



# *The Beacon*

## *St. Thomas Episcopal Church*



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

March 2025

Volume 26 Issue 3

### **In this Issue:**

- Rector's message
- Endowment News
- Daylight Savings
- Mardi Gras
- Book Group
- Young Musicians
- Apostle's Shield
- GrassRoots Garden
- St. Thomas Memories
- Grace Notes
- Reflections

### **Vestry:**

- Cindy Jensen,  
Sr. Warden
- Joe Tulacz Jr. Warden
- Lucy Barnett
- Susan Christenson
- Chris King
- Nancy Osborne
- Mark Pezzoni
- Mike Richardson
- Holly Spruance

**Rector** – Rev. Ann Gaillard

**Deacon** – Mike Watkins

**Parish Administrator** –  
JB Hoover

**Treasurer** –  
Anne VanDerveer

1465 Coburg Road  
Eugene, Oregon 97401

**Phone:** 541-343-5241

**Email:**

[stthomaschurcheugene@gmail.com](mailto:stthomaschurcheugene@gmail.com)

**Beacon Editor** –  
Cindy Jensen

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



### *From the Rector's Desk*

I'm always grateful when we have a long Season of Epiphany, which we have had this year. It's frustrating to me when Lent starts in early February instead of March because I always feel short-changed. Since Easter is late this year (April 20), Ash Wednesday isn't until March 5, with the first Sunday in Lent on March 9.

At St. Thomas, the downside of having a late Easter is that our wonderful daffodils in the front will have come and gone by Easter Sunday. But having the daffodils in bloom during the month of March is a glorious harbinger of spring and its promise.

As a tribute to our daffodils, I offer to you one of my favorite poems:

### **I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud**

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had  
brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

--William Wordsworth



## ***Endowment News***

As the new chairman of the Endowment Fund Board, I am spending a lot of time familiarizing myself with the ins and outs of being a board chairman. Fortunately, the



Endowment Fund Board has some tremendous people on it, and also some new blood in the person of Cole Jones, who brings a little different perspective due to his youth (at least compared to me). Beverly Jackson was elected secretary to the board, although she has been doing that for us without the formal title.

Our goals for the upcoming year remain much the same, to support existing and new ministries while maintaining a high level of responsibility by investing donors' monies wisely, and to serve God and this parish.

We have made some much needed changes to our Governing Policies (some people call them Bylaws) which were last amended in 2018. The changes were mainly superficial and did not affect our goals or guiding principles.

Again, I want to thank the members of the Endowment Board for their help as I attempt to step into some very big shoes. Duncan Murray has done a superb job during his tenure as Chairman of the Endowment Fund Board, and I want to thank him for his years of service to our St. Thomas parish.

Paul Barnett

Chair, St. Thomas Endowment Fund Board

## ***Looking Ahead***

Due to the editor's travel schedule, the next edition of the Beacon will be a combined April/May production. Those wishing to submit information for the next Beacon, including May notices, must have content to the editor no later than Tuesday, March 25.

## ***"Shrove Sunday" Event***



The St. Thomas choir will host coffee hour following the March 2 service. This is their annual "Shrove Sunday" Mardi Gras Celebration complete with the traditional "King's Cake." Plan on staying after church to join in the festivities. Past events have proven to be great fun, so you will not want to miss out. And of course, honor the choir and their wonderful contributions to our worship services by supporting their annual fundraiser with your donation dollars that help to fund new music materials. During the festivities last year's palms from the Palm Sunday service will be burned in order to make the ashes for Ash Wednesday.

And believe it or not, Ash Wednesday is upon us. Ash Wednesday service (with imposition of ashes) is scheduled for noon on Wednesday, March 5.



**Lent Begins  
Ash Wednesday**

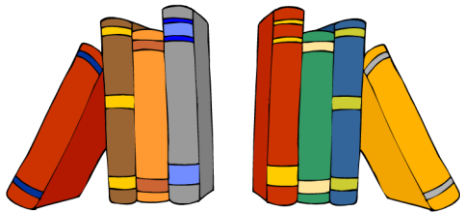
**March 5 – noon service**

## ***Daylight Savings Time***

Be sure to set your clocks forward before you go to bed on March 8 as **Daylight Savings Time begins at 1:00 am on March 9**. You don't want to be late for church!



## St. Thomas Book Group



Here is a thought provoking title for the March read selected by the St. Thomas Ladies Book Group – Jesus at Walmart by Rich Leland. No doubt the Book Group members will have much to consider as they gather to discuss the book on Thursday, March 27 at 1:30 pm in the Parish Library. As always, interested readers are welcome to join in the conversation.

