

## Services

### Sunday

8:00 am Eucharist with hymns  
9:00 am Fellowship  
9:15 am Forum  
10:00 am Sunday School  
10:15 am Sung Eucharist  
11:15 am Fellowship  
5:15 pm Contemplative Eucharist

### Wednesday

10:00 am Eucharist (Chapel)

### Daily

7:30 am Morning Prayer (Chapel)  
6:30 am Friday Morning Prayer (Chapel)  
(no Saturday service)

## Music Rehearsals

### Junior Choristers

Tuesdays, 4:00-4:45 pm

### Senior Choristers

Tuesdays, 4:45-5:30 pm

### St Thomas Singers

Thursdays, 7:30 pm

Sundays, 9:15 am

### Sinfonia

Selected Thursdays, 6:30 -7:30 pm

## Calendar

### March 6

11:45 am, Come to the Quiet, *Chapel*

### March 8

6:30 pm, Mardi Gras & Pancake Supper,  
*Great Hall*

### March 9 • Ash Wednesday

Holy Eucharist & Imposition of Ashes  
7:30 am, 10:00 am, *Chapel*  
7:00 pm, *Church*

### March 12

7:00 pm, Cascadian Chorale, *Church*

### March 19

8:00 am, Men's Breakfast, *Great Hall*  
9:00 am, Welcome to the Table: Learning  
About the Eucharist, *Great Hall*

THE

# COLLECT

March 2011

St. Thomas Episcopal Church • P. O. Box 124 • Medina, WA 98039  
425.454.9541 • www.stthomasmedina.org

## From the Rector — Lent: A No Road-Rage Zone

*by the Reverend Lex Breckinridge*

One Sunday each month, the Prayers of the People are written and then led by the children of St. Thomas. I find these prayers to be most instructive. Our children are speaking to us in these prayers and we had best be attentive. On Epiphany 6, one of the prayers was this:

*Dear God, please help our parents not to be in such a rush.*

We are all in such a hurry to get wherever it is we are going. We don't want anything or anyone to get in our way, do we? When, inevitably, some other human being frustrates us in our rush to get what we want when we want it, too often we act out. The shorthand name for this is "road rage." And it's not just on SR 520 or I-405. It seems we have less room for differences, less room for honest disagreement, less room for forgiveness and mercy in many aspects of life these days.

We are all moving too fast, don't you think? And when we move too fast, it's easy to see other people, not as human beings, but as obstacles standing between us and whatever our particular goal might be in that moment. Lent is a good time to pay attention to the way that "road rage" can rule our lives. When we experience "road rage" whether we are crossing the 520 bridge or in some other context, it is because we have inflated our own sense of self-importance. The false self, that is to say, has been let off the leash. The antidote, the key to slowing down and recognizing that the inflated self is now running the show, is prayer.

In stillness and in silence, we can begin to let down the barriers that stand between us and a relationship with the Living God. These barriers result from our need for power and control, safety and security, affection and esteem. We erect these barriers to deny and avoid and defend against the trials of real life. Running up against our self-created barriers is what leads to "road rage" in its many forms. There will always be frustration, illness, marital difficulties, financial burdens, inner trials, death. God has not promised to take away our trials. God has promised that, as we open our hearts in prayer and respond to God's compassionate love, our attitude toward those trials will shift. That is what holiness really is: an attitude or a posture of positive hopefulness, grounded in Christ's presence, in the face of life's trials.

Lent is a time to attend to that child's prayer we heard a few Sundays ago and make it our own.

*Dear God, let us not be in such a rush.*

May we simply slow down when the driver ahead of us cuts us off. Offer him or her a blessing rather than a curse. What would it be like to begin this as a Lenten practice, and not just when we're driving? We may find we have less "road rage" in our lives.

