



# The Beacon

## St. Thomas Episcopal Church

*Give thanks and praise to God and share God's love.*

January 2024

Volume 25 Issue 1

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- Lucy Barnett
- Chris King
- Mike Richardson
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### From the Rector's desk ~

*A poem by William Carlos Williams*

#### The Gift

As the wise men of old brought gifts  
guided by a star  
to the humble birthplace  
of the god of love,  
the devils  
as an old print shows  
retreated in confusion.

What could a baby know  
of gold ornaments  
or frankincense and myrrh,  
of priestly robes  
and devout genuflections?  
But the imagination  
knows all stories  
before they are told  
and knows the truth of this one  
past all defection  
The rich gifts  
so unsuitable for a child  
though devoutly proffered,  
stood for all that love can bring.

The men were old  
how could they know  
of a mother's needs  
or a child's  
appetite?  
But as they kneeled  
the child was fed.  
They saw it  
and gave praise!

A miracle  
had taken place,  
hard gold to love,  
a mother's milk!  
before their wondering eyes.

The ass brayed  
the cattle lowed.  
It was their nature.  
All men by their nature give praise.  
It is all  
they can do.

The very devils  
by their flight give praise.  
What is death,  
beside this?  
Nothing. The wise men  
came with gifts  
and bowed down  
to worship  
this perfection.



## Parish Annual Meeting



The Annual Meeting of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Eugene, scheduled for Sunday, January 28, is an opportunity to review the parish activity of 2023 and consider the budget proposed for parish operations in 2024. The meeting will be held in-person in the Parish Hall immediately following the 10:00 am service during the 11:30 am coffee hour.

This meeting is important not just for the review of parish business and the proposed budget, but as an opportunity to gather together and celebrate the spiritual life and ministries of our parish. Outgoing Vestry members will be acknowledged and a new Vestry and delegates to Diocesan Convention will be elected.

## Endowment Fund News

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Results Almost Flat

I know it looks odd to be reporting September Endowment Fund financial news in January. But 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter (July – September) Oregon Community



Foundation results came in after the deadline for the December *Beacon*. And I want to keep you all informed of The Fund's finances. So take a look back to September 30...

As of September 30 your Endowment Fund's total assets were \$241,072.81. This represented a loss of (\$1,179.97), or (.49%) for the quarter.

For 2023 to date the increase was \$15,994.32, or 7.1%. For the 12-month period ending September 30 the increase was \$32,229.14, or 15.43%.

While some financial statistics look good, the fact is that rampant inflation and resulting price increases

in energy and food have kept their feet on the brakes of key segments of the economy. So while I'd have preferred more growth, I'm OK with ours.

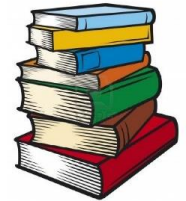
Please join me in hoping for a better fourth quarter.

Finally, on behalf of The Endowment Fund Board – **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

Duncan Murray, Chair

## St. Thomas

### Ladies Book Group



With January the St. Thomas Book Group begins another engaging list of book selections for the New Year. There is a correction from the chosen book for January that was reported in the December *Beacon*. Members should be reading Rose Code by Kate Quinn. This group of avid readers will meet on January 25 in the Parish Library at 1:30 pm to discuss the book, but more importantly, to share their camaraderie and literary interests.

As always, interested readers are welcome to join these lively discussions and build your own library of good reads. If interested in reading the selected books but unable to attend, check out the shelves of used books in the Narthex and Parish Hall. Many of the books are past selections of the Book Club. At the bargain price of fifty cents for paper backs and \$1.00 for hard back, you will be supporting the work of the Outreach Committee.

## Outreach

The St. Thomas outreach efforts were in full swing during December. On Sunday, December 10 during the coffee hour, parishioners packed the



the gift bags with size appropriate sweat suits and a toy for each of the children enrolled in the Head Start school on our campus. Throughout the month parishioners supported the H.U.G.S. program

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sponsored by St. John the Divine in Springfield. A generous contribution of hats, gloves, underwear, and socks were delivered to St. John's to supply needed items to the unhoused. Once again, our faith community has stepped up to serve the community.



Notes of grace were abundant throughout Advent and the Christmas season at St. Thomas and especially glorious during the December 17 service when we experienced the annual retelling of Christ's birth by our youth and a delightful gathering of *littles*. The choir and several willing adults shared in pageant performance roles to present an inter-generational production that was both delightful and heartwarming. Delightful because the children are just precious and the choir, serving as *the company of angels*, were especially appreciated as they added their rich voices to the accompanying hymns. And heartwarming because even without a Sunday School program at this time, the youth and youngest children enthusiastically continued the tradition – the retelling of the coming of Emmanuel – the light of the world.



