

Services

Sunday

8:00 am Eucharist with hymns
9:00 am Fellowship
10:00 am Sunday School
10:15 am Sung Eucharist
11:15 am Fellowship

Wednesday

10:00 am Eucharist (Chapel)

Daily

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

Calendar

July 1

Congregations for the Homeless
participants arrive

July 4

Independence Day
OFFICE CLOSED

July 6

9:00 am, Sandwich Makers (*Kitchen*)

July 23

9:00 am, Fellowship Hike
Spray Park (see page 2)

July 25-29

9:00 am to noon
Vacation Bible Camp (*Campus*)

July 30

9:00 am, Fellowship Hike
Silver Peak (see page 2)

July 31

10:15 am, VBC Sunday

August 6

9:00 am, Golf Scramble

August 7

10:15 am, Mass on the Grass, followed by
Parish Picnic (*Medina Park*)

August 27

9:00 am, Fellowship Hike
Gold Pond (see page 2)

THE

COLLECT

July 2011

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

From the Rector — The Mystery of Prayer

by the Reverend Lex Breckinridge

The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

—Romans 8:26-27

The clergy staff has recently spent a good bit of time planning formation/education/fellowship opportunities for the upcoming program year. It's interesting that each one of us, more or less independently, has been doing some study and reflection around the work of the Apostle Paul. That is too coincidental to be a mere coincidence. It must mean that the Holy Spirit is pointing us somewhere. So we have decided to offer a series on the Apostle and his work in the Sunday Forums beginning in September. We will begin the series with some reflections on reading scripture and then have one session on Paul's life. He's a fascinating, very complex and very human figure. We will then launch into a multi-week study of the Letter to the Romans, perhaps the most complete explication of Paul's theology. Each session will begin with a presentation by one of our clergy team, leaving plenty of time for questions and conversation. We hope it will present Paul and his life and work in whole new light.

It's serendipity, or grace, that the Lectionary appoints the eighth chapter of Romans for the upcoming Sundays in July. It's a magnificent discourse on the freedom Christians experience as a result of our hope in the power of the Resurrection. The great Anglican theologian, John A. T. Robinson, called Romans 8 the greatest piece of writing in all of scripture. Take some time to read and sit with it and see if you agree with Bishop Robinson.

In the two verses above, Paul is telling us something of great importance about the mystery of prayer. Have you ever been frustrated or confused by prayer? Sometimes liturgical prayer seems rote and mechanical. We just go through the motions. Sometimes spontaneous prayer is misguided and even demanding of God! Paul observes that it's not really possible for human beings to pray to God at all. What can we possibly tell the One who has already searched our hearts, who knows what we need before we even form the words? God knows far more about us than we know about ourselves. So, words are not the essence of prayer. The essence of prayer is instead God working in and through us, drawing forward into God's own Heart. It is the sighs too deep for words that are the essence of prayer. We acknowledge this truth at the beginning of the Eucharistic liturgy when we pray the Collect for Purity:

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you, no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit ...

Maybe this will take away some of the anxiety many of us experience about prayer. Rather than an "obligation" that needs to be "performed correctly," prayer is our time to be still and open up to God. Quietly. With humility. Let God do the rest.

Faithfully,



Parish Life

Brian Gregory Named New Youth Minister



Brian Gregory joined the St. Thomas staff in June 2011. With six years of experience working with Young Life, he is excited to work

with youth in the context of the local church. A Seattle native, Brian graduated from Seattle Pacific University in 2007 with degrees in theology and educational ministry. He has returned to SPU to work on his **Master of Divinity**. Brian's wife Kelly is a high school history teacher in the Issaquah School District. They live on Mercer Island.

When Brian is not working with the youth at St. Thomas or studying, he enjoys spending time in the outdoors, playing the guitar, piano, and hammered dulcimer, and watching baseball. Brian wishes that he could play more golf, knew how to fly an airplane, and could break dance. Brian can be reached by email at brian@stthomasmedina.org.

We welcome Brian and Kelly into our St. Thomas family.

People News

Our own Alyce Rogers will perform in the Seattle Gilbert and Sullivan **Society production of "Ruddigore"** at the Bagley Wright Theatre (Seattle Rep) from July 15-30 with matinees on Saturdays and Sundays. Find more information at: www.patterson.org, and purchase tickets at: brownpapertickets.com.

John Daniels has been given a chaplain position at Church Farm School for boys in Exton, PA. The family will move there mid-August.