Faithfully,



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# A Lenten Soul Work Journey

by The Rev. Karen Haig, Priest Associate

*Lent serves as our annual invitation to come closer to God. It provides a time to look at our lives and ourselves, not so we may criticize ourselves more harshly but so we can identify the obstructions that keep us from ... feeling the presence of the divine in our every day lives. How do we hide from God, and why? Lent gives us a chance to look at such obstructions and to move them gently away so that we can come closer to the Love that gives us life ... Thus Lent offers a gift of time and a promise of closeness. From A Clearing Season: Reflections for Lent*

As I write these lines, we are in the sixth week of Epiphany with Lent still weeks away ... yet this issue of *The Collect* will arrive at your door just before Lent begins. Lent often catches me by surprise – not because I don't know it's coming, but because it seems to creep up so quickly. Not so, this year! Ash Wednesday is March 9 – just about as late as it ever will be in our lifetime. “*This year,*” I tell myself, “*I'll be ready.*”

How does the season of Lent have meaning for you? For me, Lent is a wonderful expanse of time that affords the opportunity to go deep within and notice all the things that create the space between God and me. The luxury of 40 days to notice, ponder, and pray over the things that keep God at bay feels like a gift to me – a gift of time to begin to clear away those things that keep God at a distance.

Some of us think of Lent as a kind of “New Year's Eve,” a time to make resolutions and see if we can keep them for 40 days. We make big plans, decide we'll deny ourselves chocolate or television or some other something that offers us pleasure. We determine that denial is the order of the season and that in denying ourselves we will somehow be purified by Easter. My experience with such Lenten resolutions is, alas, not so good. It isn't that I can't stay away

from the chocolate for 40 days ... it's just that I can't seem to connect staying away from chocolate with coming closer to God or to spiritual growth and discernment.

Lent changed for me when I recognized that I needed to *take on spiritual practice*, rather than simply give up some simple pleasure. This shift was exemplified in my understanding that it wasn't denial that would feed me, rather it was spiritual discipline. I needed soul work. Denial seemed dualistic - rigid and controlling and focused on me, and my ability to be ever-vigilant. Discipline, on the other hand, seemed committed and connective and focused on God. Denial works through suppression. Discipline, from the same root as *disciple*, works through teaching and learning, through discerning and internalizing truth. That's what I want from Lent! A time to intentionally reflect on my life and to learn and come closer to God. Lenten discipline in the form of spiritual practice gives renewed meaning to penitence and fasting. Perhaps my fast is from unkind thoughts or wasteful practices. Perhaps my penitence is silence. Taking up a particular spiritual discipline remains my Lenten practice. This year it will mean daily reading, reflection, and journaling. Far from feeling like denial, this practice feels like pure gift.

Do you have a spiritual practice? Do you say the Daily Office or read Forward Day by Day? Do you practice centering prayer or journaling or walking meditation? Do you say Compline before you drift off to sleep or sing hymns of praise when you awaken? Do you volunteer at a women's shelter or a food bank or at the Humane Society? Have you ever taken up a particular spiritual practice in Lent? Would you like to? There is still time to consider this and to discern a thoughtful plan for your own

Lenten practice. What would help you to deepen your relationship with God during this particularly reflective time of the year? What would help you to look honestly and lovingly at your life, to clear out the dross so that you might recognize what life God is calling you into? If you'd like some help in sorting that out, I'd be delighted to talk with you.

Spiritual practices are as varied as we are ... but constant among them is the notion of practice. We practice, not to become perfect, but to engage in a mindful way of life with God at the center of our thoughts and actions. In order to make spiritual practice our way of life, we must pay attention. It will help our practice to find a particular discipline that feels expansive and that deepens our connection with God. That might mean scriptural reflection or journaling or walking. Or it might mean practicing compassion, writing a letter of forgiveness, or preparing for the sacrament of reconciliation. Before Ash Wednesday comes around, see if you can find some time to sit in silence and listen for God's guidance as to your own spiritual practice. And then, on Ash Wednesday when the priest says: “*I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent ...*,” you too will be ready.

May God richly bless you in this holy season.