St. Thomas angels packing gift bags – left: Janet Calvert and Sue Colvin; below: Judy Wilson and Holly Spruance



When allowed to enact this most sacred story, children remember. What may be a simple experience instills the sense of wonder in their young hearts. Countless children who have worshipped with their families at St. Thomas during the sixty-five years of this parish have worn these very same costumes, all carefully stored and resurrected from year to year. Wherever life may take these young people, this simple re-enactment provides a faith experience that will remain with them throughout their lives.



Tilda Rohde – Mary  
Bree Davies – Angel  
Lucy Duer – Star

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Little critters waiting in the wings with Shepherd, Lori Fisher, and Anne V. helping to corral them.



Lottie Rohde as narrator, the cast including Tilda Rohde and Mason Duer as Mary and Joseph, and the choir as *the company of angels* complete the Nativity.



Following the pageant service, a band of angels remained after the service to festoon the sanctuary and Narthex with ribbons, greens and the Nativity. The children decorated the Christmas tree in the Narthex and the bulletin board in the Parish Hall. The array of poinsettias were added on Christmas Eve to enhance our Christmas celebration. And on December 31 more *notes of grace* reverberated throughout the church with the service of Lessons and Carols. So it is with gratitude that we recognize all the *notes of grace* that made our Advent and Christmas experiences so rich, reverent and joyful.



Our youngest helpers decorating the Narthex tree and arranging the creche.



## Barbara Root

Faithful St. Thomas parishioner and dear friend Barbara Root has suffered a case of RSV. The good news is that she is recovering and, as the photo indicates, she is looking well! As the photo shows, Barbara brought the spirit of the Christmas season to the rehabilitation center where she has been recovering.



We will all welcome Barbara's return to worship services in the New Year.



The days are cold and short (although now getting longer each day!), and what plants remain in the ground are dormant or growing slow. After the hustle of harvest season, we at GrassRoots have our annual opportunity to take a deep breath, reflect on the last growing season, and shift our focus to perennial crop pruning and crop planning for the coming season. While in some ways it is now the "slow" time of year, there is plenty of work to be getting on with to set ourselves up well for next season and for future projects.



As part of our winter reflection and pruning work, we are excited to announce a couple of upcoming events this month: mark your calendars!

**On Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at St Thomas Episcopal Church in Eugene, GrassRoot's Emily Johnson will be giving a presentation about her recent experience in Japan** as a part of a leadership course she took this autumn: Climate Change and Food System- Youth Leading the Way, through iLEAP in partnership with Western Washington University. The course involved a series of online trainings followed by an in-person week at the Asian Rural Institute in Japan, a 50+ year old regenerative farm specializing in training people from around the world in leadership skills and regenerative agricultural techniques. Emily will share the highlights of what she learned in an interactive presentation, and we will discuss how we all can put these ideas into practice in our own community.

**On Saturday, January 27<sup>th</sup> from 10am- noon, Dick Mombell will be leading a blueberry pruning workshop at the GrassRoots Garden blueberry patch.** Dick worked for many years in the blueberry industry and has a great deal of knowledge about the crop to share. This is an excellent opportunity to gain a better understanding of how to prune and reinvigorate blueberry plants to keep them healthy, thriving and productive. We hope to see you there!

**Winter Hours:** Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 9am – 4:00pm. GrassRoots Garden is located at 1465 Coburg Rd., across from Safeway, behind St. Thomas Episcopal Church. For more information, contact Merry Bradley: 458-221-0652, [merrybradley@yahoo.com](mailto:merrybradley@yahoo.com).

## January Birthdays

- 6 Dallis Rohde
- 11 Gary Jensen
- 27 Duncan Murray
- 29 Russ Duer



## January Anniversaries

- 1 Mike and Lauri Watkins

## *Introducing Scott Lubbock and All Ears*

With the current absence of a Sunday School our classrooms are vacant; only the nursery room is in regular use. With that difficult reality in mind, the Vestry considered a proposal from Scott Lubbock of All Ears, LLC, to pay a \$350 per month use fee for occupancy of the middle classroom. The Vestry did their due diligence as they assessed this opportunity to assist with our facility maintenance costs. It was necessary for Scott to vacate his current office downtown as his building was sold, so he came to St. Thomas for consideration to move his office onto our campus.