## St. Patrick's Day Monday, March 17



On this unofficial holiday in the US, it seems like everyone claims to be Irish. However you celebrate, take a moment to reflect on the beauty of this island nation, the determination of its people, and the contribution of Irish immigrants to the United States. A couple of worthwhile books to consider:

How the Irish Saved Civilization by Thomas Cahill  
The Immortal Irishman by Timothy Egan

### *An Irish Blessing*

*May love and laughter light your days  
and warm your heart and home,  
May good and faithful friends be yours  
wherever you may roam,  
May peace and plenty bless your world  
with joy that long endures,  
May all life's passing seasons  
bring the best to you and yours.*

## Grace Notes



St. Thomas parishioners give of their time, talent and treasure in many ways – examples of loving *grace*. You may have noticed one of our latest gifts to the parish – a new piece of furniture in the Library. Keri Davis, our music director, donated a roll top desk to the church. Joe Konieczka moved the zoom connections into the desk, and now we have a much improved set up for using this important system. Our thanks go to Keri for this very generous gift to St. Thomas. And thanks to Joe for his ever cheerful attention to facility fixes.



## St. Thomas Memories



In the February 2025 *Beacon* edition parishioners were invited to share their St. Thomas memories, the stories that recount the joys, challenges, and evolution of our faith community. Perhaps the following account will inspire your own special memories as you have shared your faith-

filled spirit with your St. Thomas family. Remembrances can be verbally shared with the editor who will happily transcribe for publication in future *Beacon* editions.

*Continued on page 4*



*Continued from page 3*

Our family arrived at St. Thomas when the Education Building was just completed. That was fifty years ago. At that time this very functional building was truly a multi-purpose facility. Five days a week morning classes were held for the preschool, which accommodated four classes – two classes of three-year-olds on Tuesday and Thursday and two classes of four-year-olds on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Then every Sunday morning there were multiple classes of children attending Sunday school – an infant nursery, preschool class, first/second grade class, and third-fifth grade class. Middle school youth met in the church “board room” and high school youth met in the “farmhouse.” Yes, there were that many young people spread out on our campus on Sunday morning. Following the service and coffee hour, parishioners pitched in to reset the classrooms to make them ready for preschool Monday morning.

The Education building had a large kitchen to accommodate the many potluck dinners held on Sunday evenings. Those lively events were followed by an intensive work session to reset the large classroom for Preschool the next day. There were also occasional Sunday morning breakfasts held between the 8:00 am and 10:00 am services. On a beautiful Sunday morning drive to church in May to assist with the pancake breakfast, this parishioner remembers hearing three very loud sonic booms. Later that day we learned those *booms* were the result of Mt. St. Helens erupting.

Yes, our church has been the setting of so much history in its sixty-five plus years, but we do not lament the memory of what was. We celebrate all that we have become as a faith community and embrace the opportunities that will enable us to continue to thrive.

## ***Outreach***

The focus this month is to remember our commitment to St. John the Divine and their efforts to address the needs of those challenged



with food insecurity and homelessness. The food contributions parishioners bring to church on Sundays to fill our food basket help to stock the St. John’s food pantry. The money redeemed from the bottles and cans we bring to church to support our *creation care* commitment benefits the St. John’s program to provide housing to several individuals in housing transition. Thank you to those who faithfully continue to contribute to these outreach efforts, and if you have not done so, please consider this opportunity to put your *love into action*.

## ***Young Musicians’ Program***

The February 23 service provided a special treat as Brenna Scott joined the choir and presented as the visiting young musician representing the St. Thomas endowed



program to feature young musicians in the community. Brenna sang the prelude and the mid-service anthem, and as she regaled us with her beautiful voice, she did not disappoint. In addition to being treated to these bright young musical artists, it is inspiring to learn of their activities that enrich our community.

Brenna has been playing the euphonium for 7 years. As a senior at Sheldon High School, she is an active participant in the concert band, the marching band, and serves as the Band Council President. In addition, she is the co-costume manager for the Sheldon Theater program. Brenna participates in community musical theater at the Shedd Institute, where she hopes to continue working after high school graduation. Her plans are to major in theater at the University of Oregon with the goal of making a career out of her passion.

## ***Welcome Spring ~ March 20!***



## Apostle's Shield

Judas Iscariot was the only one of the Twelve disciples who was not from Galilee. "Iscariot" means "man of Kerioth," a town in southern Judea. He may very well have been a businessman who knew how to take care of money matters; at any rate, he acted as treasurer for the Twelve.



Judas was the betrayer of Jesus. He sold him to the high priests for the price of a slave, thirty pieces of silver. Perhaps Judas thought that the crowd would come to Jesus' rescue and save him. Whatever Judas's thoughts were at the beginning, when he saw his master condemned to death on the cross, he was overcome with grief, but it was too late. He returned to the priests with the money they had given him and tried to call off the deal. They would not hear of it, nor would they take back the money. Maddened, Judas threw the thirty pieces of silver at them saying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." Then he went and hanged himself.

In some places, Judas's shield is a row of thirty coins above a rope coiled to make the letter "J." But at St. Thomas, Judas's shield is simply a blank.



Well, it is quite the transition going from ice temperatures to balmy days in a week! It is feeling like spring, and at GrassRoots we are well into our seedling season, starting our transplants in our nursery greenhouse. There is hardly anything so satisfying as seeing a seed germinate into a little plant.

We have an exciting update to share with regards to our nursery set-up this year. We are experimenting with a compost-heated greenhouse bench! Many of

you who have dabbled in gardening know that soil temperature is very important to seed germination rate and speed. In the past we have used heat mats and extension cords, but we had problems with keeping the extension cords from being tripping hazards, and with having our starts in smaller cells dry out.

