



The Beacon

St. Thomas Episcopal Church



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

July 2024

Volume 25 Issue 6

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

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From the Rector's Desk ~

Last August for the first time, St. Thomas had a table at the annual Eugene PRIDE festival. We shared space in the Faith and Spirituality Zone with other Eugene faith communities, including St. Mary's and the Church of the Resurrection. Adele Rennie and Bernie McCafferty were St. Thomas' representatives, and they did a wonderful job communicating the mission of inclusivity of the Episcopal Church in general and St. Thomas in particular. (They also handed out swag and our St. Thomas brochure!)

This year the PRIDE festival will be held on Saturday, August 10, and St. Thomas will again have a table with the other faith communities. Adele and Bernie will host our table along with Deacon Mike (I will be out of town, unfortunately), and they would love it if other St. Thomas folks could be present for an hour or two as well. St. Thomas' brochure proclaims that St. Thomas welcomes *everyone*, and our presence at the PRIDE festival is one way we reach out to our wider community to share God's love.



With perfect timing, the Episcopal Church has designed a new PRIDE shield, described this way: "The design retains the upper-left blue corner of The Episcopal Church's shield logo and incorporates elements of the traditional Pride flag as well as the Progress Pride flag and Philadelphia Pride flag. In their use of black, brown, pink, and light-blue diagonal lines, the latter two flags represent intersectional progress in acknowledging people who are often overlooked by the mainstream LGBTQ+ movement: communities of color; the transgender community; and the many thousands harmed by anti-LGBTQ+ policy—from those who lost their lives in the AIDS crisis of the 1980s and '90s, to those still disproportionately impacted today." The statement referring to those who lost their lives in the AIDS crisis is particularly poignant for me. During the '80s and '90s I lost three former professors to AIDS, all of them wonderful teachers and significant scholars in their fields. In addition, one of the two best choral directors with whom I have ever worked died of AIDS. Also at this time, a long-time friend lost his partner to AIDS and because of that experience became a hospice counselor to AIDS patients and their families.

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Thus, to me both spiritually and personally, St. Thomas' presence at the PRIDE festival means a great deal. I hope you might stop by the festival and join Adele, Bernie, and Deacon Mike in this ministry to the LGBTQ+ community.

Ann +

Endowment News

Q1 Returns Up; Matching Gift Challenge A Big Success

For the quarter ending March 31, 2024 (and year to date) your Endowment Fund rose 5.34% to a record \$265, 286.95!

Compared to a year earlier your Fund rose by \$28,883.98, a more than respectable 12.21%.

Earlier this year your Endowment Board pledged to contribute \$2,500 to The Fund and challenged our congregation to match it. That's \$5,000.

Our goal was to grant \$2,500 to extend the Young Musicians at St. Thomas Program for a year. Any other money would go toward a future, yet to be determined ministry.

But then St. Thomas generosity kicked in... both the Board and our congregation surpassed their goals. The result? **A total of \$6,200!**

On Sunday, May 19 it was my privilege to present Music Director Keri Davis with a check for \$2,500.

On behalf of your Endowment Board - **Thank you, Thank you, and Thank you again!**

Duncan Murray, Chair



Presentation of the Endowment funding to music director Keri Davis for the support of the Young Musician's Program.

In Memoriam

Two faithful members of our St. Thomas family passed away in late May. Sandra Bristow had been active in Outreach and when her health allowed, she was a devoted presence at St. Thomas. In 2022 Sandra moved to Texas to be near family who were able to assist her with her health concerns. Sandra was surrounded by her loving family when she passed.



Tammy McMillan began attending St. Thomas a year before the COVID pandemic interrupted our in-person services. Once we were able to meet again in person, Tammy's health prevented her from attending in-person services.

Then on June 19 news of the sudden passing of Burt Schwarz was received by Rev. Ann. Burt and Sally Schwarz have been long-standing members of St. Thomas. Their leadership, generosity and hard work were instrumental in the establishment of the Columbarium and Memorial Garden.

We hold the memory of these faithful parishioners in our hearts and trust that they are at peace in the Lord's heavenly embrace.

