

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
5:15 pm Contemplative Eucharist

Monday

9:00 am Centering Prayer, *Chapel*

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

Calendar

December 3

9:00 am, Poverty Simulation Experience
8:00 pm, The Esoterics Concert

December 4

11:45 am, Come to the Quiet, *Chapel*
3:00 pm, Russian Pianist Concert

December 7

9:00 am, Sandwich Makers, *Kitchen*

December 10

7:30 pm, NW Boychoir's Festival of
Lessons & Carols

December 11

11:30 am, Moms' Group, *Parkside Room*
2:00 pm, Bellevue Chamber Chorus

December 17

7:00 pm, Cascadian Chorale

December 18

2:30 pm, Ukrainian Carols

December 24 & 25

Please see the back page for service times

THE

COLLECT

December 2011

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

From the Rector: Advent — Now But Not Yet

by the Reverend Lex Breckinridge

The one who testifies to these things says "Surely I am coming soon."

Amen. Come Lord Jesus! Revelation 22:20

This is the second to last verse in the last book of the Bible, the Revelation to John.

It is a proper ending to the scriptures as it succinctly captures all the hope of the Christian life. Notice that the future remains open. "Soon" is not defined. So we must wait expectantly for the promise to be fulfilled. And in the meantime we must live our lives faithfully from one expectant moment to another — day by day.

These words from the last appropriate watchwords liturgical year. In Advent, ness of time. We are forward to the coming of know that day or the filled with *expectancy*, each meaning. This is the way year: filled with hope for time living in the reality all we have. Each mo- lived with the deepest to be lived gracefully and be lived as if this is the Jesus comes.



page of the Bible are also for the beginning of the we are called to an aware- called to be alert. We look the Lord but we do not hour. Each moment is thus moment is pregnant with for us to begin the new the future and at the same that the present moment is ment, therefore, must be seriousness, each moment is joyfully, each moment is to moment when the Lord

The alertness to which we are called in the season of Advent is all about living in the present, all about an awareness of God moving in our lives and in the world, all about being open and receptive to the salvation offered to us and all Creation through the power of the Incarnation, Jesus Christ, Lord of Creation. The gap between God and humanity is closed.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Faithfully,

From the Priest Associate

What are you waiting for?

by The Rev. Karen Haig, Priest Associate

It's a good question, really. What ARE you waiting for? As we move more deeply into this season of Advent, waiting is the name of the game. Are you feeling hopeful? Harried? Happy? Are you finding the promise of light in the depths of this dark season? Do you have time to wait?

We seem not to be so good at waiting in our culture. We hurry out the door in the morning, talk on the phone as we make our way to work or to drop the kids at school, rush to the gym and through our work-outs, get to our homes or our desks to manage multiple tasks, eat lunch in our offices or on the go, work longer than we ought to, rush to make dinner, only to have our family members eating at different times because of the different evening activities we scatter to . . . and we fall into bed exhausted, just to do it all again tomorrow.

Maybe that isn't exactly how your day goes . . . but I know I can find elements of my day in that scenario. Yet I am one of the lucky ones – I have “waiting” built into my days. While I do indeed rush to get to the ferry, it's really the ferry line I rush to, because in order to get a spot on the boat, I have to be in line early. And that's when I get to wait. I usually pull out my computer and go to work, but this Advent I've made a promise to myself. When the gift of waiting presents itself, I will wait.

I don't imagine Mary was waiting for the angel Gabriel when he appeared to tell her that God had chosen her, but every rendering of that scene shows Mary sitting quietly and taking in what was right in front of her. She never seems to be multi-tasking or producing any “deliverables.” Instead, we see her simply taking in and pondering that which is before her, so when Gabriel arrives, she does more of the same – and so begins the waiting. Nine long months of waiting and watching and wondering and hoping. Those of us who have had babies know this kind of waiting, but pregnancy isn't required to understand the profoundly fruitful nature of waiting.

During this season of Advent, we're invited to wait, to wonder, to ponder our deepest longings. How might you do that in your household? In our home, Advent is a time when evenings are lit by candles and a fire in the woodstove. Suppers are simple and there is time to sit and to ponder. Yes, there are still meetings and holiday festivities, but when we are offered the possibility of sitting and pondering and waiting, we try to be welcoming. And we are intentional about quieting ourselves and creating an environment that invites us more deeply into the waiting. The whole world is about to change . . . God is coming to be among us! My prayer in this beautiful season of wonder and waiting and wanting is for such presence of mind and heart that we see the signs of God coming – in a glorious birdsong, in an act of loving kindness, in the stillness of the starlit sky, or the wonder of a child's eyes. I pray that you have it all this Advent season . . . all of the beauty your waiting has to offer.