Enter the compost-heated greenhouse bench! It's a massive compost pile (4 feet X 8 feet X 3 feet) contained in a pallet structure. As the material composts, it produces heat from the metabolisms of all the microorganisms doing the composting. No extension cords needed! It gives off a very humid heat, so fewer issues with seeded cells drying out. And at the end of the season we will have a large volume of compost we can use in the Garden! We didn't even use much in the way of fossil fuels (only transport of materials) to make it happen! We also invented a data-logger thermometer set-up so we can monitor the temperature in real time in a soil tray on top of the compost as well as a "control tray" on a different bench in the greenhouse.



We based our compost bench off the design in a publication by Commonwealth Urban Farm in Oklahoma City. They have been using compost to heat their winter and spring greenhouses for a few years now. We are still learning how best to utilize our set-up, and we are already scheming on design changes for next year, but even in this experimental phase we are seeing some promising results. The first two weeks it was too hot on top for ideal germination with temperatures between 90 and 100 degrees in a tray of soil on top even when it was below freezing outside! We made a tunnel of row

*Continued on page 6*

*Continued from page 5*

cover to channel the excess heat down to the benches next to it, and we've seen faster-than-last-year germination rates despite the very cold temperatures we had in mid-February. Not to mention that the whole greenhouse is staying warmer at night with this huge compost pile generating heat 24-7.



This past week the surface of the compost bench has come into the ideal temperature range for germination. We have placed some of our more challenging seeds that tend to have poor germination this time of year (parsley, other assorted herbs, and lettuce) on top to see how they do with compost heat. Hopefully they will germinate better than usual, and we will have an exciting update to share on how compost bench 1.0 performed this year.

**Swale work party Saturday, March 8, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm**

**Early Spring Garden Hours:** Tues, Thurs and Sat from 9am to 4pm. GrassRoots Garden is located at 1465 Coburg Road, across from Safeway and behind St. Thomas Episcopal Church. For further information contact Merry Bradley at [merrybradley@foodforlandcounty.org](mailto:merrybradley@foodforlandcounty.org) or 458-221-0652.

## *Reflections*



### *Our journey toward hope*

A Christmas gift from my daughter has become a daily gift and a new approach to Bible study. A Beautiful Year in the Bible is a comprehensive workbook leading one through daily meditation by reading seven passages selected throughout the Bible that relate to the weekly theme. Initially the idea of taking time out of each day to diligently attend to this “task” was met with a quiet groan as I wondered how I would carve out the time. But it was important to honor my daughter’s gift, and now I find I look forward to that quiet time of reflection.

The gift has been a revelation as I gain a deeper understanding of the Old Testament Bible stories I learned as a child, rejoice in the beautiful poetry of the Psalms, and find the revelations of Isaiah to be visually powerful. By following the thoughtful guide in the weekly lessons, the power of Christ’s teachings through parables and loving instruction resonate, and Paul’s rambling sentences in the Epistles gain clarity.

But what has been the greatest gift is the quiet calm experienced in the midst of an anxious time. In those moments of reading and reflecting, my anxiety is quelled, my breathing slowed, my heart settles. With God’s grace there is a clearer perspective. It is not just a simple verse in Psalm 30:5 “...weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.” That is the powerful message of faith, that God’s grace will prevail. In a world that seems to be in upheaval, holding onto faith is not futile. Faith and hope are the foundation for overcoming difficult times.

*Continued on page 7*



The workbook provides this inspiring quote from Episcopal priest Barbara Brown Taylor who states in her book Learning to Walk in the Dark, "I have learned things in the dark that I could never have learned in the light." Challenges are essential to our spiritual growth and journey, and through faith God enables us to navigate those times of trouble and despair. Our faith assures us we are not alone as God joins us on our journey toward hope.

*Be strong and take heart,  
all you who hope in the Lord.  
Psalm 31:24*



**March Birthdays**

15 Barbara Hemphill  
16 Debbie Pezzoni

**March Anniversaries**

6 Larry and Judy Wilson  
Dave Fredmonsky and  
Gayle Morgan

## ***March Calendar Highlights***

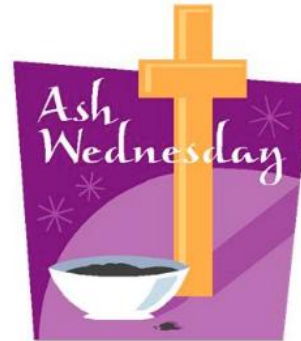
**March 1 – Event** (Parish Hall)

**March 2 – “Shrove Sunday”**

Mardi Gras Celebration  
hosted by the Choir

**March 5 – Ash Wednesday**

Noon service and imposition of ashes



**March 6 – Finance Committee** 10:00 am

**March 7 – Facilities Committee** 10:30 am

**March 9 – Daylight Savings Time Begins**

**March 9 – Vestry Meeting** (Library)

Following the Sunday service

**March 15 – Event** (Parish Hall)

**March 21 & 22 – Event** (Parish Hall)

**March 27 – Ladies Book Group** 1:30 pm  
(Library)