** began in 1974 after a wildly successful marketing campaign called "*Kurisumasu ni wa kentakkii!*" or "Kentucky for Christmas!" The fast food chain has maintained its yuletide popularity, causing some people to order their boxes months in advance or stand in two-hour-long lines to get their "finger lickin' good" food.

Similar to the 12 days of Christmas in the U.S., **Iceland** celebrates 13. Each night before Christmas, Icelandic children are visited by the 13 Yule Lads. After placing their shoes by the window, the little ones will head upstairs to bed. In the morning, they'll either have received candy (if they're good) or be greeted with shoes full of rotten potatoes if they're bad. And you thought coal was a terrible gift!

Advent Festival and Food Sunday after the service. Crafts and fun for everyone.

Advent Devotionals are available in both lobbies to keep you updated on this advent season.

Offering calendars that hold a quarter for each day, are also free to all. They make a great conversation piece for kids and grandkids and then they can bring them to church and be a part of the offering. Thank you Alan Galagher this amazing gift.

Ukrainians observe Christmas Day on January 7 by dressing in traditional garments and walking through town singing carols. A dish called *kutya*, made of cooked wheat mixed with honey, ground poppy seeds, and sometimes nuts, is a popular Christmas Eve treat. Some families throw a spoonful of *kutya* at the ceiling: If it sticks, there will be a good harvest in the new year.

All across **Mexico** members of the Church put on Pastorelas (Shepherd's Plays) to retell the Christmas story. The Mexican Christmas season begins early in December with Las Posadas, a religious march that re-enacts the journey of Mary and Joseph.

On the evening of December 24, **Danish** families place their Christmas tree in the middle of the room and dance around it while singing carols.

On Christmas morning, **Finish** families traditionally eat a porridge made of rice and milk topped with cinnamon, milk, or butter. Whoever finds the almond placed inside one of the puddings "wins"—but some families cheat and hide a few almonds so the kids don't get upset. At the end of the day, it is customary to warm up in a sauna together.

The **New Zealand** Christmas tree is the Pohutukawa, a coastal species that blooms a bright-red color in December, providing shade during the sunny days as they sing carols in both English and Maori. And of course a shrimp on the barbie.

The **Irish** leave a tall red candle in a front window overnight, a welcoming symbol of warmth and shelter for the holiday season. Traditional Christmas fare in Ireland often includes homemade roast goose, vegetables, cranberries, and potatoes.

Sinterklaas is the **Dutch** name for Saint Nicholas, the man recognized by children by his long white beard, red cape, and red miter. Kids put a shoe by the chimney or back door and wake up on Christmas morning to find treats like gingerbread men, marzipan, and chocolate letters inside.

Brazilian and Portuguese families come together on Christmas Eve to eat dinner as late as 10 p.m. Then, at exactly midnight, they exchange gifts, toasts, and wish each other a Merry Christmas. Midnight mass, *Missa Do Galo* (Rooster Mass), is a chance to meet up with neighbors to wish them well for the holiday season.

Swiss families make their own advent calendars for the holiday season. These calendars are either given to children as a surprise or made together as a fun activity.

December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Communion Girl Scts, 6p	2 Dulcimers 9-12 Elders 6:45 Scouts 6-9p	3 Morning Coffee 10a Web Design 5.30 P&L 6.30	4	5 Bells 6p Choir 6:45p	6	7
8 Girl scts, 6p	9 Dulcimers 9-12 Hospitality 6p	10 Lifeline, 8-4	11 TOPS 9-12 Dulcimers at Ft Hunter 6.30p	12 Rock Club, 6p Bells 6p Choir 6:45p	13	14 Cristkindlmarkt, 10-4 Nativity 11.30
15 Grl Scts, 6p	16 Dulcimers 9-12 Comm Imp, 2p	17	18 TOPS 9-12	19 Robbins Funeral 3p Choir 6:30p	20	21
22 Girl Scts, 6p	23 Dulcimers 9-12 Consistory 6:45	24 Hist Pres 7p	25 Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27	28

Joy to the World!