



The Beacon

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

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

September 2020

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- Janet Calvert
- Dave Fredmonsky
- Ed Johnson
- Erika Hente
- Anne VanDerveer
- Sally Ward
- Judy Wilson
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From the Rector's Desk

I'm writing this the day after the election of the 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Oregon, The Rev. Dr. Diana Akiyama. And what an election it was!

As I emailed you a few days before the Electing Convention, the election was going to be historic--historic because our slate of finalists was the most diverse in our diocese's history, and because it was the first on-line Electing Convention in the history of the Episcopal Church.

The voting went incredibly smoothly due to the hard work of the Bishop Transition Committee and the staff at the Bishop's Close. Although the Convention started a bit late due to some technical glitches, once the voting began it took place with ease and integrity. It was also clear that even as dispersed as the delegates were, meeting and voting by Zoom from all corners of the diocese, we were nevertheless gathered as one faith community, and the Holy Spirit was present to guide our decision-making.

It is a tribute to the Bishop Search Committee that every one of the candidates could have been an excellent bishop. I was fortunate to have met the four candidates in-person (masked, of course!) when they were at St. Thomas for one of the Q&A's, and I was impressed by all of them. Yet when the time came for voting, the Holy Spirit was clearly at work: Diana was elected easily on the second ballot. You can find information about our Bishop-Elect here: <https://www.diocese-oregon.org/akiyama-bishop-elect/>.

St. Thomas should take great pride in how our parish contributed to this extraordinary election. First, parishioner Mary Adams was a member of the Search Committee. Last fall, she was absolutely instrumental in writing the diocesan profile, a crucial portrait of the diocese that garnered 31 applicants, well-above average. At Diocesan Convention last fall, she along with another member of the Search Committee presented the profile and the process of developing it. Throughout the fall and winter, she and the rest of the Search Committee spent countless hours scouring the applications, checking references, and then determining which semi-finalists would be invited to a discernment retreat in (pre-Covid) February for several days of interviewing. Mary was part of the interviewing process that weekend and then participated in the selection of the final four candidates.

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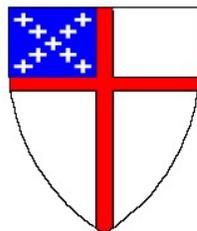
Once the Search Committee made its selection, the work was handed over to the Transition Committee, and that is where parishioner and Senior Warden Sue Colvin shone. As a key member of that committee, Sue helped to organize the walk-about and the Q&A's, and she was especially instrumental in crafting from more than 158 questions received from around the diocese the 50 questions the candidates addressed during their Q&A's and the 10 for their extended video interviews. Initially, the walk-about and the election were planned to be in-person, the way they always were during pre-Covid times. But when Covid hit, everything had to be reinvented in order to ensure the safety of the candidates and the attendees of the various events. No fewer than five times did the walk-about and Q&A's have to be restructured; no fewer than five times did the Electing Convention have to be reconfigured (and was postponed by two months). Yet Sue Colvin along with the rest of the Transition Committee powered through, putting in countless hours to enable a successful, legitimate, and Spirit-infused Convention.

During last year's Diocesan Convention, Mary presented the summary statement describing the bishop the diocese was looking for, a statement created by the people of the diocese: "We [the Diocese of Oregon] are looking for a spiritual, adaptive leader who builds strong relationships by taking the time to listen, and who is able to help us find creative solutions to diocesan issues in a culturally responsive manner."

I believe that in Diana Akiyama we have found that bishop. So let us give thanks for Mary Adams and Sue Colvin, whom God called to do extraordinary work during extraordinary times to help us discern and elect the new Bishop of the Diocese of Oregon.

Peace and many blessings,

Ann +



Endowment News



2nd Quarter Good for Our Fund

As we cruise through what has been at best a difficult year for investors, I'm pleased to report that our second quarter was a good one.

