



# *The Beacon*

## *St. Thomas Episcopal Church*

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

September 2021

Volume 22 Issue 9

### **In this Issue:**

- Rector's Message
- Parish Town Hall
- Endowment News
- Book Group
- Outreach
- Education for Ministry
- GrassRoots Garden
- Sunday School
- Head Start
- Grace Notes
- Reflections

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### ***From the Rector's Desk***

While Lee and I were on our Pacific Northwest vacation recently, both Governor Brown of Oregon and Governor Inslee of Washington issued mask mandates for indoor gatherings for both vaccinated and unvaccinated folks. And just yesterday Governor Brown expanded the mandate to include outdoor gatherings.

The mandates are necessary but so disappointing. It feels to me like a window that had been open for a few weeks this summer to let sunshine and fresh air in has now been slammed shut. But we at St. Thomas will, of course, follow all state and diocesan guidelines, which will include returning to social distancing during worship. Sigh.

It helps me to remember that this is not the first pandemic human beings have experienced—far from it. In 1527, Protestant Reformer and theologian Martin Luther wrote a treatise discussing how people should respond to the bubonic plague that was ravaging Europe.

Luther wrote:

“Therefore I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. ... See, this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God.”

According to the Rev. Kurt Hendel, Professor Emeritus at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, Luther himself had been ordered to leave the university in Wittenberg, where he taught. He refused. Instead, he and his pregnant wife, Katharina von Bora, a former nun who had learned some nursing skills in the cloister, stayed behind and opened a wing of their home as a clinic.

Those who are responsible for the spiritual and physical well-being of others must not flee an outbreak, but rather stay and care for people in the midst of it, Luther advised. However, they also must be careful not to make matters worse. In characteristically colorful language, Luther called those who did not take care not to become infected or to infect others “murderers.”

*Continued on page 2*



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Just as Luther recommended that his readers take and administer medicine, so too should we follow the science by masking up, practicing social distancing, and getting vaccinated. After all, says Kurt Hendel, “Love for neighbor is the ultimate criterion that Christians must use as they choose what to think and plan and do—not only during a time of pandemic but in all times, in all aspects of their lives.”

Peace and many blessings,



## ***Parish Town Hall Report***



On Sunday, August 1 we enjoyed a Town Hall and the opportunity for the Vestry and clergy to present the outcomes of the July 10th Mutual Ministry Review. Parish participants were able to share their thoughts and ideas and did so with enthusiasm.

In preparation for the MMR, the Vestry and clergy responded to a set of questions from our consultant, Dan Martin, and from those responses three goals were developed and then presented at the Town Hall. Those three goals are Membership Growth, Outreach (particularly hands-on Outreach), and Stewardship (Time, Talent, and Treasure).

The Vestry and clergy are grateful for the excellent input provided by the Town Hall participants. Many stressed the importance of having the congregation involved in working on these goals; one person suggested that every single member of the congregation be involved in at least one of these goals. Several people mentioned that we should make sure that our goals are smart, doable, and measurable, and to report regularly to the congregation about the progress being made. Many people stressed how important it is for St. Thomas

to be visible in the community and to increase our use of social media to get our message out.

It was gratifying to see so many in attendance for the Town Hall and to provide valuable suggestions. If you were unable to be present, please feel free to share any thoughts you might have with the Vestry and clergy.

The Vestry will be developing ideas for specific goal-related initiatives and will be asking you for help with these initiatives. In the coming weeks and months, you will be hearing more about how we all can engage in working on our goals.

Even with the challenges that all churches are facing in our era, this is truly an exciting time to be part of St. Thomas. We are incredibly blessed.

## ***Endowment News***



### **Thanks To You We Did It!**

That's right! Thanks to your generosity, as of June 30, 2021 we achieved the goal we've worked toward since our Endowment Fund was founded in 2010 - **\$250,000.00 in our investment portfolio!**

Even better news – we raced past our goal to post a balance of \$261,560.40! This means we can begin making grants from amounts above \$250,000.00.

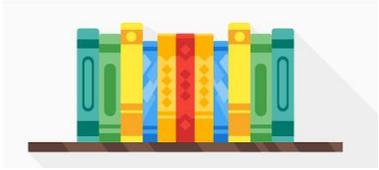
Your Endowment Board planned a grand celebration to thank our wonderful congregation for pushing us past this goal. But then came the new COVID surge, and we had to postpone it.