Faithfully,



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# Pastoral Care at St. Thomas

by Heather Smith, Coordinator of Pastoral Care



## LENT

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### Lenten Reflections Available March 6

*Lenten Reflections*, a book created by the people of St. Thomas, will be available on March 6, the Sunday before Ash Wednesday. For each day in Lent, you'll find a scriptural reflection written by someone from our parish. Our hope is that the entire St. Thomas community will be reading and reflecting on the Word as interpreted by our own friends and family and that this practice will help us to deepen both our collective and individual lives in Christ. Please pick up your copy of *Lenten Reflections* in the church any time after March 6. May your Lent be both holy and blessed.

"We are caring people" was a phrase I heard from one of the ushers during a review of emergency procedures in the church this past fall at St. Thomas. Although this particular usher was describing the off-duty attitude of the St. Thomas ushers and the sense that they are always on duty while in attendance at church, I was struck by the enormity of this thought. In this community, we are all striving to be caring people. Empathy, caring, and loving others are acts that form the foundation of our Christian faith and our hospitality at St. Thomas.

One of the many expressions of this caring can be felt with the pastoral care network. This ministry has been a part of parish life at St. Thomas for many years. In the past, it has included many individuals providing meals to parish members, laying on of hands for prayers and blessings during Sunday services, taking communion to those unable to come to the altar in the church, writing notes to parish members, praying for members, and actively listening and walking with members who are in the midst of a difficult situation. Formerly under the careful and attentive oversight of Aileen Loranger, who served as parish nurse at St. Thomas, this ministry is now in transition.

I was recently named coordinator of pastoral care at St. Thomas, a position that gives me the opportunity to work

with members of all these lay ministries. Loaves and Fishes provides meals for parish members who are overwhelmed by crises or transition. A new outreach ministry provides support and receiving blankets to new moms. Lay ministers offer daily confidential prayers. Rides to church are available for those who don't drive or are temporarily disabled. Stephen Ministry provides confidential, ongoing support for those who are in crisis or experiencing ongoing stress. Lay Eucharistic ministers provide communion for those who are hospitalized or housebound. The Healing Hands lay ministry offers prayers and blessings during Sunday services.

Parishioners and their families can ask for help from these ministries by calling or emailing the church office ([office@stthomasmedina.org](mailto:office@stthomasmedina.org)). This will alert the clergy and myself of pastoral care needs – if the church office is *not* notified of any pastoral care needs within the parish, referrals for these ministries cannot be made. Please call the church for help for a timely referral.

I am hopeful that we will involve even more parishioners in these lay ministries. I would like to start a friendly visitor lay ministry to provide companionship and Christian fellowship to those who are homebound. Please contact me if you are interested in serving and joining this caring community at St. Thomas.

# Project Outreach Awards Grants

by Tucker Moody, Project Outreach Member & ERD Board of Directors Member

On Thursday, February 10, Project Outreach distributed the bountiful resources you provided through the Christmas offering. I was particularly struck by the diverse ways that God calls us to respond to the needs of the world.

At one extreme, in January we prayed over an urgent request from Mission to Seafarers for heat. That evening, our prayers and deliberations were brief and the Spirit quite present in the room. Through Project Outreach, our parish replaced their furnace without hesitation. Alison Cole reports that heat has been restored and the mission again provides shelter and services that reflect the hospitality of God. Through God's grace, the need was met by our immediate "fast twitch" reaction. Mission to Seafarers has expressed their overwhelming gratitude for our response to the crisis as a sign of our enduring relationship.

On the other end of the spectrum, our typical pipeline of grant requests was empty. How could that be in a world overwhelmed with need? The team looked through our "rolodex" of organizations we have supported in the past and decided to canvas for grants. The list read like an invitation of familiar friends to a party: The Sophia Way, La Iglesia de la Resurreccion, Episcopal Relief and Development, Arab Evangelical Home – Ramallah, Arab Episcopal School for the Integration of the Blind, KIVA, and The Landing to name a few. Over the years we have witnessed some of these organizations thrive and grow while others scratch to stay in operation. This time the conversations were easy. "We have been blessed with resources. How can we help you?"

