



# *The Beacon*

## *St. Thomas Episcopal Church*



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

December 2025/January 2026

Volume 26 Issue 11

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- Lucy Barnett
- Susan Christensen
- Chris King
- Nancy Osborne
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### *Senior Warden's Message ~*

In coordination with the Search Committee's work to launch the Parish Profile and pursue publication of our intention to call a new rector for St. Thomas, the Vestry has been tasked with completing the OTM form – Office of Transitory Ministry. What was described as a simple cut and paste document from the Parish Profile is in truth a comprehensive overview of our Parish functions, ministries, and spirit of our faith community. As Senior Warden the actual drafting of the document responses fell to me, but I was blessed with thoughtful content suggestions and editing from both Vestry and Search Committee members.

While initially a daunting task, what I realized as I considered appropriate responses to the questions and formulated those responses is that our St. Thomas church houses a very special faith community – devoted to the church and campus, committed to the success of our Companions in Ministry, dedicated to our outreach endeavors, and especially caring of one another. Church is not just the number of parishioners in the pews. It is the size of the heartfelt shared spirit of community that truly matters. Our St. Thomas faith community has a big, vibrant heart. It was my joy to express that very real description of our parish as I responded to the OTM questions.

Likewise, the Search Committee, with the capable writing skills of Tricia Crisafulli, presented a beautiful and very real picture of St. Thomas in the Parish Profile. Both the Profile and the OTM have been approved by the Vestry and will now be sent to the Canon to the Ordinary, Chris Craun, and Bishop Akiyama for their review and edits. Once that step is accomplished, the Profile and OTM will be posted nationally to attract interest for a new rector at St. Thomas. Then the next step of the Search review and vetting begins. Parishioners will have an opportunity to read these documents, and I trust all will share my heartfelt pride in the faith community to which we are all devoted.

*Faithfully,*



## ***Advent Events***

This Advent Season we will enjoy the fun of greening the church on Sunday, December 14 following the 10:00 am service. Of course, coffee hour goodies will energize our efforts. Any children present will decorate the tree in the Narthex with ornaments created by former Sunday School children.

It will be a busy morning on December 14 as the Outreach Committee will orchestrate the filling of gift bags for the children at our St. Thomas Head Start location. This has become a much appreciated St. Thomas tradition.

On Sunday, December 21 we will once again enjoy our intergenerational pageant celebrating the birth of the Christ Child. You won't want to miss this special celebration of the season.

Christmas Eve at St. Thomas will be shared with the congregation of St. John The Divine with the Rev. Nancy Gallagher presiding. The service this year will be held at 4:00 pm followed by a singing of carols with our St. John's guests joining us.

## ***Endowment Fund News***

The Endowment Board met on Sunday, December 7 during which time chairman Paul Barnett reported that the fund total is \$317,017.72 with the following allocations: \$299,945.48 in the Oregon Community Foundation investment portfolio; \$10,240.45 in an interest bearing CD with Columbia Bank; \$6,831.79 in a checking account with Columbia Bank. The funds in the CD have been allocated to the 2026 church budget, slated for withdrawal when the fund rolls over in four months. It is truly a blessing that this fund has grown to the point that we are able to



access some of the earnings to assist with payment of parish ministries and essential capital improvements.

## ***Altar Flowers***

Our tradition at St. Thomas is to adorn the altar with poinsettias to enhance the greens mounted on the pillars. It is a lovely festive setting that warms our hearts and enriches our worship experience. Contributions to the Christmas floral arrangement and poinsettias will be due Wednesday, December 17. A form to include with your contribution and designation of memorials or tributes is printed on the back page of this Beacon edition.



By the end of the month the schedule of Sundays for altar flowers will be 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.

## ***St. Thomas Ladies Book Group***



The St. Thomas Ladies Book Group takes a holiday season break in December, but these avid readers will resume their monthly gatherings on Thursday, January 22 as they share their impressions of their first book selections for 2026 – The Thursday Murder Club by Richard Osman.

All the selected readings for 2026 are posted on the Parish Hall bulletin board. Interested readers can follow along during the course of the year reading these recommended books. The book group also provides the used books located on the shelves in the Narthex. Check out the books for sale – 50 cents for paperbacks and \$1.00 for hard backs. The proceeds go to support St. Thomas Outreach projects.

## Outreach

The St. Thomas Outreach Committee and by extension our faith community has made an impact during November and the outreach continues through December and into the New Year. The Outreach Committee hosted a wonderful lunch on November 16 celebrating the launch of Tricia Crisafulli's latest book in the Ohnita Harbor Mystery series. Attendants were treated to a reading from The Secrets of the Old Post Cemetery, and best of all, \$2000 was raised to support the work of St. Thomas Outreach.