St. Thomas Book Group



The ladies of the St. Thomas Book Group are enjoying their July reading selection, Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus, perhaps while reclining in their beach chair or sitting out on their backyard patio (wearing sunscreen and a sun hat, of course.) Members of the Book Group will take a break from summer sunshine activities to gather on July 25 at 1:30 pm in the Parish Library for their usual conversation and treats. Interested readers are always welcome.

Outreach

Our St. Thomas congregation generously responded to the request for donations of blankets and home goods for the Home Starter Kits. Tricia Crisafulli delivered two carloads of goods to Resurrection.



The Home Starter Kits volunteers at Resurrection are extremely grateful for our participation in this program.

St. Thomas Outreach will host a brunch fundraiser to benefit Cottages of Hope. The preferred date for the brunch is Sunday, September 15. Patti and Steve Buss of One Hope will make a presentation about the Cottages of Hope project to the congregation on Sunday, September 8. Publicity about Cottages of Hope and EveryOne Village will begin this summer leading up to the fundraiser and to build interest and awareness. There will be no charge for the brunch, but donations will be encouraged.

Outreach has \$1918 remaining in their 2024 budget. These funds will help support the remaining commitments.

July 7	Peanut Butter Sunday collection
Aug	Project Hope backpack project
Sept 15	Sunday brunch Cottages of Hope fundraiser
Oct	TBA
Nov	One Hope Thanksgiving boxes project
Dec	H.U.G.S. drive collection Head Start sweatsuit project

Buildings and Grounds

During June all the fluorescent tube lights in the Parish Hall wing and Education Building were replaced with LED lights. At the end of the month of June work began on the east and north exterior walls of the Parish Hall to address dry rot.



Under the leadership of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, these deferred maintenance projects are being addressed with the benefit of Anne VanDerveer’s judicious budgeting, the generous support of our St. Thomas family, and use fees from our Companions in Ministry and community users. For an explanation of the cost savings from the lighting upgrade, look forward to a detailed article from Andy Laird in the August edition.

Creation Care

Our parish efforts to be attentive to creation care extend beyond building efficiency and economy. Our cans and bottles recycling efforts are ongoing with the collections providing assistance to St. John the Divine in their shelter program for the unhoused.

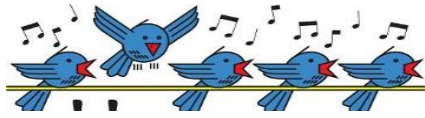


Remember your recyclable cans and bottles can be dropped off in the closet next to the office door in the breezeway next to the playground. The closet door is designated by the sign made by our parish young people.

Collections of electronics for recycling – audio equipment, computers, phones, televisions – will continue until Sunday, July 14. Electronic recyclables can be placed on the counter in the Parish Hall. On Tuesday, July 16 Gary and Cindy Jensen will load up electronic recycling contributions and bring them to Next Step. Clean out your closets and attics of those old and outdated electronics and help fill another pickup load for this recycling opportunity.



Grace Notes



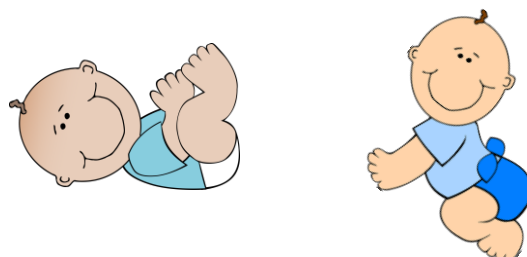
In early June Maggie Meneghin and Cole Jones welcomed their twin boys. No doubt all will agree that the arrival of William and V.O. merits a symphony of grace notes. We give thanks and praise to God for their safe arrival and Maggie's well-being. The double blessing of these little boys will garner much attention as we embrace them into our St. Thomas family.



Proud Dad ready to bring the boys home and a happy Mom getting them settled into their home.



It was a special service on Sunday, June 23 when Maggie and Cole introduced their boys to the congregation and Rev. Ann provided a special blessing for V.O. and William and prayers for this dear family.



