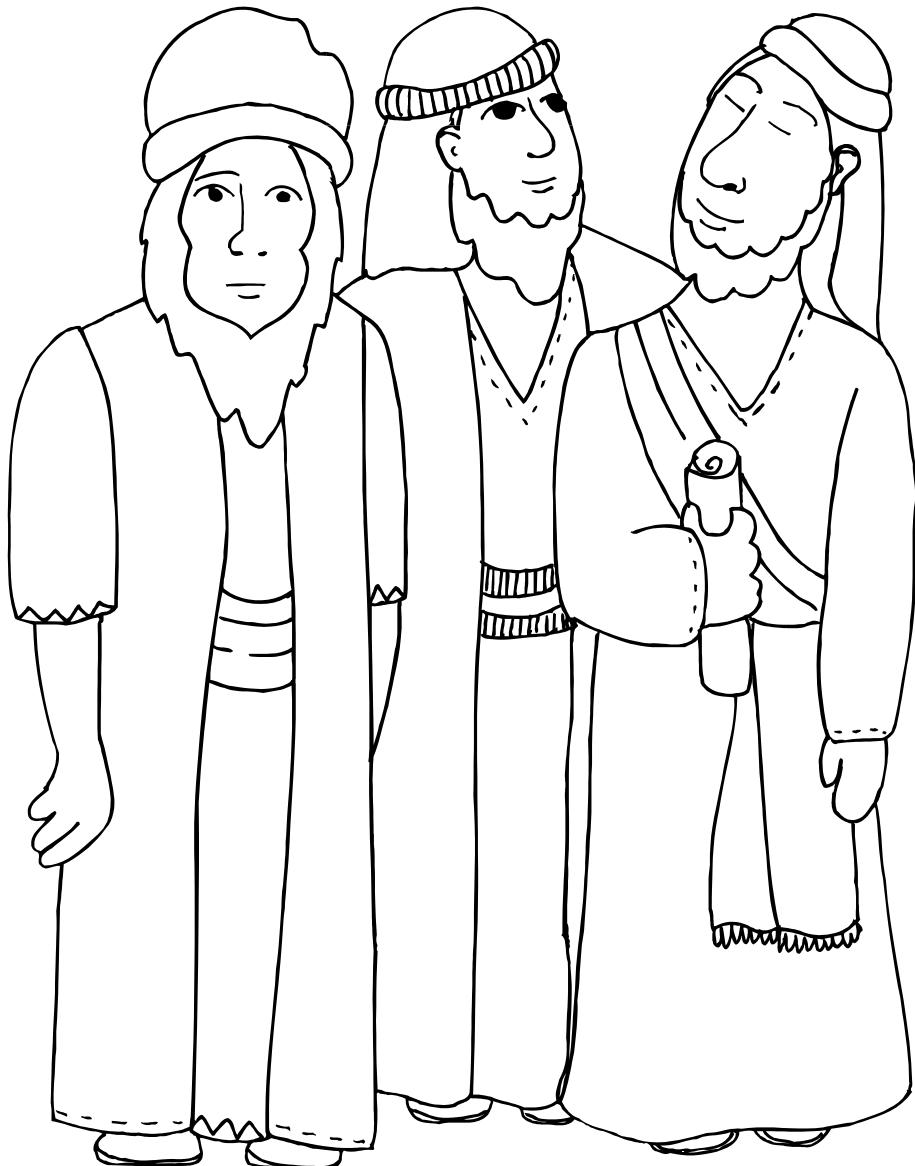


Annual Report

St. Thomas Church

2022



*“The soul that loves God has its rest in God and in God alone.
In all the paths that people walk in the world,
they do not attain peace until they draw nigh to hope to God.”*

St. Isaac the Syrian, one of the Desert Fathers

Annual Parish Meeting
January 22, 2023
St. Thomas Church
Menasha

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Opening Prayer – Fr. Ralph Osborne
- III. Election of Clerk for Annual Meeting
- IV. Clerk's Report for 2022 Annual Meeting (distributed earlier) – questions, additions, corrections
- V. Appointment of Tellers
- VI. Election of Wardens and Vestry.
- VII. Review 2022 Financials and Present 2023 Budget approved by Vestry – Russ Ritschke
- VIII. Resolution to delay election of Diocesan Convention Delegates and Alternates

Whereas experience has shown that delegates to the Diocesan Annual Convention and their alternates are often not able to serve due to changes in plans, and Whereas it would be more efficient to elect delegates and alternates closer to the Annual Convention, and Whereas Diocesan regulations require elections to occur no less than 120 days prior to the convention. Be it therefore resolved that this annual meeting authorize the Vestry to solicit nominations for Delegates and Alternates and to select persons to fill those positions no later than 120 days prior to the Diocesan Annual Convention.
- IX. Reports of Ministry Groups – questions, comments

The following reports can be found in the 2022 St. Thomas Annual Report. They will not be presented orally. Questions will be answered during the Annual meeting by the Vestry, Wardens, Staff and Rector.

 - Welcome and Hospitality – Mary Kay Hietpas and Rebecca Gietman
 - Outreach and Mission – Gordon Stillings
 - Youth Development – Genevieve Pell
 - Adult Development – Art Freiberg
 - Worship – Wade Lindholm
 - Pastoral Care – Ramona Griesbach
- X. A few words from the Senior Warden – Anne Peterson
- XI. Additional Business
- XII. Adjournment

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

ANNUAL MEETING, February 6, 2022

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. with a prayer led by Fr Ralph Osborne.

A motion was made by Anne Peterson & second by Dan Werbeckes to elect Julie Spanbauer as clerk for the meeting. Motion passed.

The nominations were opened for Vestry candidates. The following individuals were nominated: Mary Kay Hietpas, Gordon Stillings and Ramona Griesbach. Tim Peterson made a motion to close the nominations & vote on a unanimous ballot of candidates, second by Anne Peterson. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Anne Peterson, second by Dan Werbeckes to elect Dave Morton as Junior Warden. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Jeanna Werbeckes, second by Carol Hert to elect Anne Peterson as Senior Warden. Motion passed unanimously.

Fr Ralph requested a postponement in the selection of delegates to the Diocesan Convention until no less than 120 days prior to the convention. A motion was made by Tim Peterson, second by Tom Zaborski, motion passed. If you are interested in being a delegate contact Fr Ralph or a Vestry member.

The Financials and 2022 Budget were presented. Appreciation was expressed for the Live Stream upgrades and donations that helped make this possible.

