



The Beacon

St. Thomas Episcopal Church



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

March 2026

Volume 27 Issue 2

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Vestry:

- Joe Tulacz, Sr. Warden
- John Banks
- Susan Christenson
- Nancy Osborne
- Mark Pezzoni
- Mike Richardson
- Holly Spruance

Deacon – Mike Watkins

Parish Administrator –
JB Hoover

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/>



A Message from the Senior Warden

As the first signs of spring begin to emerge in our gardens and community, we are reminded that St. Thomas' work of renewal is also unfolding. We know that spring is not just a season of the calendar, but a season of new growth.

A Season of Lay Leadership: While we are in this time of transition, I want to celebrate the extraordinary "springing up" of leadership within our own pews. Our lay congregation has not only stepped into the gap – the parish is thriving. From the beauty of our liturgy and music to the depth of our outreach, facilities, grounds, securing supply priests, etc., our congregation is proving that fellowship is the heartbeat of our church. We are not a community "in waiting" – we are a community in motion, led by the soul of our laity.

Thank you,

St. Warden Joe Tulacz



Welcome Spring ~ March 20!

Endowment News

Our St. Thomas Endowment Fund is an investment that contributes to the financial future of our parish. Currently the fund balance is \$317,285.



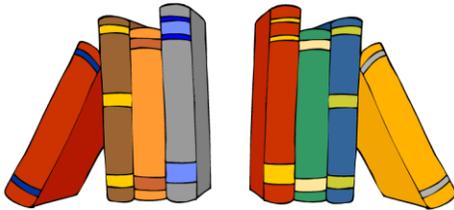
The 2026 budget allows for an expenditure from the Endowment Fund of \$5,000 to support Outreach and \$2,400 to fund a continuation of the Young Musicians Program.

Music Director Keri Davis selects and orchestrates the young musician performances on one service a month. The next Young Musician presentation will be at our Easter Sunday service on April 5.

The Endowment board will be meeting in early spring.

Paul Barnett
Chair, St. Thomas Endowment Fund Board

St. Thomas Book Group



The St. Thomas Book Group selection for March is Mink River by Brian Doyle, a title that inspires visions of cute and playful critters frolicking in a mountain stream. Perhaps the title inspires one to read the book to find out. Or one could slip into the meeting on Thursday, March 26 at 1:30 pm in the Parish Hall Library, as interested readers of the female sort are always welcome. Book discussions are always lively and informative when this group of avid readers gets together.

Daylight Savings Time

Be sure to set your clocks forward before you go to bed on March 7 as **Daylight Savings Time begins at 1:00 am on March 8**. You don't want to be late for church!



Outreach

The Outreach Committee is planning to make good use of the Endowment Fund allocation of \$5,000, which will be supplemented by income from the Birthday



Box and the book club's on-going book sale. The committee may also choose to repeat its fundraiser potluck, which has been successful in the past.

A "hands on" initiative is being orchestrated by the Outreach Committee to engage parishioners in community outreach on a monthly rotation. The opportunities for outreach engagement include:

- Once-a-month assistance at the St. Matthew's food pantry
- Once-a-month assistance at the Saturday pantry at St. John's
- After church assistance packing the Community counseling Center NOURISH food boxes
- Visiting with parishioners in their senior living accommodations

Scheduling of these outreach engagement opportunities will be posted in future editions of the *Beacon* and participation is encouraged.

Buildings and Grounds

During the last weekend in February and the first week of March there will be considerable activity centered around the Parish Hall Library as the furniture is moved out, floors



stripped, walls painted, and new flooring installed. The well-used carpet is being replaced by premium flooring that will be much easier to clean and maintain, while retaining an attractive appearance. This improvement to the Library is due to the generous anonymous contribution from a parishioner and lovingly honors Paul Colvin who gave so graciously of his time and capabilities to the maintenance of our church buildings and grounds.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee calls for "all hands on deck" for the annual parish clean up on

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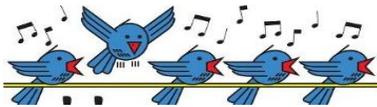
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Saturday, March 28, the day before Palm Sunday. Work begins at 10:00 am, and tasks include power washing the walkways and entry, washing windows, dusting cobwebs and anything else that needs attention. Consider spending a couple hours of cleaning fun and fellowship to show our pride for our church home.

For those crafters among us, there will be the traditional palm cross construction opportunity. Palm Sunday is a 5th Sunday of the month, so we will be hosting parishioners from St. John's and St. Matthew's in a shared service. We will need a surplus of palm crosses!



