



# *The Beacon*

## *St. Thomas Episcopal Church*



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

January 2025

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- Joe Tulacz, Jr. Warden
- Lucy Barnett
- Chris King
- Nancy Osborne
- Adele Rennie
- Mike Richardson
- Holly Spruance
- Linda Whitehead

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### *From the Rector's desk ~*

When I was on sabbatical in June of 2023, Lee and I went to Iona for a pilgrimage led by John Philip Newell, the renowned scholar of Celtic Christianity. While we were there, I picked up a CD that John Philip had produced: "Sounds of the Eternal." The CD consists of meditative chants and prayers. In it is a paraphrase of the Beatitudes, which I would like to share with you:

Blessed are those who know their need,  
For theirs is the grace of heaven  
Blessed are the humble,  
For they are close to the sacred earth.  
Blessed are those who weep,  
For their tears will be wiped away.  
Blessed are the forgiving,  
For they are free.  
Blessed are those who hunger for earth's oneness,  
For they will be satisfied.  
Blessed are the clear in heart,  
For they see the Living Presence.  
Blessed are those who suffer for what is right,  
For theirs is the strength of heaven.  
Blessed are the peacemakers,  
For they are born of God.

Peace and many blessings,

*Ann* +



## Endowment Fund News

For the past six and a half years Duncan Murray has faithfully served as the St. Thomas Endowment Board chairman, and in all that time he has provided thoughtful and dedicated



leadership in tracking and reporting the fund accounts. Every month Duncan's informative reports were sent to this editor early in the month and served as an *alarm* to get busy on the next edition. As reported in his Endowment report for the December 2024 Beacon, Duncan has completed his term of office, and a new Endowment Board chairman will be considered and approved by the Vestry at their January Vestry meeting. Please take a moment to acknowledge Duncan for his committed service to this important parish ministry.

## Annual Meeting

As is our tradition we begin the new year with our annual meeting – a time to reflect on the successes and challenges of the previous year and to consider the opportunities for the year ahead. The 2025 annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 26 following the service. This is an especially important meeting because it will be our last annual meeting with Rev. Ann. We need to honor her and recognize the Vestry members who have completed their terms of service – Linda Whitehead and Adele Renne. It will be especially important for the parish to review and approve the budget for 2025.

Treasurer Anne VanDerveer will go over the budget and address the financial impact of a rector search and new dynamic for St. Thomas. In addition, new Vestry members and Diocesan convention delegates will be introduced, and all Vestry and delegates will be voted upon to fill their positions for the ensuing year. With all this business, it is clear to see why your attendance at this meeting is so important.

\*\*\* Ministry chairmen are to provide their committee reports to Parish Administrator JB Hoover by Friday, January 17 in time to be included in the annual report booklet.

## Apostle's Shield



### Jude

This disciple had a string of names – Jude, Judas (not Iscariot), Labbaeus and Thaddeus. How he came to get so many names is a long, mixed-up story that nobody is sure of anyway.

Jude's name is always listed next to Simon's. They may have been brothers, but most people think they were just good friends. Jesus probably sent these two together when he sent his disciples out to minister two by two.

We really know next to nothing about this obscure disciple. He only speaks once in the New Testament when he asks Jesus the question, "Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?" (*John 14:22*)

Jude's symbol in art is a sailboat. This serves to represent him as a great traveler overseas in his work for Christ. He is supposed to have been sent to Edessa, Syria, Arabia, and Mesopotamia.

The story is told that Abgarus, the King of Edessa, was sick and when he heard about Jesus' miraculous powers, he sent for Jesus to come and heal him. Jesus answered, "It is necessary that those things for which I was sent should be completed, after which I shall be received up to Him who sent me. When, therefore, I shall be received into heaven, I shall send one of my disciples who shall heal you." So, Jude is said to have been sent in due time.

## Bishop's Visit to St. Thomas

Our Diocesan Bishop Diana Akiyama visited St. Thomas on Sunday, December 8, and it was a special service indeed. The Bishop presided over the service that included the confirmation of Noah Kaplowitz and the affirmation of Joanne Gross being received into the Episcopal Church/Anglican

Communion. Following the service there was a celebration for Noah and Joanne. The Vestry then met with the Bishop for a thoughtful conversation regarding the health of the parish and future opportunities for St. Thomas.