Karen +



Vestry Views

by Kim Malcolm, Vestry Member & Ministries Coordinator

There are many reasons to be grateful for our parish home; and for me, one of the biggest is our recent Discernment Day workshop. In early October, about 30 brave souls gathered in the Great Hall and dared to ask the question, “What are my spiritual gifts?” and even more bravely, “What am I supposed to do with them?”

Asking this question means being able to admit that (a) you don’t know, and (b) it’s OK that you don’t know. The emotional safety net provided by all the other people in the room made it possible for many of us to reflect more deeply on what kind of a Christian we want to be, and how we can transform our daily life and work into an act of worship.

As the ministries coordinator at St. Thomas, I’m frequently blessed by many conversations that start out with my question, “So, what are you interested in?” These conversations often get to a point when there’s a holy spark in the eyes of the person I’m talking with. It’s the moment when they dare to verbalize what really makes them happy about church, and it’s almost always some variation on the theme of being part of a vibrant community.

We crave connection, and we come to church hoping to find it. This is the time of year when we are reminded that God is also craving a connection with us.

In this Advent season, as we long for the sacred connection with the Divine, as we anticipate and prepare for the Christ Child’s arrival, I’ll try to remember that God is also anticipating and longing for my arrival – my arrival as my true self, with my gifts being used for what they were intended. I wish for you and all your friends and family the joy that comes on that journey, and all the quiet blessings of the season. Peace.



Financial Report

OCTOBER 2011

	Budget	Actual
Income	\$85,268	\$99,647
Expense	\$77,554	\$77,212

YEAR TO DATE

Income	\$827,200	\$813,230
Expense	\$840,405	\$831,471



“For Whom the Bell Tolls”*

by Anita Crocus

A few years ago on my way to Barcelona during a 24-hour stopover in Amsterdam, I encountered a cocky young Dutch shuttle driver on my ride into the inner city. He shot his verbal bullets at the Americans: “And I suppose all of you can’t wait to go visit the Anne Frank House, like most Americans? Wouldn’t you like a detour through the Red Light District first?” Not only was the remark caustic but insensitive and trivialized the Frank House into a kind of Grand-Guignol.

The others laughed uncomfortably. I was infuriated. In clipped and precise German, which nettles, I replied that he should pay attention to his driving and that if he made me late for the Concertgebouw I would report him to the company. That silenced the abrasive young driver who tuned back into the fog of his pop tunes.

His remark particularly stung because I had no intention of visiting the Anne Frank House. I wasn’t going to rekindle the Sturm und Drang of the Second World War. I’d been through the whole Pandora’s Box of horrors during the 1970s while living in Vienna – through the camps, the graphic films, confessions from neighbors, and social occasions with Simon Wiesenthal endlessly discussing his documentation center. And before that in Argentina when I worked with some of the Israeli Security forces who captured Adolph Eichmann. I wanted nothing more on my stopover than to renew my passion for Vermeer and Van Gogh, visit the Barcelona 1900 exhibit, and bask in Mariss Janson’s conducting of Mahler’s Fifth. My war chapter was closed.

After arriving at a 17th Century canal house hotel, I sat in a miniature backyard garden studying a map of the Jordaan. The mellow filtered light of late October outlined the faded blooms of summer. A few petrified roses clung to thorny stems. My first encounter with the carillon of the Westerkerk (West Church) took place there while an attendant brought out a tray of fruit and cheeses. The tower of the church dominated the view through neighboring gardens. The clerk, still recovering from the influx of summer tourists, was numb to the chime concert but marked our location on the map.

We were located between two of the main canals, Keizergracht and the Prinsengracht. “Prinsengracht!” I mused peering over the maze of fences that lined that canal. She understood and pointed, “The chestnut tree. Over there.” The dark, barren trunk of Anne Frank’s beloved chestnut tree forked toward the sky but revealed the Dutch government had failed in its efforts to preserve the dying tree. The Achterhuis, Anne Frank house, was starting to become a recurring theme. However, my initial fascination with the West Church bells ended during nocturnal hours when the 15,000-pound bell with its 400-pound hammer chimed the time and vibrated through the neighborhood of gingerbread homes, keeping me awake even when I closed the warped window.

