



The Beacon

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

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

March 2021

Volume 22 Issue 3

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From the Rector's Desk

The other day when I arrived at church, the doors to the sanctuary were open because the cleaners were in there washing the Columbarium windows. I went into my office to work, and after a while I heard loud voices coming from the sanctuary. The voices got louder and louder and the language was filled with expletives, so I went into the sanctuary. The cleaners were arguing about politics, specifically the conspiracy theories so rampant in our culture right now. When they saw me, they stopped and apologized, and I asked them to remember that they were in a sacred space.

While I was shocked at first to hear the F-word used multiple times in church, I wasn't surprised about the argument itself, nor about how vicious it was. *Un-civil* discourse has sadly become the norm in our nation.

That is why it is so important for Christians to model *civil* discourse, not just with respect to politics but with everything else, too. And the best place to start is within our faith community and how we treat one another when we disagree. Disagreement and conflict in churches are inevitable; the question is how we handle them.

Too often Christians sidestep communicating directly with someone with whom they disagree because they think they have to be "nice." Niceness is *not* a Christian virtue! But kindness *is*. You can be "nice" to someone to their face and then gossip or talk disparagingly about them behind their back. But kindness is authentic. It includes respecting others and believing the best about them instead of assuming the worst. Being kind to someone means that you can speak directly and honestly to them while also affirming them as a human being. Doing so is what the writer of the letter to the Ephesians calls "speaking the truth in love." As Christians, we can and must learn to offer honest feedback but to do so with grace and humility, being supportive of others even when we genuinely disagree with them.

Honest, respectful communication involves refraining from making assumptions about someone or something. In the churches I have been a part of, conspiracy theories have been absent, but rumors could be all-too present. Healthy, Christian communication includes asking a person directly whether something you have heard they are involved in is true, rather than allowing rumors to swirl around. Participating in gossip and rumors is never a healthy

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behavior on the part of the individual and undermines the health of a community, just as conspiracy theories are now undermining the health of our nation.

Our nation, our world needs Christians to be, well, *Christian* in how we treat one another. As we seek to follow Christ, let us model for others what it means to speak the truth in love.

Peace and many blessings,

Ann +

Endowment News

Finally – Something to celebrate about 2020! The numbers are in and I'm glad to report that our Foundation grew from \$174,857.66 to \$219,173.37. That's a gain of \$44,315.71, or 25.34%!



Now I have some even better news. In early January two generous parishioners **contributed \$20,000 to the Foundation. That brings our total to just over \$239,000.** That means that **we're less than \$11,000 from our goal of \$250,000!** When we reach that goal, we can start making grants from future growth! Good news indeed.

Want some more good news? As you may know, Beverly Jackson resigned from the Endowment Board to serve on our Vestry. But we're blessed that she volunteered to serve as Clerk of the Foundation. So, although she can't vote, we'll still have her good ideas and terrific advice at Board meetings and her excellent minutes. We are indeed fortunate.

And here's one more piece of good news: **Lee Gaillard will be replacing Beverly!** Lee's wealth of experience will bring a new and valuable perspective to our Board as we prepare to reach and surpass \$250,000 this year.

Please join me in praying for continued success for The St. Thomas Endowment Fund.

Duncan Murray, Chair



Daylight Savings Time

Be sure to set your clocks forward before you go to bed on March 13 as Daylight Savings Time begins at 1:00 am on March 14. You don't want to be late for Sunday services.



...and Thanksgivings

Thanks to the generosity of St. Thomas parishioners, for decades the St. Thomas Outreach Committee has served to help the needy in our town, our nation, and our world. The Committee is currently on hiatus until the summer, but before the members of the Committee can get back to work the Outreach fund needs to be replenished.

Much of our Outreach money comes from you, the parishioners, in celebration of birthdays, anniversaries, and other thanksgivings. During the pandemic when in-person Sunday services were suspended, Outreach contributions declined. But now since we are worshiping both in person and online, we are continuing with those celebrations. If you are present at services physically and wish to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, or other thanksgiving, please come forward for a prayer; if you are worshiping online, let Rev. Ann know about your celebration and she will say a prayer for you during the service.

If you are willing to give to Outreach, you may bring your check in person or mail your check to the church. Please make the check out to St. Thomas and write "Outreach" on the memo line.