But be assured that we will celebrate in a few months. And thanks to the delay we have time to plan an even bigger and better celebration!

In the meantime – Thank you again for your generosity and support.

Duncan Murray, Chair

## St. Thomas Book Group



As the St. Thomas Book Group enters the fall season members will be reading an American classic, *My Antonia* by Willa Cather. These avid readers will gather on September 23 in the parish library at 1:30 pm to discuss the book and consider any other thoughts that their readings may inspire. The session will be shared via zoom for those members joining from home. New members are always welcome.

## Outreach

The Outreach committee is currently considering ways in which our parish can address the needs of our local neighbors, especially Head Start.



In the coming weeks we will host an ice cream social with our newest community partner. Look forward to details on this event as they are available.

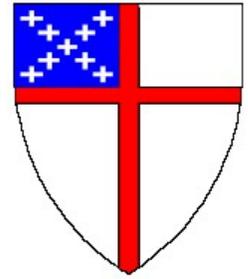
In the future we want to include an on-going article that lists outreach possibilities in which St. Thomas parishioners can participate. For now, just know that the outreach committee is looking at the needs of our parish neighbors and how we can best serve them. We are calling on all parishioners to give us your favorites: whether you currently participate; would like to participate; see them as a worthy cause; or if an area of need touches your heart in any manner.

In the Eugene/Springfield area there are so many needs and challenges. The question as to where we can fit in can be overwhelming. But as a parish with determination, we will contribute our potential. We don't need to suffer from NIH (not invented here). Where can we join? With whom can we join? What can our youth do (with or without parents in tow)?

Deacon Mike Watkins

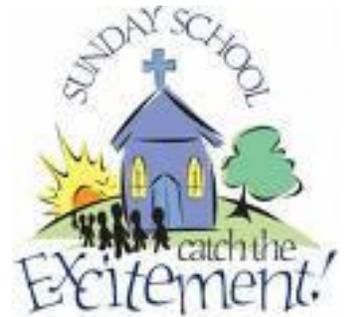
## Cursillo Postponed

Due to the recent exacerbation in COVID-19, the Cursillo Weekend that had been scheduled for September 2021 is being postponed till 2022.



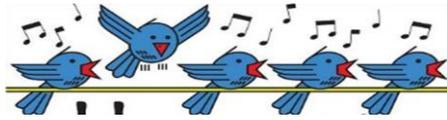
## Sunday School

Plans for re-instituting in-person Sunday School are in the works, despite the COVID set back. The most important thing that has been determined is to have two separate classes – elementary grades and middle school grades. Teachers for the elementary grades are Sue Colvin, Diana Garcia and Judy Wilson, and the teachers for the middle school grades are Dallis Rohde, Holly Spruance and Cindy Jensen. This arrangement will require two classrooms and ensures that social distancing is practiced to provide greater protection for our unvaccinated children. Teachers and students will all be masked in the classroom setting. Rev. Ann has agreed that the library can be used for one classroom assuring that care is taken to avoid messy craft supplies like glitter.



The goal is to start classes on September 19<sup>th</sup>, but the impacts of COVID may delay that start date. Rev. Ann has been communicating with parents to determine who will be comfortable with their children participating in an in-person Sunday School. Whatever the actual start date, both classes will be using a lectionary-based curriculum. If there is a significant delay in re-starting Sunday School, the teaching staff will consider ways in which we can provide support and connection to children and parents in the interim. Additional programming is being considered for the middle school class to enable these young people to be more engaged in service related activities.

## Grace Notes



Not being one who is superstitious about Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, it has been my practice to look for the positive on those rare Fridays that traditionally portend bad luck. Friday, August 13 offered a *grace note* that continues to delight us. On that day as I headed out to the garden to tend weeds, I discovered a white dove pecking for seeds on the garden path. I was able to get quite close to this visitor to our forest hilltop, and in doing so I discovered the banding on its ankles. The dove scavenged about the garden most of the day and roosted on the rooftop at night. The next morning, we found it pecking for seeds on the hay field, then flying around the house and into the forest before returning to feed in the garden. Ornithology is not my specialty, so I have no idea if it is male or female, but being one who loves to name critters, the dove was dubbed *Blanca*. It is quite comfortable with people and smart enough to quickly fly to the rooftop when our Springer Spaniel – a natural bird dog – decides to demonstrate her skills.