## GrassRoots Garden

Happy New Year! We hope you have all had a nice holiday season. We have a lot of high hopes for the new year as we line up projects and work on continuing to



improve our infrastructure at the Garden to make our growing operations easier. This winter we are excited to share some of the improvements we are making to our greenhouses.

We have begun with renovating Big Daddy Greenhouse which was due for some major repairs. The plastic needed replacement, and the wooden end wall framing was rotting out. We took the opportunity to reassess our needs with the greenhouses to figure out a new and improved design to help address some challenges we have had in the past. Here are some of the features we are most excited about with this new design:

- Steel framing for the end walls with metal studs for the toe and hip boards – this new structure should last a very long time! And it will be easy to replace just the plastic when needed without having to replace or rebuild any structural components.
- Self-opening vents on each end – we anticipate this helping greatly with moderating greenhouse temperatures in the spring and fall when colder mornings turn into sunny days that heat up the greenhouses fast (and we aren't always able to respond promptly to open them up manually).
- Roll up sides with universal joint handles – the universal joint has many degrees of freedom for the position of the crank arm, allowing us to roll up the sides easily and neatly.
- Metal framed door on the north end that will be much less “gappy” when closed, making it much easier to keep greenhouses warm and less drafty in the winter. On the south end, we are going to have no door in the winter but will be taking the whole south wall of plastic off in the summer to facilitate better airflow in the greenhouse and easier access to the beds.

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- Ridge pole on top of the greenhouse ribs to help stabilize structure and make a clear drainage divide – this should help clear up any past issues we had with water pooling on the top of the greenhouse plastic where the slope was close to level.
- Corrugated metal stem wall around the greenhouse perimeter – this will help hold soil in and create a solid wind barrier around the base of the greenhouse to keep drafts out in the winter.

The next greenhouse slated for improvement is Garden Greenhouse, that in addition to all the features listed above will also get raised up so it is taller and add bracing on the ribs to help weather snow loads in the future. We will also likely make tweaks in the design based on our experiences rebuilding Big Daddy Greenhouse. We are very grateful for our dedicated building crew who have taken on the rebuilding of the greenhouses, and to Windermere Real Estate for the grants that have funded the materials for this project. We are so thrilled about these improvements and are sure they will make a big difference in our greenhouse growing going forward!

**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).

## Altar Flowers



The 2025 schedule of Sundays for altar flowers is posted on the Parish Hall bulletin board. Parish members are encouraged to commit to a Sunday or Sundays and sign up on their preferred date. This is a wonderful opportunity to commemorate a loved one or celebrate a special day.

## Outreach

Following the service on Sunday, December 15, St. Thomas parishioners enjoyed what has become an annual activity since Head Start joined our

campus as a Companion in Ministry. Spearheaded by the Outreach committee who used allocated Outreach funds to purchase a correctly sized sweat-suit set for each child attending the St. Thomas Head Start program, parishioners filled festive bags with the gifted sweatsuits.



## Grace Notes



This column is regularly dedicated to the gracious souls who bless our faith community, but as we close one year and begin a new year, it is only fitting to acknowledge all the members of our parish family. The collective blessing of St. Thomas parishioners was especially apparent on December 22, the Sunday of our Christmas pageant and the greening of the church. It truly was all hands on deck. The pageant was magical with a delightful menagerie of little costumed critters, a mini shepherd and a guiding shepherd, a choir of angels, a jovial inn keeper, a handsome couple as Mary and Joseph, a bright star to enhance the scene, and best of all – the most precious duo taking turns as the baby Jesus. From the wings the director and stagehands could see a congregation smiling with delight and joyfully singing along with the hymns. The narrator was perfection as she recited the delightful poetic script shared by Christ Church Lake Oswego.

