



# *The Beacon*

## *St. Thomas Episcopal Church*

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

May 2020

Volume 21 Issue 5

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### **Vestry:**

- Sue Colvin,  
Sr. Warden
- Janet Calvert
- Dave Fredmonsky
- Bill Janes
- Ed Johnson
- Erika Hente
- Anne VanDerveer
- Sally Ward
- Judy Wilson
- Tom Whitehead,  
Treasurer
- Beverly Jackson,  
Clerk

**Rector** – Rev. Ann Gaillard

**Secretary** – Donna Hall

1465 Coburg Road

Eugene, Oregon 97401

**Phone:** 541-343-5241

**Email:**

[stthomaschurcheugene@gmail.com](mailto:stthomaschurcheugene@gmail.com)

**Beacon Editor** –

Cindy Jensen

**Webmaster** –

Lindy Moore

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

One of my favorite places in the world is Holy Cross Monastery in upstate New York. It is an Anglican Benedictine monastery that offers hospitality to anyone, particularly those who seek spiritual sustenance and rest. I have spent many retreats there, including the first three weeks of a sabbatical. The large, red brick building sits on the shore of the Hudson River, surrounded by woods and fields. Almost as soon as you pull into the driveway, you feel deep peace descending upon you, and upon entering the building you sense that even the walls themselves are infused with more than 100 years of monks' prayers, prayers that surround you and sustain you. The monastery is what the mystics call a "thin" place, a place where the boundary between the earthly and spiritual realms is nearly permeable, a place where you can reach out and touch the hem of heaven, a place where you can experience God more readily.

Another "thin" place I have loved is also in New York, in the Adirondack mountains where Lee and I used to live. My spiritual director, June, lived with her family on a lake, again surrounded by woods and fields. As with the monastery, every time I arrived at her home I had a sense of time slowing down, that the very buildings and trees and water were infused with prayer—that if I only knew how, I could walk through the thin membrane that separated earth from heaven.

Closer to me now is a "thin" place not far from Eugene. It, too, is infused with prayer. It, too, is surrounded by woods and meadows. Instead of the Hudson River or a lake, a creek runs through the property. But like the monastery and June's home, it is a place where "peace comes dropping slow," a place where the veil between mortals and the divine is nearly transparent.

Woods, fields, and water. Clearly, there is a natural theme connecting my "thin" places! But I have no doubt that "thin" places can be found elsewhere, including the desert. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century Desert Fathers and Mothers certainly believed so; why else would they establish most of their spiritual refuges in the Scetes desert of Egypt? In prayer and solitude, they could more readily experience God in the desert than in towns or cities.

Prayer and solitude. During this time of the coronavirus, I know that those of you who are homeschooling children in the midst of working from home may

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quite understandably feel that you don't have enough solitude, while others of you are going stir-crazy from having too much. And although many of you are busy doing projects in order to fill your days, others are binge-watching Netflix or reading mystery novels. No matter what category you're in, perhaps taking a few minutes each day in prayer and solitude might be able, just for a moment, to create for you a "thin" place in which you may more readily experience God.

Peace and many blessings,

*Ann* +

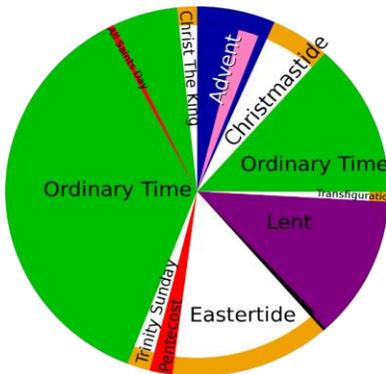
### A Prayer for Transition

Ever-present God,  
You call us on a journey to a place we do not know.  
We are not where we started.  
We have not reached our destination.  
We are not sure where we are or who we are.  
This is not a comfortable place.  
Be among us, we pray.  
Calm our fears, save us from discouragement,  
And help us to stay on course.  
Open our hearts to your guidance so that our journey to this  
Unknown place continues as a journey of trust.

--Kristi Philip

## The Easter Season

According to the Anglican Calendar, we are still in the season of Easter, that is *Eastertide*.



Here are some samples of decorations acknowledging the celebration of Easter in our homes. Also, consider places set aside for quiet reflection and prayer during this time of separation from our faith community.



## Endowment News

### Time to Look Back...And Ahead

I'm not looking forward to getting our April 401k statements. I'll bet you aren't, either. Nor do I expect to break out the champagne when I get the first quarter Endowment Fund report.

But I do think it's time to pay some attention to Roman god Janus. Remember him? He's the guy who looked backward and forward at the same time.

Let's start with backward. Looking in this direction I see a generous congregation that punches far above its weight. That's why its Endowment Fund has grown dramatically over the past couple of years.