We have surmised that *Blanca* was ceremoniously released in a celebration or



festival somewhere. For now, she is happily foraging on the hay field and taking refuge when necessary on the rooftop or in the forest. Wisdom and concern for her well-being dictates that we contact the Lane County chapter of the Audubon Society before hungry forest critters discover this very visible intruder or winter weather sets in. But for now, we are enjoying this entertaining visitor – a *grace note* that symbolizes peace and reminds us of the power of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We derive our strength in Him who calls us to be His hands and feet in a troubled world.

But where to begin? We can serve Him as we are able in our families, our hometowns, our neighborhood schools, our faith communities. And for every life we positively touch, countless more are blessed by divinely inspired grace.



## Education for Ministry (EfM)

The EfM website says, “Education for Ministry invites participants into small, mentored groups that provide the framework for understanding life and shaping actions as Christian faith is deepened. EfM seminar groups meet in local settings and online and provide a four-year curriculum that develops a theologically informed reflective, and articulate laity.” The course addresses history, tradition, faith, spirituality, and reflection. It is an Episcopal curriculum by the Seminary at the School of Theology at Sewanee University.

The course takes the form of weekly group meetings limited to 12 participants and includes readings from a prescribed textbook and additional materials designed to inspire reflection and discussion. Trained mentors Lauri and Mike Watkins will be leading the group, which may include members from other Episcopal churches in the area.

Enrollment is for one year at a time. The tuition for a year is \$375, with some scholarships for part of the tuition. Lauri and Mike Watkins can provide enrollment information to those interested. Contact Mike at 918-336-1430 or [mike.watkins@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mike.watkins@sbcglobal.net). A brief meeting will be scheduled to answer questions. There is an interview process to be considered for the course. Once a group is formed, the weekly meeting times will be determined by the group.

## Head Start



Head Start, our newest companion ministry, has refurbished classrooms, posted signs and is ready to open its doors on the St. Thomas campus. While new to St. Thomas, Head Start is not new to the community or the nation. This is a *tried-and-true* program that serves the early education needs of children and families. Soon we will be hearing the voices of busy young learners as they experience all the assets of our education building and playground. We can look forward to opportunities to welcome and interact with the Head Start staff and the families they serve.



## GrassRoots Garden

### Wire Worms: Part II

In our August article, we addressed a key pest currently at GrassRoots: wire worms, the orangish-red, segmented larva of the click beetle that range in size from .25 inch to 1.25 inches and can live for up to seven years feeding on organic materials in the soil. Last month we identified them and the damage they do. This month we want to talk about strategies to get them in check and hopefully get us beyond.

How do we deter them? We've been told that beneficial nematodes are a possibility for select beds but need to be applied at specific times of the year and at certain temperatures. Another consideration for using nematodes at GrassRoots is how deep and humus-y our beds are. Would the nematodes go deep enough to control the wire worms lower down? The other suggestion we've been given is that we set up a chicken tractor in a certain section of beds to help clean the soil. Our challenge is finding someone to tend the chickens in the off times and concerns about a stray dog possibly tormenting or killing the chickens when we're not on site. In the infested areas we have also tried using potato traps--potatoes on sticks buried at intervals throughout a growing bed to lure the wire worms. The concept is to periodically pull up the sticks and remove the potatoes with the wire worms burrowed inside. We found that the potatoes tended to rot quickly and fall off the sticks, so we determined this was not a solution that worked well for us. While we haven't tried nematodes or a chicken tractor yet, and potatoes were not a success, what we have done successfully is hand-picked wire worms from beds. In a 4-foot by 50-foot bed, we've combed through and found over 1,000 wire worms (see photo). The vast majority of beds at GrassRoots do not have this high concentration. Usually, wire worms stay near the surface of the soil. In this particularly infested bed, they were down as far as 1.5 feet, which is not common.