Grace Notes



During this time of transition for our parish, Deacon Mike Watkins is a true blessing. We have come to appreciate his steady support of our worship services and often enlightening sermons, but with the absence of a rector Mike is grace personified. Not only is Mike the reliable attendant to our supply clergy before and during services, but he is taking on the heavy load of pastoral care. Mike coordinates with JB the distribution of gas and food cards to those underserved individuals in the community who frequent our church for outreach assistance. He faithfully visits parishioners who are unable to attend services or are in need of prayerful visits. During Lent he is leading the discussion group meeting after church for seven Sundays to thoughtfully consider readings from the book Mysteries of Faith by Mark McIntosh.

In addition to all that Mike is doing to help sustain our faith community, he will be leading *Stations of the Cross* services at 1:00 pm every Friday during Lent. Parishioners are encouraged to attend this especially meaningful time of worship. The Stations of the Cross icons were a gift to St. Thomas and first installed last year to be used annually during Lent and through Easter. Mounting these special icons during this sacred season allows us to share

one more tradition that binds us together as a faith community.

St. Thomas History



(The following is a continuation of St. Thomas church history; see the February 2026 Beacon edition for part 1. First written by Ferne Hoffman and updated by Cindy Jensen.)

After Fr. Tainton retired in 1982, Fr. Granville Waldron was called and served as Rector until 1986. During the two-year

search for a new rector, Fr. Don Wilson served as interim. Fr. Ralph Haynes came to St. Thomas in 1987 and served as Rector for 12 years. After Fr. Haynes retired, a search was conducted, during which time Fr. Jack Shoemaker served as interim. In 2001 Fr. Jeremy Tyndall was called from England to be the rector at St. Thomas. Fr. Tyndall served the parish until 2008. Rev. Peter Fones served as interim during another search effort that extended across the country until Rev. Court Williams came to St. Thomas from Chicago and served as rector for six years. After another extensive search during which time Rev. Doug Hale served as interim, Rev. Ann Gaillard was called to serve the parish in 2017.

St. Thomas has benefited from the assistance of several Deacons. In the early years of the parish, Dave Shulda assisted Fr. Ted Tainton. From 2011 to 2017 Deacon Carter Hawley served the parish along with the Diocese of Oregon. In 2019 Deacon Mike Watkins was assigned to St. Thomas and serves the parish to this day.

St. Thomas has also sponsored candidates for seminary training. These include the Rev. Risa Thew, Rev. Peter Fones and Rev. Ryan Baker-Fones.

Whether we are gathered with our Christian family around the altar rail to share the sacred meal or in prayers, praise, Bible study, worship or fellowship we are offered opportunities to be aware of the presence of God in our lives.

GrassRoots Garden



Welcome, St. Thomas parishioners, to GrassRoots Garden's 35th growing season!

This will be a special year of celebration as we grow abundant crops while teaching sustainable, regenerative organic gardening; healthy cooking and food preservation; and essential life and job skills—all while creating and supporting a unique and diverse community. So, what is GrassRoots Garden?

Founded in 1991, GrassRoots Garden is a tri-affiliation community garden created and supported by OSU County Master Gardeners, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, and FOOD For Lane County, along with the generosity and efforts of a caring community.

At GrassRoots, we say that we grow food for ourselves and for others, because anyone who participates in the Garden is welcome to share the harvest. If only those with the lowest incomes were allowed to take food, many might feel too visible or vulnerable. Since anyone who grows food inevitably produces more than they can consume, we invite all participants to share in the harvest. This shared investment ensures both the success of the crops and the strength of the community.

In addition to gardening, we have an outdoor kitchen where we prepare a full-spectrum, nutritious, delicious lunch that we sit down and eat together every day. Through this process, we teach proper food handling and food safety, while also learning how to cook, preserve, and put up the harvest.

Why is this such an important part of our program? Many people today eat mostly fast or processed food, so freshly prepared meals can taste unfamiliar at first. But if we don't cook, eat, and appreciate the food grown in the Garden, why grow it at all? At

GrassRoots, we are re-educating taste buds—one person at a time.

We've also found that when people work together and eat together, they bond. Community members connect, become extended family to one another, share their lives, and support each other by networking, sharing resources, and helping one another move forward through life's challenges.

While teaching gardening, cooking, and life skills, we also teach people how to teach others through a learn-by-doing, each-one-teach-one approach. In this way, we grow garden and kitchen educators—and, together, we create and pass on the world we want to live in.

Possibly the most important thing we do at GrassRoots is help people learn how to work together and get along—skills needed everywhere, all the time.

More about GrassRoots today and how we got here is coming soon.

Winter Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. GrassRoots Garden is located at 1465 Coburg Road, across from Safeway, behind St. Thomas Episcopal Church. For more information, contact Merry Bradley at 458-221-0652 or merrybradley@foodforlanecounty.org

Ushers

We are happy to announce that Mike Richardson is joining the USHER team. Mike works for the City of Eugene as the shipping manager. He also does security work for Crowd Management Services.

