



# *The Beacon*

## *St. Thomas Episcopal Church*

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

March 2024

Volume 25 Issue 3

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

Although last Sunday was the second Sunday in Lent, I wasn't feeling at all Lenteny!

Some of you know that before I came to St. Thomas, I was rector of a parish in the Diocese of Albany, New York. That particular diocese was always a conservative diocese, but about 25 years ago it became more than conservative—it became a closed diocese, completely distancing itself from the national Episcopal Church. I believe that the diocese would have left the Episcopal Church except for New York state laws that would have forbidden the diocese to take any of its money or property with it. During those 25 years, the diocese was led by two consecutive bishops who consolidated power, sharing it only with a few who agreed with them, and whose words and actions were often wounding and oppressive to many of the clergy and laity of the diocese. I was one of those clergy during my tenure there from 2008 to 2017, when Lee and I moved to Oregon.

Fast forward to now. Last September the Albany diocese elected a new bishop, Jeremiah Williamson, a priest from Colorado. During the six-month period of the bishop candidates' interviews and walk-about, Jeremiah stood out as the only candidate who could facilitate the healing and reconciliation so necessary for the diocese, having the ability to build bridges with compassion, wisdom, prayerfulness, and devotion to God. It was the first time in its 150-plus year history that the diocese elected a bishop from outside the diocese. The laity, in both their comments and votes, were especially vocal about the need for change, and eventually the clergy, who are generally more conservative than the laity and were about evenly divided, listened to the voice of the laity and voted for Jeremiah. With my friends, including former parishioners, I shared their joy, excitement, and relief at the election's outcome. Hence last weekend I traveled to Albany to the new bishop's consecration in the gorgeous Albany cathedral.

The service was beautiful, moving, and joy-filled. It was historic in so many ways, with a diverse representation of bishops, both Episcopal and from other denominations, male and female bishops, and gay and lesbian bishops. Since Presiding Bishop Curry was too frail to attend, Bishop Dede Duncan-Probe, the bishop of the diocese of Central New York, presided at the consecration. It's important to understand that in the past it was unheard of for female

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or gay/lesbian bishops to be present, much less participate, in any event in the diocese, especially a consecration. Equally historic was that the preacher was a woman--Jeremiah's wife Jennifer, a Methodist minister.



Albany Bishop Jeremiah Williamson with his family at his consecration

As you can imagine, my friends and I could hardly contain our joyful tears. None of us ever thought we would see this come to pass. The next day was equally celebratory, as I preached and presided at a church in Albany that several of my friends attend. During those two days, it truly felt that Easter had come early this year.

## Endowment News

### Good News!

I'm more than pleased to report to you that, as of December 31, 2023, your Endowment Fund hit its "Magic Number". In fact, it even got a bit above it!



As of yearend 2023 **The St. Thomas Endowment Fund assets totaled \$251,830.06**, a gain of 11.89 percent for the year.

As you probably know, we can only make grants from Fund assets above \$250,000.00. \$1,830.06 may not sound like enough money to do anything. But it is. Remember our Young Musicians at St. Thomas Program? This program enabled Music Director Keri Davis to bring five inspiring,

talented choral and instrumental performers to our worship services in 2022. Its cost? Just \$1,000.00.

On behalf of your Endowment Fund Board I want to thank you, the congregation, for your generosity, without which the Fund couldn't exist, let alone thrive.

Here's some other "Good Endowment Fund News"; as of January 1, 2024, Beverly Jackson joined the Fund Board of Directors. She also serves as our Clerk. Also in January, John Spruance "re-enlisted" for another one-year term.

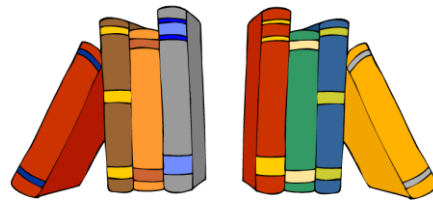
Please join me in thanking Beverly and John for their service.

I also want to thank the rest of the Board for their dedication – Rev. Ann Gaillard, Lee Gaillard, Cindy Jensen, Sr. Warden, and Diane Landon.

That's the good news for this month. I know that there'll be much more to come.

