



The Beacon

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

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

June 2021

Volume 22 Issue 6

In this Issue:

- Rector's message
- Town Hall Meeting
- Outreach Ministry
- Updated Worship Guidelines
- Endowment News
- Book Group
- Head Start
- Coffee Hour with Bishop Akiyma
- Sunday School News
- Grace Notes
- GrassRoots Garden
- Reflections

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From the Rector's desk ~

On May 25th, the clergy of the diocese attended (on Zoom) our annual spring conference, led by Bishop Diana. That day was also the one-year anniversary of George Floyd's murder. As you know, that event has prompted many Americans to do a great deal of soul-searching about the history and current status of race relations in our country.

It was appropriate, therefore, that the topic of that day's conference was *liberation*, and how the concept of liberation intersects with the theology of the Eucharist. The Eucharist, after all, is *the* common place where we all are fed. It brings people together to a common table, where regardless of skin color we all receive the same-sized piece of bread/wafer and share the common cup. The Eucharist has the power to enable us to step out of our systems of division and engage with one another in a relational and transformational way. In the Eucharist, Christ, who is our great liberator, empowers us to leave what is static and begin a journey toward liberation, and that liberation involves increasing mutuality, establishing and sustaining our relationship with God and each other. That's why the Eucharist is done in *community*. Our faith teaches us that salvation is *communal*; we take *Communion* with the rest of the Body of Christ, the Church.

Bishop Diana opened the conference with a wonderful prayer by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I offer it to you as a prayer that can nourish us during these challenging times as we struggle with racial reckoning and reconciliation, and seek to respond to God's call for us to live into the liberation journey, a journey that involves love, listening, respect, courage, vulnerability, curiosity, and empathy:

When our eyes do not see the gravity of racial justice,
Shake us from our slumber and open our eyes, O Lord.

When out of fear we are frozen into inaction,
Give us a spirit of bravery, O Lord.

When we try our best but say the wrong things,
Give us a spirit of humility, O Lord.

When the chaos of this dies down,
Give us a lasting spirit of solidarity, O Lord.

Continued on page 2



Continued from page 1

When it becomes easier to point fingers outwards,
Help us to examine our own hearts, O Lord.

God of truth, in your wisdom, Enlighten Us.
God of hope in your kindness, Heal Us.
Creator of All People, in your generosity, Guide Us.
Amen.

Peace and many blessings,

Ann +



Endowment Fund News

Good Quarter, Better Year for Endowment Fund!

I'm pleased to report to you that, thanks to your generosity, our Endowment Fund portfolio rose \$29,167.05 (13.5%) during the quarter ending March 31, 2021.

For the 12 months beginning March 31, 2020 and ending March 31, 2021 our investment portfolio rose a whopping \$89,743.66 (57.8%)! It now stands at \$245,156.21

It's well worth noting that we accomplished this growth during a once in a century pandemic.

This increase is not only a record for any 12-month period. It's also a big, big step toward our goal of \$250,000. Once we hit that we can begin making grants from future growth.

On behalf of The Endowment Fund Board – Thank you for your generosity and best wishes to each of you for the rest of 2021.

Duncan Murray, Chair

Parish Town Hall Meeting

On May 16 the parish held a virtual town hall meeting with Jon Davies facilitating and Erica Mongé-Greer recording. The following summary was provided by Erica.

1. What have you appreciated about St Thomas in the last year?

- Communications and online offerings/engagement
- The vestry's commitment to care for the financial health of the church, especially with the transition of the preschool from the church's jurisdiction to Head Start.
- Much appreciation for Ann's personability and leadership.

2. Are there things you wished had gone better? Are there things that feel unresolved for you?

- The preschool transition was abrupt, but most seemed to understand this as a necessary consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Most pressing concerns involved socializing with others, i.e. coffee hour and singing together in church.

3. How have the congregation's needs changed because of the pandemic? What does our congregation need from St. Thomas now?

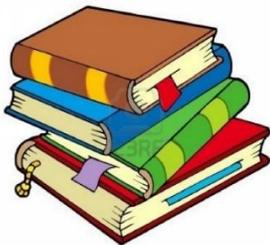
4. How can we better address those needs?

- Recognized need for personal interaction
- Need to adapt to people's new habits
- Caring for people who will remain in isolation for various reasons
- What will the church's role be re: medical advice?
- Can the church provide masks at the door in case a visitor is uncomfortable?
- It seemed like there was a desperate need to discuss government regulations and individual responses.
 - This might be best done in a separate setting or by means of casual social events.