The GrassRoots Garden

Winter Pruning at GrassRoots

This winter, while still working with the COVID pandemic and very low participation at GrassRoots, we identified the need for developing a new pruning crew to tend our orchard, grape arbor and berry patches.



Four people, who had been participating with us, expressed a willing interest to become this new pruning crew with the teaching and guidance of Jim Rundall, Merry Bradley and Erica Chernoh, OSU Lane County Extension Agent. Our new pruning crew is comprised of Emily Johnson, Sully Sullivan, Rocky Sigloh, and Dick Mombell.

Raspberries and thornless blackberries were pruned by Emily Johnson, a longtime garden participant who originally came to GrassRoots when she was 14. Now as an adult with a Master's degree from UC Davis in horticulture, she handily pruned the berry patch with instruction from Merry Bradley.

Our huge 16' X 46' grape arbor was pruned by Emily Johnson and Sully Sullivan with pruning assistance and training from Erica Chernoh. Sully, eager to learn, has been participating with us at the Garden since this summer. This small group training process enabled Emily and Sully to feel very capable and confident with grape pruning as together they finished their project in one morning.

Last year, our blueberry patch was first pruned by a new garden participant, Dick Mombell. Recently retired, Dick was a long-time employee of Fall Creek Farm and Nursery and was instrumental in donating blueberry plants for our plant sale every year for many years. Last winter, he appeared at GrassRoots and offered to prune our new blueberry patch. Knowledgeable and skilled, he did a remarkable job. He also demonstrated himself to be an excellent pruning educator for blueberries. This winter, he returned to prune the blueberries again,

as well as becoming a member of our new orchard pruning crew.

Our orchard, which is comprised of apples, pears, Asian pears, a few plums and two cherry trees are being pruned this February and the beginning of March by Emily, Sully, and Dick as well as Rocky Sigloh, Master Gardener Pruning Specialist, under the guidance and training of Jim Rundall, Master Gardener Pruning Specialist and longtime head pruner and pruning educator at GrassRoots.

The concerted and orchestrated efforts of our new GrassRoots Garden pruning crew is a wonderful foundation for our future. Our heartfelt appreciation to Jim and Erica for sharing their knowledge and expertise.

GrassRoots Garden is currently closed to the public due to the COVID pandemic. For more information, please contact Merry Bradley at 541-484-7144 or merrybradley@yahoo.com

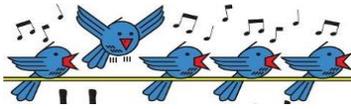
Easter Flowers



Lent has barely begun, but we are already looking ahead to Easter. Even though attendance will still be limited in numbers (more about that later in March), we will certainly be having at least one in-person Easter Day service and will be streaming the service(s) online. So, it's time to think about Easter Day flowers.

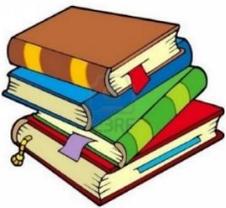
Traditionally, people have contributed in honor of or in memory of loved ones. If you would like to contribute to the Easter flowers, please make your check out to St. Thomas and write "Easter flowers" on the memo line. In addition, please include a note with your check indicating whether you are giving flowers in honor or in memory of someone, and you and they will be listed in the bulletin. Suggested donations are \$25, but any amount is helpful. Contributions are due by Friday, March 19. Please do consider making this Easter especially beautiful in our beautiful church.

Grace Notes



During a recent afternoon when I was assisting in the church office and doing a busy-work task, a single typed page was discovered in the midst of the paper copies I was cutting and repurposing into scratch pads. It was a serendipitous moment because I had just received from Duncan Murray the Endowment article for the March Beacon edition, and here was the page of notes prepared by Charles Warren to announce the foundation of an Endowment Fund for St. Thomas. In his prepared remarks Charles listed those members of the original Endowment board – Bob Loomis, George Lamont and Jeff Knowlton – with Charles as board chairman. I remember well that presentation to the congregation, but in reading the message and the names of these dedicated members of St. Thomas who have passed on, I was struck by the legacy established for our church with such grace by these faithful gentlemen. A piece of paper – a bit of St. Thomas history – along with the exciting news that the Endowment Fund has grown significantly even in these challenging times – this was certainly a moment of grace. And it is grace magnified for the Endowment Fund continues to grow with the capable leadership of Duncan Murray and the devoted board members who work to guide its course to the day when the church will be able to benefit from Endowment Fund assistance for special projects.

