



# The Beacon

## St. Thomas Episcopal Church

*Give thanks and praise to our Lord and share His love.*

July 2020

Volume 21 Issue 7

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### *From the Rector's desk ~*

As many of you know, I love the poetry of the late Mary Oliver, and one of my very favorite of her poems is one that I have shared with you before, "The Summer Day." I was thinking of it yesterday, one of the first days of summer—a gorgeous, breezy, warm-but-not-hot day of blue skies and sunshine and just a smattering of clouds, and lush green trees and grass and riotously-blooming flowers. But I thought of the poem not just because it is about a summer's day, but also because of its message, which resonates acutely with me at this particular time given my recent cancer diagnosis. So I offer it to you again.

#### The Summer Day by Mary Oliver

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean--

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down --

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

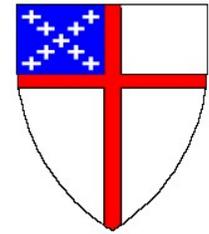
Tell me, what is it you plan to do

With your one wild and precious life?

Peace and many blessings,

*Ann* +





## *Endowment News*



### **Time to Look Ahead**

For most of us, thanks to the coronavirus pandemic our financial pictures aren't what we'd like them to be. But we can smile and admit that they're lots better than they were at the depths of the crisis. Even so, many of us still aren't as generous right now as we'd like to be.

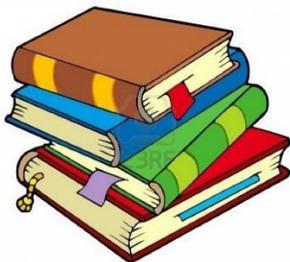
But, as our country's economy and our 401(k)s continue their upward trend, we'll once again express our Christian values by giving to St. Thomas. Yes, that time will come – maybe not as soon as we'd like but surely sooner than we expect.

With all this in mind I'd like to invite you to join Sandra and me in thinking about how we might turn once again to supporting The St. Thomas Endowment Fund when we don't cringe at the thought of seeing that month-end financial statement.

Next month I'll share with you an idea about an easy way to donate to our Fund. In the meantime, let's not only celebrate, but thank God that, once again people are starting to work, pay bills and feel more secure about their future.

Duncan Murray, Chair

## *St. Thomas Book Group*



The St. Thomas Book Group tried a Zoom meeting for their monthly meeting in June. This may be the meeting style until members can safely maintain social distancing for meetings in the parish hall. The chosen book for July is The Women in Black by Madeleine St. John. Donna Hall is the July 23 meeting hostess with Sue Colvin leading the discussion.

- Jackee Martinez has been selected as a Deacon Ordinand. Best wishes to her as she continues her dedicated faith ministry.
- The Walkabout events for the candidates for diocesan bishop will take place August 9 – 14, 2020. In-person attendance is limited to voting delegates and clergy due to the COVID social distancing requirements. However, all interested congregants are encouraged to submit questions for the Walkabout events using this link: <https://www.oregonbishopssearch.org/20/05/30/submit-your-questions-for-the-candidates/>.

The events will be live streamed so that all may participate. In addition, simultaneous Spanish translation will be offered for two sessions. The current Walkabout schedule can be found on the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon website: [www.diocese-oregon.org](http://www.diocese-oregon.org).



During this time of pandemic and severe economic recession, many people in our community are hurting. Our Outreach Committee would like to do more to assist hungry individuals and families with grocery cards, but they are unable to do so because they are not receiving the contributions they normally receive when we are gathered together at church. If you have a birthday or anniversary or some other special occasion upon which you would normally contribute to Outreach, please continue to do so. Outreach needs your help so that they can help others.

## *Sunday School*



To stay connected to our little band of young parishioners, the Sunday School teachers are preparing weekly activity packets to mail out to Christopher and Emily Hente, Mason and Lucy Duer, Tilda Rhode and Sofia Garcia. This effort has been inspired by Judy Wilson and Sue Colvin with Holly Spruance and Cindy Jensen providing additional support. Rev. Ann has included an encouraging letter to parents to assure them that the packets are not intended to add to the challenges of home life during the COVID health crisis, but rather to provide fun, self-guided learning activities for the children to stay connected to Jesus and their faith community.

