

Sunday Morning
Worship Time
Every Sunday
Starting at 10:30 am



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The St. Thomas Newsletter is published monthly except for July and August. Submissions are due by the 20th of the preceding month. Send submissions to pr@stthomasunited.ca.

Minister's Message: Reverend Tracy

May is a time of rebirth and renewal. It's always a long wait and while I might want to start cleaning my yard and flower beds, my spring mantra is "wait until the May long weekend wait, until the May long weekend". I'll protect the lady bugs and other insects as they continue to find shelter and warmth during those, still, times of frost risk. Wait until the May long weekend!

For St. Thomas, May is also a time of renewal as we look towards our future and how we can remain relevant to the congregation and the wider community beyond the church walls. As a church we are at a crossroads where we are thriving, but things could change quickly and the reality of Foothills United Church closing has hit close to home, for me anyway. I don't want the same thing to happen to St. Thomas. I want us to grow as we become more and more inclusive. I want us to share how great we are and accept new people into our midst. I want to see St. Thomas recognized far and wide as being the loving, flexible, risk-taking, go-with-the-flow community of faith that we are. This is an outstanding place with outstanding people who can invite even more outstanding people to join us on the journey.

To move closer to that reality, we are hosting FROM BACK TO THE FUTURE event for the congregation on Saturday, May 30, 2026. Everyone is invited as stories are shared about where we've been and what we love about St. Thomas. Together, we then move into brainstorming and planning about where and who we want to be in the future. All your diverse voices are needed so please plan on coming for the day, or part of the day, to do some community building and dreaming. Lunch, snacks, and childcare are included.

There's a sign-up sheet in the foyer, or as the church calls it: the narthex, so that we know how many are coming to ensure we have enough food and childcare leaders available. My dream for May 30, 2026, is to have 100 of you show up to have your ideas heard. Together, with Open Hands, Open Hearts, and Open Minds, St. Thomas will continue to thrive with plans on how to move forward into a future that is long and strong. It's up to you to make it happen!

Worship at St. Thomas - Cathy Rivard

We will be graced with a performance from the orchestra on **May 3, 2026**. We will celebrate Mother's day on **May 10, 2026**, with both the Children's choir and the youth choir. The Adult Choir will be supplying with their, as always, wonderful music offerings on both **May 17** and **May 24, 2026**. Also on **May 24, 2026** we will be having Asian treats after church , in honour of it being Asian Heritage month.

Upcoming Services for May, 2026.

<p>May 3 Jesus' Ascension Reverend Tracy. Scripture: Acts 1:1-11 Music: Orchestra, Kari Orosz.</p>	<p>May 10 Mother's Day - Wisdom and Safety of Home Reverend Tracy. Scripture: John 14:1-14 Music: Children's Choir, Youth Choir, Kari Orosz.</p>	<p>May 17 All Shall be One Reverend Tracy. Scripture: John 17:1-11 Music: Adult Choir, Kari Orosz.</p>	<p>May 24 All Shall be One Reverend Tracy. Scripture: Acts 2:1-21 Music: Adult Choir, Kari Orosz.</p>
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Gift Cards - Richard Taylor-Kerr

As of mid April, we have fundraised \$2600 through the sale of gift cards. This is a little bit behind where we were last year. Not to worry though, the year is still young. I encourage you to keep buying grocery gift cards!

We have gift cards available in \$50s and \$100s for Safeway/ Sobeyes, Co-op, and Superstore. Payment is by e-transfer, cash, or cheque (payable to St. Thomas United Church). Safeway/Sobey's and Superstore cards can be used in any of their affiliated stores across Canada. Co-op cards can only be used in Calgary.

The best way to order cards is to e-mail fundraising@stthomasunited.ca. Cards will be ready for you on the following Sunday. We can also make arrangements for pickup. Thank you for supporting this important fundraiser. Every purchase helps, no matter how small.

