



The Beacon

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

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

May 2021

Volume 22 Issue 5

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From the Rector's desk ~

Spring is a time of so much hope and promise. The cherry blossoms and tulips have mostly faded, but the dogwoods, lilacs, and azaleas are in full bloom, and most of the trees have brought forth their young leaves. Everything looks and even smells fresh and lovely.

It's hard, therefore, to remain vigilant about the pandemic when we are craving the renewal, the fresh start that spring gives us. We want to tear off our masks, hug each other, gather together without worrying, sing in church. But we can't, not even those of us who have been vaccinated. It's doubly discouraging that Lane County has been moved back to Extreme Risk for the next three weeks.

At this point, fortunately, our worship need not change. The number of in-person attendees is still within the state guidelines for faith groups. If something changes, though, I will certainly let you know.

The same situation affects our user groups. Advanced Tai Chi has already resumed in the Parish Hall, and Yoga is planning to resume next week. Now that the county has moved to Extreme, however, those user groups' plans will have to be modified. I've spoken to both the Tai Chi and the Yoga teachers about the numbers they are allowed. I was all ready to invite NarAnon and AA back, but that is on hiatus for now. Yes, like spring the vaccines provide hope and promise, but we still have to be careful and abide by the state guidelines.

But even with these setbacks, St. Thomas is moving forward in a very important way. Janet Calvert, Beverly Jackson, and Dallis Rohde have been working on the lease agreement with Head Start and have developed a good draft that is in the process of review. The Head Start folks have been through the Education building and have determined what contents they will be able to use; they have also provided us with preschool contacts who can help us sell and/or give away the remaining items. The Head Start teachers, administrators, support staff, and maintenance crew have been exceptionally helpful and friendly as we make the transition. And everyone is tremendously excited about the new partnership between St. Thomas and Head Start. The hope and promise, the renewal and fresh start of spring are manifested in the coming of Head Start to St. Thomas.

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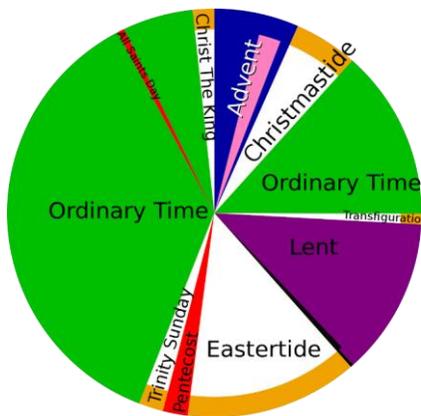
Even more: As we know from Holy Week and Easter, there is no resurrection without death. Jesus Christ would not have been raised unless he had first died. When we had to close the St. Thomas Preschool permanently, it was a type of death, and understandably we grieved. But with the coming of Head Start we see resurrection. As I have said before, resurrection is not a *rebirth*, but a *new birth*. Let us give thanks and praise to God for this new birth, this resurrection, at St. Thomas.

Peace and many blessings,

The Easter Season

According to the Anglican Calendar, we are still in the season of Easter, that is *Easter tide*. Following Pentecost on May 23 and Trinity Sunday on May 30, we will resume Ordinary Time and the color green will again grace the altar and vestments and frame our monthly newsletter.

This rainbow of colors does have significance though. Over the years I have explained it to Sunday school youth in the simplest terms: the blue of Advent is for the promise of a savior; the gold or white of Christmastide and Eastertide signifies the light of Christ in the world; the purple is the royal color signifying the majesty of Christ; red is for the presence of the Holy Spirit and the green – the most apparent color – is for growth and recognizes the most important charge of Christians to grow the church with outreach as we are the feet and hands of Christ in the world.



Endowment News

We Want to Hear from You!

As we approach the Endowment Fund balance that allows us to begin making grants, we want to hear your ideas on what kind of grants we should make.



Keep in mind that The Endowment Fund can make grants that fund:

- capital needs of St. Thomas
- outreach ministries and grants
- seed money for new ministries & special one-time projects
- other purposes specifically designated by donors.

Also keep in mind that at the start we won't have a lot of money. So even if we approve a project, we may not be able to start funding it immediately.

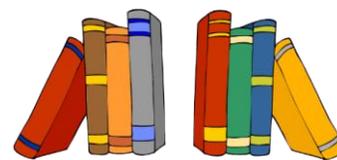
Please also remember that our portfolio is at the mercy of the market, which can go down faster than it's going up.

Please send any ideas you have for grants to me at duncaninsocal@yahoo.com.