Continued on page 3

5. *If you are not attending in-person services now, what can we do to make you feel comfortable about in-person worship?*
- Some waiting until they are fully vaccinated.
 - Some waiting for children to be vaccinated.
 - Some waiting on mask requirement to be lifted.
6. *Do you have any thoughts about how St Thomas should change to adapt to the future needs of the congregation and the community?*
- This question needs more discussion, and it was determined that a second TH could be specifically targeted at shaping a future vision to answer the question “where are we going and how do we get there?”
7. *Additional topics to discuss*
- Is there a way to know what the membership of our church is now?
 - Can attendance or former attendance be tracked?
 - Is it possible to provide an exit survey to people who do not return?
 - How can we best track our membership?

St. Thomas Book Group



In May the St. Thomas book group met in a hybrid setting to share their impressions of *A Long Petal of the Sea* by Isabel Allende. The group will meet again on June 24 at 2:00 pm in both the parish library or via Zoom to discuss the June selection *Firefly Lane* by Kristin Hannah. Newcomers are always welcome.

Grace Notes



The garden is a spiritual place to spend time and just be present during this season of new bright green growth, especially when everything is sparkling from the recent blessed rain. Whether weeding, thinning the new starts, pruning the spent blooms or enjoying the hum of the bees in the blossoms and the song of the birds tending their nests in the birdhouses, there is a sense of peace – a feeling that at this moment all is right with the world – well, at least this little corner of the world. A poem shared by Rev. Ann inspired these musings for time spent in the garden is as much about the “greening” of one’s soul as it is about growing blooms and edibles.

A Greening Prayer

Godde
 Keep me always
 Greening

Keep me rooted
 In the dark
 Keep me turning
 Into light

Keep me well
 And deeply watered
 Keep me bending
 With the wind

Keep me growing
 Beyond the fences
 Keep me leafing,
 Budding, blooming

Keep me fruiting
 Keep me yielding
 Ever blessing
 Everything,

Keep me healing
 Calm and able
 Keep me still as
 Stillness calls

Keep me always
 Greening
 Godde

GrassRoots Garden Happenings



Updated COVID restrictions have impacted access and activities in the Garden.

Food for Lane County has changed their mask policy, taking into account CDC and Oregon Health Authority guidelines.

- People who are fully vaccinated and show certification to GRG staff are allowed to work at GrassRoots without a mask.
- Those not vaccinated must still wear a mask and be mindful of social distancing.
- With this easing of restrictions, GrassRoots Garden is now open for drop-in participation of high school age youth through adults.
- Drop-in days are Tuesday, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, 9:00am–4:00pm.
- During this time of transition, GrassRoots will be closed on Fridays, as well as our typical Sunday/Monday weekend.
- Holidays we are closed.
- Our security system remains in effect at those times.
- Though we are opening, we're not opening with lunch, yet.
- We need to make a transition, but the Kitchen Coordinator position is also in flux.
- Angel Barclay, our former Kitchen Coordinator, left her position at the end of May.
- At the time of printing, the position has not yet been filled, but will be shortly.

We want to especially acknowledge Angel Barclay, our retiring Kitchen Coordinator. During her time at GrassRoots, Angel not only

cooked and managed the Kitchen, but when the Kitchen closed at the start of the pandemic, Angel transitioned into working alongside those of us in the Garden. She embraced the change whole-heartedly and was an integral part of the work we did in our pandemic emergency response. With her gentle, kind, warm and light-hearted nature, she was a great support to all with whom she worked throughout this challenging year. Angel gave great attention to detail and was a wealth of nuanced information about flowers, ornamentals and other plants.

New GrassRoots Garden hours: Open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, 9am-4pm. Closed Friday, Sunday, Monday. For more information contact Merry Bradley: 458-221-0652, merrybradley@yahoo.com.

Head Start News



The lease has been signed! Head Start of Lane County will begin moving into the Education Building on the St. Thomas campus on June 1, joining us and our other companions in ministry, the Grassroots Garden and the Center for Community Counseling. Congratulations and thanks to all the many, many parishioners who have been involved in making this momentous and complicated transition happen.



This is a reminder to remember Outreach giving in your petitions for prayers, your birthday and anniversary remembrances and thanksgivings. When the Outreach Committee resumes its community activities, a healthy Outreach fund will be greatly appreciated.

Sunday School

The parish Sunday School program has been maintained by Judy Wilson who has sent monthly packets out to our St. Thomas youth in grades K-5. By mid-June all our St. Thomas youth will be on summer break after what has



been a difficult year for learning and experiencing grade level activities. Continue to keep our young people in your prayers as they enjoy summer and look forward to a healthy and productive new school year in September. At that time, we hope to return to an in-person Sunday School program.