Looking forward we know that the current "plague" will end. The Angel of Death will pass over us and be gone. Eventually – not as soon as we want but sooner than we expect, America will return to normal.

Stores will open, millions will return to work and the world of finance will start spinning like it was a couple of months ago. And as it does, our 401ks will resume their upward climbs and our Christian generosity will take full flight.

Until then, let's all thank God for our wonderful past and remember two of the most common words in the Bible: **Fear not!**

Duncan Murray, Chairman

## Church Maintenance

During this hiatus from onsite church activities and worship, the maintenance of our beautiful grounds and building continues. Tom Whitehead has provided pictures of the extensive floor cleaning and waxing project, as well as photos of the glorious spring blooms on our well-maintained grounds.



Remember, there is a cost to this essential upkeep of our house of worship, so faithful attention to pledge commitments is appreciated.



## Parish News

Ryan Baker-Fones was originally scheduled to be ordained to the Transitional Diaconate on May 9, but that has been postponed due to COVID-19. He is still on track to be ordained to the priesthood on December 12, though.

Called to *Serve*

Sue Colvin, a member of the Bishop Search process Transition Committee. With the current state of COVID-19 closures, the walk-about and the election are being postponed from June to August.

## The GrassRoots Garden

**Annual Plant Sale at GrassRoots**, relocated and configured to be COVID-19 safe, was a very intentional, deliberate and successful process.



- All plants were sold, and the wide array of veggie, blueberry and strawberry starts created access for gardeners throughout the community to grow their own food during these difficult and troubling times.
- **Look for another plant sale** the first weeks of May held at the Youth Farm. Again, all orders, payment, and scheduling of pickups will be done online. See FOOD for Lane County Gardens Program website, <http://www.foodforlanecounty.org/gardens> for offerings by the end of April/first part of May.

**GrassRoots during Covid 19 closure:** Though the Garden is currently closed to the public and regular Garden participants, we are functioning under the terms of the governor's Stay at Home mandate as an essential business, in that we're growing and providing access to food for the community.

- A small, select number of Garden staff, including Master Gardeners and interns, are continuing with our learn-by-doing, each-one-teach-one process.
- Through our emergency response to the global pandemic, we are continuing to fulfill our mission, just in an extremely modified and altered way: growing food for ourselves and others, teaching earth-friendly gardening, and creating and supporting a unique and diverse community.
- Slowly and deliberately we are following the governor's social distancing and safety protocols as we teach gardening, create garden educators, and prepare beds and plant crops for this growing season.

**A Produce on Request Project** for regular Garden participants, which we've implemented during the pandemic, is keeping our GrassRoots community connected and nourished.

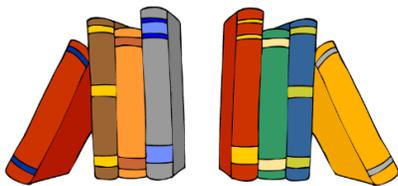
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- Those that receive are older retirees, people that have been laid off, and/or have large families or households they provide for.
- GrassRoots is their home garden they've created, learned from and have grown in. They now receive food they've helped produce and provide for themselves and others.
- Though not able to come to the Garden, they still take part in the intent and connection. They feel a part of and not left out.
- Beyond creating food for themselves, they've created enough to provide for the greater community during a heightened time of need.
- Once a week, Garden staff fulfill requests for specific, available Garden crops.
- Fresh produce is safely and carefully packaged, then delivered using GPS and Google Maps to the doorsteps of individuals and families of GrassRoots.
- Utilizing social distancing, people of the Garden receive fresh produce and stay connected to the food they helped grow and the community they are a part of.
- Many of these participants learned and taught and grew the direct seeding crops reported on in the February newsletter article. Now they're reaping the rewards of their effort, energy, and positive intent.

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

## ***St. Thomas Book Group***



The May selection for the St. Thomas Book Group is Education by Tara Westover. Though these loyal readers have not been able to meet during this period of social distancing, they will have much to discuss regarding the March, April and May book selections when they can finally gather again.

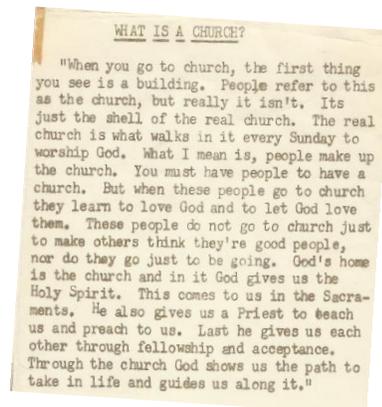
## ***In Memorium***



It is with heartfelt sadness that we received the news of the passing of long-time parishioner Robin Barrett, who succumbed to the coronavirus at the Lebanon Veterans Home on April 14 at the age of 95. Robin was a dear soul who delighted all who knew him with his warmth, gentle spirit and faithful devotion to the Lord. Many years ago, when I first met Robin and he learned of our family's Marine Corps service, he shared with us his own Marine Corps experience serving in the battle of Iwo Jima. It was his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and he prayed then that if he survived that experience, he would devote his life to the Lord. Robin did indeed survive. He saw the flag raised on Iwo Jima and that iconic moment captured in photograph and stone memorial, was indelible in his mind. He was forever a loyal Marine, a great patriot, a faithful servant of the Lord and a dear friend. Robin lived his life devoted to the Lord and for him we sing, *well done, good and faithful servant.*