Starting to consider grants is a big step. Thanks to your generosity, we're taking it far sooner than anyone ever hoped to. So, on behalf of the Board I give you a great big **"Thank you!"**

Duncan Murray, Chair

St. Thomas Book Group



The St. Thomas Book Group continues to meet in hybrid sessions with over half of the members meeting in the parish library, social distanced and masked while several members join via zoom. The selection for May is A Long Petal of the Sea by Isabel Allende.

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Members will share their impressions at the May 27 gathering at 2:00 pm in the parish library or online.

Meanwhile, book group members are considering the book selection for their chosen month for 2022. They will make their selection of a book that relates to an official commemorative observance during that month, or they could choose a book that they would like to read with the group. Members will share their book at the November 2021 meeting. New members are always welcome to join the fun of this shared reading experience.

The GrassRoots Garden

New COVID phase at GrassRoots: We at GrassRoots Garden are strategizing to further adapt to yet another phase of the COVID pandemic. Though many are getting vaccinated, due to HEPA laws, we're unable to ask who has been and who has not. And even if people are vaccinated, there's still the 5% risk of infection, beyond the 95% efficacy rate. At this time, we must act as if people are not vaccinated.

FOOD for Lane County reemphasized that safety protocols will not go away anytime soon. For everyone's safety and well-being at the Garden and throughout FOOD for Lane County, protocols are still in place. Some are based on CDC guidelines, some above and beyond are coming from FOOD for Lane County themselves.

Though we're strategizing phases, we realize those strategies are subject to further adapting and adjusting as the pandemic plays on. At the time of writing this article, we are in the midst of another surge in Oregon due to the impact of spring break.

Though people are getting vaccinated and we're outside, everyone at the Garden still has to mask. We still must social distance. Before we kept people very, very far apart. Now we're adding a few more people at a time and can allow them to work closer yet maintain at least 6 feet. We continue to sanitize common surfaces. Though the CDC says COVID is predominately spread through particulate matter in the air, FOOD for Lane County requires us to continue sanitizing regularly any commonly used

surfaces. GrassRoots' outdoor kitchen and lunch programs remain closed.

Everyone who comes to the Garden commits to a regular and consistent schedule. This allows us to keep people distanced and conceptualize who is doing what. We can then layer one person's work upon another's and move forward with the overall objectives of the season. There are no drop-ins, and we are not open to the public. We are selective of who fulfills what tasks, and therefore what individuals participate. We had scheduled ten or less at a time in the Garden. Now we're endeavoring to add more people.

We structured this growing season with special care to realism in our sequential plantings and crop selection.

Though this has gone on for a very long time and we wish it were different, we accept that we're not through the pandemic yet. We want an end in sight, but don't know when or how or in what ways that will happen. We look forward to the day that we are able to reopen and invite everyone back with full operations. Though we're feeling ready for it, the reality is it's not time. The best we can do is continue through the evolution.

We appreciate those select individuals who have worked with us during the pandemic and the understanding, support, and patience of those who haven't been able to return yet. These are challenging and trying times.

GrassRoots Garden is currently closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, contact Merry Bradley: 458-221-0652, merrybradley@yahoo.com.

May Birthdays

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

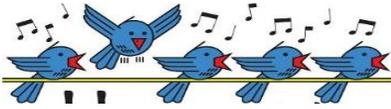


May Anniversaries

- 17 Karl and Erika Hente



Grace Notes



The fair spring weather has inspired us to get back into our gardens, but before we can accomplish anything in the way of soil preparation and planting, weeding is required. Oh, the weeding! A painful chore, but an opportunity for contemplation. This year the ground is especially dry and digging in the dirt makes that concerning reality all the more apparent. I am writing this as we are receiving a much-needed dose of rain---grace in every drop!

When we moved to the Willamette Valley 47 years ago, I never thought drought would be a concern. It seemed to rain incessantly, and green tomato summers were the norm. Nevertheless, I would say to our son, someday it will all be about water. He must have listened because today he is a hydro engineer --- the grace of wisdom.

And then there is the practical grace of just asking the right question, which parish treasurer Anne VanderVeer did when digging through the weeds of church finances she asked, "What's this?" Anne discovered we were being assessed an unusually large amount for water usage when the preschool building was not in use. The reinforcements arrived in the form of our capable grounds crew – Larry Wilson, Joe Koeniczka and Paul Colvin. A company was engaged to search for the leak, which was found and is being repaired.

So, as I weed I contemplate the grace in every drop of water, the devotion of faithful volunteers and the commitment of the stewards of the earth's precious resource – water.



We are so blessed to have parishioners willing to participate in our worship as LEMs and Lectors! However, we are looking for more folks willing to participate in those important ministries. If you are interested, please speak to the Rector or contact her at revgaillard@gmail.com or (518) 304-3124.