The Wise Women of St. Thomas United Church

Outdoor Thoughts - Wanda Veer

It is April 2026, as I write this. The great outdoors beckons briefly, then we get a dump of snow, cold winds, and icy streets. Perhaps May will be beautiful. But we humans, along with our twittering prairie birds and our tough prairie perennials, just soldier on, knowing that more spring adventures await us just around the corner. My dad loved springtime. He always found the pussy willows, the crocus, the buffalo beans, the first crabapple blossoms. Even the spring green of dastardly weeds is pleasing to our eyes. He and Mom farmed and ranched, so springtime meant calving and planting with high hopes for bumper harvest yields. We City Folks have a totally different way of life in this century. We anticipate some gardening and outdoor sports and camping!

I am not sure when camping became a huge summer activity, but I am guessing perhaps in the 50's and early 60's, after the massive development of reliable cars, trucks, and highways. We kids heard about this on the farm, and pestered Mom and Dad until they agreed to go on a camping trip to Radium in the late 50's. We even convinced Grandpa and Grandma to join us. I know this to be true because we have photos to prove it. I remember the men pitching the tent, the ladies digging around for all the food and cooking equipment. Sleeping on the ground in a tent that allowed noises and smells to jostle our imagination about bugs and predators. We swam in the Radium Hot Springs, and marveled at the warm, clean water. You should know, dear reader, that my genetics approve of being on water, looking at water, not being in water! So, this was a most remarkable event. And that was the absolute last time my parents went camping. Electricity and running water were only introduced to eastern Alberta in the mid-50's, thus we were so enjoying the benefits of modernization. As Dad said, "why would I choose to carry water, build a fire, use an outdoor toilet, etc. I've been doing that my whole lifetime."

Stan and I adopted that attitude also, but accepted a motorhome or 5th wheel alternate. We have had many fun adventures as we camped around Alberta, Montana, and Saskatchewan. One time we had a raging bonfire in Montana and decided to see if the rocks in the fire were hot enough to fry eggs. Yes, they were, and the skunks that joined us were thrilled! Getting stuck in the Indian Graves campground! Having a Hawaii party wearing toques and winter jackets! Each of you who has planned a gathering outdoors knows the risks, and relishes memories of successes and disasters.

Although Ruthann mentions, very wisely, the erosion of our most popular outdoor destinations because of over-use, there is still plenty of room to roam in the countryside of Alberta/ BC/ Saskatchewan. We always return with a new appreciation of our exceedingly good life in Canada. Enjoy your Outdoor Adventures.

Outdoor Thoughts - Ruthann Watson

Over the years, I have come to some conclusions about The Great Outdoors, the first being that there are entirely too many people in them. I know this sounds like those people who move to Vancouver Island and then complain about others who do the same.

Tourism contributes \$10 trillion annually to the world GDP. Increasing rates of affluence and accessibility of international travel means that there are almost no truly remote places left. 100K people visit Antarctica every year. Residents of Victoria Falls are subjected to the noise of helicopters every few minutes of every day.

Continued...

World tourism organizations warn about increased traffic, environmental and structural damage and harassment of wildlife. Many countries have banned single use plastics, restrict access to wilderness areas and levy huge fines for damages. But tourism accounts for 1/10th of worldwide employment and provides much needed foreign currency. Too many people wanting to see the world is a good problem to have if it leads to more respect for the earth and our fellow inhabitants, be they human or otherwise. It's a double-edged sword.

As I write this, we're celebrating the safe return of Artemis and some people are talking about going to the moon "for good", as if leaving Earth is as easy as moving to a bigger house. Or BC. Given the cost of the trip and accommodations up there, I assume that only the very affluent would have the option of relocating to a "nicer neighbourhood".

I wish you all safe long weekend travels, be they to wilderness areas or IKEA.

I Love the Outdoors (Mostly) - Maureen Dodd

I love Spring when the crocuses first raise their furry heads out of the dirt and then open their faces to the sun. I love seeing the robins build a nest under our eaves, then wait to see the babies peek out. Unfortunately for the robins, they aren't very accomplished at nest-making so it can take several tries before something sticks together. They are very patient birds.

I'm very grateful that enjoying the outdoors is a luxury for me. I don't work outdoors, have farm chores or have to lead folks in the wilderness for forty years, so far. The closest we came to that is when we walked the Camino de Santiago in Spain. But even then, we were only 'Lite Pilgrims.' We carried everything on our backs, but we had accommodation booked at the end of each day. No sleeping in barns or stables or rooms with thirty people for us. The whole experience was amazing. I had never spent that much time in the fresh air, trudging kilometer after kilometer. I thought we smelled fragrant and woody because of it, but apparently, I was mistaken.