The team visited with parish members who are involved in the work of these groups, shared stories about the success of programs we have funded in the past, talked about dependence and interdependence, shared notes from site visits and conversations with those who minister directly to clients. We prayerfully considered how your contributions would deliver the biggest impact. We methodically moved forward, a "slow twitch" and thoughtful response. Not all proposals were funded, but our resources were abundant enough to meet the most pressing needs. And in God's mysterious way, a small sum is left over for the unexpected. Discernment was made in broad community with those in need and brought us together in closer relationships.

After three years on Project Outreach, I have learned that outreach is not about the money. It's about relationships and community. I'm reminded of a passage on charity from the writing of C.S. Lewis.

"The worldly man treats certain people kindly because he "likes" them: the Christian, trying to treat every one kindly, finds himself liking more and more people as he goes on – including people he could not even have imagined himself liking at the beginning." (*Mere Christianity*, Chapter 9).

Our faith expressed through good works in the name of the Spirit has created an amazing circle of people we "like." Our rich tapestry of friends stretches from the West Bank through Africa, along the Skagit Valley and Puget Sound, all the way back to Medina. Our community of relationships is global. Whether our friends come looking for us or we seek them, our outreach comes not from a place of judgment or power, but from the connections we make trying to live into the generosity and mercy of God and practicing His hospitality.



## Forum on Project Outreach

On Sunday, March 6, Susan Shevlin and Leslie Brewer, Project Outreach Co-Chairs, will report on recent outreach activities. Please join us at 9:15 in the Great Hall to hear more about this ministry.

## Financial Report

JANUARY 2011

	Budget	Actual
Income	\$168,833	\$167,152
Expense	\$98,334	\$98,949

YEAR TO DATE

Income	\$168,833	\$167,152
Expense	\$98,334	\$98,949

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# Update from Companions in the Diocese of Jerusalem

by Mary Pneuman, St. Thomas Companions Committee

St. Thomas Companions in Ramallah, West Bank, and Irbid, Jordan, offer innovative and caring Christian educational programs for children, regardless of ethnicity or religion. Here is an update for the 2010-11 school year:

Sister Najah Rantisi, director of the Evangelical Home for Children, Day Care Center, and Pre-school in Ramallah, wrote that the first week of October marked the 56<sup>th</sup> year of the founding of the Home and the adjacent K-12 Evangelical School where students boarding at the Home receive their education. The mission of the Home, which can house 10 to 12 children until they graduate from high school, is to provide a safe and loving **environment where the children's** spiritual, physical, social/emotional, and educational needs can be met. Most children-in-residence come from poverty-stricken or dysfunctional homes.

At present six children are full-time residents in the Home. At the end of the 2010 school year, two children returned to their parental homes. Those who stayed attended summer camp at the nearby technological and vocational training center. The Day Care Center provides after-school supervision, help with homework, and a hot meal for about 30 children of working parents, while the Pre-school can accommodate up to 50 children. The combined facilities also can provide overnight accommoda-

tions for teachers and students who are unable to reach their homes because of emergencies or closures.

A Christmas greeting from Father Samir Esaid and his wife, Sabah Zurikat, brought news from the Arab Episcopal School (AES) for the integration of the blind in Irbid, Jordan. Enrollment this year has risen to 175 K-6 students, 20 percent of whom are blind or visually impaired. AES has been a leader in Jordan in mainstreaming severely disabled children in a fully integrated educational program, and the quality of education offered here has been a magnet for normally sighted children. Sabah, who is the headmistress of the school, has **a master's degree in special education**, and she supervises a teaching staff of 20, four of whom are blind. The parents of blind children also receive instruction in Braille so they can assist their child at home.

This year, AES is embarking on a program to expand their space to accommodate a 7<sup>th</sup> grade in September 2011. The presence of this school in a predominantly Muslim community (96 percent of the population) has led to the building of a new **church, St. Mary's, the only Episcopal church** in Irbid, a city of about one million. In October, the Esuids became parents of their third daughter.

Check out the bulletin board in the Great Hall to see updates and pictures posted by the St. Thomas Companions Committee.



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## Call for Poetry

“A poem should not mean  
But be.”