Ministry team reports are found in the Annual Report that was distributed. Please take time to read about the things going on at St. Thomas and join 1 or more ministry opportunities.

A Thank you to our retiring Junior Warden Mike Land & Vestry members: Tom Mace, Claudie Stillings and Val Phillip.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:42 with a motion by Anne Peterson, second by Larry Langohr.

Respectfully Submitted: Julie Spanbauer

The Vestry of 2022-2023

Office	Term Ends
Senior Warden:	Anne Peterson
Junior Warden:	David Morton
Vestry:	Art Freiberg
	Rebecca Gietman
	Genevieve Pell
	James Kopczynski
	Wade Lindholm
	Ramona Griesbach
	Mary Kay Hietpas
Treasurer:	Gordon Stillings
	Russ Ritschke
Clerk:	Julie Spanbauer

Rector - Fr. Ralph Osborne

2022 was another testament to God's faithfulness. God's faithfulness is our story to tell. In a time when so much around us seems unstable and intimidating, it is good to pause and reflect on the ways we have seen God move.

One of the ways St. Thomas told the story of God's faithfulness is in how we welcomed 2+ Afghan families to the Fox Valley. Two teams from St. Thomas helped the families with grocery shopping, moving into apartments, learning about each other's cultures and finding favorite foods. In other words, we tried to welcome them to our country and our lives. We learned and we were blessed.

In the third year of COVID, St. Thomas continues to do the work we have been called to do. We do meet regularly for worship, which is our first calling. Our worship looks different this year, and I expect yearly changes to continue. More of you are returning to in-person worship. Sometimes the building looks less empty. I pray for physical attendance to experience a renewal among us. At the same time, virtual worship continues to be an important part of our worship together. In bad weather, attendance has remained fairly constant because people can attend without driving to the church. Online worship is also an important part of the lives of those who cannot attend in person. We all have more to learn about what hybrid worship means and how we can be in relationship with each other no matter where we are.

There are other aspects of our life together that are moving in a more normal direction. This year our youth went on a mission trip to Appalachia. There were ten students and four adults on this trip that served by providing warmer, safer and dryer housing. After two years of missing Fellowship camp, we went back to Camp Forest Springs for our annual retreat. Mother Hillary was our guest speaker and we came back enlightened and enthused about our life together.

Finances were a bit of a rollercoaster in 2022. In the first two years of COVID, finances were very steady through the year. In 2022, St. Thomas returned to 'normal'. Giving went up and down through the year. That meant that there were more concerns about finances, but we ended the year in the black. Bills were paid, salaries were paid, missions were supported, people were helped with rent, food and other needs. Over the years, I have learned much about our church. One of those things is your response to the faithfulness of God. Your response is faithfulness and generosity. When needs arise that call for funds, you experience that need and give. I appreciate your generous hearts.

As I type my last annual report to St. Thomas, it is important to state that we are a community that works together. I am not St. Thomas. So many of you make the faithfulness of St. Thomas a reality. My mind will always remember seeing altar guild members shoulder to shoulder in the sacristy, setting up for our services or cleaning up afterward and putting things back in their places, refilling and restoring. My appreciation will be rekindled as I remember. I will see folks serving in the parish hall after a funeral, providing food and welcome to the grieving. I will see a table filled with vestry members doing their best to be leaders of our parish. I will see Jessica and parents celebrating our children and leading them into participation in our worship and in joyful activities. In my mind, I will walk by a room filled with people studying the Bible together. I will see and hear conversations at coffee hour, and join in the laughter. I will see your living rooms, kitchen tables, coffee shop booths and other locales where conversations have taken place. I will see hospital rooms and relive the laughter and the tears. I will see so many nursing homes where sometimes rehabilitation worked and at other times, did not. I will be in my kitchen making sauce and in a moment, I'll be in our parish hall watching you eat my spaghetti. I'll sit in a church and see the children and I will remember the children of St. Thomas that I have had the honor and joy of talking with, and looking at their faces during the children's sermon. I will see our loft with our music team preparing and praying. In my heart, I will shout up to them from the floor of the nave. I will hear a song and know that the Spirit led Laura to play it. I will be in the office, getting work done and giving Anne and Sandie a hard time. I will see the lounge and remember conversations. I will be standing in the pulpit, looking at your faces,

and I will be grateful. I'll be back in the sacristy and preparing for service with Fr. Aran and Deacon Lisa.

2022 was a good year. It was almost normal. I have so much to be grateful for. God has been faithful and so have you. I pray for you daily. I will continue to do that. I will trust that God will be faithful in 2023, and I trust that you will too. I believe in you.

With you in my heart and vision,
Fr. Ralph+

Operations Reports

Senior Warden – Anne Peterson

St. Thomas continues to successfully engage the challenges that have resulted from the pandemic and working towards re-engagement. Many have returned to worshiping in person, but there are still those who feel more comfortable online. Also, some of our online regulars are not from the area. The Vestry has wrestled with how to engage with our “hybrid” church of online parishioners. Some are attending the Sunday morning study with Jill Beverlin. Numerous bible studies continue to have both in person and online participants. We had an online worshiper hear the need for soup at a Lenten Soup Supper and drove up from Milwaukee to bring us soup.

We have worked towards re-connection. Coffee hour after the 8 and 10 am services has resumed. Weekly letters to the homebound or those unable to connect through social media continue (#141 was sent out Jan 12th). We welcomed two Afghan families to the area and helped them get settled in apartments, find jobs and connected them with community resources. Lenten Soup Suppers restarted and Fr. Ralph and Jill Beverlin led an adult forum during Lent. The Mission Team offered free water and popcorn at the Memorial Day parade. We returned to Forest Springs Camp and Conference Center the second weekend in September, after a two-year absence. Mother Hilary Crupi of the Order of Julian of Norwich, facilitated sessions on how we can live together in spite of our disagreements. We talked about connecting with God and our community during difficult times and healing and forgiveness. The Ladies Christmas Tea was held at St. Thomas in December with a great turnout. Spaghetti Supper resumed in December and January. There are plans to continue this ministry even after the chef, Fr. Ralph, is gone.

Double Portion resumed onsite meals and continues to offer take-out meals three days a week and the food pantry is open. Meals were taken to families experiencing Covid or other illnesses or whatever the need. Cookies and plants were delivered to the homebound. Even with all these efforts, we find that people still long for in-person contact and we continue to look for ways to facilitate this. If someone is on your mind, please give them a call, they will appreciate it. We did accomplish a few capital projects this year with repairs to the boiler and the parking lot, adding another garbage disposal in the kitchen and some microphones in the loft.