GrassRoots Garden



Summer is upon us here at GrassRoots. With our main season crops in the ground (tomatoes, peppers, corn, cucumbers and zucchini) we're now in the midst of harvesting our spring crops (such as kale, cabbage, kohlrabi, peas, chard, beets and lettuce). We were very fortunate to have had lots of people out to help us this spring including school groups, U of O groups and classes, corporate groups and many individuals. Thanks to all their efforts we were right on schedule with our plantings. It felt good!

This newsletter edition provides an opportunity to highlight some of our successes with the bird boxes we have put up. We wanted to add bird boxes to the Garden to help get more resident birds on site to provide more ecosystem services – in other words, to eat caterpillars, insects and other bugs around the Garden. Bird parents feeding their chicks are especially voracious eaters, and so by putting up bird boxes for chickadees, western bluebirds and swallows, we hoped to provide a feast for these birds while bringing down populations of some of the critters that like to eat our crops.

Tim Fiedler is our dedicated bird house manager, and he has adjusted bird box positions since last year to try and get more bird activity in them. He diligently checks the boxes every two weeks, and to date we have had two chickadee nests built, with baby birds! There is also a pair of western bluebirds who made a nest in a box with new eggs. While we have seen swallows zipping around the garden and checking out some of the boxes, we haven't seen them building a nest in one yet.

While we have seen a few cabbage moths flying around, we haven't seen much caterpillar damage on our brassicas. We are thinking we can thank some of our bird friends for this! We also are

noticing a significant drop in click beetles flying around. They are the parents of the wire worm larvae, our current biggest pest concern. So, between our efforts to trap the wire worms and perhaps the swallows' habit of eating flying insects, it would seem that the wire worm population is dropping down. Hooray!

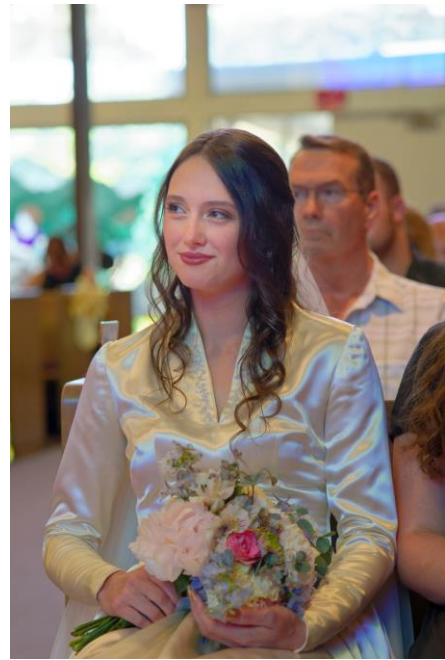
In addition to the western bluebirds, chickadees, and swallows, lately we've also seen lots of gold finches, house finches, sparrows, and crows. A cooper's hawk was sighted, and we have seen bald eagles and osprey flying way up overhead on the thermals.

SUMMER HOURS: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. GrassRoots Garden is located at 1465 Coburg Road, across from Safeway, behind St. Thomas Episcopal Church. For more information contact Merry Bradley: 458-221-0652, merrybradley@yahoo.com.



Wedding Bells at St. Thomas

It has been a while since a wedding was celebrated at St. Thomas, but the wedding of Grant Smith and Lexi Ball on Friday, June 7 allowed for a joyful return of wedding bells. As a young boy Grant attended St. Thomas with his family, so it has been a delight to have him return to our faith community along with Lexi and children, Atlas and Hazel. These photos of their wedding capture an especially happy event.



Apostle's Shield

John, the Beloved Disciple

James and John were the sons of Zebedee, a Galilean fisherman, and his wife Salome, thought to be the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, making James and John cousins of Jesus. James and John were called to be Jesus' disciples soon after Peter and his brother Andrew. James and John and Peter were the three disciples who were closest to Jesus. Often, he would take only these three with him as special friends. They were the ones who witnessed the Transfiguration.

