



# *The Beacon*

## *St. Thomas Episcopal Church*

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

January 2023

Volume 24 Issue 1

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- Jon Davies, Jr. Warden
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### *From the Rector's desk ~*

As people of faith, I'm sure we can all agree that Sunday is the most important day of the church week. Sunday is the day when we come together as a faith community to pray, praise God, and receive the holy sustenance of the bread of life and the cup of salvation.

If you come to St. Thomas only on Sunday mornings, though, you may not realize how busy our campus and buildings are, how well-used they are every day of the week. Certainly, our campus residents Head Start, the Center of Community Counseling, and the Grassroots Garden are hives of activity in their separate domains. But there's much more going on at St. Thomas than just those entities. During the month of December alone, here are just some of the events and activities that took place:

- Our exercise groups—Yoga, Chair Yoga, and Tai Chi—each met twice a week.
- AA met six days each week.
- Over a period of three days, the League of Women Voters used a portion of our Parish Hall to receive and distribute fruit as a fundraiser as well as a contribution to Food for Lane County.
- Men's Bible Study met every Saturday morning while the Altar Guild set up the church for Sunday.
- Education for Ministry met every Sunday afternoon.
- A Youth Group gathering met on a Sunday evening before going caroling at nearby senior living residences and coming back to St. Thomas for pizza.
- Two enormous parties were held in the parish hall on separate Saturdays, complete with live music and food.
- Advent Eucharist took place each Wednesday.
- The CCC's Grandparents' group met on alternate Mondays.
- The Grassroots Garden used our kitchen extensively at least three days each week.
- Various St. Thomas Committees met.
- A CPR course was offered and attended by a number of parishioners.
- Parishioners prepared and packed sweatsuits and Christmas gifts for our Head Start children.

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All these things occurred in addition to our annual Greening of the Church, Christmas pageant, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services, and more. At one point, one of the volunteers from the League of Women voters said to me, “Wow, this place is really busy!” “And it’s only going to get busier,” I replied.

St. Thomas has always been a beacon of light in our community. And it is becoming even more so with each passing year, as more and more people discover us and walk through our doors. As we celebrate the New Year, let us also celebrate the gift of St. Thomas’ presence in our neighborhood and beyond.

Peace and many blessings,

### ***Parish Annual Meeting***



The 2022 Annual Meeting of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Eugene, will take place on Sunday, January 29, 2023. The meeting will be held in-person in the Parish Hall immediately following the 10:00 am service during the 11:30 am coffee hour.

This is an important time for St. Thomas members to gather as we will be recognizing the work of each ministry, reviewing the 2023 budget and voting on new Vestry members and delegates to Diocesan Convention.

### ***Endowment Fund News***

#### **Legacy Society Treated to “Thank You” Lunch**

It was time to give a big “Thank You” to the St. Thomas Legacy Society. They’re church members who have chosen to include our Endowment Fund in their estate planning.



Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, we were able to host Society members to a delicious lunch in the Umpqua Room of Valley River Inn last November 2.

Why do members bequeath portions of their estate to our Endowment Fund? First, because they want to ensure that the Fund will be able to underwrite new ministries like we did last year with our Young Musicians Program.

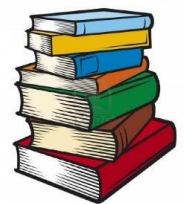
Second, because they want to create a lasting personal legacy of faith and generosity through our Endowment Fund.

There are several ways to include our Fund in your estate planning. Want to know more? Just speak with Rev. Ann or me. Maybe you’ll be the next new member of our Legacy Society!

Duncan Murray, Chairman

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

The St. Thomas Ladies Book Group members are currently reading Daughter of Fortune by Isabel Allende. They will be



discussing this book in their monthly gathering scheduled for January 26 in the Parish Library at 1:30 pm. Looking ahead the group will read and review The Lincoln Highway by Amor Towles and gather again on February 23. Newcomers to the group or interested drop-ins are always welcome to join these lively discussions and celebrate good reading.

## Ushers

### NEW USHER FOR 2023

Please join our Ushering Team in welcoming Maggie Meneghin as our newest usher.

Maggie lives with her husband Cole on a farm in Harrisburg. She teaches English language development at an elementary school in Corvallis.

