



The Beacon

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

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

September/October 2023

Volume 24 Issue 9

In this Issue:

- Rector's Message
- Endowment News
- Ladies Book Group
- Outreach
- Pride Festival
- Nursery Assistance
- Youthful Service
- GrassRoots Garden
- Grace Notes
- A Joyful Noise
- Facility Users
- Reflections

Vestry:

- Cindy Jensen,
Sr. Warden
- Jon Davies, Jr. Warden
- Lucy Barnett
- Chris King
- Mike Richardson
- Holly Spruance
- Joe Tulacz
- Linda Whitehead
- Beverly Jackson, Clerk

Rector – Rev. Ann Gaillard
Parish Administrator –
JB Hoover

Parish Treasurer –
Anne VanDerveer

1465 Coburg Road
Eugene, Oregon 97401
Phone: 541-343-5241

Email:

stthomaschurcheugene@gmail.com

Beacon Editor –
Cindy Jensen

Website –
<https://st-thomaseugene.net/>



From the Rector's Desk

A few weeks ago, I received the very hard news that a dear friend and seminary classmate is entering into the final months of her life. I'm telling you this for a purpose, so please "hear" me out.

My classmate's name is Sonia Waters. She's been on the St. Thomas prayer list for a couple of years, ever since she was diagnosed with a rare and inoperable form of cancer. She's been through rounds of experimental immuno-therapy (which didn't work) and many rounds of chemo. Her chemo treatments bought her some time. In the past year, she and her husband John (also a seminary classmate) have been doing a lot of "bucket list" traveling, but she just can't travel anymore.

Sonia's soul combines compassion with intellectual brilliance. In the first days of seminary, she said to me (echoing St. Paul), "Well, I've always been a fool for Christ. So here I am!" She arrived at seminary when she was around 30, graduated when I did, was ordained and served as a parish priest for a while, and then went on to get her doctorate and became a professor of Pastoral Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. Her husband John is rector of a large church in Montclair, New Jersey. They have three children.

We (her classmates and other friends and colleagues) have been aware of Sonia's illness and have been praying for her and her family for some time. Last week Sonia posted to her friends on Facebook what might be her last post. I'm sharing it with you because I think her message is something we all need to hear from time to time.

"August 11, 2023

Just wanted to let you know that I will no longer be teaching. Which is another way to let you know that my life is drawing to a close. We have exhausted the viable options for containing my cancer and will begin the process of preparing for my death over the next few months.

People often ask what they can do for me. You have already done so much. All of your texts, messages, and "comments" of love and support over the last two years have carried me. As we begin this final phase, I will continue to be

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

encouraged by you! If I don't manage to reply, know that I take these kindnesses very much to heart!

Unfortunately, it is much more difficult for me to take visits or calls at this time. My pain is increasing and it's difficult for me to concentrate and hold a conversation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, and right now my body just needs too much rest. Please know that I do appreciate you and the love you've shown me over the years.

Finally, of course, what I really need is to be covered with Holy Spirit-filled prayer at this time. If you are up for that, pray hard for a relief from pain, the preparation of my soul, and that peace that passes all understanding for me and my family. For my friends of other faiths or none...send me blessings and good energy in whatever manner is true to you.

And remember to enjoy your life. Drink it in as best you can. There's so much BS out there trying to control us. Trying to break our spirits. Find every opportunity to be a little silly, foolish, and free. You're worth it."

Please cover Sonia, her husband John, and their kids Jack, Sarah, and Grace with Holy Spirit-filled prayer.

Peace and many blessings,

Endowment News

2024 – Coming Soon!

It's just September now, but before we know it the Christmas tree will be down, and we'll be popping champagne to welcome 2024.



The New Year is a good time to make updates to important parts of our lives, including our wills and trusts.

Maybe in the past you've thought about adding The St. Thomas Endowment Fund in your estate planning. Maybe you enjoyed our Young Musicians

Program and considered making a bequest so that we can create more programs like it.

