



The Beacon

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

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

November 2023

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In this Issue:

- Rector's Message
- Endowment News
- Book Group
- GrassRoots Garden
- Outreach
- Ingathering Sunday
- Coffee Hour
- Blessing of the Animals
- Grace Notes
- Reflections

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- Chris King
- Mike Richardson
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From the Rector's Desk

Our six-week trial of the Creation Season liturgy ended a few weeks ago, and I am so grateful to those of you who have phoned, emailed, or spoken to me about your reactions to it. The opinions you expressed ranged from “I liked it all! Keep the whole thing!” to “I liked much of it, but I wish that...” I was a bit surprised but very glad that no one said, “I hate the whole thing!” And I greatly appreciate that the suggested changes I received were quite thoughtful and offered in the spirit of kindness, something that St. Paul holds up as an important virtue in his letter to the Colossians. It was wonderful to know that those of you who responded were always speaking out of Christian love. What an example to the world!

As I hope I made clear from the outset, the Creation Season liturgy was only to be for six weeks. It was always my intention for the second reading to go back to a scripture reading. And we have returned to the traditional congregational responses to the first and second readings. We are again saying “The Word of the Lord” instead of “Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.” Although the latter response has been an option in the Episcopal Church for decades, I understand if the response doesn’t feel grounded enough for some people. I deliberately selected “Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people” in the trial liturgy because it wasn’t appropriate to say “the Word of the Lord” after a secular second reading, no matter how Spirit-filled it was. And to avoid confusion, I used the “Hear what the Spirit...” response for both the first and second readings.

You may have noticed that some elements of the Creation Season liturgy still remain—a little bit in the Prayers of the People, the Confession, and the Post-Communion Prayer, for example. In addition, each week I am including a “Creation Meditation” in the bulletin for you to use at home if you wish.

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

I truly appreciate your willingness to try something new and to make suggestions for improvement. The word “liturgy” comes from the ancient Greek *leitourgia*, which means “work for the people,” and in the Christian tradition, by virtue of our participation in worship, all of us are liturgists.

Peace and many blessings,

Ann +

All Saints’ Day Service

For several years the five Episcopal churches in Eugene/Springfield have held a combined service on *All Saints’ Day*. After a lapse of a few years due to the COVID pandemic, this tradition has been resumed and the responsibility in the rotation falls to St. Thomas to host this year. On Wednesday, November 1 the St. Thomas parish will open our doors to clergy and worshipers throughout Eugene/Springfield to allow for a joyful noise of celebration, praise and thanksgiving. The service will begin at 6:00 pm, but St. Thomas participants are encouraged to arrive early to secure a parking space and to be a welcoming spirit to our fellow Episcopalians from St. John the Divine, St. Mary’s, Resurrection and St. Matthew’s.



Endowment News

2nd Quarter Results Almost Flat

June 30, 2023 marked the end of Quarter #2 of 2023. As of that date your Endowment Fund’s assets totaled \$242, 252.78.

This amount reflected a decrease of (\$5,849.81) or (2.47%) for the period. For calendar 2023 the loss was (\$17,174.29) or (7.63%) and for the prior 12 months (\$19,882.72) or (8.94%).

The Endowment Board has approved transferring \$3,000.00 from the Umpqua Bank cash account to the Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) investment portfolio as economic conditions improve. Until then we’ll rely on OCF to limit our downside as they manage our assets.

While we’re not popping champagne and belting out “Happy Days Are Here Again”, we know that history assures us that markets always recover.

Duncan Murray, Chair



On October 18 the St. Thomas Legacy Society met for lunch in the parish hall hosted by Endowment Board Chairman Duncan Murray.



Ingathering Sunday ~ November 5



Grant us grateful and generous hearts to serve God and all God's Creation.

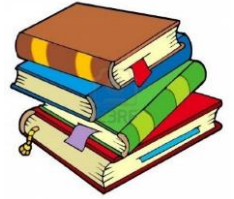
During the month of October the parish has been considering our stewardship responsibilities to support and sustain the life and mission of St. Thomas. In our prayerful considerations of our St. Thomas mission, we are mindful of our relationships to one another, to our faith community, to the greater community, to our world, indeed to all of God's creation. The stewardship theme focuses on this mission of service in gratitude for all of God's gracious gifts in creation. Our worship services have emphasized the miracle of all of creation and our responsibility to cherish, protect, restore and preserve through service, sharing and caring in all things. Individually the responsibility is overwhelming, but every singular act of stewardship when given as a contribution in a collective effort has a powerful impact.