Duncan Murray, Chair

## St. Thomas Book Group



The St. Thomas Book Group has an intriguing book title for members to consider for the March book review. They Call Her Dirty Sally by Amy Matayo will certainly spark some lively conversation as the members gather on Thursday, March 28 at 1:30 pm in the Parish Library. As is their practice, interested readers are always welcome to gather with the ladies for engaging discussion and good treats.

## Daylight Savings Time

Be sure to set your clocks forward before you go to bed on March 9 as Daylight Savings Time begins at 1:00 am on March 10. You don't want to be late for church!





Once again, the St. Thomas Choir hosted a Mardi Gras celebration on Sunday, February 11 during coffee hour following the service. In addition to the colorful decorations and requisite Mardi Gras masks, choir members served tasty treats (baked by Joe Konieczka) and the traditional King Cake. Lucy Duer was especially delighted to find *the baby* in her slice. This event is the annual fundraiser for the choir, and choir director Keri Davis was pleased to report a generous collection of \$400.



Adeline Hoover, Lucy Duer, Paul Barnett Dan Paulson and Cole Jones assist Rev. Ann with the burning of the palm crosses.



### *Young Musicians*

Wilder Teague, the latest recipient of the St. Thomas Young Musicians' Scholarship, is a Junior at South Eugene High School. Wilder joined in our Sunday, February 4 worship service and sang for the prelude and during the offertory. Born and raised in Eugene, Oregon, Wilder has been studying singing and musical theater for a few years and has pursued drama and acting at both high school and community stages. She also grew up learning to dance and play violin, fiddle, and guitar.



Dan Paulson's wife Janny enjoying the Madri Gras festivities.



### *Burning of the Palm Crosses*

Following tradition and in preparation for Ash Wednesday, the palm crosses from the prior year's Palm Sunday service were burned on "Shrove Sunday." A gathering of assistants stepped away from the Mardi Gras celebration and followed Rev. Ann out to the playground to attend to this task.

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The Young Musician's Scholarship program was made possible in 2022 by the St. Thomas Endowment Fund, and with the support of an anonymous donor we continue to be blessed with the talents of selected young musicians.

## ***Palm Cross Making***

At 9:00 am on Saturday, March 23, many of us will gather in the Parish Hall to make crosses from palm leaves for Palm Sunday, which is the next day. No problem if you have not done this before as there will be plenty of knowledgeable folks to teach. There are rumors that refreshments will be provided.



## ***Spring Cleanup***



Saturday, March 23 from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon, those who are able are encouraged to join in the annual parish spring cleanup. Some of the projects include light weeding and pruning, brushing out exterior cobwebs and sidewalk power washing. Those of you who want to make palm crosses are encouraged to join the outside crew when you are finished with the palms.

Mark your calendars. We look forward to seeing you then. As the adage says, "Many hands make light work."

## ***Apostles' Shields***

Not long ago one of our parishioners had a good idea for a series of articles for the Beacon: a brief write-up each month on the meaning of the apostles' shields that hang on the walls of the sanctuary. So this month we are starting with the shield of St. Peter.

Simon Peter always heads the list of the disciples because he was the spokesman for the group. Jesus gave him the name Peter, meaning "rock." His hometown was Capernaum where he had a house and family and made his living as a fisherman.

After Jesus' resurrection, Peter taught in the cities along the Mediterranean seacoast and in Samaria. He was put in prison in Jerusalem and had a miraculous escape (Acts 12:3-25). Later, accompanied by his wife, Peter preached in many places including Antioch, the city where Jesus' followers were first called Christians.

The story goes that Peter was crucified in Rome. They say that he felt unworthy to die as Jesus did so asked to be crucified head downward.

On his shield is an upside-down cross which itself is crossed by two keys, reflecting Jesus' words to Peter, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16:19).



*Editor's note:* The shields were a gift to St. Thomas from Jack and Diane Pyle in honor of Fred & Wynne Goddard and were crafted by Mark Warner.

## ***Welcome Spring ~ March 19!***



## GrassRoots Garden



What a February we've had, with plenty of sun and balmy temperatures! We've been busy at the Garden pruning our fruit trees and vines before they try to leaf out and flower with select *learn by doing* crews of garden participants. This has enabled individual participants to get hands on heightened training and hone their technique, knowledge and comfort while helping us manage our orchard, kiwi and berry patch.