Finances have been up and down this year and we developed a significant deficit toward year end. We asked and you were very generous in December and we have ended the year in the black. The Vestry is so thankful for your faithfulness in giving and in offering your gifts and talents.

In December, Fr. Ralph announced his retirement. We are sad that he will no longer be our priest. His sense of humor, pastoral care and leadership have been a blessing to our parish, diocese, and community. We will be having a celebration of his ministry on January 29th after the 10a.m. Sunday service. It will be catered so we all can enjoy ourselves and not have to spend so much of our time in the kitchen. Please come and give Fr. Ralph and Cindy a great send off.

I am grateful to our Vestry for all their hard work and help in relaunching and supporting programs. I am honored to be your Senior Warden and look forward to continuing to serve with you. Blessings to all of you as we continue in ministry together.

Treasurer - Russ Ritschke

We are a blessed congregation filled with faithful givers and we are thankful for your faithfulness and generosity. You have adapted to the pandemic and give online, through the mail or in-person.

Pledge income was \$449,796 and our total income for the year was \$583,851, which was \$7,421 less than budgeted. Our expenses were \$582,529, which was \$8,743 less than expected. This resulted in a surplus of \$1,323. We had a few capital expenses such as hot patching the parking lot, a second garbage disposal in the kitchen (cost was shared with Double Portion), and repairs to the boiler. Our endowments were down this year as were most investments. The endowment funds available for general operations is \$2,490,231. The income available for the budget is a four-year rolling average of these accounts at 4.5%. For 2022, the amount available for the budget was \$106,119 and in 2023 the amount will be \$114,283. We were running a significant deficit in the last months of 2022, but you responded with great generosity and we ended the year in the black.

We are blessed by God's provision and your generosity. Please continue to pray for St. Thomas and your Vestry, that we will seek God in all we do as we strive to be good stewards of the resources given us as we live out our Mission – to Know Christ, to Share Christ and Serve Others in Christ's Name.

St Thomas Church
Balance Sheets
As of December 31, 2022

	Assets				
	<u>General</u>	<u>Double Port</u>	<u>Cap Improv</u>	<u>Discretionary</u>	<u>All Funds</u>
Current Assets					
Cash - Checking	270,608	33,115		2,132	305,855
Cash - Money Market	199,961				199,961
Petty Cash	359				359
Organ Fund - Schwab	207,478				207,478
Due From Other Funds				4,553	4,553
Total Assets	678,406	33,115	-	6,685	718,206
Liabilities					
Current Liabilities					
Payroll Withholdings Payable	4,437				4,437
Due to Rector Discretionary	4,553				4,553
Due to Youth Discretionary	3,435				3,435
Deacon Discretionary	752				752
Church Capital Project	25,600				25,600
Fix-up Fund	7,515				7,515
Mission Scholarship	7,780				7,780
Scrip	6,293				6,293
Altar Guild - Sensiba	2,154				2,154
Memorials	43,217				43,217
Columbarium	7,077				7,077
Healing Fund	1,116				1,116
Organ & Bells	333,976				333,976
Madson Fund	34,007				34,007
Sabbatical Fund	6,000				6,000
Youth Special Events	205				205
Youth Mission Trips	36,281				36,281
ECW-Women's Ministry	4,907				4,907
Mother's Mercy Home	14,294				14,294
Jericho	100				100
African Medical Missions	27,327				27,327
Mission B Day Box	3,772				3,772
Flowers	1,141				1,141
Bishop's Appeal	1,420				1,420
Lambeau Fund Raising	14,429				14,429
Designated Contribution	2,321				2,321
Fellowship Camp	1,412				1,412
Special Events	7,247				7,247
Prepaid Pledges	1,000				1,000
Budget Reserve Fund	56,607				56,607
Total Current Liabilities	660,375	-	-	-	660,375
Fund Balances					
Fund Balance January 1	16,709	23,079	5,695	3,604	49,087
Surplus (Deficit)	1,322	10,036	(5,695)	3,081	8,744
Fund Balance December 31	18,031	33,115	-	6,685	57,831
Total Liabilities & Fund Balance	678,406	33,115	-	6,685	718,206

St Thomas Church
Statements of Income and Expense
General Fund

Income	<u>Budget 2022</u>	<u>Actual 2022</u>	<u>Budget 2023</u>
Contributions			
Unrestricted	145,000	134,532	135,000
St Thomas Only	36,000	33,800	34,000
St Thomas & Diocese	290,000	281,464	286,000
Total Contributions	471,000	449,796	455,000
Other Offerings			
Loose Offering	3,600	2,981	2,500
Holiday Offerings	7,800	15,559	7,000
Envelope Contributions	100	245	250
Total Other Offerings	11,500	18,785	9,750
Other Income			
Endowment Disbursement	106,119	106,095	114,283
Amazon Smile	250	241	200
Building Use	950	625	600
Interest Income	50	39	50
On Line Fee Contributions	903	1,378	2,000
Deficit Reduction	-	6,000	
Miscellaneous Income	500	892	500
Total Other Income	108,772	115,270	117,633
Total Income	<u>591,272</u>	<u>583,851</u>	<u>582,383</u>

St Thomas Church
Statements of Income and Expense
General Fund

Expenses	<u>Budget 2022</u>	<u>Actual 2022</u>	<u>Budget 2023</u>
Operations - Compensation			
Rector Compensation	106,584	106,584	17,054
Rector Pension	19,185	19,185	3,070
Rector Health Benefits	25,404	20,582	3,167
Rector Travel	3,600	2,342	3,600
Assistant Compensation	74,565	74,565	77,547
Assistant Pension	13,421	13,422	13,959
Assistant Health Benefits	38,864	38,970	40,628
Assistant Travel	3,600	2,872	3,600
Secretary Compensation	35,465	35,465	36,884
Secretary Pension	3,192	3,192	3,320
Secretary Benefits	500	343	400
Maintenance Service	17,500	13,455	15,000
Organist	27,589	27,589	28,693
Children Ministry Compensation	11,261	11,261	11,711
Child Care Compensation	1,925	1,440	1,500
Technology			6,000
Interim Compensation			45,000
Interim Benefits or Pension			12,000
Search Process			40,000
Moving Expense			10,000
Admin/Supply Clergy/Vacation	600	435	600
Employer's Share Tax	5,832	5,795	6,026
Total Operations - Compensation	<u>389,087</u>	<u>377,497</u>	<u>379,759</u>