As of June 30, our Endowment Fund's investment portfolio totaled \$178,498.70! That is a gain of \$23,086.15 (14.85%) for the quarter, \$7,973.20 (4.68%) year to date and \$25,302.23 (16.52%) year over year. This is more evidence that a diversified, conservative investment strategy can yield decent gains even during difficult times.

The June 30 balance in our Columbia Bank account, the funds we set aside for day to day expenses, was \$5,633.72. Thus, our Endowment Fund's total balance was \$184,132.42. During the quarter we received contributions totaling \$300.00.

For the first two quarters of 2020 our generous St. Thomas congregation, during what was the worst financial climate in several decades, contributed \$11,300.00 to the Endowment Fund. Now we're just a bit over \$70,000.00 shy of the \$250,000 we need to start making distributions.

We're not out of the financial woods yet. Now let's keep our eyes focused straight ahead, walk with faith and we'll soon see the bright sunlight of better days ahead!

Duncan Murray, Chair



Baby News



Mary Adams and Amiel Angeles joyfully announced the safe arrival of their son Matthew James Adams Angeles. Little Matthew was born August 12 weighing 9 pounds 6 ounces. According to Mary, he is wonderful, and doing really well.



Parish Concerns

As most of you know, Tom Whitehead is recovering from surgery to address a brain bleed. The surgery was a success, and he is now doing the hard work of physical, occupational, and speech therapy. He hopes to return home soon. Tom's St. Thomas parish family will continue to keep him in thoughts and prayers for a positive outcome.

Rev. Ann herself continues to recover from her two surgical procedures and we are all grateful for a positive prognosis. Radiation treatment has begun as part of her ongoing recovery plan. We will remain faithful in our prayers for her full recovery.



Parish Ministry Transition



Due to his health concerns, Tom Whitehead has resigned from his position as Parish Treasurer. Tom has held this position for ten years, during which time he has provided thoughtful, efficient and wise management of our parish financial resources. Even in the most trying circumstances Tom has employed his financial acumen with calm, grace and good humor.

However, St. Thomas is blessed to have Anne VanDerveer step in as interim Parish Treasurer effective immediately and until such time as the official vote for a new Parish Treasurer takes place. Having served in this position before Tom and as the Vestry liaison to the Finance Committee, Anne is well-apprised of the parish's current financial situation. Anne will ensure a wise and steady financial course for St. Thomas.

Even in this time of social distancing when we cannot meet in person, it is still possible to express our thanks and good wishes via email or a note to these faithful St. Thomas parishioners.

St. Thomas Book Group



The St. Thomas Book Group met on the church grounds safely distanced to review and discuss their August book selection – *A Woman is No Man* by Etaf Rum. They will meet again in this manner on September 24 at 2:00 pm to share insights regarding the September selection – *The Red Address Book* by Sofia Lundberg. This month's gathering will be hosted by Sandra Bristow. All interested readers are welcome.

Sunday School



The Sunday School teachers – Sue Colvin, Judy Wilson, Holly Spruance and Cindy Jensen – have faithfully continued to attend to this ministry throughout the summer with the compilation of weekly packets sent to the six youngest members of our parish family. With guidance from Sue and the benefit of the online Kids Sermons program, the teachers have taken turns assembling the craft activities and work sheets to accompany a Bible story. Each teacher prepares an introductory letter with a personal note for each child. These packets have been enthusiastically received by the children. During this extended period of social distancing and the inability to worship in person, this effort has included our youngest parishioners in the spiritual embrace of our faith community.



GrassRoots Garden Happenings



The COVID pandemic has caused GrassRoots Garden to operate upside-down. Instead of a broad and diverse community growing food for those in need, there have been very few select individuals doing much work to feed many.

In selecting our crops for this COVID year, we had to be very pragmatic and realistic, as well, and intentional and concerted in our efforts. We focused on fewer basic crops and allowed more land to sit fallow. We also utilized less extensive crop rotations.

Early season crops prioritized were cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, lettuce, arugula, turnips, onions, potatoes, peas, carrots, radishes, beets, and chard.