I love how nature keeps reminding us how powerless we really are. All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small can put paid to our well-planned events in minutes. Storms, rock-slides, floods, fire, sheep who won't move off the road, chiggers, midges, and even one mosquito all show us who's really in charge. Also bears. I have a slightly unhealthy fear of bears.

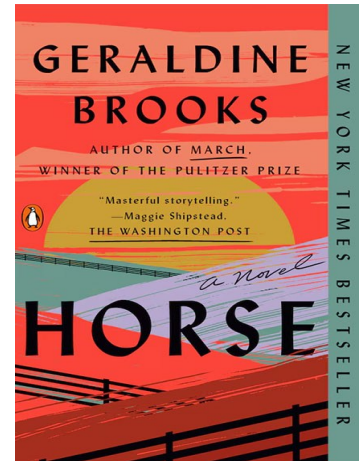
I hear from tourists all the time how lucky we are to live in such a beautiful place. Let's do our best to keep it that way and to appreciate every minute outdoors. As the sign on my desk says, "Go outside. Worst case scenario, a bear eats you."



Interested in quilting? Quilting For Others meets weekly at St. Thomas United Church, Thursdays, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.

St. Thomas Book Club - Rachel Murray

For more information contact Rachel at rachelmurray@shaw.ca. New members welcome! Meets every second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm on Zoom. Meets every second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm on Zoom. This last book for this year is:



May, 2026

Faith Formation - Sharon Ramraj-Thompson

You might be used to Gayle Wilderman writing this section, but this month's entry is by me, Sharon, co-chair of the Faith Formation Committee. Since I'm an English teacher, I can't resist sharing this: Did you know that the poet James Thomson (1700 - 1748), once said "Among the changing months, May stands confest The sweetest, and in fairest colors dressed!" Hopefully, May will bring us less snow than April did, though the poet, T. S. Eliot 1888-1965 did write that "April is the cruellest month".

The Sunday School has lots of exciting Spring-themed activities planned for May. We hope that all the students can attend the last full month of Sunday School and celebrate Ashley Dressler who is, sadly, leaving us at the end of this year.

With this said, once we decide on a new Sunday School teacher, we will share the exciting news. We also encourage you to send us any feedback you may have about the Sunday School program as we transition into a new era with a new teacher. Please send any questions or comments to us at faith-formation@stthomasunited.ca.

As for library news, don't forget to check out our library table in the foyer. We will also be showcasing books by two local authors in our own congregation: Sheila Humphries, and Marina Theron-Monnery. There are also many children and teen books of various genres, some of which are "popular" works in the library on the second floor. Do come up the stairs and have a look.

Finally, we would like to recognize the wonderful efforts of everyone who participated in the Holy Humor Sunday service. We all enjoyed the service!

Committee: members – Fiona Craig, Ashley Dressler, Elaine Gray, Myrna Malanik, Reverend Marion Martin, Sheila Humphrey, Sharon Ramraj-Thompson, Gayle Wilderman.



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS of
ST. THOMAS UNITED CHURCH
"STUC on a Musical Revue"
At St Thomas United Church,
100 Hawkwood Blvd NW,
Saturday May 9, 2026 at 2:30pm.

Adults & Teens \$25.00 (suggested price) Children 12 & Under \$5.00 (suggested price)
Includes post-show reception & refreshments (with beer, wine, coolers, soft drinks for purchase) Tickets on sale at St Thomas United Church or Eventbrite:
<https://stuc-on-2026.eventbrite.com/>
Phone 403-241-0366

Camp Kasota West - Elaine Taylor-Kerr

Camp Kasota West is a United Church camp on Sylvan Lake near Red Deer. They offer week long residential camping experiences in July and August for children who have completed grades 1 – 9. They also offer counsellor in training weeks for youth who have finished grades 10 or 11 and sailing camps for youth who have finished grades 9 – 11. The rates are very reasonable. Several St. Thomas children have attended over the years. Several of our former youth group members have been counsellors at camp. All have enjoyed the experience.

For further information see www.campkasotawest.com



Youth News

Junior Youth Group

The children continue to have a lot of fun together getting to know each other, doing some crafts, and playing active games.