As a congregation we have been inspired by Rev. Ann's sermon in which she reminded us that *stewardship is a prayerful offering of thanksgiving that draws us nearer to God and to each other as we claim citizenship in the reign of God.* We have been honored to hear the testimonials of fellow parishioners as they shared their stewardship stories that motivate them to pledge to the mission of St. Thomas. On Sunday, November 5 during the 10:00 am service we will joyfully present our pledges to the mission of St. Thomas for 2024.



St. Thomas Book Group

The St. Thomas Ladies Book Group has read their way through another year of engaging and informative books.



The final reading assignment for 2023 is Hotel du Lac by Anita Brookner. The November gathering will take place in the parish Library on Thursday, November 16 at 1:30 pm, and as always, interested readers are welcome. Or you can check out the book and read along at your leisure.

The November Book Group meeting is always popular among members because this is the time when books for the coming year are suggested and determined. Look for the 2024 listing posted on the Parish Hall bulletin board and keep reading!

The Book Group also sponsors the book sales located in the Narthex and the east end of the Parish Hall. There you can find a wonderful variety of books including copies of books chosen for Book Group reading selections. Sales are "on your honor" – 50 cents for paperback and \$1.00 for hard back – with proceeds going to Outreach.



Grace Notes

Garden director Merry Bradley and Vestry members toured the garden bounty before the fall harvest and came away with a renewed appreciation of the wonderful variety and quality of the produce this two-acre parcel provides to people in Lane County dealing with food insecurity.

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3



Gathering for a rainy walk in the garden that includes use of every bit of space – pots, planter boxes, garden beds and green houses.



different grape plants on the arbor along the 2x6 supports of the trellis. The cordons are the main horizontal structures running across the top of the arbor in our set-up, and they stay year to year while we manage the fruiting wood coming off of them. By training them along the 2x6 supports, we have made it very easy in future years to identify what are the cordons and what are not in the jumble of vigorous growth that carpets the arbor every year. This organization also makes it easier to ensure that we are thinning out the canopy sufficiently, plant by plant.



Additionally, early this summer we thinned out the shoots of the plants, leaving just one shoot per node on the cordons. This provided much more airflow, which in turn helps combat diseases such as powdery mildew from taking hold. We ended up getting to this task a little later than ideal. Our shoots were about 3 feet long when we got around to it, but next year we are hoping to hop on the task when the shoots are only 6 inches long. This will make it much easier and faster to do the shoot thinning.



Happy Autumn to all! At GrassRoots, Harvest is beginning to wind down, and we wanted to take the opportunity to highlight our grape crop this year, and mention a few of the changes we have made to our cultural practices to get a better crop.

The past two years, we embarked on a restructuring of our grape vines on our Grape Arbor to help facilitate more straightforward winter pruning and easier maintenance throughout the year. This restructuring largely consisted of selecting and organizing the main branches (cordons) of the



Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

Lastly, we thinned the grape clusters out. Our goal was to leave 1 cluster per side shoot to make sure the grapes sized up well and improve the fruit quality, but halfway through the task we ran out of time and ended up leaving many areas thick with grapes. Nonetheless, we still ended up with decent grape size overall! Next year we hope to be more thorough with our cluster thinning and see how it changes the quality of the overall crop.



If any of you are looking to learn more about how to prune and manage grapes, there are excellent resources available through OSU Extension that have very helpful diagrams and instructions.



Late Fall Hours: T, 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.

Outreach

The Book Release event featuring Tricia Crisafulli's latest book generated \$1000 for Outreach. Our sincere thanks to Tricia for graciously giving the sale of the first 100 copies to Outreach.



In October St. Thomas parishioners gave over twenty sheet sets and blankets to the Home Starter effort. The Outreach committee is looking ahead to assisting One Hope in stocking Thanksgiving food boxes on Sunday, November 19. St. Thomas parishioners are encouraged to participate in this lively and fun activity. Time and location to be announced. Outreach donated \$500 to One Hope to assist with the purchasing of food supplies to fill the boxes.

