



# *The Beacon*

## *St. Thomas Episcopal Church*

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

November 2021

Volume 22 Issue 11

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### *From the Rector's Desk*

Every year, the season of autumn seems to go by faster and faster. I truly can't believe it's already November. It's been a beautiful fall, though, and bright leaves are still blazing on many of the trees. Having lived on the East coast for decades, Lee and I have remarked that although eastern autumns are more spectacular than those in the Willamette Valley, our autumns here are softer, longer, and gorgeous in their own way. And every fall I recall John Keats' ode "To Autumn," and how the poem's imagery moves stanza by stanza from early to mid to late autumn. In thanksgiving for autumn, then, I offer you Keats' poem.

#### To Autumn

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;  
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
Until they think warm days will never cease,  
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?  
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;  
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,  
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:  
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep  
Steady thy laden head across a brook;  
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,  
Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.



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Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?  
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—  
 While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,  
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;  
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
 Among the river shallows, borne aloft  
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;  
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;  
 Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft  
 The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;  
 And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Peace and many blessings,

*Ann* +

## Endowment News

### A Time For Giving Thanks

November – A time to enjoy falling leaves, cooler weather, and spending moments giving thanks to God for our many blessings and to our families and friends for the blessings they’ve been to us throughout the passing year.



Speaking on behalf of your St. Thomas Endowment Fund Board, I want to enthusiastically thank you, members of St. Thomas, for your embrace of and generosity toward our Fund. Because of your gifts it has grown from a humble but ambitious start on June 10, 2010 to a substantial sum which, in the near future, we’ll put to work for new and exciting ministries.

This all happened because of you and the congregations that preceded all of us. We don’t yet have numbers for the year to date, but even without them we know that we’ve enjoyed very healthy growth during 2021.

So, as this wonderful season of thankfulness gives way to the blessed season of giving – Thank you again for your support of our Endowment Fund.

Duncan Murray  
 Chair

## In Memoriam

Faithful parishioner of St. Thomas and Vestry member, Sally Ward, passed away peacefully on October 18 after suffering from cancer. She was surrounded by her family as she passed into our Lord’s



heavenly embrace. Sally was a dear friend to many of us. Her four children, Becky, Bruce, Lizzy and Julia all attended St. Thomas Sunday School and served as acolytes. When her children were young, Sally held the position of Sunday school director. We pray for God’s loving comfort to the Ward family and rest eternal for His good and faithful servant Sally.

A service of thanksgiving for Sally's life will be held at St. Thomas on Friday, November 5 at 1:00 pm. Following the service there will be a reception in the Parish Hall.

## St. Thomas Book Group

The St. Thomas Book Group selection for November is The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett. The group will gather in the parish library for a review and lively conversation on November 18 at 1:30 pm. As has been the practice in recent months, the gathering will be a hybrid format to accommodate those participants joining from home. This will be the last meeting of 2021. Members can look forward to voting for their preferences for next year’s book selections. Enthusiastic readers are always welcome to join the group.



## Sunday School

What fun it has been to have our youngest parishioners back in church enjoying the Sunday School lessons and participating in the worship service. With the assistance of



of Sunday school teachers Judy Wilson, Diana Garcia and Cindy Jensen, the children have been engaging in lessons and activities based on the weekly lectionary readings.

The quilt commemorating St. Thomas Preschool was presented to the parish on October 17 and held up for a blessing by Sofia Garcia, Christopher and Emily Hente and Mason and Lucy Duer. It now hangs in the Sunday school room for our children to enjoy and celebrate the support this parish gives to the nurturing of young lives.



With direction from Rev. Ann and assistance from Katrina Jensen, the Sunday School children held up the quilt. Hidden in the middle of the quilt is Emily Hente, whose hands and feet are just peeking out above and below.

## Outreach

As Deacon Mike Watkins has reported, the reinstatement of the Outreach committee is taking a measured approach to community service efforts as the committee determines what projects to support.