Updated Worship Guidelines



We have received the COVID-19 diocesan guidelines for worship:

It is safe for fully vaccinated persons to gather in person for worship services without a mask and without keeping a 6-foot distance.

Unvaccinated persons are to continue to wear masks and face coverings and to stay 6-feet apart to protect themselves and other unvaccinated persons from the transmission of COVID-19.

If, however, you are fully vaccinated yet feel more comfortable continuing to wear a mask and/or staying 6-feet apart, that is totally fine. No one will ask questions, and there will be no judging or shaming.

We are not yet ready to begin singing, but look forward to that changing soon.

Thank you for your flexibility during this time of transition!

Reflections



Communities across the country are re-opening as more and more people are vaccinated and infection rates in the United States have declined considerably. Even so, there are countries throughout the world that are still dealing with the ravages of the pandemic, and we must be ever mindful and prayerful for assistance and recovery of these regions of the world, particularly the developing nations.

Nevertheless, eager Americans are enthusiastically stepping out of their socially distanced cocoons and taking flight or hitting the road to travel, visit and embrace friends and loved-ones. We are blessed with the opportunity to do so. People talk about a *return to normal* or a *new normal*, but if history is any indicator, there is no *normal* or *new normal*. But there is a *path forward*.

Throughout the history of mankind there have been cataclysmic events, famine and plagues, mass migrations, wars and social upheaval. The aftermath is never as it was before and the results are usually a mix of *the good, the bad and the ugly*, but never a return to the *normal* that was before. The crucifixion of Christ led to the establishment of the Christian church, but also the persecution of Christians; the fall of the Roman Empire resulted in a bloody reordering of countries and boundaries; the Crusades exacerbated the discord between Muslims and Christians; the plagues of Europe and the Dark Ages were followed by the Renaissance – a time when great art and architecture was created, but great disparity resulted between the wealthy and ruling class and the masses. Then there was the discovery of the New World and the land grab generated by colonialism resulting in the decimation of the native

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

populations. And today we continue to deal with the repercussions of the slave trade and resulting institution of slavery, which helped to build a new country but also ignited a Civil War. That tragic event led to what was to be a hopeful resolution in Reconstruction only to decline into the Jim Crow era. The list continues with World Wars, the Space Race, assassinations, scientific discoveries and most recently 9/11. All of these events have resulted in a significant shift in life as it was known before the events.

And so it will be with this world-wide, once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. We will be changed. Society will be changed. There is to be no return to *normal*, but there is an opportunity for a *path forward*. The operative word is *opportunity*. I am reminded of the line from a song – *Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me*. Each of us can choose to take the path forward with a clearer understanding of the value of respect and compassion for others, consideration of good public health practices, and an appreciation of the helpers. We can choose to expand our outreach as faithful servants. Simply put the path forward is following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ by living out His message as His hands and feet in this earthly life.

Virtual Coffee Hour with the Bishop

Our new diocesan bishop, Diana Akiyama, is eager to get to know folks in the diocese. As a result, she is scheduling regional Zoom "coffee hours" at various times throughout the summer with clergy and parishioners.

Our regional date and time is Sunday, June 13, at noon. You are asked to register just so that the Zoom link will be sent to you. Our region (otherwise known as a Convocation) is Central. Here is the information. Rev. Ann sent out an email with the registration link. Following registration, the link and passcode to the Zoom call will be emailed to you.

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

June Birthdays

- 2 Lyn West
- 6 Shirley Collard
- 7 Lori Konieczka
- 7 Margaret Heltman
- 8 Beverly Jackson
- 16 Eloise Bushnell
- 17 Janet Calvert
- 19 Anne VanDerveer



June Anniversaries

- 6 Duncan and Sandra Murray

Schedule for June

Saturday, June 5 – Diocesan Council

Thursday, June 3 – Finance Committee

Tuesday, June 8 – Vestry

**Sunday, June 13–Noon Zoom Coffee Hour
with Bishop Akiyama**

(Below is the Zoom link for registration)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/joinMeeting/register/tZUtcuCoqjsiHtDJP52xeJimkr58zxWCfon4>

Sunday, June 20 – Father's Day



First Day of Summer

Thursday, June 24 – Book Group 2:00 pm

In-person worship services will continue with the prescribed restrictions at 10:00 a.m. every Sunday. (See Updated Worship Guidelines on page 5.) 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