## ***The Church in Community***

This extended period of social distancing, viewing online worship and learning of gracious acts of love and care has allowed us to recognize the power of love in action – the church in community as Christ had intended. We are separate from our church building, and sadly from each other, but we are united in faith and ministry as we find significant ways to share His grace and be the church in community. In recognizing this I remembered this writing assignment for my confirmation class fifty-nine years ago. It was published in the Church of the Ascension, Burlingame, CA spring newsletter. Today I witness what my twelve-year-old self had to say.



## More Virtual Hugs from Parishioners



I worked in my plot at the c  
then was craving a slurpee. At and in 7-11, one of  
the counter workers talked about the weather. I said  
to him "Don't forget about Easter!" I did not realize  
it but there were about 10 people around and spread  
out. I was too loud because they said at different  
times "oh, yeah." I said "Yes, let's not forget about  
Jesus. He really loves us." People were smiling  
when I left. Diana :)

I actually went to Eastern Oregon to help my mom.  
Her fence was falling and yes, we all practiced  
social distancing. Mom was happy to see us. We  
had a wonderful time just being at home with my  
mom and I could see mom was happy to have us.  
She is mostly home as she is considered a senior.

Yes, all this situation takes a lot of energy from us.  
I have had to spend time with Sofia on her  
homework and getting us all going with the online  
has been a bit crazy, seeing some program work and  
not work.

Family from church is great. I hope to see all of you  
soon, too. I do miss you and am so proud to be part  
of this loving parish and grateful many have been  
part of this church to keep it strong.

If you need help cleaning around the church  
outside, let me know and we can help with that.

Ann, take care. You have done a great job, so  
focused and yet so kind in how you carry the words  
from our Book of Common Prayer. I feel your heart  
in how you do it. Thank you!

Diana and Sofia

The only interesting thing I have done of late is to  
cut Larry's hair for the first time in 53+ years of  
marriage. Fortunately, he still has all the tools he  
used for years cutting our son's and grandson's hair.  
The haircut is acceptable?? Well, at least he did  
NOT follow it by shaving what was left!

JudyWilson

I miss going to church, too. I miss everyone there,  
but I really enjoyed your service last week even  
though, it just wasn't the same.

The sound on my computer doesn't work so well, so  
I heard about 1/2 of what was said, but I really miss  
going to St Thomas and all the people that are  
there. I hope this Pandemic won't last too long!  
Hope you are well.

See you people, whenever! – Mary Lusk

From Karl and Erika Hente:

Hello to our St. Thomas friends. We miss all of you  
and are hopeful to reconnect soon. We're all doing  
well -- Christopher and Emily have been busy with  
their at-home schoolwork and virtual martial arts  
and Erika and I are busy with work as always. The  
house can get pretty crowded! But we're all healthy  
and happy and grateful for each other. Take good  
care and we'll see you soon.

Just want to let the congregation know that May 4 is  
Lottie's 16th b day. I would welcome happy  
birthday cards to her as in this situation she will  
obviously miss a lot of the "normal" milestones:  
driver's license and sweet 16 celebration! 265 W  
20th Ave; Eugene OR 97405

My grandfather, age 86, went into the hospital from  
a farming related accident in New Mexico - to a  
hospital where patients were dying from  
Coronavirus - so we are grateful he is now home  
and recovering. Church is incredibly important to  
him - he's been the Sunday school teacher for 5-  
year-olds for over 40 years, so we call each Sunday  
and sing one verse of a hymn of his choice. It's a  
nice new routine and I wish it would not have taken  
this situation for us to put this "tradition" in place to  
stay closer across the many physical miles that  
separate us. Dallis Rohde

And from Pam Farr – pictures of her social  
distancing activities – online teaching and planter  
box construction.



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Hi, we at least have each other to talk to. Since we live in a senior living building, we are confined to our apartment except for medical trips. Our meals are brought to our door.

We do a lot of reading and some TV. The staff provides games and puzzles daily. We have a nice green grass and trees view, but it never changes, except for the cars on Coburg Road a couple hundred yards away. Sometimes it's fun to plan a weekend trip, as shall we go to the living room or the bedroom, or maybe even a side trip to one of the closets. (You gotta keep your sense of humor.)