Most church members include endowments in their wills because they want to create a lasting and holy personal legacy. There are other reasons, which we'll share with you throughout September.

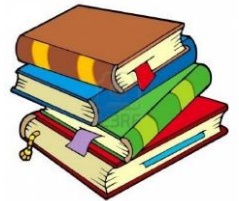
We honor St. Thomas members who include our Endowment Fund in their estate planning by including them in our Legacy Society. Should they wish to remain anonymous we respect their wish.

Please be assured that no one will ever ask you the amount of your bequest. A bequest to our Endowment Funds is your non-binding intent of a future gift. You can adjust or cancel it at any time.

All our bequests are separate from our yearly pledges, which are current gifts. As we move through September, please give some thought to an Endowment Fund bequest. Questions? Please contact Rev. Ann or me (541/343-6975).

God Bless,
Duncan Murray, Chair

St. Thomas Book Group



The St. Thomas Ladies Book Group never fails to line up an engaging mix of books for continuous reading opportunities.

The September selection is Black Water Rising by Attica Locke. Interested readers will gather in the church library on September 28 at 1:30 pm for lively visiting with *some* book discussion. 😊

Looking ahead to October, readers can get started on the selected title, Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell. Mark your October calendar for Thursday the 26th at 1:30 pm to enjoy the book review and no doubt spirited discussion.



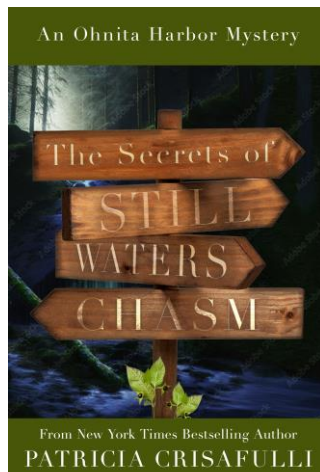
Outreach

**Book Launch Party &
Outreach Fundraiser**
Friday, Sept. 22nd at 6 p.m.,
St. Thomas Parish Hall



Once again our St. Thomas resident published author, Tricia Crisafulli, has graciously offered to host a special book launch event for the second installment of the Ohnita Harbor series. This book, titled The Secrets of Still Waters Chasm, is an intriguing and often heart-stopping adventure as Gabriela Domenici, an authenticator of historic documents and director of the Ohnita Harbor Public Library, unravels more mysteries in her beloved upstate New York community.

Everyone who attends will receive a copy of Tricia's novel in exchange for a donation to Outreach. Cash, checks, and Venmo (online payment) to St. Thomas Outreach will be accepted. *All proceeds will be donated by St. Thomas to the local charities we support.*



Please invite your friends, neighbors, and book club members—**this event is open to all!** We will gather at 6 p.m. for refreshments, conversation, and a brief program beginning at 6:30 pm. Wine, sparkling water, juice, snacks and nibbles will be served.

If you would like to attend and need a ride, please contact the St. Thomas Outreach Team and arrangements will be made to get you to the program and home.

Grace Notes

Our St. Thomas faith community was well represented at the Project Hope shoe sorting event on Friday, August 18. Over two thousand pairs of shoes were unpacked, sorted by size and style, and arranged on the gym floor at Willamette Christian Center. Children and families in need of assistance can select pairs of shoes to assist them with back-to-school needs so they can put their best foot forward

as they begin another school year. A vigorous effort was provided by this cheerful band of volunteers. The greatest value of grace received is to share our blessings in service for others.



Some of the St. Thomas volunteers who assisted with the shoe sorting effort.



And Tricia Crisafulli's son took time off work to join the effort.



Rev. Ann and Lucy Barnett unpacking boxes while Linda Whitehead (back) sorts shoes.

Pride Festival



On Saturday, August 12 Eugene/Springfield was ablaze with rainbow flags in the Pride Festival. It was a beautiful celebration of love. St. Thomas was represented by two of our faith community members, Adele Rennie and Bernie McCafferty, who served in the Faith and Spirituality Zone.