Fellowship Weekend

Golf Scramble: We are looking for golfers of all skill levels to participate in the 3rd Annual St. Thomas Scramble golf tournament on Saturday, **August 6**. Last year's event proved to be a great way to meet and get to know other St. Thomas parishioners in a relaxed and fun environment, so come join us! Contact: Larry Loranger, lloranger3@comcast.net

Mass on the Grass: Mark your calendars for this excellent worship and fellowship opportunity in Medina Park on **August 7**. We'll offer Eucharist at 10:15 am followed by food, fun, and frivolity. There will be games for all ages. Helping hands are welcome! Please sign up in the Great Hall. Contact: Jan Wang, jan@thewangfamily.us

More Summer Fellowship Events

Here are some summer hikes to enjoy. For more information, call or email the leaders.

July 23: Spray Park, Mt. Rainier
Leaders Bob & Sue Collett
bob.collett@milliman.com
425-453-7164

July 30: Silver Peak, Snoqualmie Pass
Leaders Jerry & Laurie Angelo
jlcangelo@frontier.com
425-883-7172

August 27: Gold Pond
Leaders Bob & Sue Collett
bob.collett@milliman.com
425-453-7164

Help Wanted

Here are a few helpful and rewarding opportunities for volunteers at St. Thomas. These are not lifetime commitments. We'll be thankful for whatever time you can give. Please call the office for more information or to sign up.

Offering Counters

Duties: Count and prepare the Sunday offering for deposit to the banks. The Counters work in teams of two persons, who serve once every six weeks year 'round. Whenever there are individual scheduling conflicts, it's easy to arrange a swap with another Counter. *Time/Day:* 9:00 am to noon on Mondays.

Columbarium Angels

Duties: Remove "expired" flowers and plants from the East and West Columbarium areas, pull small weeds between the paving stones, and sweep away dead leaves. *Time/Day:* Any time or day, once a month for about an hour.

Lay Weeders

Duties: Pull weeds in the areas adjacent to the parking lots. *Time/Day:* Any time or day, once a week during the growing season, less frequently during the winter; not necessary to do all the areas all at once.

Fellowship Committee Members

Duties: Plan or organize or work on fellowship events during the year. We already have a wonderfully active committee, but it could use a few more members. Volunteers can take on a new event, or sign up to help with an existing event. *Time/Day:* Variable!

Sunday School Assistants

Duties: Help our Sunday School teachers with setup/cleanup, and other support tasks. *Time/Day:* 10:00 to 11:00 am on Sundays when you can be available. It won't be necessary to serve every Sunday.

Vestry Views

Reflections on Hymn 673 “The first one ever!”

by Bob Webb, Senior Warden

Having Vestry members write a *Collect* article on a hymn we’ve never sung is a challenge, an “opportunity.” As with my writing about St. Paul last year, I am reminded by the process to have faith. Hymn 673 begins:

The first one ever, oh, ever to know of the birth of Jesus was the Maid Mary
Was the Maid of Galilee and blessed is she, is she who believes.
Oh, blessed is she who believes in the Lord, oh, blessed is she who believes.
She was Mary the Maid of Galilee and blessed is she, is she who believes.

In the second verse, the Samaritan woman is the first to know – “perceive” – the Messiah. Then the third verse shows Mary, Joanna, and Mary Magdalene were the first to know – “see” – the rising of the Lord and his “glory to be.”

Also, we recognize that the disadvantaged are the first to see these blessed events. We might be reminded that Jesus always emphasized the equality of all and championed the downtrodden.

So, what is the message? What was Linda Wilberger Egan’s message in 1980 when she wrote music and words? What does this exercise mean to me and possibly to you? The first message to me personally is “slow down!” We should slow down to think and discern. We should have faith that the God in our heart will speak if we listen.

This reminds me of Wednesday Bible Class. We read a lesson, usually the Gospel, three times, looking for a word or phrase that touches us, then “perceive” a message for us, then “see” how we might use this in our life. Similarly, in choir we practice the hymns several times. The repetition allows progressive attention to the message and thus to the words and punctuation that reveal the message for us and the congregation.

The exercise of studying a hymn has a message for me despite little belief, perception, or insight early on. It is: “Slow down! Think, Discern!” Have faith and see what horizons open up. And in the life of St. Thomas? We’ve opened our hearts to new possibilities with plans for a new Great Hall. Does this hymn have a message for you?

Do You Know...