Mid-season crops were onion garlic, tomatoes, tomatillos, eggplant, peppers, zucchini, cucumbers, potatoes, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, beets, chard, lettuce, green beans, peas, basil and herbs, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, apples, pears, and Asian pears.

This was our first year to harvest a blueberry crop. Though not extensive, it was satisfying, and a wonderful treat for those select individuals working at the Garden.

Celery was also planted as a main season crop, though did not play out well. We'll report more on this year's celery crop in a future newsletter article.

Fall and winter crops are lettuce, peas, potatoes, carrots, parsnips, cabbage, Brussel sprouts, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, Chinese cabbage, Bok choy, kohlrabi, arugula, turnips, radishes, beets and chard. Crops that we did not do this year, or did very little of, were winter squash, corn, and dried beans. We had intended to do more winter squash but ran out

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of space and time. We had enough dried beans stored up from last year's harvest to provide for our garden cooking next year. Our space and time were better spent on crops that were more useful and in demand by the community.

Realizing it was going to be a season like no other, we aligned our expectations with reality. We were happy for whatever we could produce, and we had an understanding for what we had to let go or didn't play out. We appreciate all those that helped us make the season possible—those working at the Garden, and those giving their understanding and support, though not able to physically be in the Garden this year.

Early fall Garden hours: closed to the public until further notice. For more information, contact Merry Bradley: 541-484-7144, merrybradley@yahoo.com.

God's Wife

The following is an excerpt from a collection of stories entered in a contest sponsored by author and lecturer Leo Buscaglia. The intent of the contest was to find the most caring child. Thank you to Dave Fredmonskey for sharing a story that will surely make you smile.

An eye witness account from New York City, on a cold day in December, some years ago: A little boy, about 10-years-old, was standing before a shoe store on the roadway, barefooted, peering through the window, and shivering with cold.

A lady approached the young boy and said, "My, but you're in such deep thought staring in that window!"

"I was asking God to give me a pair of shoes," was the boy's reply.

The lady took him by the hand, went into the store, and asked the clerk to get half a dozen pairs of socks for the boy. She then asked if he could give her a basin of water and a towel. He quickly brought them to her.

She took the little fellow to the back part of the

store and, removing her gloves, knelt down, washed his little feet, and dried them with the towel.

By this time, the clerk had returned with the socks. Placing a pair upon the boy's feet, she purchased him a pair of shoes.

She tied up the remaining pairs of socks and gave them to him. She patted him on the head and said, "No doubt, you will be more comfortable now."

As she turned to go, the astonished kid caught her by the hand, and looking up into her face, with tears in his eyes, asked her. "Are you God's wife?"



Vestry Resolution

At their August 11, 2020 meeting, the Vestry adopted the following resolution: "We commend Barbara Root, Lindy Moore, and Cindy Jensen, past and present Beacon editors, for their wonderful work communicating with the parish, especially in times of transition, such as this."



Grace Notes



Our house is small, so I don't have an office at home; my office with all my church-related files and books is at St. Thomas. But ever since COVID hit in March, for safety's sake I've been working a great deal from our little den at home. Our den consists of a small pullout couch, a coffee table, shelves for books and family photos, a TV, and an easy chair whereupon sits the pile of files and books I've brought over from church.

During the first few months of COVID, I was frustrated not to have everything I felt I needed at my fingertips from my church office. I would fume that I was missing just the right book to help me write a sermon, or just the right file to refer to when making a tough decision. I still experience those frustrations at times.

When I was diagnosed with breast cancer in mid-June, however, I began to realize what a gift I had in working out of our little den. Yes, I still needed to go over to church from time to time—to check out the hedge removal, touch base with Donna and Tom, pick up a file or book, print out documents that were too long or complex for our home printer to handle, scan photos for the directory, etc. But while working in our den, whenever I got scared about being diagnosed with cancer (and I did get scared), I could look up from my sermon writing or my Zoom meeting or whatever else I was doing, and see cherished books and family photos on the shelves and pull my favorite throw blanket around my shoulders. The photos especially—of husband and step-children, of parents and grandparents, of sisters and brothers and nieces and nephews and grand-nieces and in-laws—all made me feel surrounded by a web of care and love.