St Thomas parish was enthusiastically represented in the One Hope Thanksgiving box packaging at the Moshofsky Center where nearly 2,000 boxes of non-perishables and small gifts were packed with assistance from the Oregon Duck football team.



St. Thomas food box packers included Anne VanDerveer, Joe Konieczka, Joe Tulacz, Gloria Baker and Pat Commins. Enthusiastic workers not shown were Lori, Lucy and Eli Fisher and Tricia Crisafulli.



Also in November the Outreach committee used some of their budgeted funds to support local food pantries that had been overwhelmed by increased food assistance due to the government shutdown. St. Thomas Outreach sent checks to the following agencies:

- \$1,000 – Food for Lane County
- \$500 – The Shepherd's Table at St. John the Divine
- \$250 – St. Matthew's The Big Pray Food Pantry
- \$250 – The Food Hub

In December the annual cold weather drive is underway with the collection of H.U.G.S. – hats, underwear, gloves and socks. A collection box is located under the Narthex table. The highlight giving activity occurs December 14 when we will pack the gift bags with sweatsuits and small gifts for the children at the Head Start St. Thomas location.

In January the Outreach committee will meet to plan a schedule of "hands on" outreach activities to enable all who are able to engage in outreach service experiences one a month.

## Grace Notes



The faithful servants that seamlessly attend to the altar preparations for every service throughout the church calendar year are truly the unsung saints at St. Thomas. The Altar Guild ladies and gentlemen are capably led by Linda Whitehead. On assigned services they arrive on Saturday morning to prepare the appropriate priest's vestments, service linen and implements and set the altar for the Sunday service.

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Following the service they reverently “clear the table” and properly store all the implements. Throughout the year they make sure that the altar candles are filled with oil, the brass fixtures are polished, appropriate floral adornments are in place, and the linens are cleaned and ironed. These are ongoing tasks that require reverence and grace to carry out, and their devoted efforts merit our appreciation. During the special seasons of the church year like Advent, their attention to the altar details is even more demanding. We give thanks and praise to these altar angels: Linda Whitehead and her ever-reliable team including Tom Whitehead, Anne VanDerveer, Joe Konieczka, Judy and Larry Wilson, Dale Bixler, and Nancy Barton. Ed Johnson polishes the silver and brass and Sue Colvin irons the linens. As with any of our parish ministries, new volunteers are always welcome and will be thoughtfully trained.

## ***GrassRoots Garden***



### **Carrot Harvest Day 2025**

**Join in the Family Fun!** GrassRoots Garden will again stage its annual **Carrot Harvest Day on Saturday, December 13.** Arrive at 10:30 AM to select your spot for harvesting the biggest carrots. We pull at 11:00 AM sharp. We'll enjoy carrot ginger soup, carrot cake, hot crusty Metropol bread and hot chocolate while the carrots are judged. Prizes will be awarded for the heaviest, longest and most unique carrots.

We hope this year's celebration brings out past and present friends of GrassRoots to the Garden. We'll acknowledge the challenges and celebrate the successes of 2025 and make plans for our 35<sup>th</sup> growing season ahead. It's great fun for the whole family. We hope to see you there!

**“Give a Gift that Grows!”** Our Adopt-a-Plot Program at FOOD for Lane County GrassRoots Garden can fill many of your holiday needs. This worthy GrassRoots fundraiser allows you to select and sponsor a 40-foot vegetable bed from over 100 producing beds while honoring a friend, relative or associate with a gift that grows throughout the 2026 gardening year. You may want to visit the Garden and choose a bed from sections with names such as Ladybird Beetle, Dragonfly, or Damselfly or other beneficial insects.

Apple, Pear, Asian Pear, Cherry and Plum trees also make a great gift, heralding the seasons with blossoms in the Spring and lovely fruit in the Fall. Choose a specific tree from over 100 trees in the orchards and if you wish create your own garden tag or marker to give with your gift. Each bed, tree, or compost bin can be sponsored for a one-year fee of \$50. The kiwi arbor, berry patches, greenhouses and other structures and gardens are also available for adoption in 2026 from \$250 to \$1000 each. Donors of \$50 or more include name placement on our Donor Recognition Wall. We can send you an Adopt-a-Plot brochure and donation form via email: Please contact Jen Anonia at [jen@foodforlanecounty.org](mailto:jen@foodforlanecounty.org).

**New Winter 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 or [merrybradley@foodforlanecounty.org](mailto:merrybradley@foodforlanecounty.org).

## ***Search Committee News***

I'm pleased to tell you that your Search Committee and Vestry have made good progress over the last month!

St. Thomas' first communication with prospective rectors is the **Parish Profile**. This 11 page document describes our church, its history, ministries, finances and goals. Our Vestry has approved this key report, which will be available to applicants online. Thanks to our Tricia Crisafulli for the many hours she spent creating and editing this Profile.