As reported in prior editions, the Outreach Ministry is on hiatus during this period of COVID restrictions. However, donations in recognition of birthdays, anniversaries and special blessings are still especially welcome and will be a benefit to the work of Outreach once this important ministry is able to offer assistance to community needs and concerns.

Meanwhile, the St. Thomas parish family is attending to *inreach* in countless gracious, thoughtful and constructive ways to maintain our beautiful grounds, keep the church building in good order, provide office assistance, support in-person services and technical assistance to the live-streamed services, participate in virtual business meetings, and assist with the leasing agreement and preparation of the preschool building for a new tenant. *Inreach* – necessary and devoted efforts to maintain a strong foundation for our St. Thomas community for *outreach* to resume once the community is open and healthy.

Sound System for the Hearing Impaired



Did you know that as part of the recent upgrades to our sound and video systems, hearing-loop assist systems were installed in both the sanctuary and parish hall?

Hearing-loop assist systems:

- Transmit sound from microphones directly into any hearing aid or cochlear implant with a telecoil (T-coil), and
- Deliver sound customized for one's own hearing loss pattern.

Check with your hearing aid provider to determine if your hearing device has T-coil capability and how to connect.

Preschool Building



As Rev. Ann's rector's message highlighted, the preschool building is buzzing with activity as representatives from the Head Start facility team and faithful volunteers from St. Thomas work to prepare the school for a new beginning. This wonderful building that has served the St. Thomas parish well for decades will have a new lease on life come September when we once again enjoy the delightful voices of eager young learners.

Anne Haynes served as director of St. Thomas Preschool during the tenure of her husband, Rev. Ralph Haynes. Our family has remained in touch with Anne and in a recent correspondence we let her know what has transpired with the preschool. Anne shared this heartwarming assessment in her return letter. "The decision to include Head Start as part of St. Thomas' outreach to the community is wise. St. Thomas will still continue to be the place where each child has the opportunity to *make the best beginning possible.*"

Schedule for May

May 5 – Cinco de Mayo

May 6 – National Day of Prayer

May 9 – Mother's Day

May 23 - Pentecost

May 30 - Trinity Sunday

May 31 – Memorial Day

In-person worship services will continue with the prescribed restrictions 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:

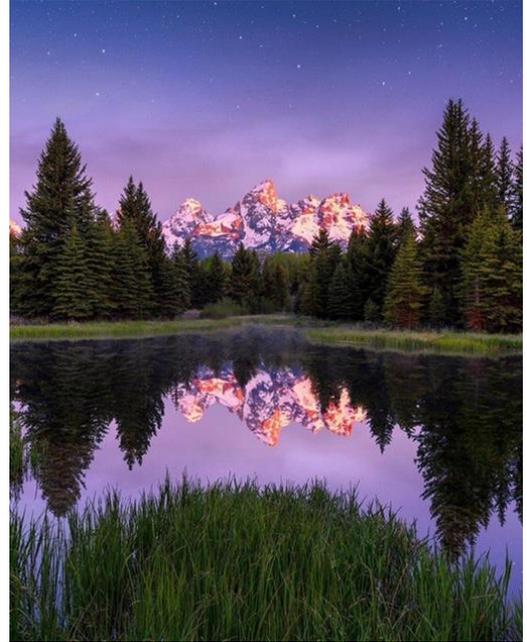
<https://www.facebook.com/st.thomas.eugene>

Tu/Th 10:00 am – Advanced Tai Chi

Wed. 5:30 pm – Yoga

Tu/Th 12:00 noon – Chair Yoga

Reflections



From *purple mountains majesty* to snow-capped peaks and forested slopes, mountains have always captivated me. Whether enjoying a vigorous climb or just gazing into the distance, my spirit soars with the height and breadth of mountains. And so it was when a few years ago we visited the Grand Tetons. The majesty of those mountains simply took my breath away. I often reflect on that awe-inspiring visit and fondly remember the Episcopal chapel in Moose, Wyoming, a small village located on the edge of Grand Tetons National Park. The window behind the altar rivals the stained-glass windows of the world's grandest cathedrals, for that window frames the Tetons – God's majesty carved in granite splendor.

During Lent we have climbed some mountains as we have dealt with the challenges of the ongoing pandemic, as well as personal challenges that demand our determination, resolve and renewal. Easter is the reward – the confirmation of Christ's resurrection and our *new birth* in Him. To paraphrase a popular hymn, we can sing from the mountaintop, *go tell it on the mountains that Jesus Christ is Lord.*



Committee reports and articles for the Beacon are welcome. Please submit to Cindy Jensen at LAJotKDK@aol.com by the 25th of the month.