Maggie will be joining our current team, which includes Lucy & Paul Barnett, Len & Janet Calvert, Adeline Hoover, Sandra & Duncan Murray, Dan Paulson, and John Paulson.

We are happy to have Maggie working with us and thank all for their commitment and service.

Sandra Murray



Maggie Meneghin wrapping and stuffing gift bags



Adeline and Barbara Rose Hoover contribute to the effort

## Outreach

Caring, sharing and joyfully participating – this was the spirit of St. Thomas outreach during the season of Advent.



With the generous donations of parishioners, St. Thomas was able to contribute to the HUGS effort sponsored by St. John's parish in Springfield. Hats, underwear, gloves and socks were enthusiastically shared.

On December 11 following the worship service parishioners gathered in the Parish Hall to fill the gift bags for the children enrolled in the Head Start program at St. Thomas. With a financial investment from Outreach funds, approximately 50 gift bags were filled with a sweat suit and toy in sizes and interest suitable for each registered child.



A couple of cheerful elves – Frank Moss and Jon Davies



## Grace Notes



A recent article shared by Rev. Ann inspired this message of *grace*. Our December 18 Sunday service at St. Thomas exemplified the spirit of grace in our faith community. Peter Marty's uplifting response to the question, "Why aren't people coming back?" was answered with a joyful noise. It is not about the number of bodies in the pews, but more importantly about the size of the spirit within the parish – a spirit that echoes across the church grounds and into the surrounding community.



An inter-generational pageant was presented with loving determination as we kept this St. Thomas tradition alive with two high school students, two middle school students, two elementary school students, two toddlers, two adults and a choir providing the company of angels. It was a tour de force rivalling pageants from years gone by when we had 20 children participating in the pageant.



Following the service parishioners joined forces to decorate the sanctuary, narthex and parish hall with our annual greening of the church with efforts fortified by the tasty treats of coffee hour. So once again we prove that while faith-filled and faith-seeking bodies are welcome through our doors, it is the spirit of those within who uplift, fortify and encourage our faith-inspired engagement with each other and throughout our community.



During Advent the children lit the Advent candles.

Lori Fisher as the shepherd with Eli & Lucy, her little lambs.



Sofia Garcia, Lucy and Mason Duer and guest decorating the narthex tree.

Lucy Duer arranged the creche while dad Russ Duer assisted with hanging the greens.



The days are short, the temperatures are frigid, and the carrots are harvested! Carrot Harvest Day was December 10<sup>th</sup> this year at GrassRoots, our annual festival where we pull carrots en masse and have a friendly competition for who can find the heaviest, longest, and most unique carrots. Since carrots produce sugars to act as an antifreeze to protect the plant in cold weather, we usually host the event the first or second weekend of December to ensure that we have had a week of below-freezing temperatures to sweeten them up before harvest.



We had a fantastic turnout of 128 participants for this year's Carrot Harvest Day, and a record 82 contestants who submitted a single, carefully chosen carrot to the esteemed judges, hoping to win a prize. While the judges painstakingly measured, weighed and assessed uniqueness on all the entries, the guests enjoyed hot cocoa, warm crusty bread, delicious carrot ginger soup, carrot squash soup, raw carrots, celery and kohlrabi with ranch dressing and hummus, as well as yummy carrot cake and other fine carrot desserts. As is our tradition, we talked the year in review and looked forward to the year ahead.



The biggest (heaviest) carrot this year was a whopping 1 pound 10.5 ounces, found by Jamie Staniewitz. The longest carrot measured in at 11.5 inches found by Richard Staniewitz. There were 12 unique carrot prizes awarded, with four #1 most unique prizes given out.



Richard Staniewitz shared, "I've never been able to grow good carrots more than a couple inches long. When my daughter and I pulled two carrots we thought were really big, we looked around and saw them everywhere. Everyone had really big carrots!" It was an exciting time for all!



We are grateful for everyone who helped clean and trim the carrots after the exceedingly rapid harvest! All 770 pounds of carrots were trimmed, washed, and boxed within 45 minutes of the beginning of pulling the carrots out of the ground! We appreciate everyone's efforts in making the post-harvest preparing of the carrots so smooth and quick.

We would also like to thank everyone who helped out with preparing the Garden for the festival, greeting/signing people in, explaining the rules of the harvest, preparing and serving the food, entering carrots for the judging, judging the entries, and helping us clean up after the event was over. We couldn't have done it without all your efforts!