—Archibald Macleish, “Ars Poetica,”  
poets.org

April is National Poetry Month, and *The Collect* will once again feature poems in the April issue to honor St. Thomas Church's dedication to the arts and artists. To submit a poem for consideration – either an original or one by a favorite poet – please send to the editor by March 14 (sedeffenbaugh@comcast.net).

# St. Thomas Episcopal Church

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## The Collect

Shirley E. Deffenbaugh, *Editor*  
Elizabeth Ward, *Assistant Editor*  
Laura Gregg, *Layout and Production Editor*  
Deadline: For the April issue,  
March 14. Please submit copy to Shirley  
Deffenbaugh, [sedeffenbaugh@comcast.net](mailto:sedeffenbaugh@comcast.net)  
or leave in the drawer marked "Collect" at  
the church. All articles will be edited. Ques-  
tions? Please call Shirley at 425-455-4817.

# Christian Formation

## Take Off Your Mask

by Josh Hosler, *Associate for Christian Formation*

Mardi Gras is great fun – we wear masks, eat pancakes, and cut loose to New Orleans music. The next day, Lent begins, and we remove our masks. We have ashes imposed on our foreheads; to do this is to publicly admit that we are human – that we will die someday. Not everyone who attends the service is ready to do it ... so they don't.

Five and a half weeks later, Lent will end with another episode of vulnerability: on Maundy Thursday, we will wash each other's feet. Not everybody who attends the Maundy Thursday service will be ready to do it ... so they won't.

Between now and then, 6-year-old Logan Smoot, the son of our childcare coordinator Danielle Brzusek, will prepare for baptism at the Easter Vigil. On the evening of April 23, we will gather in the darkness to light the new Paschal flame. Illuminated by candlelight, we will hear the story of our faith. And then, as our 40 days in the desert draw to a close, we will accompany Logan to the water. But why is he coming to the water? What does baptism do, anyway?

In his booklet "Holy Baptism: A Guide for Parents and Godparents," theologian John Westerhoff writes:

*Baptism is a sacrament, not magic. The purpose of a sacrament is to make us aware of a truth that is not self-evident so that we might benefit from it. Sacraments are symbolic, ritual acts of revelation. Magical acts, on the other hand, are intended to acquire something we would not otherwise be able to possess. Magic, for example, would be an action performed to convince God to do something God would not do without our convincing.*

God doesn't need our baptism – we do. God loves each and every one of us unconditionally, and that's difficult to believe. God loves us in a way we can't earn ... that we don't deserve ... and that we can never be apart from. Unfortunately, many people go through life unaware of this boundless love, or actively refusing to believe it.

In fact, this kind of love is so hard to believe that we need to engage in a public ritual – a sacrament – to begin to grasp what's going on here. Jesus himself was baptized, so we are too. We want to show everybody that God washes away all our sins, all our guilt, all the things that might ever come between us and God's love.

During the 40 days of Lent, we will mute our joy and listen for God's judging voice. Loving judgment flows from God perpetually, and in that judging, we will find growth. We will undertake self-discipline and prayer. It's time to do our spring cleaning, clearing out the cobwebs in our minds, scrubbing the dingy corners of our hearts ... and, above all, removing our masks so God can see us just as we are. When that happens, we will find that God has always loved and affirmed us and wants us to grow joyfully into the people we were always meant to be.

So come to the water. Come to the table. Come join our family. Come dance and play and be friends with God; God is already friends with you. These are not demands, and they are not requirements. We do it this way because this is how we perceive God at work in the world: inviting, but not forcing. Maybe you're not ready, but we're inviting you anyway. Take off your mask. Take off your shoes. Be vulnerable.

We are Christians. Lent and Easter are our story. Come tell the story with us.

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## The Quiet Corner

### Ignatian Spirituality and the Spiritual Exercises

by the Rev. Kathryn Ballinger, Deacon, Associate for Spiritual Direction & Parish Visitor

Gonzaga University, a Jesuit school in Spokane, is my alma mater. While studying there, I was impressed by the intellectual and servant zeal of my Jesuit teachers. I pondered Ignatian charisma and spirituality, and I read about the life of Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits.