The Junior Youth Group is an energetic group of children in grades four, five, and six. We plan to have monthly in-person events this school year. We will also be continuing the collaboration with Symons Valley for some joint events. If you know of a child who will be in this age range this school year who would be interested in joining in and who isn't already on the email distribution list, please email junior-youth@stthomasunited.ca to be added to the list.

The next event will be held **May 1, 2026**, at Symons Valley United Church (38 Kincora Rise NW). The June event will be held **June 5, 2026**, at St. Thomas United Church.

Youth Group (Grades 7 to 12)

The Youth Leaders of St. Thomas and Symons Valley United Churches are excited to invite you to Youth Group! Youth Group is for everyone who is in grades 7-12. Typically, we meet on Friday evenings or Sunday afternoon for our social event and at service on Sunday morning. The Youth Leaders will send out an email every Monday to let you know what activities will be taking place that week. Our social events typically last two hours and include activities such as charades, crafts, and movie nights. Sunday mornings are focused on faith discussion, learning more about various scriptures, or exploring social justice issues. Friends are always welcome to come to Friday activities and Sunday mornings. A Zoom link can be provided for Sunday mornings if you would like to join us virtually! If you are interested in joining us and aren't currently receiving our weekly emails, please reach out and send us an email at youth@stthomasunited.ca or call the church office to be added to our mail-out list!

In April, we played Dungeons and Dragons, attended Naked Faith with our friends from across the city, and attended Messy Church at St. Thomas! On Sundays, we talked about taking risks, planned our youth service, and attended the youth led service at Fish Creek United Church

What is Happening this Month?

Here are the events we currently have planned for May. Please remember that this schedule is subject to change on short notice. Keep an eye out on your weekly emails for the most up-to-date information! Our Sunday mornings will consist of:

Sunday Mornings

Sunday, May 3, 2026: We will be discussing freedom of press and free speech.

Sunday, May 10, 2026: We are planning our youth led service.

Sunday, May 17, 2026: We will be continuing to plan our youth service.

Sunday, May 24, 2026: We will finish our planning for our youth service.

Sunday, May 31, 2026: Join us in supporting the youth led service at Fish Creek United Church

Fridays

Friday, May 1, 2026: No youth group this week, as it is Good Friday.

Friday, May 8, 2026: We will be continuing our Dungeons and Dragons campaign.

Friday, May 15, 2026: We are attending Naked Faith at St. Thomas United Church.

Friday May 22, 2026: We are participating in Messy Church at St. Thomas United Church.

Friday May 29, 2026: We are rehearsing our youth led service, while enjoying Ice Cream!

St. Thomas and Symons Valley United Churches have a very active youth group for Junior High and Senior High School Students. The program includes social events, mission, and outreach activities, involvement in the life and work of the two congregations, and Sunday morning faith exploration and social justice discussions. The group meets Sunday morning at each church and holds a weekly joint social event typically either on Friday evening or Sunday afternoon. They also attend Fish Creek Shared Ministry youth events.

Camp Caravan - Elaine Taylor-Kerr

Camp Caravan is a week-long summer day camp designed for children from kindergarten to grade 7, bringing adventure, creativity, and community to various locations across Chinook Winds Region. Each day is packed with dynamic activities, hands-on learning, and unforgettable experiences that help children explore God's love and "Follow the Spirit" in their everyday lives—all while making new friends and having a blast! St. Thomas will be hosting Camp Caravan July 13 – 17, 2026. To register go to [Camp-Caravan.ca](https://camp-caravan.ca)

A SMALL GIFT A BIG SUMMER

Camp Caravan is hitting the road again! We're bringing faith, fun, and friendship to children and communities across Calgary and Southern Alberta.

This year, we need your help.

Every summer, families rely on our No-Barrier Bursary Fund so their kids can attend camp. Camp costs \$150 per child, but we believe finances should never keep a child from belonging, laughter, and faith-filled community.

No child is ever turned away.