...what happens to our Sunday plate offerings?

Every Sunday after each morning service, a team of two designated ushers gathers immediately in the sacristy to count and sort the plate offerings. This money is then placed in the church safe. The next day, Monday, another team shows up to organize the donations, that is, to separate the cash from the checks and make copies of every check, etc. When a final accounting is made, the money is deposited in the bank that day and the receipt is brought back to the church.

Called “The Counters,” the teams include the following people:

- ◆ Fred Hayes (Chair) and Cathryn Cowles
- ◆ Donn Foreman and Suzanne Hutchinson
- ◆ Bruce Myers and Steve Reid
- ◆ Jack Caldwell and Alan Senear
- ◆ Bob Webb and Robin Middleton
- ◆ Charles Brown and John Palevich
- ◆ Fred McCorriston, alternate

Financial Report

MAY 2011

	Budget	Actual
Income	\$68,938	\$66,786
Expense	\$77,057	\$73,211

YEAR TO DATE

Income	\$446,826	\$435,045
Expense	\$456,623	\$458,706

Congregations for the Homeless

This month St. Thomas will again host a group of 30 homeless men, providing a safe shelter and three nourishing meals each day. This year we’re asking that when you come to deliver your dinner contribution, please consider staying for dinner and talking with our guests. If you have breakfast or lunch food to deliver, bring it by in the evening and plan to stay. If you live nearby or happen to be in the area, please join us. Let us enlarge St. Thomas’ reputation to include warm and caring fellowship. Sign up for food donations in the Great Hall. Contact: Margaret Waterfall, 425-747-3791, margaretwaterfall@comcast.net

Life Center Update

A Talk Presented to the Parish on June 12, 2011

by Mary Newcomer Williams

I am pleased to have this opportunity to update you on the campaign for the Life Center at St. Thomas, particularly our community-facing efforts. As we did for our campaign within the parish, we have hired a professional consultant to assist with these efforts, and her guidance, connections, and support are invaluable. **With Tracy's assistance** [Tracy Bennett, Fundraising Consultant to the Center at St. Thomas Project], we are pursuing ongoing efforts falling into three main categories: (1) building partnerships with community non-profits, (2) meeting and educating potential donors, and (3) preparing applications for foundation grants.

As you may have read in the June *Collect*, we are building on our experience in partnering with community organizations, such as the Boy Scouts and Alcoholics Anonymous, as we look toward construction of the new Center.

We are engaged in exciting conversations with the Bellevue Boys and Girls Club about offering their services in the Center during times when the Church is not using the space. As you know, the bulk of parish activities in the current Great Hall occur on Sunday and in the evenings, leaving large portions of the building unused during weekday hours, particularly in the late afternoon. This provides a great opportunity for a respected and skilled organization like the Boys and Girls Club to offer after-school enrichment programs – in math, science, technology and the arts – that will serve the needs of our parish families, St. Thomas School families, and other young people in our neighborhood. And of course we will further strengthen our existing relationships with Alcoholics Anonymous, the Boy Scouts, and Congregations for the Homeless, while continuing to explore new partnerships

with other non-profit organizations that support our mission of outreach and service to the community.

Partnerships with groups like the Boys and Girls Club help us in two ways. First, they help potential community donors and foundations see how the new Center truly would be an asset to the entire community. Second, they bring essentially turnkey operations that will allow the new Center to be well utilized while our parish resources – human and financial – remain invested in the core mission of our ministry. And, we hope that as people unfamiliar with St. Thomas come to the new Center, they will learn more about our work as a parish and the opportunities for reflection and worship within the church. But even if these community **members don't worship with us on Sundays**, serving them through our new facility will be a way to live out our mission and will reinforce the bonds of our parish community.

Simultaneous with our discussions with partners that might use the Center, Father Lex and others are meeting with potential donors – including local corporations and charities, families with a historic connection to the parish, and friends and neighbors recommended by parishioners and our consultant – about opportunities to support this exciting project. The generous campaign giving from within our parish – which has impressed a number of potential donors with whom we have spoken – shows our commitment to making the vision of the Center a reality, and provides an essential foundation for our community engagement efforts.

We are also in the process of submitting proposals to a number of local foundations. These proposals also highlight both the deep commitment of the parish and the opportunities for the new Center to serve our entire community.