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If all this was not enough, parishioners stayed after church to enjoy festive coffee hour treats provided by Judy and Larry Wilson, sustenance that fueled the decorating. The wreaths were hung in the sanctuary; the children decorated the tree in the narthex; and the creche were arranged at the altar, in the narthex and outside at the church entry. Accenting it all were the array of poinsettias in the sanctuary, all contributed by parishioners. This loving and enthusiastic effort contributed to especially beautiful Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.



Hazel and Atlas are getting some encouraging tree decorating assistance from Lewis Kaplowitz, JB Hoover, Katrina Jensen and Sheila Bell.

## *Young Musicians*



For the December 29 service of Lessons and Carols the congregation experienced an additional treat provided by Sophia Marie Easley, the granddaughter of parishioners Debbie and Mark Pezoni. Sophia first graced St. Thomas with her beautiful voice a decade ago when she sang “Ave Maria” a cappella during a 10:00 am service. We were fortunate to have her back in Eugene for Christmas to fill music director Keri Davis’s goal of a YMS performance each month.

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Narrator – Tilda Rohde; Mary – Maggie Meneghin; Joseph – Cole Jones; Choir – The company of angels; Lead Shepherd – Mason Duer; Little shepherd – Lucy Fisher; Animals – Eli Fisher, Atlas and Hazel; Star – Lucy Duer; and the Baby Jesus – William and V.O. Jones



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Since her youthful performance at St. Thomas, Sophia has been very involved in the performing arts with roles in several musical productions and superior ratings recognition in vocal competitions. Sophia is currently a freshman at Texas A and M University in College Station, Texas where she has been a member of the Women's Chorus while studying voice, guitar and piano.

## In Memoriam

Parishioner Nancy Thompson passed peacefully in early December while in assisted living following the passing of her husband Larry several years ago. Nancy and Larry had been devoted members of St. Thomas for many years during which time Nancy was an active member of the Altar Guild. In recent years declining health prevented them from attending services, but they remained faithful congregants of St. Thomas.

On November 30 our dear friend and devoted St. Thomas parishioner Paul Colvin passed peacefully into our Lord's heavenly embrace. Paul and his wife Sue have graced St. Thomas with their presence for decades. Paul was the "keeper of the keys" as he knew every square inch of our parish facilities. He did it all and always without complaint – serving as a Lay Eucharistic Minister, singing in the choir, spearheading the stream team, taking several turns as Senior Warden, and providing wise guidance to the Buildings and Grounds Committee.

A memorial service for Paul will be celebrated at St. Thomas on Saturday, December 4 at 2:00 pm.



This simple country chapel gained fame for being the place where "Silent Night" was written and first performed on Christmas 1818, accompanied by guitar because the organ was out of commission. The carol became popular throughout Europe, and by 1839 it reached the United States where it was performed on Christmas in front of Wall Street's Trinity Church.

"Silent Night" may arguably be the most popular of Christmas carols. Every Christmas Eve when we sing it by candlelight, it never fails that tears come to my eyes, and especially so this Christmas as I gazed at the altar festooned in simple elegance. This hymn of praise is the perfect statement of God's unlimited grace. To think that a baby born of a peasant girl in a crude stable is Emmanuel – God with us! The certainty of God's presence in our lives, the limitless gift of His grace, the profound example of humility, compassion, sacrifice and forgiveness, these are the gifts of Christ's birth.

Perhaps the hymn "Silent Night" is so special because of the quiet strains of the song. There is truly a peacefulness about it that resonates in our souls. It is a song that inspires our best selves to reflect the light that radiates from the holy child in a manger while heavenly hosts sing *Alleluia*.

After the decorations are put away and the Christmas sheet music tucked into the piano bench, may we retain that *silent night* in our hearts and strive for the quiet peace that God longs for us to know – the *peace* that is kind compassion; the *peace* of civil concord; the *peace* of guns silenced; the peace of food and shelter; the *peace* of hugs shared; the *peace* of a *silent night*.

## January Birthdays

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



## January Anniversaries

- 1 Mike and Lauri Watkins

## Reflections

This past spring on a trip to Europe our travels took us on the back roads of Austria on our way to Salzburg. When our guide pointed out the Chapel of St. Nicholas in Oberndorf, Austria, I was able to capture this picture from the window of our motor coach.