During the European Renaissance, Christians were restless to find new kinds of holiness in a spirituality that would combine ancient Christian mysticism with dedicated action on behalf of others in the world. They were seeking a spirituality that embraced the beauty and goodness of the world while longing to make good things happen under the influence of God's redemptive love.

St. Ignatius developed a new spirituality, an original discernment process based on his own mystical experiences and insights. For more than 450 years, the spirituality of St. Ignatius has drawn men and women into a deeper intimacy with God and a renewed energy to serve others. This is achieved through his *Spiritual Exercises*, which enable people to understand more clearly God's movement in their hearts and God's purpose for their lives. They begin to find themselves being more "contemplative in action," finding God in all things.

Ignatian spirituality has at its center the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, His death, and His resurrection. Ignatius taught that Jesus invites people to come to know, love, and follow Him wholeheartedly; that He brings healing, reconciliation, justice, hope, forgiveness, and love to everyone; and that God can be found in our everyday lives, in our work, and in our relationships.

The *Spiritual Exercises* are a retreat and school for prayer and discernment. The retreat can be made in 30 days or stretched out over nine months following the liturgical calendar starting in the fall. The retreat is usually done with the aid of a spiritual director.

The *Spiritual Exercises* are divided into four movements, or stages, each with its own graces. These four movements include:

- ◆ considering God's generosity and mercy and reflecting on the complex reality of sin;
- ◆ focusing on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, His teachings, and His miracles;
- ◆ reflecting on His last days, including His passion and death;
- ◆ meditating on the resurrection and discerning Christ's continuing life through the Spirit in the world and through His people called to His mission.

I did the Exercises almost 30 years ago, and the experience is still making an impact on my life. For years, I was part of a team at Gonzaga that directed people through the Exercises. Now, I direct them privately.

Making an Ignatian retreat is a big commitment – not to be taken lightly. It requires an hour of prayer with scripture every day, and a meeting with your spiritual director every two weeks for support, guidance, and discussion of your experiences of prayer.

The Exercises lead to an experience of deeper conversion into life with Christ. They allow our personal stories to be caught up into the story of God.



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### Book Notes

A Review of *Organic Prayer: A Spiritual Gardening Companion* by Nancy Roth [Seabury Books: New York, 1993]

by Harriett Gill, Parishioner

Winter is almost over, and many of us have turned our thoughts to gardening. Roth's book will not help very much with your flowers and vegetables, but it will certainly fertilize your spiritual health.

Roth, an Episcopal priest, writes that the 'organic' metaphor for prayer helps her to practice contemplative gardening of the spirit. Each chapter has 'spadework' at the end, encompassing ways to cultivate and fertilize one's spirit. This is a book in which one finds many 'aha' moments that not only stir one up but bring joy. The foreword is written by Madeline L'Engle, which is truly an endorsement. My favorite chapter is about the blessing of the animals at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Manhattan. Reading this book will help one to experience the world more fully, whether in one's garden or walking on a city street. Roth invites us to be true to ourselves by reminding us that nature prays by being absolutely true to itself. "Glorify the Lord, all you works of the Lord."

## Parish Life

### The Road to Reconciliation: A Sacramental Journey of Healing and Hope

During the Adult Forum, beginning on March 13, 2011, and continuing for five consecutive weeks in the Great Hall, we will be invited to explore the Sacrament of Reconciliation, one of the least understood and least utilized resources of our Church. Discussion will be facilitated by clergy and will cover a wide range of topics such as healthy guilt versus shame, the spiritual power of confession and absolution, the process of forgiveness, and the potential for deepening and healing our relationships with God and one another. If you have further questions please contact the Rev. Steve Best ([steveb@stthomasmedina.org](mailto:steveb@stthomasmedina.org)) or the Rev. Karen Haig ([karen@stthomasmedina.org](mailto:karen@stthomasmedina.org)).

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## Practicing the Hospitality of God

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