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Our Diocese also requires an **Office of Transition Ministry (“OTM”) Profile**. This is a highly detailed description of St. Thomas’ worship and community. Senior Warden Cindy Jensen created the OTM profile in her well written fashion and got it approved by our Vestry in record time. Thanks, Cindy!

By the time you read this both Parish and OTM Profiles will have been submitted to the Diocese for approval.

Finally, but far from least, our Maggie Meneghin is working with the Diocese’s Communications Dept. to prepare the social media arm of our search. Please join me in thanking Maggie for her efforts.

In sum, January finds us ready to take the next step in our search, which is seeking applicants for the office of Rector, St. Thomas Episcopal Church!

Duncan Murray, Chair

## ***Annual Parish Meeting***



The Annual Parish Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 25 at 11:30 am following the service. Coffee hour will be extra special that day to enhance our gathering. Because we are a parish in transition, attendance is especially important. The meeting will include reports of committees, approval of the budget for 2026, an update on the Search process and election of Vestry and Convention delegates. Ministry reports are to be sent to the Parish Administrator no later than Friday, January 16 to allow time for the assembly of the Parish Annual Report Booklet.

## **December Birthdays**

- 21 Larry Wilson
- 25 Dave Fredmonsky
- 30 Adeline Hoover



## ***Reflections***



Last Christmas I received a book from our daughter that required considerable commitment, and I confess, I was anxious about being able to follow through with the reading assignments. *A Year in the Bible* is a collection of 52 essays – one a week – with seven Bible readings to compliment the theme of each essay. The selections are scattered throughout the Bible, but by the end of the year the full Bible has been read. This was an enlightening approach and I have thoroughly enjoyed immersing myself in the Bible in this way. It was certainly a different approach from my Sunday School classes as a child and later as a teacher, or the weekly readings assigned to Sunday services. In both the Old and New Testament readings I gained a fresh perspective and a considerable degree of comfort during a year when human suffering, adversity and natural disasters have seemed endless.

But these are conditions that have prevailed throughout the ages, and the Bible certainly attests to that. But the Bible is also a book of *hope* for God’s grace prevails throughout the pages of the Bible that tell the *good news* of God’s presence in our lives. During this season of Advent we wait in wonder for the light of God’s enduring love that overcomes the darkness in our world. But the awesome wonder of the promise of Christ coming into our lives does not need to be confined to a liturgical season. It is a faithfulness that can be practiced daily. By our faith we know that Emmanuel is the light that overcomes the darkness, the grace that has the power to unify us by the love of Christ.

*Share the grace you have received and be the light you wish to see.*



## *Advent and Christmastide at St. Thomas*

**Sunday, November 30**

10:00 am Holy Eucharist at St. Matthew's

*The lighting of the Advent wreath begins with the candle for Hope.  
The Joy, Love and Peace candles will be lighted on successive Sundays.*

**Sunday, December 7**

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**Sunday, December 14**

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, followed by the Greening of the Church

*During Coffee hour please join the members of the Outreach Committee  
to pack the sweatsuits we are giving to our Head Start children for Christmas.*

**Sunday, December 21**

10:00 am Holy Eucharist with Christmas Pageant

*Get into the Christmas spirit by enjoying an intergenerational presentation of the  
Nativity story. Then after the service, join the fun of decorating the church and narthex  
for Christmas!*

**Wednesday, December 24 – Christmas Eve**



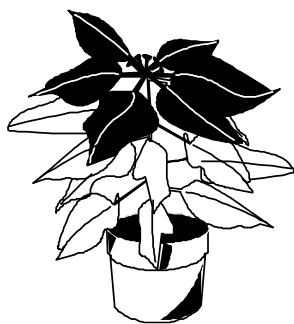
4:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist followed by Carol Sing

*A joyful celebration of the Nativity with music to usher in the birth of our Lord.  
Join us immediately afterwards outside to sing Christmas Carols.*

**Sunday, December 28 – Christmas II**

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Lessons & Carols and Holy Eucharist



## *FLOWERS FOR CHRISTMAS*

Dear friends,

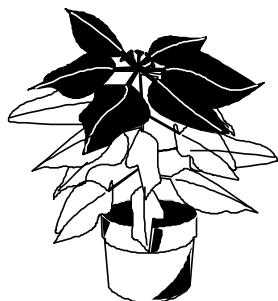
As we do every year, we are inviting you to contribute to the Christmas flowers to decorate the church. Your contribution will be toward both the altar flower arrangement and the poinsettias. The suggested contribution is \$25, but any amount is totally fine. Please make sure we receive your contribution by Wednesday, December 17, so that we can add your name to the list of persons donating in the Christmas Eve 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 "Christmas flowers" in the memo line. Thank you!



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