Our vegetable seeding is also underway in our nursery with our longtime committed group of seeders. The first plant starts for the upcoming growing season have popped up and are looking healthy and strong.

To give other Garden participants the opportunity to learn the technical process of creating plant starts, GrassRoots Garden participants and staff joined forces for day long hands on *learn by doing* seeding parties at the Youth Farm throughout the month of February to seed the many flats of bedding plants needed for our early spring plant sale.

If you're also having dreams of plant starts and spring, mark your calendars for the FOOD for Lane County Gardens Programs Plant sale, April 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>! Here are the details:

Online ordering for FOOD for Lane County's Spring Plant Sale opens March 22 at noon and features early crops like peas, greens, broccoli, onions, culinary herbs and some flowers, as well as blueberries and thorn-less raspberries <https://plantsale.foodforlanecounty.org>. We will be distributing all plant sale orders during pre-scheduled pick-up times on April 5 at the Youth Farm.

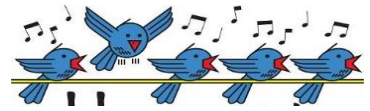
On Saturday, April 6, from 10am-4pm, we will be selling plants onsite at the Youth Farm. Come and

peruse the starts and find some exciting little plants to take home!

Your purchase supports FOOD for Lane County's Grassroots Garden and Youth Farm in our efforts to reduce hunger by engaging our community to grow food, build skills and nurture community, <https://plantsale.foodforlanecounty.org>.

**Winter and Early Spring 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).

## Grace Notes



This Beacon feature was initiated to call attention to the gracious acts of parishioners and the moments of grace we experience in our St. Thomas community. Now it is Lent, a time of year this editor used to dread growing up in a household where Lent practices were strictly enforced. As an adult I have come to appreciate the *grace* that abides in Lent.

First and foremost is the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ. His example of teaching, healing, sharing, caring and ultimate sacrifice personify *grace – love in action*. It is what we aspire to as Christians. The *grace* of Lent allows us a second benefit – the opportunity to experience love in action, *to be love in action*. Such *grace* minimizes the focus on sacrifice and emphasizes the acts of love – love that can change the lives of others, but more importantly change our lives. Lenten practices can become life practices as our acts of love become more selfless practices as we live more intentionally.

What does that mean *to live intentionally*? It is living with grace – to be less focused on self and more focused on kindness, respectful consideration for others, sharing of our blessings, care for all of God's creation, and listening to God's voice of *grace*.

## St. Thomas Prayer Team

St. Thomas is in need of additional members of our Prayer Team. Right now we are down to two: Judy Wilson and Rev. Ann.



Members of the Prayer Team commit to praying regularly for each member on the parish prayer list. In addition, as soon as Rev. Ann is notified of someone in need of prayer, she lets the Prayer Team know; such prayers are kept completely confidential.

Please let Rev. Ann know of your interest as soon as possible. Our prayer list is getting longer and we need more teammates!



### March Birthdays

15 Barbara Hemphill  
16 Debbie Pezzoni

### March Anniversaries

6 Larry and Judy Wilson  
Dave Fredmonsky and  
Gayle Morgan  
20 Paul and Sue Colvin

## Important Reminders



Attached to this *Beacon* edition are the order form for contributions to Easter flowers and the schedule of Holy Week services. Please make note of these attachments.

## Reflections



*The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago.  
The next best time is now. ~ Confucius*

February is tree planting season, the best time to sink roots into cold, wet soil before the shoots begin to break bud in spring. For large tree farm managers it can be an intense operation, but on a small hilltop forest it is a more focused effort. When the stewards are two determined senior citizens, the process tests the joints and strains the muscles, but the work is always satisfying and emotionally uplifting. We transfer those saplings, which have been lovingly tended for a few years in a small garden nursery, to locations throughout the forest in order to fill in clearings and replace trees lost to drought or windfall. And then we hope, for as the poem *Plant A Tree* proclaims ~

*He who plants a tree plants a hope. ~ Lucy Larcom*

It is a challenge to keep to our commitment to practice forest management without spraying. Sometimes hope prevails and the tree thrives and sometimes the forces of weather, critters and blackberries have their way with the young trees. That is life in a diverse forest.