I practice guitar daily to keep ready for when this is over and my musical friends come to join me for our monthly performance for the residents here.

And I keep writing articles for the Oregon Knife Collectors Knewslettter as I have for 20 years. One appeared in the March issue that was written just before our computer crashed.

I found I can function without a computer on my smart phone. So since I was asked to write an article for May as the big show was cancelled which always takes that space, I went back to the old method "writ by hand." My wife says my writing is readable, even at almost ninety-three.

Look to the good.

Merle and Janie

~ ~ ~ ~ ~  
We are supporting Mason with his virtual classroom and homework from Irving School while attempting to keep a rambunctious Lucy entertained. Our determined four-year-old has transitioned to a two-wheel bicycle and is racing all over our cul de sac with great confidence. Russ teaches daily his online Taekwondo classes to his dedicated students and Katrina is managing all the demands of her online sales. With the encouragement of our kids, we have attempted our first garden boxes and have worked together to make our back yard an inviting outdoor living space. The Duers are staying busy and well and wish you all the same.



About ten days ago I got an e-mail from Alicia Longoria, the Eugene School District Family Resource Coordinator. Our Outreach Ministry had given families from her school the Thanksgiving boxes last year. Alicia was reaching out to community partners who had previously supported her school, hoping they could help to provide food baskets or gift cards for some of their in-crisis families.

She said the school district is doing the best they can to provide more lunch pickup locations across the schools but there isn't enough food for the whole family. They have a district wrap around team to refer families to the different pantries across Eugene, but some of the families are too scared to leave their houses because they don't have face masks. In some cases, parents are home with multiple children and don't want to go out and expose them. Adding to the confusion, many of the parents with whom Alicia coordinates, do not have English as their first language and feel even more isolated and desperate. These are challenging times!

The St. Thomas Outreach Ministry immediately purchased \$250 worth of gift cards to Fred Meyer and I made 40 masks in adult and children's sizes and delivered them to her within a few days. The need is still great and with every passing week, the need increases. Wanting to do more, the Outreach Ministry has agreed to put up a \$500 matching donation fund for these families. The gift cards will be purchased from Fred Meyer and given to Alicia for her to distribute to the families. She suggested Fred Meyer because the families can also purchase gasoline there. She keeps meticulous records and receipts on the money given to her, so there is no question of an abuse of funds.

Several parishioners have already committed to donating to this matching fund. If you are willing and able to contribute, please make your check out to St. Thomas Episcopal Church with "Outreach—Food Gift Cards" in the memo line.

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Many of us will weather this storm in relative comfort, others will have had their worlds turned upside down in a single day and lose everything. I feel blessed and it is a blessing to be able to help others. As it says in Matthew 25:35, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."

Thank you and God bless you all,

Lindy Moore, Secretary

**Note:** St. Thomas Mask-Making Ministry. In addition to making and distributing masks to parishioners, we have made and given 50 masks to St. John's in Springfield for their food pantry volunteers and shoppers. We are looking to expand the ministry as well; you will be hearing more about that from Deacon Mike soon. In the meantime, if you need a mask or know of someone else who needs one, please contact Postulant Jackee Martinez ([jackeemartinez73@gmail.com](mailto:jackeemartinez73@gmail.com); 541-915-8031) or Senior Warden Sue Colvin (541-520-1468).

## Reflections



Despite the recommended closures, social distancing and extended periods of isolation, daily reports of the stricken and the grief for those lost, the earth's winter dormancy is retreating to an awakening spring. The COVID-19 pandemic has not affected the changing of the seasons. In our little forest the first signs of spring have emerged with the delicate purple blooms of the fairy slipper orchids and trillium that rise out of the duff around the fir trees. The camas and wild iris bloom on the

perimeter of the hay field. The white blossoms of wild cherry and dogwood trees are bright spots on a green canvas. Vibrant new green leaves on the maple spread their foliage over once barren branches. And through the forest the creek bubbles with new runoff. Spring. New life enhances a once dark, gray landscape.

During this Easter season we celebrate Christ's resurrection, His conquering of sin and death. As a resurrection people we are blessed everyday with new life through Jesus Christ. Our sins are forgiven. His light overcomes our darkest days.

### Spring awakening.



Fairy Slipper orchid, Trillium and Wild Cherry



## May Birthdays

- 4 Lottie Rohde
- 7 Joe Konieczka
- 14 Christopher Hente
- 26 Ann Gaillard
- 30 Mark Pezzoni



## May Anniversaries

- 17 Karl and Erika Hente



### Schedule for May

Sunday 10:00 am – Morning Prayer  
Access online at

[Facebook.com/st.thomas.eugene/](https://www.facebook.com/st.thomas.eugene/)

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.