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**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, [merrybradley@yahoo.com](mailto:merrybradley@yahoo.com).

### *Epiphany Series – Poems of the Spirit*

For those who are interested: the first session in Lee Gaillard's Epiphany series "Poems of the Spirit" will be held in the Parish Library during coffee time following the 10 a.m. service on January 15. We will be taking a look at two poems--by American poets Mary Oliver and e.e. cummings. (IF we have time, we'll also get into one by British poet Gerard Manley Hopkins...) If you would like to participate, please let me ([leegaillard@gmail.com](mailto:leegaillard@gmail.com)) or JB know before January 8 so we can be sure to have copies of the poems for you.

### *Monthly Recognitions*

We have a lovely tradition at St. Thomas to sing a song of celebration when parishioners come to the altar to share their birthday, anniversary, or special achievement. In the early years of the parish the song shared was written by Fr. Ted Tainton, but it was specifically for birthdays. In later years the choir director at the time wrote the song we currently sing to acknowledge any special occasion.

### *January Birthdays*

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



*Many happy returns of the day of thy birth  
Many seasons of joy be given.  
And may the dear father prepare you on earth  
For a wonderful birthday in heaven.*

### *January Anniversaries*

- 1 Mike and Lauri Watkins



## *Reflections*



There is a reason that the Reflections photo for this edition is not a winter scene, but rather a view of a Hawai’ian beach vista, and it is not because during the cold and wet days of winter Oregonians often long for a get-away to Hawai’i. The photo reflects the message of Hawai’i – Aloha. When the message of Yahweh (printed in the December 2022 edition) was shared with our son, he responded by sharing the following article.

*Aloha – The Breath of Life*  
by Leialoha

Aloha literally means “the breath of life.” When a person is born into this world, they take their first *ha*, or their first breath. When a person departs from this world, they breathe their last *ha*. The word marks the significant and deep moments of reflection, the moments where the only thing that matters is the love and the tenderness of the relationships formed in this life. It’s no wonder, then, that western culture has redefined the word *aloha* as meaning “hello, goodbye, and ‘I love you.’”

Aloha marks the life and death of a person, but it means more than just “hello” and “goodbye.” The tenderness of feelings that accompany these two significant life events, birth and death, remind us that this truly is our one life to live. We have one chance to breathe love, to breathe goodness, and to breathe light to others.

Thus, aloha is the breath of life. It is the kind of unconditional love that surpasses superficial personalities and weak character. No matter what, a person who lives with aloha has integrity and humility. They understand that nobody is perfect, and *every* person needs to be loved.

They love others just as they love themselves. People are attracted to them—not because they are popular, but because they emit beautiful and pure energy. They are like lights in a dark room. They give love and they receive love.

This way of living aloha is to breathe life, not to just survive life. Those who live aloha appreciate this life. They appreciate the challenges as much as the good times. Aloha becomes them and, in return of their giving aloha, aloha is returned to them. They live a happy life, a peaceful life, and a beautiful *aloha* life.

After considering Rev. Elizabeth Keaton's interpretation of *Yahweh* and then reading the explanation of *aloha*, one cannot overlook the beautiful simplicity of indigenous peoples, their connection to the natural world. The essence of this connection is love, for it is that life force that provides the very breath of our being. God is love. God is our breath of life. God is the provider of our natural world rich with resources to sustain us, but also demanding our caring attention. God is the comforter, who has given us companions to walk this life with us, and for whom we are called to love and respect as we would want them to do so to us.

In this New Year may we be ever-mindful of the love that is God and the love we are called to share with each *breath of life*.

### ***Important Reminder***

Ministry Reports will be due to the church office by January 16, two weeks before the Annual Meeting, to allow the parish administrator time to prepare the Annual Report for our parish meeting on January 29. Thank you to ministry leaders not only for their service but for the time invested to write their reports.

### ***Schedule for January***

#### **Sunday Morning Worship:**

10:00 am In-person Worship & Eucharist

Or access the live streamed service at

<https://www.facebook.com/st.thomas.eugene/>.

See the attached calendar for scheduled activities, meetings and events.

Committee reports and articles for the Beacon are welcome. Please submit in a WORD document, New Times and 12 font, single spaced. Send email attachment to Cindy Jensen at [LAJotKDK@aol.com](mailto:LAJotKDK@aol.com) by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.