Operations - General			
Rector's Business	1,300	573	1,200
Assistant's Business	1,200	1,699	1,200
Insurance	21,000	20,571	21,000
Building & Maintenance	11,400	12,601	11,425
Landscaping & Tree Maintenance	4,000	9,900	3,000
Plowing	7,500	1,734	8,500
Waste Pickup	3,750	3,907	3,800
Sabbatical	1,000	1,000	1,000
Maintenance Supplies	1,200	886	855
Gas	8,000	11,768	10,000
Electric	10,000	10,935	10,200
Water & Sewer	6,000	5,929	6,000
Flowers	250	110	250
Soda	-	(147)	-
Hospitality	3,500	2,837	3,000
Diocesan Convention	1,000	320	800
Office Expense	14,895	14,948	14,330
Telephone, Internet & Website	8,720	9,427	10,050
Stewardship	1,200	934	1,000
Diocesan Pledge	63,100	63,100	63,064
Capital Fund	1,000	1,000	1,000
Miscellaneous Operating	500		
Total - Operations General	<u>170,515</u>	<u>174,032</u>	<u>171,674</u>

St. Thomas Church
Statements of Income and Expense
General Fund

EXPENSES	Budget 2022	Actual 2022	Budget 2023
Ministry Teams			
Adult Development	170	-	100
Mission Outreach	8,500	8,483	8,500
Welcome/Hospitality			
Fellowship Events	500	400	250
Fellowship Camp	3,500	3,500	3,500
Visitation/Sr. Lunch	1,000	114	750
Subtotal Welcome Hospitality	5,000	4,014	4,500
Worship			
Altar Supplies	1,500	1,633	1,500
Worship & Music	2,500	4,544	2,500
Acolytes	500	216	350
Subtotal Worship	4,500	6,393	4,350
Youth Development			
Youth Programs	11,000	10,366	11,000
Church Sch-Children	1,000	896	1,250
Awana/Kids Club	1,000	848	1,250
VBS	500	-	-
Subtotal Youth	13,500	12,110	13,500
Subtotal Teams	31,670	31,000	30,950
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	591,272	582,529	582,383
Surplus	-	1,322	-

St Thomas Church
Receipts & Disbursements - All Funds
For The Year Ended December 31, 2022

	<u>Beginning</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>Ending</u>
All Funds				
General	16,709	583,851	582,529	18,031
Double Portion	23,079	30,819	20,782	33,116
Capital Improvements	5,695		5,695	-
Rector's Discretionary	5,891	10,572	9,778	6,685
Youth Discretionary	2,500	1,250	315	3,435
Due to Endowment	-	20,000	20,000	-
Deacon Discretionary	752			752
Fix Up Fund	6,635	880		7,515
Church Capital Projects	18,600	6,000		24,600
Cabin Capital Projects	1,000			1,000
Roof Repair Fund	185		185	-
Sensiba - Altar Guild	2,154			2,154
Memorials	43,192	5,890	5,865	43,217
Bishop Discretionary	1,420	130	130	1,420
Columbarium	7,086		10	7,076
Healing	1,116			1,116
Organ & Bells	337,006	30,000	33,030	333,976
Madson	23,739	11,328	1,060	34,007
Fellowship Camp	152	8,034	6,775	1,411
ECW - Women's Ministry	4,907			4,907
United Thank Offering	-	1,890	1,890	-
Mission B Day Box	3,113	659		3,772
Mission Scholarship	7,780			7,780
Scrip	5,629	32,904	32,240	6,293
Jericho Ministry	350	82,450	82,700	100
Mothers Mercy Home	23,931	12,140	21,777	14,294
SAMS - Hills	100		100	-
Youth Special Events	2,361	3,384	5,540	205
Youth Mission Trip	20,776	28,858	13,353	36,281
Refugees	1,060	16,864	17,924	-
Flowers	1,700		560	1,140
African Medical Mission	27,327			27,327
Lambeau Fund Raising	20,169	27,243	32,983	14,429
Landscaping & Trees	1,749	1,734	3,482	1
Sabbatical	5,000	1,000		6,000
100 Year Celebration	769	20		789
Israel Trip	2,933	125,832	128,765	-
Cynthia Tobias	4,715			4,715
Fellowship Events	1,343	400		1,743
Designated Contrib	2,866	41,595	42,140	2,321
Prepaid Pledge	18,322	1,000	18,322	1,000
Budget Reserve Fund	56,607			56,607
Total	710,418	1,086,727	1,087,930	709,215

St Thomas Finance Committee – Dave Morton

The Finance Committee meets quarterly to review church finances and make recommendations to the Vestry. Current Members are Father Osborne, Anne Peterson, Russ Ritschke, Bob Keller, Jeanna Werbeckes, David Morton and Walter Scott.

The Finance Committee is responsible to work with our Treasurer, Russ Ritschke, and Financial Administrator, Anne Peterson, to prepare the annual budget. The task begins early in the fall of the year, with the final budget presented to the Vestry in January.

The Committee also meets annually with our Investment Advisor, Schaper, Benz & Wise, reviewing our endowment funds investment.

Lastly, we review any proposed capital improvements and make recommendations to the Vestry. Fortunately, we have been blessed with a loving, generous congregation that give to significant projects!!

We continue to be a generous congregation. Through COVID struggles, through implementing Hybrid Worship every Sunday, we are blessed with a generous congregation. One of Fr Ralph's recent sermons was: *"Rekindle the Gift."*

"Let us rekindle the Gift of God that is within us. (These were the words of St. Paul to St. Timothy) St. Paul was encouraging St. Timothy. Let us continue to rekindle the Gift of God by sharing our gifts with others."

We have been faithful stewards of God's Church. Your love of St Thomas has made our financial governing a rewarding way to serve God. On behalf of the Finance Committee, thank you for your generosity & it has been an honor to serve God's Church through this ministry.