The bell tower of the West Church lends height and interest to the flat skyline and the view from the top offers an unequalled panorama of

Amsterdam. Somewhere within the church walls lies the body of Rembrandt, but no one knows the precise location. The gilded and white Renaissance organ dominates the stark interior, which is akin to the inside of an empty eggshell. The back of the church faces the Prinsengracht from where it is impossible to ignore Anne Frank’s house snaked with incessant



tourist lines. Unlike the cynical shuttle driver, I doubted everyone queued was American.

The weather turned particularly nasty on my last night. After departing a canal boat, the wind blew a blast of wet leaves into my face. To escape the rain and the boat pilot who was administering another drug fix on his break, I walked toward shelter and noticed few people clotted around the Frank House ticket office. Primarily as a refuge from the storm, I found myself inside with the last visitors during the remains of the day.

From the moment one climbs the steep stairs from the street-level ware-

house into the former office and up beyond the legendary faux bookcase, conversation, if at all, is hushed. There is a sacred feeling to the profane of **Anne Frank's last hiding place**. Our small group thinned further during the introductory film where some became visibly traumatized watching the piles of bodies bulldozed in the camps. Their shock revealed they had not seen the horror show before but that **in itself was shocking**. It's always easier to dehumanize people in groups than individually. Concentration camp scenes were not nearly as searing as the testimonials at the end of the film from those who knew the girl from the Secret Annex, which humanized one victim.

The last woman who saw Anne Frank at Bergen-Belsen revealed that Anne believed her entire family had perished, that she was alone. Over the barbed fence, the woman threw the skeletal child a packet of food that stronger inmates wrestled from her. The witness painfully mused that perhaps if Anne had known her father lived, she might have had the will to go on. Instead, she watched Anne walk away, hungry and ill with shoulders slumped like an old woman, with a sense of hopelessness into death.

The story of the annex has been told and retold over the decades. It has been sanitized, dramatized, and even sometimes romanticized. I didn't think there was anything new for me to glean, but I was wrong. Of course, **the pathos of actually seeing Anne's faded red-plaid journal in the room where it was found on the floor could not be denied**. No other book so

aptly conveys Baron Lytton's sentiment that the **"pen is mightier than the sword."** Anne's journal spoke of the unbearable loss of all innocent children, regardless of nationality, who were robbed of their dreams, futures, and lives.

But there was another powerful image clearly visible from the kitchen and living quarters, a symbol of human existence, of hope, of the outside world. In the upper window that never had to be covered because no one could see inside from that angle was a perfectly framed view of the West Church tower. The tower looked like a painting against the sky with its ornate blue-red-gold crown of the Holy Roman Empire on top. In darkness, the clock face must have made an impressive night light for the former occupants. The chime felt like a heartbeat and made the clock seem a living entity.

Unlike her family, those chimes held special significance for Anne – a constant reminder that both time and life existed in the outside world. The notation of time had become for the young writer a kind of punctuation mark. She mentions the tower frequently in her diary. The following is her first notation from the Critical Edition by the Netherlands State Institute:

"Saturday, 11 July, 1942

Dear Kitty:

Daddy, Mummy, and Margot can't get used to the sound of the Westertoren clock yet, which tells us the time every quarter of an hour. I can. I loved it from the start, and especially in the night. It's like a faithful friend."

The clock was silenced during increased bombing of Holland in summer 1944 because the Wehrmacht mistakenly believed that the Dutch underground was using the tower to signal Allied bombers. What was welcome news to most others sensing the oncoming freedom, Anne interpreted the silence of her **"friend"** a bad omen. Ironically, the group in the annex was discovered and arrested shortly thereafter and Anne died two months before liberation. Time had truly stopped for them.

It's not what you believe in life but what you do about what you believe, and it's not what you see that matters but what you understand about what you see. I was wrong. The chapter is never closed because the book is still being written by those who don't remember, don't know, and worse, those who don't care, bringing to mind the French epigram, **"The more things change, the more they stay the same."**

That last night in Amsterdam, despite the damp cold, I left the window of my room open to clearly hear and feel the chimes of the West Church and let in the welcome sound of freedom, hope, and remembrance. There was no doubt in my mind for whom that bell tolls.

[*Title from John Donne's Meditation #1, 1623, *Nunc Lento Sonitu Dicunt, Morieris* (Now this bell, tolling softly for another, says to me, Thou must die.)]

Know Your Church

Design of the St. Thomas Sanctuary and Chapel

by Mark L. Nelson, AIA

The cornerstone of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, named after Thomas the “builder apostle,” on NE 12th Street in Medina was laid on November 8, 1953, with the transepts completed in 1957.