Diana Garcia shared this message with Rev. Ann. "Sofia got her notebook with her first lesson from Judy. I was so grateful for the church's effort to reach out to my Sofia. More accurately, I was touched for the effort to do so. I sat with her and we started her lesson. She was in AWE too about how she had received the gift from church. The lesson of learning and knowing that God is always around us in many ways and educating Sofia how much God loves her and cares for her."

## *GrassRoots Garden Happenings*



In light of the Governor's orders to move forward in regards to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have successfully fulfilled our Phase I at GrassRoots. In a very slow and deliberate way we have requested a small number of select past Garden participants to

come fulfill specific work goals and do needed tasks. Working to maintain social distancing, strict and concerted safety protocols, we continue to work with a few interns that have worked with us this spring and have added one new academic intern. Our Phase I was successful in allowing us to integrate new people at the Garden who comply with our protocols, set schedules, and follow directives while working with new Garden functioning.

In Phase II, though the Governor has opened gardens, FOOD for Lane County chose to use their nonprofit agency prerogative to keep GrassRoots Garden closed to the public. Though we are a Garden, we are also attached to the regional food bank, and FOOD for Lane County feels strongly that they cannot risk a COVID outbreak, which would be disastrous to the community.

So, with the Garden still closed in our Phase II, we will continue to slowly select other individuals to integrate a bit at a time. In order to ensure social distancing, our objective is to keep one person working in each section at any time, which requires us to overlay one person's work with another's, and continuously track where each person is in the Garden. Though a rather laborious undertaking, we feel confident that we're keeping people safe and well, and day by day are advancing the Garden so we can grow the produce so needed in the community.

We're in the midst of the early spring harvest as we finish planting the main season crops. Though there are still areas that look unusually unkempt, more and more the Garden is looking like our usual GrassRoots. The past several months have been very difficult and tiring for all of us at the Garden. It feels like everything is upside-down from the way we usually function. We no longer have the spontaneity and the easy flow of community in and out of the Garden, making up what we're doing and making the most of teachable moments on the fly.

Instead, everything is very orchestrated and organized with deliberate intent and schedule, giving great care to how we prepare the beds and put in the crops, using mulches to ensure less need for future weeding. Though all of this is laborious,

we are succeeding in putting together the Garden in a very solid and sustainable way with very few, though ultimately feeding many. We still incorporate the learn-by-doing, each-one-teach-one methods. Master Gardeners teaching interns and interns teaching other interns and selected Garden Participants. It feels different and sometimes hard, but not bad.

We look ahead to when we all move forward, operating like the GrassRoots that we know and love. Many have contacted us, wondering what's happening at the Garden, and missing coming and being a part. Many have expressed a desire to help and wish there was something they could do. At this time just their caring and support means a lot to us, even though they're not able to be physically present or do the physical work. We appreciate the respectful space given, which allows us to focus to get the work done.

For those who would like to see what is happening and what the Garden looks like, look for new posts on Facebook (@Grassrootsgarden) and Instagram (fflgrassrootsgarden), where we will post photos and updates as we're able.

Summer Garden hours: closed to the public until further notice. For more information, contact Merry Bradley: 541-484-7144, [merrybradley@yahoo.com](mailto:merrybradley@yahoo.com).

GrassRoots is alive and well, just closed. We miss our Garden family, the GrassRoots community and still appreciate their support. We look forward to connecting further on as we can, just not now.

### July Birthdays

- 3 Lucy Barnett
- 4 Florence Litzenberger
- 9 Jane Spencer
- 12 Sally Ward
- 22 Tom Whitehead
- 24 Merle Spencer



### July Anniversaries

- 11 Gary and Cindy Jensen
- 18 Burt and Sally Schwarz

## Pledge Update



We are happy to share that the pledge income is on track so far this year. We are grateful to everyone who has found ways to continue their giving, even when the plate is not being passed. As we approach the summer months, it is critical for this to continue. In order to facilitate that, we have several ways to help you.