St. Thomas Endowment - 2022 Annual Review – Walter Scott

At the end of 2022, St. Thomas had endowment assets of \$2,490,231. These assets have resulted from the generous gifts of many people over a number of decades. Schaper, Benz & Wise Investment Counsel, Inc. (SBW) is our investment advisor. Associated Bank, N.A. acts as trustee and custodian of the endowment assets. These funds, dedicated toward general operations and clergy education, can be invested in the following way: 40-70% stocks, 25-60% bonds, and 0-10% cash. Last year the equities in the St. Thomas endowment were in the middle of the targeted range at 55.3%. Fixed income securities represented 31.4% of the total, while 13.3% was in cash and equivalents. The cash position is temporarily higher than the targeted range, but SBW feels it is prudent to hold a higher level of cash in this environment. Holding a mix of stocks, bonds, and cash provides current income for distributions while also growing the assets longer term to preserve purchasing power. In 2022, the combined value of these accounts declined 15.4%. The benchmark investment portfolio (55% S&P 500 Index, 40% Broad Bond Index, and 5% 90-day U.S. Treasury Bill) declined 16.0%. Since Schaper, Benz & Wise began managing the accounts in 2002, our endowment assets have an annualized return of +7.8% compared to +4.8% for the benchmark portfolio.

For stocks, our investment advisor gravitates toward high quality companies with reputable management teams, a sustainable competitive advantage, manageable debt levels, and robust cash flow characteristics. For 2023, SBW expects another challenging year, particularly in the first half. Stock valuations are discounting mid-single-digit earnings growth which may be difficult to achieve as the economy slows and the Federal Reserve continues to tighten monetary policy. Given the rising interest rate environment, fixed income investments have become much more attractive. Cash has also become a more viable asset class with money market funds yielding 3.6%. We are comfortable holding a higher than normal cash position until the investment outlook improves and/or valuations fall further.

At the discretion of the Vestry and Finance Committee, the endowment trust documents were amended to allow for a unitrust distribution rate to be applied to the endowment trust assets. The unitrust distribution approach began on July 1, 2012. Withdrawals for the church totaled \$106,515 and distributions for clergy education amounted to \$17,622 last year.

Assets in the St. Thomas Church – Organ Fund were valued at \$207,478 on December 30, 2022. These assets have been segregated because the funds have been set aside to provide for care and maintenance of the Church's organ. The custodian for these funds is Charles Schwab, and Schaper, Benz & Wise is the investment advisor. The investment objective is conservatively balanced with 26% stocks, 69% fixed income and 5% cash. Due to the size of the account, our advisor is utilizing no-load, high quality mutual funds, exchange traded funds, and individual bonds. In 2022 this account returned -12.7%.

Welcome/Hospitality – Mary Kay Hietpas and Rebecca Gietman

The Sunshine Ministry (Bev Johnston) sends out birthday cards, sympathy cards, and get-well cards. If you know of someone who could use a little sunshine, and who has given permission for their name to be shared with this ministry, please send their contact information to Bev at revbevj@new.rr.com.

The Funeral Reception Team (Team Leader Kathy Peterson) hosted 2 funeral receptions. This ministry is vital and appreciated by families during a difficult time. If you would like to volunteer to help with this ministry, please contact Kathy Peterson.

The Lenten Soup Suppers Team (Team Leader Sandie Umland) organizes volunteers to bring and serve their favorite soup on a Wednesday evening during Lent. Every Wednesday during lent, there is worship at 5:30pm, soup supper at 6:00pm, and fellowship and teaching for all ages at 6:45 p.m. If you are interested in helping with this ministry, please contact Sandie in the office.

Coffee Hour is regularly held following the 8 and 10:00 service every Sunday. This is a wonderful way to meet St. Thomas members who you don't get a chance to speak with at a service. Volunteers can host coffee hour and bring snacks or treats, make coffee, and clean up afterwards. The position of Coffee Hour Team Leader is open, to organize and train volunteers to host. Please consider serving in this need and capacity.

St. Thomas Greeters are assigned on Sundays to connect with visitors to help them feel welcome. Greeters attempt to obtain visitors' contact information for Fr. Ralph and the office. With the pandemic we have not had St. Thomas Greeters since March of 2020. It would be nice to start having them again. If you are interested in this please contact a member of the Vestry Committee.

Annual Fellowship Camp Weekend (Team Leaders Dave Morton and Mary Kay Hietpas) resumed in 2022. It was held, September 9-11th at Forest Springs Camp and Conference Center, in Westboro, Wisconsin. Mother Hillary, of the Order of Julian of Norwich, facilitated sessions on how we can live together in spite of our disagreements. We talked about connecting with God and our community during difficult times and healing and forgiveness. She is a very stimulating and thought-provoking speaker. We hope to have Mother Hillary speak again at St. Thomas sometime in 2023.

The Christmas Tea was held this year on Friday, December 9th. It was hosted by the Wed. am Women's Bible Study. It was held at St. Thomas this year instead of a private home so that we could spread out more, but still be in one room. This worked out very well and attendance was good. A nice time was had by all in the Christmas spirit.

Spaghetti Suppers (cook - Fr. Ralph Osborne), restarted on the second Wednesday in December 2022. This was a wonderful event for fellowship, interacting with young and old and enjoying a delicious spaghetti dinner. The next Spaghetti Supper is planned for January 11, 2023. There are

plans in the works for teams of parishioners to take turns cooking spaghetti each month so this ministry can continue. We have also resumed our St. Thomas Church Picnic and the popcorn and water give-away at the Memorial Day Parade.

The St. Margarita Society dined at Solea Mexican Grill in Neenah on the fourth Monday of the month for women and the 5th Monday of the month for men and women. This event is resuming in January 2023 (Jan 23rd for women and Jan 30th for both men and women). Please come join us!

Prior to the pandemic, Senior Luncheon (Team Leader Carol Hert and Linda Smith) was enjoyed once a month following the school calendar. We are looking forward to the return of this event.

Some activities have yet to resume since the pandemic. Dinners for Eight (Team Leader Sandie Umland), the Ice Cream Social, Fall Festival, or Winterfest. We hope some of these will resume in 2023.

Please contact any Vestry member, or any Team's Leader, if you would like to offer your time and talents to any of the above ministries. We would also appreciate any feedback on how we could better serve St. Thomas and the surrounding community, as well as ideas on how to better promote friendship and grow our community both inside and outside of St. Thomas.

Outreach and Mission Team – Gordon Stillings

One of the adventures that St. Thomas participated in during 2022, was the welcoming of two Afghan families and several individuals. St. Thomas teamed with World Relief-Fox Valley to support new refugee families settling in our area. We had two volunteer teams from our church, and many other St. Thomas folk helped with financial donations, donations of furniture and with many needed kitchen items. Our teams helped our families with grocery shopping, healthcare visits, all with the goal of independent living. During the year, our families found apartments and jobs, and schools. The biggest part of our service was to build friendships. Bowling and eating pizza together builds bonds. We are hoping the relationships last. Continue to pray for our families. The experience went so well, it would be wonderful to help other families in need.