We feel very good about the reception we are getting as we engage with these potential donors and foundations. They are interested and want to learn more. But we do realize that it may feel like the process is moving slowly in contrast to our rapidly successful parish fundraising last fall. However, given that people outside the St. Thomas community are not familiar with our plans for the Center (or our current work in some cases), we must take the time needed to share our plans and excitement, listen to their feedback, and then engage in a dialogue about how they can help build this much-needed community asset. After all, many of us within the parish needed to be educated before we fully understood and were inspired by the opportunity offered by the new Center, and the same is true of potential donors in the community. Based on the level of interest and engagement we are seeing as we reach out to the community, we feel strongly that these efforts remain worthy of the investment of time and energy we are making now.

As we continue to move forward with our planning and our fundraising, we will not only keep you informed but would appreciate your thoughts. Please do not hesitate to contact me or members of the clergy or Vestry with your ideas and suggestions.

And let us all continue to keep in mind that the new Center, in whatever form the Lord guides us to create it, will provide much needed and wonderful space for our youth ministry, parish celebrations, and community outreach. Your early investment in this project has brought us to this exciting point, and your continued prayers, support, and enthusiasm will see us through to wherever the Lord intends us to be. Thank you all.

Project Outreach Makes Spring Grants

by Ann Casey, Project Outreach Steering Committee Member

Thanks to the collective efforts and generosity of St. Thomas parishioners, God's love can be seen around the world. Recently the St. Thomas Project Outreach Steering Committee made grants, on behalf of our congregation, offering aide and support to organizations both locally and abroad. Below are some examples of the impact of those grants, as well as ways parishioners can become personally involved.

Congregations for Kids is a coalition of local congregations that helps supply low-income families with backpacks and school supplies for children in the Bellevue School District. Besides supplies received from the recent school supply drive at St. Thomas, Congregations for Kids was granted \$1,500 to purchase additional school supplies for the estimated 2,000 students in need for the coming school year. Volunteer opportunities are available over the summer to sort and assemble school supplies.

St. Thomas is contributing \$2,000 to the fundraising efforts at Christ Church, Tacoma, to help build a Sanitation Block at the St. Andre Parish in Cazale, Haiti. The new facility will be constructed through the Haiti Episcopal Partnership to provide adequate toilet and septic facilities and water to wash in for the 450 members **of the church's congregation, in addition to 125-150 children who attend the day school in the church.** This Sanitation Block is part of a two-year project with the Christ Church Haiti Committee to offer aide to St. Andre following the earthquake in January 2010.

In February, the Rwanda Girls Initiative (RGI) opened the Gashora Girls Academy, a community center

and secondary boarding school for girls. The school serves girls from each district of Rwanda ages 14-18 in grades 10-12. The first class of 90 **10th grade girls arrived for this year's term,** and the school will grow each year by 90 additional students until it reaches capacity at 270 students by 2012. **St. Thomas' grant of \$4,500 will train and fully fund the tuition of one additional teacher for the coming year.** Parishioners are welcome to be personally involved with administrative, marketing, and fundraising efforts at the local Bellevue office.

The Landing, a branch of Friends of Youth, offers emergency shelter, transitional housing, employment



support, mental health and substance abuse counseling for the Eastside homeless population ages 18-24. This segment of the homeless population is not otherwise served locally. The current grant of \$3,000 will allow this organization to hire additional support staff so they can expand the shelter from five to seven nights a week, increasing from 3,363 nights to 5,353 nights per year. Many volunteer opportunities with the organization exist, like providing dinner for ap-

proximately 15 youths nightly, tending to the upkeep of transitional housing, providing snack packs and hygiene kits, or donating bus tickets and household items.

St. Thomas, as a member of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, has made a \$2,000 grant to Support Life at St. Vincent's Center for Handicapped Children School and Medical Facility in Haiti. This project is part of an ongoing fundraising effort to provide at least two meals a day and adequate water for the children of St. Vincent's.

During the month of July, St. Thomas will host Congregations for the Homeless, a project that supports 30 men who are making the transition to permanent housing. Shelter participants are involved in life coaching and case management. (This is the only shelter program for single men on the Eastside.) Project Outreach is providing \$3,500 to support this important work. Parishioners can help by supplying food, personal items (like toothpaste), cleaning products and, of course, a warm welcome.