Right now, however, our **bursary fund is nearly empty**, and the need is greater than ever. Your gift helps us keep saying YES. \$150 sends one child to camp \$75 shares the cost Any amount opens the door for another camper

When you give, you're not just funding a week of camp you're creating friendships, confidence, faith, and lifelong memories. Help keep the Camp Caravan rolling. Scan the QR code for a donation or visit:

<https://camp-caravan.ca/>

(Tax receipts provided for gifts over \$25.)



Youth Leader Needed

We are currently looking for an enthusiastic and energetic person to join the youth leader team. The person in this role will be key to the continuation and growth of the shared youth program at St. Thomas and Symons Valley United Churches. Responsibilities will include working with fellow youth leaders to plan and run social activities and Sunday morning youth classes as well as communicate with other staff members and committee members to ensure the success of this program. For further information or to apply, please email youth-advisory@stthomasunited.ca.

SYMONS VALLEY PLAYERS PRESENTS:


Alibis

WRITTEN BY PETER KENNEDY
PERFORMED AT SYMONS VALLEY UNITED CHURCH
38 KINCORA RISE NW, CALGARY AB

Join us for a thrilling night of Whodunit, Howdunit!
Both the action and dialogue are fast paced and it leaves only one question: What is your Alibi?

JUNE 5TH @ 7:00PM
JUNE 6TH @ 2:00PM & 7:00PM
JUNE 7TH @ 2:00PM

PURCHASE TICKETS:
www.symonsvalleyplayers.com



Performed with exclusive permission from Heuer Publishing

Imagine CHILDREN'S RETREAT 2026

A safe, joy-filled retreat where children play, wonder, and grow in faith!

Faith + Fun = Awesome!
Come explore, play, and grow together!

for children, ages 8-11 and their leaders!

April 17-19, 2026
@ Kasota East Camp (Sylvan Lake, Alberta)

Info/Register:

\$300 includes transportation, meals, accommodation and supplies*
*Need financial support? We've got you—bursaries are available, and you choose what works best for your family during registration.



firstthirdministry.ca

St. Thomas Garage Sale

May Long Weekend

Saturday, May 16, 2026

Get ready, get set, GO!




Music News - Elaine Taylor-Kerr

All of the musical groups are looking forward to another year of making music together. New members, regardless of skill level, are always welcome in all groups.

Upcoming Special Music Presentations and Events:

May 9, 2026: in the afternoon – Celebrating 50 Years of STUC! Save the date for another STUC musical show! As STUC will celebrate 50 years in 2026, this show will include music from various past shows and sermon series.

July 5, 2026: Annual Stampede service put on by the Strummers.

Group	Practice Time	Ages	Contact
Children's Choir	Thursdays 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	ECS – Grade 6	Kate Power childrens-choir@stthomasunited.ca
Youth Choir	Wednesdays 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm	Grade 6 – University	Barb Robertson barbrob@telus.net
Adult Choir	Thursdays 7:15 pm – 9:30 pm		Pam Bazinet pmbazinet@shaw.ca
Orchestra	Mondays 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm		Dick Worton dworton@telusplanet.net
Strummers	Thursdays 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm		Ron French rondifrench@telus.net
Strummers Outreach	Tuesdays 1:00 pm - 3:00pm		George Zirotf gzirotf@shaw.ca

Adult Choir

The Easter time has come and gone. I hope you enjoyed all the glorious music. We certainly enjoyed singing it!

Our latest STUC Performance is shaping up. There is one show only at 2:30 pm on **Saturday, May 9, 2026**. The theme this year is a re-visit to shows of the past. I can tell you that the adult choir is reviving "Mama Mia". We are having a challenging but fun time trying to relearn this wonderful music. As Leonard Bernstein said, "To achieve great things, two things are needed; a plan (which we have) and not quite enough time (which is true!)". Please come and join us for what is going to be a great and memorable STUC show! As a bonus enticement to join us, the adult choir is providing the after show snacks and let me tell you, this choir can cook!

Research continues to support the message that singing is very good for both your physical and emotional health. It "reduces stress, anxiety, and depression, while boosting mood through the release of endorphins, dopamine, and oxytocin". It is a social activity, it involves breathing, reading, and making beautiful harmony with friends. Consider giving it a try!

Continued...

I agree strongly with Hans Christian Anderson's sentiment that, "Where words fail, music speaks". As always, new members are welcome. If you are interested in singing, come on out on a Thursday evening and give us a try. You do not need to be able to read music. You just have to love to sing!