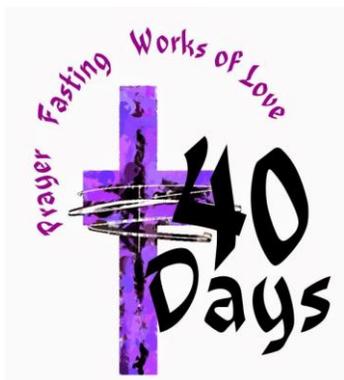
Mike is the sitting Master of Creswell Masonic Lodge #112 and President of the Eugene/Springfield Shrine Club.

A St. Thomas member since 2017, Mike serves as a Lay Eucharist Minister and is on the Vestry.

Please join us in welcoming Mike to our Usher team and thanking him for his service.

Sandra and Duncan Murray
Co-Chairs for the Usher Team

A Message for Lent



During this season of Lent there are many opportunities for prayerful reflection. The February 19 Diocesan Digest arrived in this editor's inbox the day after Ash Wednesday, and the letter from the Presiding Bishop, The Most Rev. Sean Rowe provided a thought provoking beginning to my Lenten reflections.

In his message Bishop Rowe refers back to the 1928 Book of Common Prayer and the Ash Wednesday service as he refers to this quote from Lamentations: "Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned." Bishop Rowe states, "I believe that as we Episcopalians turn, as we fast and pray for the conversion of our hearts, we can make a great witness to a world that has been brought to its knees by the power of hatred and division." He goes on to say that "like the apostle Paul, the conversion of the heart that we must undertake may start with a blinding light, but the ongoing change it requires is the work of a lifetime, and may require everything we have." You are encouraged to take the time to read this heartfelt and powerful message.

On Palm Sunday, March 29 at 8:00 pm Eastern time (5:00 pm Pacific time) Bishop Rowe will host a service on Zoom. Further information and the link coming soon.

March Birthdays

15 Barbara Hemphill
16 Debbie Pezzoni

March Anniversaries

6 Larry and Judy Wilson
Dave Fredmonsky and



Gayle Morgan

Search Committee News



Starting in mid-January your Search Committee posted our rector search in the *Episcopal News Service* ("ENS"). Emailed daily to subscribers nation-wide, ENS is the key publication for clergy seeking new churches and churches seeking new rectors.

As of February 6, 535 readers had viewed our posting. Four actually clicked through to the job description. As of this writing we have yet to receive an application. You and your Search Committee would have preferred more "hits." But, as we all might guess, demand for three quarters time positions is less than we'd prefer.

In our recent monthly update, Search Committee member Tricia Crisafulli urged each of us to think of someone we know who might know of a priest interested in relocating to the beautiful Pacific Northwest. Maybe it's someone at a church you used to go to or one at a church you visited. Or maybe it's someone who might know someone of interest. If you learn of a potential candidate, please speak with a Search Committee member.

Your Search Committee includes Tricia Crisafulli, Cindy Jensen, Maggie Meneghin, Joe Tulacz, and me. Any of us would be more than glad to hear your ideas. Once again we must remind ourselves to be patient – God's timeline may not be ours! Just as important, each of us must live in hope, knowing that when we pray "Thy will be done on Earth..." is exactly what will happen.

Duncan Murray, Chair

Reflections



On a visit to Ireland Crough Patrick captivated my attention. It is part of Irish lore that St. Patrick climbed this mountain where he meditated and fasted on the summit. The mountain in the Connemara Range near the seaport of Galway is named for St. Patrick. The trail up the mountain, worn down by centuries of pilgrims making the climb of penitence on St. Patrick's Day, can be seen from miles away.

We are a diverse nation and a melting pot of races, nationalities, cultural traditions, and religious practices. While we recognize and honor the indigenous people who first occupied this continent, today we are all Americans. Except on March 17 on that day we are all Irish, at least it seems so. This editor really is part Irish, thanks to my maternal great grandmother. While I may claim the Irish first, my family must acknowledge about five other origin nationalities. That is probably true of most Americans, especially those whose roots go back to the founding of our country. So, on St. Patrick's Day we put all political persuasions aside, disregard all other foreign alliances, and embrace the Irish in us. Boil up the corned beef and cabbage, tip a pint of Guinness, read a poem by Robert Burns, dance an Irish jig, and sing *Tu-ra-lu-ra-lu-ra* – an Irish lullaby.

***St. Patrick's Day
Tuesday, March 17***



March Calendar Highlights



March 3 – Buildings & Grounds 11:00 am

March 5 – Finance Committee 10:00 am

**March 6 – Stations of the Cross 1:00 pm
Consecutive Friday services**

**March 7 – Event (Parish Hall)
Soromundi**

March 8 – Daylight Savings Time Begins

March 10 – Vestry Meeting (Zoom)

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

March 29 – Palm Sunday Service
With parishioners from St. John's
& St. Matthew's celebrating with us