GrassRoots Garden

Celebration of Life and Honoring Lynn Negus and Jim Rundall



Monday, September 11, 5-7pm
GrassRoots Garden, 1465 Coburg Rd., Eugene
under the grape arbor

Join us for a tribute to Lynn and Jim who helped create much that now exists at GrassRoots Garden.

We will fire the cob oven, serve a light meal and desserts, and enjoy music and memory in the Garden.

RSVP by September 7

to grassrootsgardensale@gmail.com

If you are interested in helping with the celebration, please text Merry at 458-221-065

Summer/Fall Hours for the Garden: T, Wed, Th, Sat, 9am-4pm. 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.

Youthful Service

Earlier this summer Harlen Rohde contacted the church office to see if he could perform some service tasks at St. Thomas. After communications with JB and the Sr. Warden and negotiating time around his South Eugene High School football practice schedule, Harlen was able to meet with Rev. Ann to consider service activities and create an action plan.

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

Parishioners must surely remember Harlen as one of our Sunday School youth who grew up to be a regular narrator, along with sister Lottie, of recent Christmas pageants. Harlen has been dedicated to coming to church after practice to do various tasks, including a deep cleaning of the tables and chairs in the parish hall, which are being heavily used by our facility renters. Adeline Hoover graciously joined Harlen in that effort. Harlen also cleaned, mopped the floors and reorganized the storage closets, and when Adeline was not available, he folded worship booklets. He willingly took on any tasks asked of him. Thank you, Harlen, for your service!



It is gratifying to witness a young person's involvement in a faith community. Over the years so many young people have experienced Christian education and worship at St. Thomas. We trust that the spiritual connections they experienced will lead them to seek opportunities to engage in meaningful, faith-filled ways.

A Joyful Noise



The St. Thomas Choir takes the summer off, but that has not prevented a *joyful noise* from emanating from our Sunday services. Several choir members have taken turns to graciously serve as cantors during services to encourage the congregation to lift their voices during the hymns and canticles. Many thanks go out to JB Hoover, Sue and Paul Colvin, Chris King, Joe Konieczka, and Maggie Meneghin.

To add to this chorus of voices we have been surprised and especially touched by the guitar playing and vocal compositions of Jon Davies. Following her return from sabbatical, adding Rev. Ann's beautifully trained soprano to the mix has been a delightful gift. And as always, we are blessed every Sunday with the musical direction and piano skills of Keri Davis and organ accompaniment of Chris King. All together we make a *joyful noise* at St. Thomas.

Nursery Assistance



St. Thomas is a welcoming faith community, but it is especially important that we are accommodating to young families. Though we do not have sufficient numbers to offer a regular Sunday School program, Judy Wilson graciously provides engaging packets of faith-based art and reading supplies for children who attend worship services. Our parish nursery is an essential service for toddler and preschool age children, and of late the nursery has enjoyed some happy activity with the attendance of as many as four littles on a given Sunday.

A childcare certified young adult has been employed to cover nursery duty when children are present; however, **the diocese requires that there always be two adults present when working with children.** In the case of our nursery, the employed nursery aide does the actual work with the tots, but a second pair of eyes is essential. Linda Whitehead has graciously filled this requirement on several Sundays, **but more volunteers are needed.** As Linda has shared, this is a delightful experience that requires little time. The children can join their parents midway through the service at the Great Thanksgiving, for as Rev. Ann has emphasized, it is important for children to experience worship and communion.

Yes, this is another task for which we are requesting volunteers to prayerfully consider. There is a sign-up sheet on the narthex table. If after ten minutes no children show up for nursery attention, you can join the service.