Our Mission Partners

Double Portion Soup Kitchen and Pantry - Bill Steinhilber

2022 was an exciting year of “returning to normal” for us at Double Portion. As the COVID-19 pandemic waned throughout the beginning of the year, we decided that after two years of serving takeout meals, it was time to return to in-person dining. Our volunteers and guests were thrilled to be able to spend more time in fellowship with one another as we continued fulfilling our mission “to know Christ, to make Christ known, and to serve others in His name” by providing a well-balanced meal to those in need in a caring, supportive Christian atmosphere which shows concern for the whole person. Although the return to in-person dining was well received, our team also wanted to serve those who were not comfortable dining in person, so we continued offering take-out meals as well. That change seems to work well for everyone and helps us meet the needs of more people in our community.

We served approximately 9,500 meals this year, with an average of 62 meals served each day, down about 14% from 2021 (but very close to our 2020 numbers). We have been visiting with and providing meals for guests we've known for many years, as well as meeting several new guests who are experiencing hardship for the first time.

We are blessed to have several groups providing fully prepared meals such as St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Double Portion Home Cooks and Knights of Columbus Post 5514. In addition, on

Wednesdays we have three groups who come in to serve the meal: Lakeside Packaging Plus, Friendship Place, and Epic Middle School in Menasha. We are grateful for the faithfulness of these groups who we can count on regularly to help serve. We also have approximately 30 dedicated volunteers who serve alongside us on a regular basis from one time per month to several times per week, 10 of whom joined us just this year.

In addition to new volunteers, we have two new members of our ministry board, Joe and Melanie Miller, who also serve as lead cooks on Wednesdays, taking over for Don Bannister who served in both of these roles during COVID. We appreciate their service to our guests and ministry. We are also grateful to Bill Steinhilber, Gayle Varner, Sally Brandt, and Julie Last for their many years of continued service on our board and in the kitchen.

In the past year, the Menasha and Neenah Public Libraries eliminated fines for most materials, thereby also eliminating their "Food for Fines" drive which benefited Double Portion. Although the Food for Fines program has been eliminated, the libraries generously held two food drives for us in 2022. While other local food drives, including the USPS drive and Boy Scout drive, did resume after a break for COVID-19 we received fewer donations than in previous years. During times when our shelves were a little lean, the board voted to purchase some staples, which we were able to do thanks to Calvary Bible Church designating their Easter offering for our ministry. Each month we served an average of 64 individuals or families with our pantry, with most receiving items multiple times per month.

Double Portion exists to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those in need in our community. In addition to providing for practical needs, we are also able to provide an opportunity to share the gospel with others as Christ works through us in order that all would come to know Him. Our continued prayer is that we would find new ways to connect with, bless, and share the Good News of Jesus with our guests.

Jericho Ministries/Betsy Hake – Val Phillip

This report came from a letter that Betsy Hake sent at the end of 2022.

We started 2022 with the challenge of having two girls hospitalized. Katherine Lideny, had surgery to remove a tumor from her lung. It was benign and easily removed! My daughter Isabella was hospitalized for severe depression. By the sheer grace of God both girls have experienced His healing power in their lives, one in the physical realm and the other in the area of her emotions. Please continue to pray for Lideny and Isabella. Prayer definitely makes a difference especially when the road to healing is long.

We broke ground on the first cabin and then, because of the detailed planning, were able to initiate construction on the second and third homes. This amazing team from Mountain Life Church in Park City, Utah were a godsend.

God made a way for me to be hospitalized for treatments at Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville when my kidney function dipped down to 16%. There I was diagnosed with Amyloidosis of the kidneys, the same disease I had been healed of in 2008. After three intensive days in the hospital for diagnosis, Mayo said I would need weekly treatments which cost \$31,000 each. I almost had a heart attack, first when I heard how expensive the treatments were and second when my insurance refused to pay for the treatments. I could only think of how I would rather spend that money (as in new vans for the children etc). I remember sitting on a bench and crying out to God for help! I had five hours to come up with money for the first treatment! Elvia remembered a loving couple from Utah who helped us with the funds for one of the girl's homes. We texted Katrina and Jay and their response still makes me cry. Katrina said, "Of course we will help you!" She wired the money within five minutes and I received the first treatment!

And the next treatments? These prayer warrior sisters from St. Luke's Hilton Head came to the rescue and helped me set up a Go Fund Me account. We watched in awe as God provided through so many of you and others whom I didn't even know. Members of St. Luke's (and the Walkers) helped pay for the hotel which has an hour shuttle to Mayo Clinic. I was overwhelmed at the response of His body for our need! When I went home to Honduras for a visit, Mayo contacted me to say I would now have to come up with \$96,000 because they would not do any more treatments until I had the funds for three treatments in a row. My second night home, I cried out to Jesus in the wee hours of the morning. I knew He would either provide for these treatments or that He would heal me Himself. I needed to get to the point of total surrender to His will. Early the next morning a board member texted me that Lynn Keller from St. Thomas, Wisconsin had chosen to give enough funds for two full treatments! And the third treatment? By the time I got back to Mayo Clinic, enough funds came in from friends and family to cover the third treatment completely! Even a family who worked in the dump felt led to help! It was a total financial miracle! The doctors want to prepare me for a stem cell transplant, which will most likely be done in February 2023.

Graduation 2022! Six of our girls will be attending college this year, so we now have a transition apartment in Tegucigalpa for them. One of our teachers felt a call to lead this transition home so we are very thankful for Karla!

As I ponder all that God has done this year, I can see how clearly He used the body of Christ over and over again to help us and to extend His Kingdom! Thank you all for praying for us and for believing in miracles with us! Thank you for giving so generously! I love you and thank you from the bottom of my heart!

God is doing wonderful things through Betsy's ministry, Jericho Ministries. Jericho Ministries is a multifaceted Christian ministry which started as an outreach to women trapped in prostitution. It has grown to include three ministry sites: a children's home in the country, an urban school and women's workshop, and a boy's home in the city of Tegucigalpa. Our vision is to equip women and children to glorify God and serve Him by breaking the chains of prostitution, sexual abuse, and addictions that have plagued their families for generations. Please continue to support Betsy and Jericho.