We are proud of our congregation and the ongoing love and generosity that everyone has shown to these deserving organizations. If you are interested in getting more information, becoming personally involved through volunteer opportunities, or bringing awareness to organizations that you are involved with, please contact the St. Thomas Project Outreach Steering Committee.

www.stthomasmedina.org/outreach/project_outreach.htm

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

Vestry

Bob Webb, *Senior Warden*
Fred Barkman, *Treasurer*
Jim Blundell, *Chancellor*
Linda Hendrickson, *Clerk*

Paul Birkeland	Bill McSherry
Christopher Breunig	Bonnie Pearce
Joanne Del Bene	Delphine Stevens
Brian Evison	Steve Reid
Rose Magee	Mary Williams
Kim Malcolm	

Staff

The Right Rev. Greg Rickel,
Bishop of the Diocese of Olympia
The Rev. Lex Breckinridge, *Rector*
The Rev. Stephen W. Best, *Associate for
Couples & Family Life*
The Rev. Karen Haig, *Priest Associate*
The Rev. Kathryn Ballinger, *Deacon*
Associate for Spiritual Direction & Parish Visitor
Brian Gregory, *Associate for Youth Ministries*
Charles Rus, *Associate for Music &
Liturgical Arts*
Marion Anderson, *Director of Children &
Youth Choral Activities*
Danielle Brzusek, *Childcare Coordinator*
Kim Malcolm, *Ministries Coordinator*
Phyllis Ross, *Newcomers Coordinator*
Heather Smith, *Pastoral Care Coordinator*
Torrey Musicant, *Sexton*
Doug Anderson, *Day Porter*
Gerry Gallaher, *Business Manager*
Laura Gregg, *Executive Assistant to the Rector*
Bob Simeone, *Building Project Manager*

The Collect

Shirley E. Deffenbaugh, *Editor*
Elizabeth Ward, *Assistant Editor*
Laura Gregg, *Layout and Production Editor*

Deadline: For the September issue,
August 15. Please submit copy to Shirley
Deffenbaugh, sedeffenbaugh@comcast.net
or leave in the drawer marked "Collect" at
the church. All articles will be edited. Questions?
Please call Shirley at 425-455-4817.

Art at St. Thomas

Story of the Pyx (Flying Dove)

by Marilee Watts McCorrison

The brass dove that flies freely on the pulpit side of the altar at St. Thomas is more than a decoration. It serves as the receptacle of the blessed food of the Eucharist to be taken to the sick and grieving or to those otherwise unable to attend church for Communion.

When my older and only brother, Dan Watts, was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer at the age of 29, my family did not know that our tragedy would end in a beautiful gift to St. Thomas. In January 1972, Dan, a brilliant young man just starting his law career, with a happy family life and a strong body due to his many athletic



endeavors (including a silver medal in crew at the Pan American Games in Brazil in 1962) found out he had lung cancer with only a short time to live. He was living in Medina at the time, with his wife and two children.

Driving home after this diagnosis, Dan's first stop was at St. Thomas where he hoped the doors would be open so he could pray. That afternoon he met Father John Vruwink, former rector, who happened to be in the nave, and the two soon became very close friends. The many hours Dan spent with Father Vruwink in prayer and theological discussion during the last year of his life were his greatest source of peace, hope, and joy. His family attended St. Thomas

every Sunday that Dan was able to overcome the pain. We were all sure that if we prayed hard enough, this strong young man would live.

During his many discussions with Father Vruwink, Dan expressed how much having Holy Communion brought to his home when he was unable to attend church meant to him. He asked how he could demonstrate his love of the Eucharist in a tangible way at St. Thomas. Since Dan was a sculptor besides being an engineer and a lawyer, Father Vruwink recommended that he consider designing and donating a pyx, which would store the blessed bread to be delivered to the sick.

Dan chose to draw the plans of a brass dove as the pyx, which could be near the altar, ever present, ever watchful. It would always be in full view, reminding the members of the congregation of the faith, love, and peace they are given through the Holy Spirit, a gift from God through Jesus Christ's baptism, as described in Matthew 3:16, 17: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him: And lo a voice from Heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Once the plans were drawn and a sculptor who worked in brass was located, the dove was made after Dan's death. Two years later it was stolen and for several years not replaced, since no one could find the plans or the artist who made it. But the dove is replaced and home now, keeping watch over the congregation.

I watch the dove at every service, giving thanks for this reminder of the Holy Spirit within me, and the peace of the Lord that passes all under-

Hymn 673 "The First One Ever"

by Charles Rus, Associate for Music & Liturgical Arts

Occasionally, I get together with Cindy and Herb Holeman and Marilyn Pederson to play sacred folk music. Hymn 673 "The First One Ever" is a real hit with our band: recorder, fiddle, autoharp, and melodica make a beautiful combination for this ballad.

standing. It is also a visible reminder for me of my brother, who suffered great sorrow and pain in his last year, at nearly the same age as Jesus Christ at His crucifixion, and neither man could stop their inevitable deaths.