The Outreach committee is requesting contributions of blankets for Home Starter kits. These kits are assembled by the Home Starter non-profit to provide essential housekeeping supplies for individuals who are re-establishing a home base after being unhoused, incarcerated or in recovery.

New donated blankets may be dropped off by the table to the left of the office door in the narthex.



## Coffee Hour

This unofficial "sacrament" of the Episcopal Church has returned to St. Thomas. The October 17 gathering following the service was a lively affair with members lingering to chat and enjoy the array of treats provided by the Duer family. Clearly those attending felt the need to catch up and share time and conversation. Join the coffee hour gatherings as you are able, and if you are so inclined, consider signing up to host a future coffee hour. The sign-up sheet can be found on the clip board on the kitchen service counter during each coffee hour.



Chatting it up over coffee and donuts in the parish hall and kitchen.

## Thanksgiving ~ We give thanks and praise to the Lord



## GrassRoots Garden



Since 1991, you, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, have graciously and generously donated the use of your land for FOOD for Lane County's GrassRoots Garden. To make your donation legal, you've charged us \$1 a year. From the very beginning, you've allowed us to use your city water to irrigate crops. In 1999, EWEB dug a well for irrigation and St. Thomas began paying for the electricity to run the pump. Additionally, you've let us continue utilizing your city water for our drinking fountain and handwashing sink. In 2007, when we built our Outdoor Kitchen, you further allowed us to use the city water for Kitchen purposes.

St. Thomas has also covered the cost of electricity to run the well and electrical appliances, as well as light our Office, Kitchen, and Tool Shed. In the last year, the electricity enabled us to put in security and a freestanding exterior cooler next to the greenhouse in the back orchard, the Coolbot. This 12x8x8' cooler allowed us to harvest and directly refrigerate crops without needing to search for a cool or shady spot to hold produce until we would take it in at the end of the day. Being able to put it directly into the cooler provided us more latitude in the harvest timings, as well as a better and more logistical use of our staff hours.

This past summer, during the extended heat wave of extremely high temps, the Coolbot also became incredibly instrumental in keeping Garden participants and staff safe and well. If a person became too hot or overheated, they could simply sit in the cooler for an extended period and cool off with a beverage. This Coolbot became an invaluable tool that helped us take care of our crops and people, too!

Beyond utilities, as we've worked collaboratively together, St. Thomas staff and parishioners have provided decades of incredible logistical and emotional support. You've helped bolster morale during hard times, as we've brainstormed solutions to challenges, including parking needs and security. Most recently, during the pandemic, it has been exceptionally valuable to be able to talk with Ann while working through the difficulties brought on because of COVID.

Also, this year the people of the grounds crew, knowing that we were short-handed, stepped up above and beyond to do additional mowing under the squatty trees in our orchard. On their riding mowers, they would duck and do bodily contortions to dodge the low hanging branches. This had to be incredibly difficult, though it was extremely instrumental and beneficial to us.

Other ways we have benefitted from our alliance have been through being able to use the Church Library for meetings and Seed to Supper classes, the Parish Hall for larger functions, and the Kitchen for baking and more recently, pressure canning.

It has truly been a gift to be able to work together and support each other. We deeply and sincerely appreciate all of your caring, generosity and kindness. Next month we'll address what this incredible support has allowed GrassRoots Garden to do and become.

**New Winter Hours:** T, Th, Sat, 9am-4pm for drop-ins. Masks required. For more information, contact Merry Bradley at [merrybradley@foodforlanecounty.org](mailto:merrybradley@foodforlanecounty.org) or 458-221-0652.



## Grace Notes

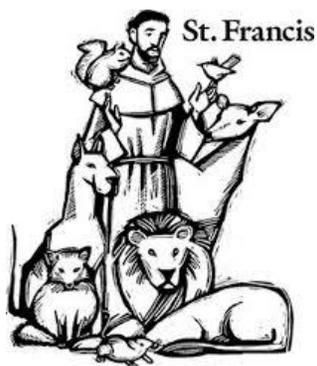


The rains we have experienced this fall have truly been heaven sent – God’s healing grace on our parched fields and forests. With the welcome precipitation forest fires were diminished and our gardens and lawns were revitalized with blooms and green grass. But all that lovely green grass around our church demanded attention, and grace arrived in the persons of Larry Wilson and Joe Konieczka who employed their generous gardening services to mow and edge the lawn.