Mothers' Mercy Home Partnership Program Board - Kathy Peterson

On March 31, 2022 we celebrated 15 years of the Mothers' Mercy Home Partnership Program. Due to difficulty with communication over the past few years (we had not received any updates on our children since 2018), the Board prayerfully considered how we should continue our support. It was decided that our donations would be made through Cargo Care Charity Trust Ltd. Cargo Human Care (CHC) is the philanthropic branch of Lufthansa Airlines which has been a supporter of MMH almost as long as we have. This is the organization which funded the dormitory, medical building, other buildings on campus and the John Kahleni Residence off campus for secondary school graduates. They regularly send physicians to provide medical care, run camps during school vacations and their Board members are frequently on site at MMH. They also have a Foster Program somewhat similar to our Partnership Program. We have received updated reports on all the Primary & Secondary students as well as the current John Kahleni Residence students and graduates of JKR. We will now be receiving updates on students twice yearly as well as other news of MMH.

During Covid, due to emergency conditions, a few children were assigned to MMH by authorities. In April, 16 new children were admitted in time for the new school year. Half were of pre-school age but some were admitted along with older siblings. In late 2021, 12 of our Partnered students (2014-2017 Secondary School graduates) completed the John Kahleni Residence Program and are now independently living and working in their professions. Since mentalities about the way to deal with money and resources is strikingly different in Kenya where any money available is usually spent immediately, students were taught to enter income and expenses to create an awareness of where money goes and how to create reserves for the future.

With draught in Kenya and the war in Ukraine, food prices have increased dramatically and CHC is providing more assistance with the cost of feeding the children nutritious meals. The staff was thanked for devoted service (especially over the last 2 years) with an event during the year and then presented with food packages at the Christmas celebration.

During 2022, \$21,700 was wired for MMH. This included \$240 a year for school fees for the 39 Partnered Children; all bedding, pajamas and slippers, uniforms, shoes, school bags, as well as first term school fees for the 16 new children; funds toward the new playground; 6 months of weekend activities at MM; and repair of the pump for MMH and the Medical Clinic.

The Board is very pleased with the cooperation we have had with Cargo Human Care over the past year and look forward to supporting the children of MMH and the young adults at the John Kahleni Residence in the coming years along with them. Thanks to all our loyal Partners and those who support MMH in other ways. The children, staff and administrators say ASANTE SANA!

Scrip Program - Sandie Umland

St. Thomas participates in selling Scrip gift cards to raise money for the Mission and Outreach Scholarship Fund. This year, we raised \$758.78. In May 2021, all our scrip cards were taken during the break-in. The police recovered \$4,165 of the \$5,770 stolen. The recovered cards are still in police custody. Since then, we have been doing individual orders each Monday morning, instead of having an inventory of scrip cards. Thank you to all that have purchased during this time. These cards are offered to nonprofit organizations at a discounted rate, enabling revenue to be generated every time a card is purchased. The Mission Scholarship Fund grants funds for parishioners going on short or long-term mission trips as well as for bringing mission partners to visit St. Thomas.

Outreach and Mission Team Financials - Anne Peterson

The members of our parish have been very generous in giving to missions. Here are some contribution numbers as of December 31, 2022.

Mission Sunday/Birthday box	\$ 659
Rector Discretionary Fund	\$10,572
Youth Discretionary Fund	\$ 1,250
Good Friday – Jerusalem	\$ 985
Diocese of Masvingo(cows)	\$ 400
ERD – Ukraine	\$ 1,300
Afghan Refugees	\$16,864
BS Troop 3 – trailer	\$ 3,373
YASC – Christi Cunningham	\$ 870
Jericho Ministry(support & medical)	\$82,450
Mothers' Mercy Home	\$12,140
Double Portion	\$ 9,667
UTO	\$ 1,890
Youth Mission Trip	\$ 1,750
Youth Care Packages	\$ 290
Yth Adopt-A-Family	\$ 775
Lambeau Field	\$27,244
Budgeted money for Mission was sent to –	

Double Portion	\$2,000
Mother's Mercy Home	\$2,000
Jericho – Betsy Hake	\$2,000
Jericho – medical care	\$2,000
Church Periodical Club	\$ 250
St. Thomas Softball Team	\$ 230

Youth Development – Genevieve Pell

Children's Ministry – Jessica Zaborski

Nursery - The nursery is staffed by Wanda Weiland, during both services. Wanda does an excellent job ensuring our youngest parishioners are well cared for.

Children's Sermon - The kids take turns surprising Fr. Ralph or Fr. Aran by placing an item in a hat box. They then have a conversation about that item. These chats are always amusing and insightful.

Children's Sunday School - We have five students who are regular Sunday School attendees. We are still using the David C. Cook *Bible in Life* curriculum. We also read many illustrated Bible story books and discuss them. This year we went back to our usual 9-9:50 am time slot.

Kid's Club - We have five students who consistently attend Kid's Club on Wednesday evenings. We have changed the time to 6:30-8pm because all of the students have a parent or siblings in D-groups. We are using the Weaving God's Promises curriculum. This is an Episcopal based program that teaches the bible stories but also gives them an understanding of the liturgy and practices in our church. This continues to be a great time of fun and fellowship with, running games, crafts, snacks and theme nights.

Christmas Pageant - We had 14 children and 4 adults participate in this year's pageant. We were so happy to continue this wonderful tradition at St. Thomas.

Easter Egg Hunt - This year we hosted our second annual Easter Egg Hunt in the downstairs of St. Thomas before the 10 am service. Over 25 children participated and it was great fun. We plan to continue to host this special event.

First Communion - There were 3 children who received their First Communion on April 17, 2022. First communion classes will be offered this year during Lent. The class will be recognized in the spring, during the 10 am service.

Youth Minister/Associate – Fr. Aran Walter

Hello friends . . . grace and peace,

In today's world (2023) we don't have to be in the same room as other people in order to be together. Zoom, FaceTime, Discord, Slack, WhatsApp, etc. They all connect us to other people. And it's amazing to have these tools in our hands. They help us and make our lives better.

None of those things existed 25 years ago when I was hired at St. Thomas fresh out of seminary. The world is a fundamentally different place than it used to be. Things have changed and shifted and morphed and progressed. Those aren't bad things at all. Differences and changes aren't bad. They just . . . are. And in a post-COVID world, just about everyone has stepped into a new way of doing things, whether its school, work, family, and yes, even church.