The sanctuary was designed by architect Harold Whitehouse, a specialist in European church design of the nationally renowned firm of Whitehouse and Price in Spokane, Washington. Whitehouse and Price had previously designed the cathedral church of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, in a gothic revival style, which was built in 1925.

Not much has been written about the inspiration for the design of the St. Thomas nave, but observation and research points to a likely intention to draw from the classical forms of Western Europe and Anglican Medieval England. In contrast to the grand cathedrals of Europe, the architect apparently was inspired by the more modest 7th century “parish” churches of early Britain and/or the Medieval English “tithe barns” of the 14th century. Both styles featured hand-carved rubble-like stone walls, timber roof structures with building techniques borrowed from ship building, and wood shake roofs. Thus, the “ark” metaphor used to describe the interior, exposed heavy-timber roof structure. Other architectural elements from that style include the “cruciform” plan shape – strongly projecting transepts and central tower with a spire – common in Britain. The central tower, with spire, is located above the “crossing” (the inter-

section of the nave and transepts, or cruciform). Contrary to the purity of the architectural style, a central altar with communion rails all around was located below the “crossing” to avoid long waits during communion, while still maintaining the focus on the altar from the nave and both transepts.

In addition, the humble “parish” church was an integral part of the early English social life and culture. St. Thomas Church is also an integral part of Points communities and the West Bellevue area. “Parish” churches were not built by the Church of England but by local lords, similar to St. Thomas’ beginnings with the land being donated by Norton Clapp, and the altar, cross, and stained glass window over the front door being donated by members of the Clapp family.

In 1971, the architectural firm of Durham, Anderson & Freed designed a remodel of the chancel to accommodate the installation of the new pipe organ, hand-built by Hans-Ueli and Oskar Metzler, brothers from Deitikon, Switzerland. This was the second Metzler organ to be installed in the United States. The organ stands 19 feet tall, is constructed of Virginia white oak, weighs three and a half tons, and has 1,374 pipes. The artistically designed organ is prominently located behind the altar and is a striking and beautiful focal point.

In 1986, the west columbarium was added to the northwest side of the sanctuary, and the bell tower and east columbarium were added to the northeast side in 1994.

The St. Thomas chapel, added to the north end of the sanctuary adjacent to

the sacristy, was completed in 2002. The seed money was provided by the family of the late Father Vall-Spinosa. The design was created by architect and parishioner, Mark L. Nelson, AIA. The goal was to design a chapel addition that fit seamlessly with the existing sanctuary so it would appear to have been built at the same time as the original building and not look like an “addition.” I have often stated that if the original sanctuary architect were to drive by and look at the chapel addition, he would say, “That’s exactly what I would have done.” The chapel is designed as an intimate worship space for small services, weddings, and funerals, and the space accommodates up to 50 persons. It also serves as quiet, solemn space for private meditation and prayer.

Its shape was inspired by the English churches from the Saxon period when churches were simple and the end of the sanctuary was often rounded. The polygonal termination reflects the architectural forms of the Gothic cathedral “apse” located on the liturgical end of cathedrals in England and Western Europe. This form provides an esthetically pleasing terminus to the existing structure, reflects the roof form of the transepts, and provides excellent acoustics and intimate scale to the chapel interior. The exterior stone is taken from the same Wilkerson sandstone quarry as the stone used on the sanctuary. The interior beams and framework are inspired by the sanctuary timber roof structure and ceiling, but they are joined in the center by a unique timber and steel structural connection.

The north exterior stone wall of the existing sanctuary was preserved and serves as a dramatic backdrop to a beautiful Western Cedar contemporary cross designed and built by sculptor Hans Nelsen, son of famed architect Ibsen Nelsen. In front of the cross and centered on the intersection of the roof structure is a stone altar, designed by the chapel's architect. It is made of three slabs of sandstone and was inspired by early Christian altars. The architect also designed the sandstone votive candle stand. Stained glass windows by artist Robert Hill of Anacortes, Washington, were designed to reflect and harmonize with the existing

diverse styles of the stained glass windows in the sanctuary. The metal and glass hanging lights were salvaged from the existing sanctuary when it was remodeled for the organ installation. The altar rail pickets are cast using the "lost wax" process and duplicate the sanctuary altar rail. The picket design depicts grapes and wheat, symbolic of the "bread and wine" served at communion.

The chapel cornerstone was given by Harry and Suzanne Hutchinson in "Loving Memory" of their mothers: Louise Jacobsen Allen and Jean Patrick Hutchinson.