It is always a source of pride for St. Thomas parishioners when we drive into the church parking lot and see our beautifully groomed grounds. It takes a dedicated team to maintain the garden beds and expansive lawn, certainly too many caring gardeners to mention. Enhancing our church grounds is the meticulously cultivated profusion of orchards and garden beds managed by the GrassRoots Garden. User group participants meeting at St. Thomas often praise the beautiful and inviting appearance of our grounds.

And consider our location on Coburg Road. St. Thomas is an oasis in a thriving business section of our community – not just a garden sanctuary, but a haven offering hope and healing, nurturing and growth, sustenance and comfort – the essence of a faith community. Grace personified.

## Blessing of the Animals



On Saturday, October 2 several parishioners brought their beloved pets to St. Thomas for the annual *blessing of the animals* by Rev. Ann. This is always a delightful sharing of the dear creatures who provide loving devotion and comfort in our

lives. It is also an opportunity to celebrate the lives of those pets who once graced our families and homes.



John Spruance with his canine puppy receiving the blessing from Rev. Ann; Diana and Sofia Garcia present the remains of their beloved pet to receive an eternal blessing.

## Companion Ministries

During this time of year when we are celebrating the stewardship commitment of St. Thomas parishioners as well as our community outreach, representatives of our companion ministries have spoken to the parish. Jon Davies, a fellow parishioner and board member of the Center for Community Counseling, spoke at the October 17 service and shared information about the work of this valued ministry that has been serving the community for over 40 years with the dedicated support of St. Thomas. On October 24 Merry Bradley, master gardener and director of the GrassRoots Garden, spoke to the congregation about the tremendous contribution of food and education services provided by the garden on the 2.5 acres of land donated by St. Thomas.

Our third companion ministry, Head Start, will be represented by Director of Operations Charleen Strauch, who will speak to the parish on October 31 and share information about their settling into the St. Thomas campus and the work of Head Start in our community.



Jon Davies (left) and Merry Bradley (above)

## Reflections



Autumn! The very name of this season resonates with heart-swelling awe. Nature in all its glorious display of dazzling golden hues takes my breath away. Every time I express the desire to see autumn in the northeast, my resident forester suggests a ride along the back roads of the Willamette Valley or just a walk in on our forest hilltop. True, those northeast forests in autumn are quite spectacular, but here in the northwest fall radiates in vibrant bursts of color framed by the variegated shades of our green conifers.

As I compose this edition of the Beacon, I am blessed with a view of the forest that is glowing in the late afternoon sun, bright leaves glistening from a recent rain shower. The colors are a marvel of nature, as the cooler temperatures and reduced daylight contribute to the reduction in photosynthesis in the leaves allowing this seasonal transformation to occur. And the wonder does not stop there for the falling leaves will be nourishing mulch for the forest. Come spring there will be tiny fragile Douglas fir seedlings sprouting up through the thick duff on the forest floor. In this wonderful example of the symbiotic relationship of differing species we can reflect on how we as followers of Christ can serve Him as we nurture, feed, teach and care for those who share our forest community.



## Celebrations

### November Birthdays

1	Nancy Thompson
8	Dick Braun
11	Diane Landon
13	Saundra Murray
15	Gloria Duce
21	Cindy Jensen
26	Shari Janes
27	Keri Davis

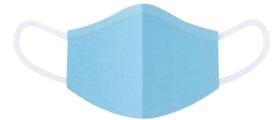


### November Anniversaries

19	Len and Janet Calvert
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If you wish to be added to or deleted from the parish recognition of birthdays and anniversaries, please contact the Beacon editor at [LAJotKDK@aol.com](mailto:LAJotKDK@aol.com).

### 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!

### *Schedule for November*

#### **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.