And when I'd had my surgery in July and wasn't feeling well, I could not have been more blessed. For the window in our little den faces our next-door neighbor's fence. Over that fence, all summer long, have draped their jasmine vines. All summer long,

I have kept that window open whenever I've been home, and all summer long the sweet, delicate scent of jasmine has wafted into the room and through our house.

Even more: Our neighbors also have wind-chimes, and all summer long their sweet, delicate, music has wafted with the jasmine scent into our den.

Months and years from now, I will remember this season of pandemic and cancer diagnosis, treatment, and recovery as a hard time. But intertwined with that memory will be the grace-filled remembrance of beloved books and family, the scent of jasmine, and the music of the wind chimes.



Rev. Ann Gaillard

Celebrations

September Birthdays

- 2 Lucy Duer
- 4 Steven Payne
- 12 Linda Whitehead
Charlotte Heltman
- 14 Burt Schwarz
Dave Phillippi
- 17 Jean Payne
- 25 Harlan Rohde
- 27 Garnet Harris
- 29 Gail Morgan
- 30 Tilda Rohde



September Anniversaries

- 2 Andy and Laurinda Andrist
- 7 Joe and Anne Konieczka
- 14 Dick and Joan Braun
- 15 Mark and Debbie Pezzoni

Reflections



Our family has lived in Oregon for forty-seven years, but like many Oregonians we are California transplants. I grew up appreciating the California Redwoods and so many of my early life experiences were in the Redwood forests of the central and northern California coastal regions. For several summers I went to camp at St. Dorothy's Rest, operated by the Episcopal Diocese of San Francisco. As a teen I experienced Camp Fire Girls activities at their camp in the Santa Cruz Mts. And then there is the family cabin located in a remote Redwood forest along the central coast. This rustic cabin was built by my grandfather over a 100 years ago. My father collected cobble stones from the streets of San Francisco when the city was converting to paved roads, and with these stones he and my grandfather constructed the hearth and chimney. Three generations have enjoyed happy times at this family retreat, and we are blessed to have these memories to hold in our hearts.

I share this because these remembrances are uppermost in my mind as the fires rage through the Redwood region of California. We can attribute this disaster to mismanagement, overpopulation, environmental neglect or simply the awesome force of nature, but the fact is the losses and human toll are heart wrenching. At this writing, these special places from my early years may be reduced to ashes, and so I am reflecting on those treasured places and the experiences they allowed and savoring the memories.

The most important thing I continue to focus on is what I learned about Redwood trees at a very early

age. Around our old cabin there were ancient Redwoods with their bark severely scarred and yet they continued to stand and thrive. There were other Redwoods that grew in tight circles around old charred stumps. In our forest here in Oregon where we have planted Redwoods, some have been lost to winter snows and frost, and yet even as those trees have died, new Redwoods sprout up around the stump. It is a wonderful quality of the Redwood species. They are incredibly resilient with the capability of resurrecting themselves. Knowing this eases my distress as the forest fires rage through the Redwood forests of Central California.

Communities will be impacted. People will suffer. The land will be scarred, but the forest will return for future generations to enjoy. Yes, it will take time, but it will happen because of the innate capability of the Redwood tree.

I am reminded of Bishop Hanley's encouraging words that as Christians we are a resurrection people---a people of faith with the capacity to rise above our challenges and overcome grief and adversity. It is our faith in Christ and the certainty of His resurrection that we may enjoy eternal life in Him. The Redwood tree is nature's enduring example of the fulfillment of resurrection.



Schedule for September

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

Sunday Coffee Hour following the
Zoom service
[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 by the 25th of the month.