Facility Rentals

Those who attended church on Sunday, August 13 and enjoyed coffee hour were treated to an example of the kind of extravagant set up and décor orchestrated by our event users. The event that weekend was for a wedding reception. These photos show how our parish hall can be transformed for special rental events. The decorating and clean-up are the responsibility of the renter while St. Thomas is making good use of our facility and benefitting our budget.



This was a two-day event, so concessions were made to allow the renter to leave their décor up overnight. It was a good opportunity for parishioners to see an example of facility users' event set up.

And Just Because...

(from Rev. Ann)

A priest friend of mine was trying to explain black holes to his 6-year-old daughter. Here is their exchange:

Dad/priest: "Gravity in black holes is so strong that nothing can get out, even light."

Daughter: "Except love."

Celebrations

September Birthdays

- 2 Lucy Duer
- 4 Steven Payne
- 12 Linda Whitehead
Charlotte Heltman
- 14 Burt Schwarz
- 17 Jean Payne
- 25 Harlen Rohde
- 29 Gail Morgan
- 30 Tilda Rohde



October Birthdays

- 15 Sandra Bristow

September Anniversaries



- 7 Joe and Anne Konieczka
- 15 Mark and Debbie Pezzoni

October Anniversaries

- 6 Katrina and Russ Duer



Reflections



He who plants a tree plants a hope.

This line from the Lucy Larcom poem *Plant a Tree* has always resonated with me. We do indeed plant trees on our forest hilltop, but inspiring hope goes beyond the planting of trees. There are many nurturing ways to encourage the promise of possibilities. While tending my garden throughout the late spring and long summer I am mindful of the spirit of hopefulness. Tilling, planting, weeding, fertilizing, and watering. There is even that tedious task of dead-heading the spent blooms to encourage more growth and entice the pollinators. It is all an effort in nurturing, encouraging, and fostering hope for a plentiful harvest.

*We plant a tree this day
and leave the blossoming to God.*

I love this anonymous quote, which often echoes in my mind as I work in our woods or in the garden. While we may provide the faith inspired and hopeful efforts, it is God with infinite wisdom and grace who blesses us with the fruits of our labors.

So as summer wanes and the blooms begin to fade, the harvest is gathered and the leaves turn, I am a bit wistful. But I remind myself of the especially important promise of this time of year. For educators and students this is the beginning of the school year, perhaps more significant than New Year's. In those enthusiastic young faces and the determined expressions of older youth we must recognize the promise of possibilities – their hope for success in the classroom, on the athletic field, in their social relationships.

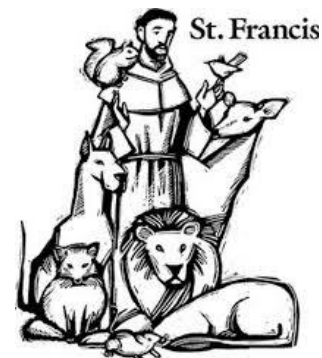
As adults we have the opportunity to plant hope, whether it be with our children, grandchildren, students, young employees, or neighbor children. Every adult can encourage the young people whose lives they encounter, for they are our world's future. Growing up I was very involved with Camp Fire and enjoyed leading our children through the Camp Fire traditions, as well. Perhaps the most impressive Camp Fire pledge that has remained with me all my life is the Torch Bearer's Desire.

*That light which has been given to me
I desire to pass undimmed to others.*

As people of faith we know the source of *that light*. And as Christians we believe in the greatest hope, that of eternal life in God's heavenly kingdom. In this life we are charged with sharing the light of Christ. With hopeful hearts we strive to be the light that reflects God's grace.

Celebrate Creation on the Feast of St. Francis

Saturday, October 7 at 10:00 am
St. Thomas Episcopal Church



Bring your beloved critters (leashed or caged, please) for a special service of blessings and prayers especially for them.

Message from the Editor



Due to travel conflicts, this is a combined September/October edition. Both the September and October calendars are included, and any additional calendar notes or important information will be sent via email communications. Meanwhile, enjoy this packed edition and look forward to the November edition of the Beacon.