In December the parish will once again provide sweat suits and a toy for each child enrolled at our Head Start St. Thomas location. Outreach members have already made the purchase of required sweat suits. Gift bags will be festively filled following the Sunday, December 10 service. Parishioners are encouraged to join the fun in this special seasonal project.

Coffee Hour



During this busy time of year, adding one more thing to one's "to do" list is a challenge. So share the effort and collaborate with another parishioner to contribute to coffee hour. You could agree to make the coffee and set out the tea and condiments, while someone else provides the treats. Make an extra batch of "something" when doing your holiday baking; then package and freeze for a future coffee hour.

Those who regularly provide coffee hour treats and service are so greatly appreciated. This service is one more way in which we at St. Thomas are a blessing to each other. If you haven't joined in the fun of this very social post Sunday service

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

gathering, consider participating. A signup sheet is located on the table in the narthex. There are updated directions in the coffee hour supply cabinet with a special note for coffee hour providers to remember to clean and disinfect the tables and kitchen counter following coffee hour.

Blessing of the Animals

On Saturday, October 7 Rev. Ann officiated over a very vocal and lively event – the annual *blessing of the animals*. Several parishioners brought their cherished furry friends to church to be blessed by Rev. Ann. This lovely tradition allows us to honor our pets as part of God’s creation and to give thanks for the devotion and companionship these special pets provide.



And the *blessing of the stuffies* for Lucy and Eli Fisher



Above – Judy Wilson and Jet
Left – Paul Barnett and Lily
Right – Duncan Murray and Peanut



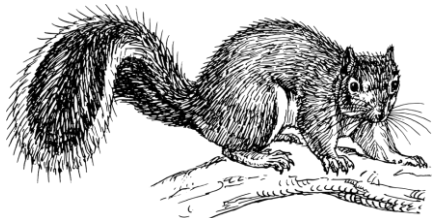
Reflections



The view from my office window during October and early November is a blazing progression of fall color. From this perspective I have a *bird's eye view* of our forest hilltop. Three large maples are prominent, and during late summer and fall they have been especially abundant with their seed pods. As children we would call these pods *helicopters* because of the way they spin and drift when they fall from the trees.

Over the years my resident forester has often pointed out the volume of cones and seeds in late summer and fall – indicators of what promises to be a *hard winter*. But more recently this abundance is due to the more concerning indication that the tree is in stress. Excessive cone and seed production is the tree's way of insuring survival of the species. Our northwest trees especially are under stress due to warmer temperatures and considerably less rain than what we have historically experienced.

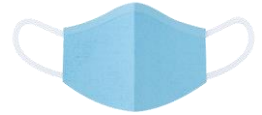
One afternoon when I was working at my desk and periodically gazing out the window for inspiration, I observed a very fat squirrel perched on a branch gorging himself with maple seeds. Clearly, he was fattening himself up for the winter ahead. From time to time he would scurry down the tree, perhaps to hide his collection of gathered pods. I was entertained by this singular effort in the annual gathering and stockpiling of one's winter supply – just one example of the inter-connectedness of all creation.



It would be a stretch to say that climate change is contributing to the obesity of squirrels, but it does make one recognize how the impact on one aspect of nature affects another.

C. Jensen, Editor

Cold, Flu and COVID Season



One could ask, “Is it a season, or did these ailments ever go away?” Whatever the answer, we can confirm that as fall sets in and winter approaches, we are more subject to illnesses, everything from the common cold to the more egregious ills of the flu and COVID. Flu shots and the COVID booster are encouraged to protect yourself and those around you. Already this season several parishioners have contracted COVID. Let's be mindful of the health and well-being of others. If you are sick, stay home and enjoy our worship service on Facebook. If COVID has impacted you, once you test negative it is important to remain isolated for an additional five days and to wear a mask if out in public at least ten days after your last negative test. Most importantly, stay positive and stay well.



November Birthdays

1	Nancy Thompson
11	Diane Landon
13	Saundra Murray
21	Cindy Jensen
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.