John, James' younger brother, is often referred to as the Beloved Disciple and John the Evangelist because he is believed to be the author of the Gospel of John. He is thought to have been the youngest disciple, the "disciple whom Jesus loved." At the Last Supper, he sat next to Jesus. It was customary to recline on couches at meals, and this disciple leaned on Jesus.

After the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, only Peter and the "other disciple" (according to tradition, John) followed him into the palace of the high-priest. The "beloved disciple" alone, among the Apostles, remained near Jesus at the foot of the cross on Calvary alongside myrrh bearers and numerous other women. Following the instruction of Jesus from the cross, the beloved disciple took Mary, the mother of Jesus, into his care as the last legacy of Jesus. Peter and John were also the only two apostles who ran to the empty tomb after Mary Magdalene bore witness to the resurrection of Jesus.

After Jesus' Ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, John, together with Peter, took a prominent part in the founding and guidance of the church. He was with Peter at the healing of the lame man at Solomon's Porch in the Temple and he was also thrown into prison with Peter. Later, only Peter and John went to visit the newly converted believers in Samaria.

John is believed to have died of old age about fifty years after his brother James was martyred. His shield symbol is the chalice with a serpent emerging from it. This symbol is interpreted as a reference to a legend in which John was challenged to drink a

cup of poison to demonstrate the power of his faith (the poison being symbolized by the serpent). He did so, and lived.



Young Musicians Program

Our most recent performer sponsored by the Young Musicians Program was Eva Coleman, an eighth-grade student at CLC, a private school in west Eugene. Eva has grown up in a performing arts family inspiring her talent. She recently performed as a vocalist in the live band for Cinderella, a 60's rock opera ballet presented at the Hult Center. Eva has enjoyed performing in various musical theater productions through the E.Y. Harburg Academy at the Shedd Institute. As one of our youngest Young Musician performers, we can look forward to future presentations from Eva.



Reflections



This time of year has us out in our gardens planting vegetables and flowers, grooming our lawns, or lovingly attending patio pots, hanging baskets or window boxes. It is growing season in the Willamette Valley. It is also the peak of allergy season, but that is beside the point. Vegetation is thriving and blooming. It is a time of year that gives this amateur gardener much satisfaction, inner peace and a great sense of hopefulness.

As I look for the bees in the budding lavender, delight in the butterflies and dragon flies flitting about the garden and listen to the song of the chickadees and junco, I cannot help but marvel at the inter-connectedness of nature – God’s creation on full display. Our forest hilltop is alive with activity - the small meandering creek, deer grazing on the edge of the hay field, coyote prowling the hillside at night, turkey scampering up the road, swallows soaring over the garden, squirrels gathering seeds from the maples, pines and fir trees dropping their cones, and a resident bear who digs the yellow jacket larvae out of the nests in the field. All this is just a microcosm of the interplay of the flora and fauna of the natural world.

As we work in our garden and forest, we are ever mindful of the role we play in this small but very active habitat. There are 304 million hectares of forest land in the United States, or 34% of the land in the US. Of that acreage 42% is owned by US, state or local government entities, 20% by corporations and 38% by family units. For the most part those family units take very seriously their stewardship of this valuable and renewable

resource. Forests are rich habitats for wildlife, sources of food for the pollinators, sanctuaries for the migrating birds, places of spiritual renewal for wayfaring humans, and great sequesters of carbon.

So, we tend our garden and forest and quietly marvel, breathing in the fresh air and delighting in the view while always praising God for the blessing of this forest hilltop and the opportunity to be good stewards of this small corner of God’s creation.

*Let us walk softly on this earth
with all living beings, great and small,
remembering as we go, that one God,
kind and wise, created all.*

Native American Blessing



July Birthdays

3	Lucy Barnett
4	Florence Litzenberger
6	JB Hoover
22	Tom Whitehead
25	Lucy Fisher

Happy Anniversary!

July Anniversaries

9	Ann and Lee Gaillard
11	Gary and Cindy Jensen
25	JB and Adeline Hoover Maggie Meneghin and Cole Jones

Committee reports and articles for the Beacon are welcome. Please submit to Cindy Jensen at LAJotKDK@aol.com by the 25th of the month.