During Lent, as I watched the dove descend during the Maundy Thursday service. I noticed its head was bent downward, as if it felt the sorrow of the days to come. But on Easter morning, the dove was raised up and shining like the sun, with its head held high in celebration of Christ's resurrection.

I hope that knowing this history of the St. Thomas pyx will bring peace to all who see it, knowledge of the love of God as He watches over us all, and comfort in knowing that the Holy Spirit is always with us. Our hymns often refer to the dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. We sing and pray about the Holy Spirit every Sunday and at every service we attend, each with a different description. "Like the murmur of the dove's song, like the challenge of her flight, like the vigor of the wind's rush, like the new flame's eager might: come, Holy Spirit, come."



The first one ever, oh, ever to know
of the birth of Jesus, was the maid Mary,
was Mary the maid of Galilee,
and blessed is she,
is she who believes.
Oh, blessed is she who believes in the Lord,
oh, blessed is she who believes.
She was Mary the maid of Galilee,
and blessed is she,
is she who believes.

The first one ever, oh, ever to know
of Messiah, Jesus, when he said, "I am he,"
was the Samaritan woman who drew from the well,
and blessed is she,
is she who perceives.
Oh, blessed is she who perceives the Lord,
oh, blessed is she who perceives.

'Twas the Samaritan woman who drew from the well,
and blessed is she,
is she who perceives.



The first ones ever, oh, ever to know
of the rising of Jesus, his glory to be,
they were Mary, Joanna, and Magdalene,
and blessed are they,
are they who see.
Oh, blessed are they who see the Lord,
oh, blessed are they who see.
They were Mary, Joanna, and Magdalene,
and blessed are they,
are they who see.

Each verse creates a vivid and intimate image. I look forward to singing this love song together at the Eucharist this summer, perhaps accompanied by our sacred folk music group.

Book Notes

A Review of *Chasing Francis: A Pilgrim's Tale* by Ian Morgan Cron
by Harriett Gill

Ian Morgan Cron is an Anglican priest who started a faith community, Trinity Church, in Greenwich, Connecticut. *Chasing Francis: A Pilgrim's Tale* is his first book. He wished to write a nonfiction book about St. Francis, but his publishers informed him that hundreds of books have been written on this subject. He elected to write a novel instead and incorporate the ideals of St. Francis into the story. He has done a remarkable job; this is a book that really **holds one's interest and challenges one's way of life**. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, was so taken with the book that he has read it twice.

Although the novel promotes the ideas and way of life of a long-dead saint, it is set in the modern world. The main character (he cannot be called the hero), Chase Falson, is the

head preacher of a mega-church in Connecticut. A young parishioner has died suddenly in a tragic, senseless way, and Chase finds he is losing his faith because of this death. The loss, unfortunately, becomes glaringly real to him while he is preaching. He stops in the midst of his sermon, steps down from the pulpit, walks down the center aisle and out of the church without any explanation.

For a time, he is clueless about what to do because of his erratic behavior. He calls an uncle who happens to be a Franciscan monk in Italy and tells him what he has done. The uncle bids him to come to Italy immediately.

Chase lives in the monastery and learns about the life and practices of St. Francis, which is really learning the way of Jesus. Francis left everything of worldly value to follow Jesus

and serve his fellow man. Chase goes with the monks on their various works and even goes with some nuns on their charitable ways. He learns to serve his fellow human beings in a very new and foreign way for him.

The author writes a compelling story, giving the ideals of Francis' way of life while painting an inviting picture of the contemporary Italian countryside and lifestyle.

Eventually, the protagonist Chase finds that things in the mega-church that he founded are not going well. He is ordered to come back immediately. Ordinarily, one could make a good guess about how this story would end. This one surprises. The book ends with a section of questions for reflection – questions one must take seriously, and the answers are not always easy.

Practicing the Hospitality of God

in this From the Rector, p. 1
issue: Parish Life, p. 2
Vestry Views, p.3

Life Center Update, p. 4
Project Outreach, p. 5

The Flying Dove, p. 6
Hymn 673, p. 7

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
P.O. Box 124
Medina, WA 98039

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Medina, WA 98039
Permit No. 1