Pam Bazinet: pmbazinet@shaw.ca

Youth Choir

The youth choir has had another great year. They are a wonderful group of young people to work with. On April 19, 2026, we presented and interpretation of "Noah and the Ark". We received a standing ovation from the congregation! This was the scripture for the day.

We are practicing for our participation in STUC on a Musical Revue which will happen on **May 9, 2026**. We look forward to seeing you there!

As our season is coming to a close for this school year, we would like to thank the youth for their enthusiasm, energy and great singing. We would also like to thank the parents for getting their kids to practices and Sunday morning services. We hope you have a great summer and that we will see you back in the fall.

For further information please contact: Barb barbrob@telus.net

Children's Choir

The children's choir season is coming to a close. We're preparing for the STUC show on **May 9, 2026**, followed by our Mother's Day wrap up the next day. Our final rehearsal will take place on **Thursday, May 7, 2026**. Huge thanks to all of our wonderful choristers and to their families for their support.

Kate Power: childrens-choir@stthomasunited.ca

Orchestra

The Orchestra is looking forward to playing for worship on **May 3, 2026**, and participating in the STUC show on **May 9, 2026**. After **May 9, 2026**, we will take a break until the fall.

The Orchestra is a friendly group of people who enjoy sharing their music. The orchestra rehearses on Monday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30. New members are always welcome.

If you are interested in joining us please contact

Dick Worton: dworton@telusplanet.net

Strummers

The Strummers practice on Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm in the Library. They are practicing for both Church services and outreach concerts. A subset of the group also practice on Tuesdays at 1:00 pm to learn extra music for their outreach program. They plan to sing for worship services and at various seniors' residences.

They are also practicing a medley to perform in STUC on a Musical Revue and are working on music for the annual Stampede Service on **July 5, 2026**.

New members are always welcome. If anyone is interested in joining, please contact David Gray davidmg1957@gmail.com

Other Opportunities for Soloists and Instrumentalists

If you would like to share your talents as a singer or instrumentalist during the offering time, as a prelude or postlude, or when one of our regular groups is not available to provide an anthem, there are lots of opportunities to do so. This invitation is open to people of all skill levels. It would be particularly fun to have some children play the piano or another instrument, for example. If you are interested, send an email to music-team@stthomasunited.ca or talk to Elaine Taylor-Kerr.

Naramata - Elaine Taylor-Kerr



Naramata Centre Summer Programs for all ages
Naramata Centre is conference and retreat centre of the United Church of Canada. Open to people of all ages, Naramata Centre is an inclusive, welcoming place to connect and deepen in mind, body and spirit. Situated on 23 acres of land on the east shore of Lake Okanagan, the

Centre provides a peaceful oasis for children, teens, adults, families, and elders to play, relax, grow and be authentically themselves, supported in community.

Naramata Centre draws and inspires people from many paths and walks of life, as a place for learning, sharing, contemplation, personal growth, and spiritual renewal. The Centre has long provided a space for spiritual retreat and reflection, intentional engagement and professional development. The Centre offers a wide variety of programs in music, the arts, health and well-being, leadership, social justice, and spiritual nurture.

The essence of Naramata Centre is difficult to capture in words. It is a place where being present and connecting to oneself, others, nature, and the Sacred become easier. Come stay at the Centre to experience what it has to offer. Enjoy a program or retreat. Walk the labyrinth and visit the Chapel. Do yoga or play on the beach. Jump into the lake. Snooze or read in the shade under the canopy of trees. Sink into community and laugh and sing. Join others in Sacred Pause or meditate. Explore Naramata village and Naramata Bench wineries. So much to experience...come and discover!

AM Fitness - Barbara Robertson

Are you looking after yourself? Join A.M. FUN and FITNESS to keep those muscles strong, the heart pumping, and maintain balance as you age. Yes, I know we are all aging, but exercising is a basic part of "healthy aging that can significantly slow the physiological aging process".

Join us: Mondays 9:00 online. Wednesdays 9:30 Mountainview Hall, Fridays 9:00 online.

Sessions subject to change. No class **Monday May 11, 2026.**

*St. Thomas United Church
A.M. Fun and Fitness Group*