2,000 years ago, church looked really different from today. The same is true for 1,500 years ago. 1,000 years ago. 200 years ago. 25 years ago. 3 years ago. Again, this isn't a bad thing. Church has always changed and shifted and morphed and progressed.

Here at the STYG, we're all about inviting 6th-12th graders as well as young adults to invite God to be a part of their always changing, ever shifting, constantly morphing, and progressing lives. And in the Way of Jesus, the best way to do that is to do it together. Sometimes that means we're all together in the same room, or on weekend retreat, or on a trip, or doing something for others. But our goal is do this whole God/Jesus/bible/Church thing together.

This is why we invite students to check out things like Film School and Youth Group and D-Groups and a Love Journey as well as Sign Up For Stuff like Contagion and The Fall Lock-In and #EpiscoWisconsin Summer Camp and Six Flags and lots more! Because the more we intentionally get together, the more opportunities we have to be a community.

If you're in 6th-12th grade, you're invited. If you know 6th-12th graders, invite them. All are welcome! www.styg.com

Adult Development – Art Freiberg

In the past year, St. Thomas has been blessed with six active lay directed groups focused on adult development. Approximately fifty participants are exploring, how are we hearing God and how can we find his presence in our day to day lives. This year has seen the addition of hybrid gatherings (in person/zoom) in four of these groups to encourage even more participants. Perhaps it's time for you to explore one, or more, of these for yourself.

IN PERSON

- 1) Thursday 6:00-7:00am - Men's Bible Study meets in person at the Delta Restaurant in Oshkosh. Contact Larry Langohr at 920-722-8722
- 2) Thursday 9:30-11am – mixed Bible Study meets in person in the St. Thomas lounge. This group is viewing the entire series "The Chosen". Contact Mary Kay Hietpas at 920-740-5737

HYBRID GROUPS – In person and Via Zoom

- 1) Sunday 9:00-9:50am - Conversations on Scripture (in person) in the St. Thomas lounge. Contact Jill Beverlin at jill.beverlin@elca.org or find the zoom link on the St. Thomas weekly email.
- 2) Tuesday 6:30-7:30am - Men's Bible Study (in person) in the fire place room at Mahler Park Highlands. Contact Tim Peterson at 920-594-3794 for the zoom link.
- 3) Wednesday 9:00am - Women's Bible Study (in person) in the St. Thomas lounge. Contact Anne Peterson at 920-851-2686 for the zoom link.
- 2) Friday 8:00-9:00am - Men's Bible Study (in person) at the Weathervane Restaurant in Menasha. Contact Jim Dickson at 920-725-8237 for the zoom link.

Worship Reports – Wade Lindholm

The St. Thomas **Worship Team** consists of Seven Teams (team leads): **Altar Guild** (Bev Johnston, Barbara Barry and Sherry Morton), **Prayer Team** (Fr. John Peterson, Val Phillip), **Prayers of the People** (Deacon Lisa Ueda), **Acolytes** (Dan Siracusa, Wade Lindholm), **Readers** (Tim Peterson), **Ushers** (Jon Phillip), and **Music** (Laura Rothe). Our Vestry Liaison is Wade Lindholm.

With services being both in-person live and on-line virtual, the Worship areas have changed a bit but continue with no restrictions. Laura Rothe has continued to lead our music ministry. The live stream system has been upgraded to provide excellent streaming capabilities for all on-line services and events. Additional microphones and sound enhancements are being made that will benefit both in-person and streaming services. In addition, Martina Mims has continued in her role as Verger, helping to plan, coordinate and guide services.

Dan Siracusa and Wade Lindholm continue to work with our acolytes scheduling, coordinating, training and recruiting of new Acolytes. We have now fully resumed the Acolyte program. Jon Phillip leads our ushers, a dedicated group of people who are often the first person a newcomer encounters. Altar Guild provides huge support to the Clergy and assures that all vessels are cleansed after the Eucharist and ready for the following week's service. They're also the group of people who are responsible for changing out the colors of the altar hangings in the Sanctuary and Chapel as we

move through the Church year. The role of Lay Reader is a very valued role in our Liturgy. The Music Team continues to seek & pray for new singers. We would love to have you join and all ages are welcome! To all, thank you for your service to these teams! Anyone interested in participating in any of these Worship Team areas please contact the team lead listed above.

Pastoral Care Team – Ramona Griesbach

The pastoral care team is comprised of several ministries. Through our healing ministry, Lay Eucharistic visitation, prayer chain, meal preparation, and visitation of the homebound we continue a strong prayer life and service to others in God's name.

Helping Hands – Home cooked meals are provided to those having surgery, a newborn baby or are in need of temporary meal assistance. We have 3 teams helping in the meal ministry. Double Portion meals may also be utilized by this ministry.

St. Martha's Guild – There are three rotating teams that hosted two funeral receptions at St. Thomas this past year. They provide beverages and desserts, and help setup, serve and clean up. If you are interested in helping, contact Kathy Peterson (725-3174) or Sandie Umland (725-5601).

Holiday Visitation – Homebound parishioners are visited at Easter and Christmas. For Easter, fifteen parishioners were visited and each one received a plant. At Christmas, seventeen homebound parishioners were visited, and they received Christmas cookies and plants.

Lay Eucharistic Visitors – Clergy and laity visit homebound parishioners and take them communion if they would like to receive it. Visits can also occur at area hospitals in Appleton, Neenah, and Oshkosh. If you or a family member would like a visit, please call the Parish office (920-725-5601).

Prayer Chain – This is a confidential ministry where volunteers pray for requests that are received via a phone call or emails. Parishioners can call the Parish office (920-725-5601), if they would like a prayer request sent out through the prayer chain.

Prayer and Healing Ministry – Prayer for healing is offered in the chapel every Sunday during communion at the 10 a.m. service. Everyone is invited into the chapel for prayers. Confidentiality is always maintained.

Specialized Pastoral Counseling is offered by Fr. John Peterson. If you are having issues with anxiety, depression, grief, low self-esteem, relationships, anger, resentment issues or self-destructive problems, please call Fr. John Peterson at 920-725-3174.

Weekly letters are sent to the homebound and others unable to stay in touch with the church through social media or other venues. This letter includes the Sunday sermon and gospel reading, announcements, inspirational images, and funny cartoons. If you would like to receive these letters, please let the church office know at 920-725-5601.