If you would like some addressed envelopes with the church address on them, we are happy to provide them to you. Please let Donna know, and we will get them to you. You are welcome to use your own envelopes as well.

If you would like to use Bill Pay where your bank sends a check directly to the church, we can help set that up for you. It can be set up to pay automatically for the rest of the year if you prefer. There are no fees to either side for these transactions. Call the church and someone will contact you to assist.

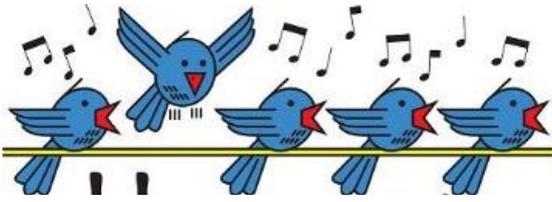
The diocesan website has a place that will take credit and debit cards through August 31, and the amount will be given to our church. There is a processing fee of 2.2% that the diocese is currently picking up.

Again, we are grateful to the community of St. Thomas. You have allowed us to focus on how to worship now and in the future instead of being worried about paying the bills. We are blessed.

The Finance Committee



## Grace Notes



During these months of dealing with the COVID pandemic, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has offered weekly online messages to encourage *habits of grace*. In listening to these messages I am reminded that to develop *habits of grace*, we must first learn to recognize *grace* – the blessings from God that touch our lives in countless ways everyday even in the most difficult times. *Grace* comes in moments that touch our soul, events that inspire, people whose acts of love touch our hearts and vistas that take our breath away. Once recognized and savored, those moments of grace become the enduring threads woven into the fabric of who we are.

During this seemingly endless period of social distancing I had occasion to visit St. Thomas to drop something off at the office. What a delight to see ever-faithful Larry Wilson mowing the lawn, no simple task considering the expanse of lawn around the church. I was reminded of the blessing of Larry and all those who so diligently maintain the grounds around our church making it quite a showplace for all who drive down Coburg Road, and always a lovely setting as we enter the church for worship. It was a moment of grace to take note.



On that lovely spring day, the dogwood tree was in full splendor with its abundant white blooms. I especially love this tree because it reminds me of Len and Mary Kearney whose children donated the tree to the church in memory of their parents. They were founding members of St. Thomas and their devotion to the parish is a faithfulness I fondly recall. Len was known for his sourdough pancakes that he cooked up all the years we held a spring service and breakfast out at Armitage Park. He was an avid ham radio operator and if you gave him five minutes, he would regale you with stories of the most interesting life he lived. Mary loved to serve her scheduled time with the babies in the nursery before the church hired a nursery attendant. St. Thomas babies, my own included, were comforted by her sweet smile as she tended them. Parishioners whose simple acts of love warm my heart to this day – *grace* to take note.

As people of faith we are mindful of the *grace notes* in our lives. For grace to become a habit, grace fully realized, these blessings are shared. In this column you are invited to share those moments of grace. Send *grace notes* to the editor's email, signed or unsigned, and in so doing you can inspire others with your moments of grace.



## Reflections



The events of the past month have no doubt prompted us all to pause and reflect. Painful as the media images are, perhaps more difficult is the realization that we must not turn inward. St. Thomas parishioner Bev Jackson shared this letter from her daughter, Kara Pattinson, MD, who is a child psychiatrist, Medical Director for Community Counseling Services in Eastern Oregon, and the mother of a black son. Kara gave permission to share her letter here.



Silence is a statement, but sometimes there is so much to say it is difficult to find the words.

The definition of a pandemic is the outbreak of a disease over a whole country or the world. By this definition, there are two global pandemics at the forefront of our consciousness currently. One came on rather suddenly, felt foreign, and we were able to see it for what it was and act to attempt to protect ourselves and others from it. We developed policy, socially distanced, wore masks, sent many home to work, and made huge sacrifices in an attempt to successfully contain it.

The other pandemic is insidious, has existed far longer than any of us have been alive, is part of our lives every day, and has killed far more people. We have not discussed it in the same way, developed policy around it, nor been successful at containing it.