When we hand pick them, the ones we hand pick in quantity we send to someone's chickens, which find them a delightful treat. They're very easy to spot due to their bright orangish-red color when you're going through the soil with a broad fork, hand tool, or simply weeding by hand. They are usually near the surface, but slowly squirm down lower when disturbed. Because they're so visible, and not so fast, they're easy to grasp and get a hold of. When you find one, you can use two hands, one on each

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end of the wire worm, to pull it apart. These are the main methods: either we take them out in quantity and give them to someone's chickens, or we pull them apart. The outer part of their body is too hard to pinch between your fingers or squash underfoot.

After finding them in compost piles, we started placing a barrier cloth underneath the piles to make sure that the wire worms are not coming up through the ground to infest our compost.

Another reason we think our wire worm population flourished is that we didn't use a rototiller for 10 years--we only used broad forks and shovels. But after tilling, we found dead or injured wire worms, so we know that a tiller is hard on mass wire worm populations. We've gone back to using the rototiller the past years while we've had so few people to help with the physical task of spading during the pandemic. We will continue to use it as a deterrent for the wire worms.

Now that we've accurately identified them, in this past year we've been diligent in searching them out, removing and destroying them. Since they went so many years before they really got on our radar, we find them throughout the Garden. Now they have become a very active and necessary focus as we fight back their populations and the damage they do. We've been very carefully hand-picking, particularly cabbage beds. Again, when we see plants die, it's good to be prompt in getting in and looking for them. Otherwise, they kill off the plant, discontinue feeding there, and migrate to another plant. Likewise, when they kill off a zucchini plant, we pull out the plant and search for wire worms in that area before planting seed to create a new plant. We've planted zucchini seed as late as the first week of August and will be curious to see if those plants have time to come to maturity and fruition before the frost takes them out. Plants we replaced by seed in June and July are already producing, giving us a second-generation sequential harvest.



Though we may not completely eradicate the wire worms from GrassRoots, we hope to greatly reduce their population with perseverance and diligence.

GrassRoots Garden is now open to drop-ins, high school age and older. Masks required. COVID transition hours: T, W, Th, Sat, 9 to 4. Closed Fri, Sun, Mon. For more information, contact Merry Bradley at 458-221-0652 or

merrybradley@yahoo.com.

## 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
- 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

## Remember ...



When visiting the church office or attending Sunday worship services at St. Thomas, please follow the Oregon Health Authority guidelines --- wear your face mask and practice social distancing. With thoughtful care and concern for one another, we will defeat this pandemic!

## Reflections



Summer is coming to an end and with it my garden's bounty. Though, true confession, it has not been as bounteous this year as I had anticipated when I was busy tilling the soil and so carefully planting the starts I had carefully nurtured in my green house. The drought that has plagued the Northwest took a toll on my garden production, despite all the careful weeding and judicious watering, pinching of spent blooms and thoughtfully pruning. But my positive nature demands that I look for the benefits of every effort.

While the lettuce bolted early; the corn produced only tassels; the peas and beans were pitiful at best; and the beets are looking rather pathetic – there have been splashes of glory. Early in the summer the roses were magnificent; the daisies were abundant; the summer heat encouraged the best crop of tomatoes we have enjoyed in years; the lavender was a glorious lavender blue profusion; raspberries and blueberries were plentiful; the succulents have gone wild surprising us with a variety of unusual characters and colors; and the sunflowers continue to thrive with late summer blooms.



As I assess the time and effort expended to produce this unruly mix of foliage and fodder, what truly has

provided the greatest value is the opportunity for peaceful contemplation – time to thoughtfully problem solve, lovingly reminisce, and joyfully celebrate the sounds, scents and colors of the garden. Those are comforting reflections I share with all who spend time and energy tending their gardens, whether they are a collection of pots on a patio, a few raised beds in the back yard or acres of crops.

Gardens allow us to *just be*. So, as I watch the blooms wane, clean the beds and cover them with straw, I reflect on what was and look forward to what will be in the garden next spring.



### *Schedule for August*

#### **Sunday Morning Worship:**

10:00 am In-person Worship and  
Eucharist

Or access the live streamed service at  
<https://www.facebook.com/st.thomas.eugene/>.

See the attached calendar for scheduled activities, meetings and events.

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.