St. Thomas Book Group



The St. Thomas Book Group has been enjoying their assigned March book *A Light in the Wilderness* by Jane Kirkpatrick. The reading for April is *Clementine: The Life of Mrs.....* by Sonia Purnell.

The book group will meet in a hybrid session with Sue Colvin hosting in the church library and some members joining online on April 22 at 2:00 pm.

Books, Books and more Books...



Looking for a good book? The Women's Afternoon Book Club has stocked the bookcase in the church entry with a wide variety of titles. Drop by during office hours (MWF, 11-1) or on Sunday morning to browse. Titles currently on the shelves include:

Alexander Hamilton – Ron Chernow
A Man Called Ove – Frederick Backman
Golden Poppies – Laila Ibrahim
Lady in Waiting – Anne Glenconner
The Book of Longings – Sue Monk Kidd
The Splendid and the Vile – Erik Larson
The Things We Do For Love –
Kristin Hannah

Donations of money and books are welcome but not required in order to access this library. All money received will go to the Outreach fund.



March Birthdays

10	Bill Janes
12	Karl Hente
15	Barbara Hemphill
16	Debbie Pezzoni

March Anniversaries

6	Larry and Judy Wilson
20	Paul and Sue Colvin

*May your
blessings
out number the
shamrocks that
grow and may
trouble avoid
you wherever
you go.*



Sunday School Connections



We continue to keep in our thoughts and prayers our youngest parishioners – Sophia Garcia, Christopher and Emily Hente, Mason and Lucy Duer, and Tilda Rohde, who are not only missing Sunday School but their in-school learning opportunities, as well. Judy Wilson has been ever faithful in sending out monthly study packets that include a Bible story, word puzzles and games, coloring pages and stickers and craft ideas. Rev. Ann provides a recorded children’s sermon each month, which is posted to the St. Thomas website. During this Lenten season parents can encourage their children to find a small space in their home where their child can create a worship center – a place they can decorate with their own art, a place to be quiet and listen to God’s encouraging words, a special place where they can say their prayers. Here are two simple prayers to help your child learn.

*O God, Thou who has given so much to me,
Give one thing more, a grateful heart.*

George Herbert

*O Lord, open my eyes, to see what is beautiful:
My mind, to know what is true,
My heart, to love what is good: for Jesus’ sake.*

G.W. Briggs

March 2021

March 14 – Daylight Savings Time begins

March 28 – Palm Sunday



In-person worship services will continue with the prescribed restrictions. St. Thomas is offering an in-person service at 10:00 a.m. every Sunday. Because of COVID, we are limited to 25 people. The service is also streamed to our Facebook page so you can view it at home:

<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.

Reflections



As a young girl Lent was a gray time of year. “Oh, it’s Lent,” I would groan. Raised in a household with a mother who had spent her formative years in an Episcopal convent, Lent was serious business. Desserts were non-existent. Sunday school was not to be missed. And the winter weather in San Francisco was gloomy at best. My siblings and I dreaded the dark days of Lent. But because of Lent, Easter was perhaps one of our most favorite days of the year – a day when the sun came out, the hunt for my mother’s special marble egg among all the Easter eggs was a grand competition and the Easter dinner feast was a celebratory family gathering.

Over the years my Lenten perspective has changed considerably, partly due to a maturing of my personal faith, but also due to life in Oregon and on a tree farm. In February we plant trees to get the seedlings in the ground when the soil is wet and soft enough to work and for the roots to settle in and before the sap starts to flow. So, Lent and tree planting coincide. The work is methodical, quiet, determined and very physical. It is a good time for quiet reflection. There is a silent prayer for each seedling to take hold and thrive. And so it is with Lent – time for quiet reflection, prayer and promise, for we know that Easter is coming, that the Lord overcomes the darkness. And to that I say, “Ahhh, it’s Lent.”

One of my favorite sentiments is expressed in this quote from philosopher Nelson Henderson – *The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit.* We witness this philosophy carried out in so many ways within our St. Thomas community, each member inspired by faith and the giving of time, talents and treasure to sustain our church for the present and ensure its mission for the future.