The first step in curing this disease is admitting its existence in the world and in each of us. I am racist, not because I choose to be, but because I am alive today living in this society with the near

constant bombardment of negative messaging about people of color. Sometimes we aren't even aware of the negative messages we have ingested and allowed to become part of how we see the world.

Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people, but the silence over that by the good people."

I am fearful that in a few months George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Christian Cooper will fade from our collective consciousness in the same way others who have been injured or murdered have faded after an initial period of outrage. In order to keep their sacrifices meaningful, we must examine ourselves and our immediate surroundings first, and encourage others to do the same. We must look at ourselves, our homes, our churches, and our immediate community.

Some reading this may see it as a statement against law enforcement. This is not my intent. If the reader identifies a message meant to demean those who have sworn to protect us, then I invite them to consider this association further. It was not an association in my heart as I wrote this. I don't see the perpetration of this violence as isolated to law enforcement, but I believe we all need to be willing to reform.

We are human. I want to learn. I am listening. I am seeking enlightenment and growth. I would ask that we attempt to listen with an open mind and heart. But the conversations must happen for change to occur.

Silence is a statement.

## *Anti-Racism Resources*

Given the recent events surrounding the Black Lives Matter movement and the intensifying calls for racial justice, a number of you have been asking about anti-racism resources. Below you will find a variety of resources; text in green should link directly to the resource.

I do recommend taking the Harvard Implicit Bias Test. I took it a number of years ago and it is eye-opening. Ann+

## READ:

*White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* by Peggy McIntosh (article)

*I'm Still Here* by Austin Channing Brown

*White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo

*Waking Up White: Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving

## WATCH:

*White Fragility* - a video summary of Robin DiAngelo talking about her book

*Just Mercy* - a film released in 2019, based on the book of the same title by Bryan Stevenson. *Just Mercy* is available for free during the month of June on YouTube, Amazon Prime and other streaming services. *Just Mercy* addresses issues related to the death penalty and legal representation for American blacks, specifically Walter McMillan.

## LISTEN:

Smartest Person in the Room's episode on *Well Meaning White People*

## CONSIDER:

- Placing a Black Lives Matter sign in your yard to show your support & solidarity with people of color in our community. There are other signs that signal this, as well (Hate Has No Home Here, etc.).
- Donating to bail funds.
- Grandparents, aunts/uncles/ parents: next time you're buying a book for a gift, make sure the book features characters of color and difference; purchase a book by an author of color; even consider gifting a book that deals, explicitly, with race. Here are some suggestions:
  - Any book illustrated by Kadir Nelson (*Thunder Rose* by Jerdine Nolan, *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*, *Ellington Was Not a Street* by Ntozake Shange, *Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad* by Ellen Levin for a start.)
  - The *Track* series by Jason Reynolds; and we're in the middle of *Clean Getaway* by Nic Stone, who also wrote *Dear Martin*.

- *Brightly* is a treasure trove of resources for a variety of themed reading.

- Take the *Harvard Implicit Bias Test*

*This list was compiled by St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Simsbury, CT, with the help of a much lengthier resource list compiled by students at Austin Presbyterian Seminary.*

## Schedule for July

Sunday Morning Worship: Access anytime at <https://www.facebook.com/st.thomas.eugene/>.

Sunday 11:30 am – Zoom Coffee Hour  
[Facebook.com/st.thomas.eugene/](https://www.facebook.com/st.thomas.eugene/)

## Parish Directory

Rev. Ann has developed a new parish directory that can be accessed online. Two drafts for this directory have been sent out via email. Be sure to review your contact information and alert her if any updates or corrections need to be made to your information. If you have not already done so, please provide a photo to include with the directory. Photographs can be sent via email to [stthomaschurcheugene@gmail.com](mailto:stthomaschurcheugene@gmail.com). Be assured that this online directory is password protected.

Committee reports and articles for the Beacon are welcome. Please submit to Cindy Jensen at [LAJotKDK@aol.com](mailto:LAJotKDK@aol.com) by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.