Scott established All Ears more than two decades ago. It is a “listening service” for clients that operates on a sliding scale basis according to their ability to pay. Scott is not a licensed therapist and does mostly individual counseling. He has considerable experience working with people struggling with substance abuse, particularly alcohol; thus his services complement rather than conflict with those of the CCC. He does not advertise, and his clients either hear of him by word of mouth or are referred by their physicians. The terms of the agreement are for a period of one year. To emphasize that All Ears is part of the mission of the church and our Outreach program, Scott has offered a free drop-in clinic to parishioners once a week.



Holly Spruance and Rev. Ann at work clearing out and storing Sunday School supplies.

Before agreeing to the arrangement, the Vestry made sure a background check was conducted. By the nature of his business, Scott is a mandatory reporter. In addition, since his office would be on a

campus with children, Scott also completed the online Safe Church training, and his certificate of completion is in his file with the lease agreement. As requested by the terms of the agreement, Scott has named St. Thomas on his certificate of insurance, and his key fits only the door to his new office.

The Vestry believes that the nature of Scott’s work fits beautifully with the mission of the church. You will enjoy meeting and getting to know him.



Scott Lubbock  
Listener

## *A Case For Love*



A film showcasing Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s message of love is being shared with the wider world in cinema presentations. Parishioners are encouraged to attend this local theater viewing on January 23, 2024 at Cinemark Eugene Springfield 17. Show times are 4:00 and 7:00 pm. Tickets may be purchased in advance.

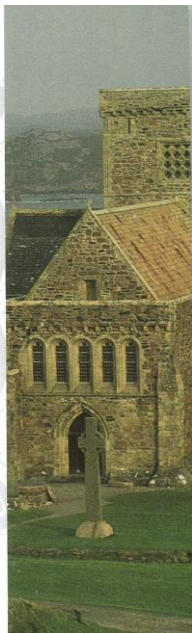
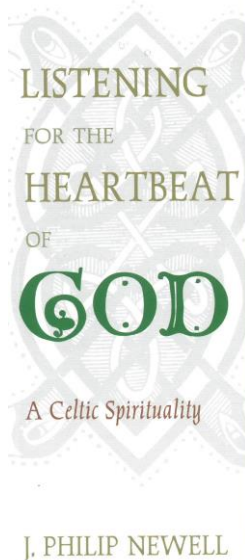
## *Lenten Book Study on Celtic Christianity*

During Lent, Rev. Ann will be offering a book study on Celtic Christianity. The book is *Listening for the Heartbeat of God* by John Philip Newell, a scholar, pilgrimage leader, and teacher of Celtic spirituality.

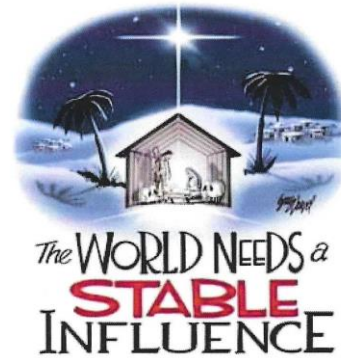
Celtic Christianity emphasizes the essential goodness of creation and of humanity made in the image of God. The book traces the lines of Celtic spirituality from the British church in the fourth century through to the twentieth century.

John Philip finds Celtic spiritual roots in the New Testament, in the mysticism of St. John the Evangelist. John was especially remembered as the one who lay against Jesus at the Last Supper and heard the heartbeat of God. Hence he became a Celtic image of listening to God in all of life.

The book study will meet during coffee hour on three Sundays: February 18, March 3, and March 17. A sign-up sheet will be available in the weeks before.



## *Reflections*



As people of faith we celebrated the Christmas season despite our anxiety for the state of the world. We carried on with our traditions – experiencing Advent services, sharing intentional love with those in need, experiencing the joy of friends and family, delighting in the wonder in the eyes of children, and keeping Christ inspired hope in our hearts. As joy-filled as it all is, it is an exhausting five weeks, and finding the light breaking through the darkness in the world is challenging. Thankfully that *Christ inspired hope* prevails.

The graphic above was on the Christmas card sent to us by Rev. Janis Hansen, a former St. Thomas parishioner. Janis completed her PhD in English at the U of O, became a Deacon and then moved with her husband Dave to Beaverton for work opportunities. Janis went on to complete seminary and be ordained before moving to Sheridan, MT to serve as rector of the small rural church there. Happily, we have remained in touch. Her card delighted us, and the graphic seems to say it all.

Yes, *the world needs a stable influence*, and we are called to be *stable influencers*.