Spending time in the forest allows one to feel an intimate connection to the creator. The message of Daniel Cooperrider in [Speak with the Earth and It Will Teach You](#) notes this connection referencing Genesis 1 when he states, "...our relationship and our similarity to trees speaks to the heart of our call to be co-creators with God, and co-stewards, of this adventure of life on planet Earth." As Cooperrider points out, Genesis scripture proclaims the primary and ultimate purpose of trees is their beauty and

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their usefulness for food and function is secondary. He goes on to state, "Only after appreciating their inherent beauty might we then learn how to use them wisely, and maybe learn that wisdom sometimes means not using them at all."

When walking or working in our forest, I feel the breath of life – the soft rustle of the leaves, the babble of the creek, the squish of forest duff, the crackle of branches as a disturbed deer darts from its shelter. Cooperrider calls it *a sacred exchange of wind and breath*, the forest breathing in and out is *the spirit that makes all life possible*.

*This is God's wisdom made visible. When we open our eyes to the rush of wind in a tree, we open our eyes to God. ~ D. Cooperrider*

## Beacon Quiz

Several dedicated readers responded to the *Beacon* Quiz question in the February edition, but **Lucy Barnett** was most quick on the keyboard to send her answers. The original name of our parish newsletter was *The Church Mouse* edited by Barbara Root. That answer appeared several times in *Beacon* editions, but the most recent information was noted in the *Beacon* report in the 2024 parish annual report. All participants will be included in the prize drawing at the 2025 annual meeting.

The question for this edition: **What is the name of the annual GrassRoots Garden fall festival?**

Send your answer to the editor at [lajotkdk@aol.com](mailto:lajotkdk@aol.com).



## FLOWERS FOR EASTER

Dear friends,

As we do every year, we are inviting you to contribute to the Easter flowers to the church. Your contribution will be toward both the altar flower arrangement and the lilies and tulips. The suggested contribution is \$25, but any amount is totally fine. Please make sure we receive your contribution by Friday, March 22, so that we can add your name to the list of persons donating in the Easter Day bulletin.

**YOUR NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**IN MEMORY OF** \_\_\_\_\_

**IN HONOR OF** \_\_\_\_\_

This form may be sent to the church office or drop it in the offering plate. Please make sure your donation accompanies the form. If you are writing a check, please put "Easter flowers" in the memo line. Thank you!

## *Holy Week and Easter 2024*



### **The Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday (March 24)**

10:00 a.m. Liturgy of the Palms and the Holy Eucharist

*We shout “Hosannah!”, our palms are blessed, and we celebrate Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Yet triumph turns to tragedy, shouts of “Hosanna” to “Crucify him,” as the Passion Gospel of St. Mark is read at the end of the service.*

### **Holy Wednesday (March 27)**

5:00 p.m. The Way of the Cross

*For centuries, Christians of many denominations have conducted services (known as the Way of the Cross or the Stations of the Cross) that commemorate Jesus' journey from being condemned to death by Pilate to his entombment. We will be using the Way of the Cross service from Celtic Daily Prayer. A quiet, meditative service.*

### **Maundy Thursday (March 28)**

5:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday Liturgy

*The word “Maundy” comes from the Latin “mandatum” which means “command;” Christ’s Great Commandment is that we love one another as he has loved us. At this service we reenact his demonstration of this commandment through the ritual of foot washing (optional). We will also commemorate the first Lord’s Supper. The service concludes with the solemn stripping of the altar.*

### **Good Friday (March 29)**

12:00 noon The Good Friday Liturgy

*This solemn service includes the reading of St. John’s Passion Gospel and the veneration of the Cross.*

### **Easter Eve (March 30)**

10:00 a.m. Holy Saturday Liturgy

*A short, simple service of readings and prayers.*

8:00 p.m. The Great Vigil of Easter (at St. Mary’s)

*The kindling of new fire; dramatic readings of the stories of Israel’s redemption; renewal of Baptismal vows; the first Eucharist of Easter; a festive gathering afterwards. St. Thomas is joining with St. Mary’s, St. Matthew’s, and St. John the Divine in celebrating the central feast of the Christian year.*

### **The Sunday of the Resurrection: Easter Day (March 31)**

10:00 a.m. Festal Eucharist

*Friends old and new join the St. Thomas family to celebrate the Sunday of the Resurrection. All are welcome. An Easter Egg Hunt for children will follow the 10:00 service.*