[*Author's Notes:* A "tithe barn" was built to store the produce from farmers in the area who paid one-tenth of their produce to the local abbey as the landowner.

This style of architecture also directs the focus of the church on the altar. The original ornate wall and backdrop to the altar was removed and replaced by the organ, which in itself is a primary focal point, creating a visual focus towards the altar.

Stone churches were first built in 673-850 A.D.

Early Norman churches were aisles, with a central tower and built in a cruciform plan.

Parish churches were smaller than cathedrals.]

Making a Difference

by Paul and Diane Birkeland

After the service and coffee hour today, let me take you out for a tour of the columbarium, and in particular, the one near the bell tower at the northeast corner of the sanctuary. There you will find the niches holding the remains of my late wife Joyce who died in July 2009, and my wife Diane's late husband Bob who died in June 2005. Ultimately, that is where many of us will end our days here on earth. It is a quiet place with fall leaves rustling and sunny shadows playing on the sandstone walls of St. Thomas.

We are reminded of the meaning of life every time we visit that place and spend a moment reflecting on those two folks and the many others interred there. What have their lives meant to us and to all who knew and loved them? How did they make a difference during their brief time on earth? What did they do that was meaningful and lasting? Certainly the fine children and grandchildren they left are a legacy that will live forever. And the joy and happiness they imparted to us will also endure for years to come. And the many fine charitable acts of generosity they both exhibited are lasting reminders of their presence in our lives.

We think of all of this as we think of our own mortality and what it will mean in years to come. We are all children of God, imbued with His grace and charged with living a Godly life. What in the world does that mean, we often wonder. More than anything we think it means to follow the first two commandments Jesus gave us: Love God, and love our neighbors. Easy to say but not so easy to do.

In this season of Thanksgiving, let us remember those who have gone before us, what they meant to us, and what they left with us. And we need to reflect on our lives and those we have touched and work ever harder to reach out and touch those in need. St. Thomas is a wonderful ministry immersed in that process of breathing God's love into those in need. Dig a little deeper, find God's love within your heart, and make this year the year you really make a difference at St. Thomas.



St. Thomas Episcopal Church

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Deadline: For the January issue,
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or leave in the drawer marked "Collect" at
the church. All articles will be edited. Ques-
tions? Please call Shirley at 425-455-4817.

Project Outreach Update

by Marilyn McGrath, *Project Outreach Steering Committee Member*

As a child, I remember getting up on Christmas morning anxious to see what Santa Claus had brought me; but I had to wait. Sometime during the night before Christmas morning, my mother would close the sliding wooden door in the hallway that led to the living room so that my two sisters and I could not see what was under the Christmas tree. To add to the anxiety, I also had to wait until everyone else was awake before going into the living room. When my mother finally opened the door, I was always surprised to see my new toys and all my gifts.

Christmas at St. Thomas is like my childhood memories of Christmas morning. I am in awe of the generosity of parishioners and visitors at this time of year.

We are pleased to report the Vestry has approved the undesignated Christmas offering be given to Project Outreach. These monies will be used to fund grants to organizations within and outside of St. Thomas. During 2011, some of the recipients of your gifts were *Congregations for the Homeless*, *Sandwich Makers*, the *Thanksgiving Project*, the *Haiti Project*, *Rwanda Girls Initiative*, *Congregations for Kids*, and *Friends of Youth*. In 2012, Project Outreach looks forward to making grants to organizations such as these, as a result of your generosity.

I wish everyone a Merry Christmas. I hope your Christmas season will be full of wonderful blessings and surprises.

Giving Tree Program

Once again during the season of Advent, we have a wonderful way to prepare for the birth of Jesus: by participating in Fiesta Navideña at La Iglesia Episcopal de la Resurrección in Mount Vernon.

This year, the Reverend Jo Beecher has entrusted Resurrección's Youth and Young Adult Group to coordinate and run the Fiesta Navideña project. Many of the young adults involved in running the giving tree project once received gifts as part of Fiesta Navideña, and they are eager to give back to others in need. They have expanded the project to include not only the children of their congregation, **but also other farm workers' children in the Skagit Valley and Russian immigrant children living in the local homeless shelters.**

St. Thomas has joyfully agreed to help 40 children. We can assist with the Fiesta Navideña project in a variety of ways:

- Select a gift tag from the Christmas tree in the Great Hall and purchase the item (more specific instructions for boxing and preparing the gift will be available near the "Giving Tree").
- Purchase a grocery gift card for stores in Bellingham and Skagit counties (Safeway, Brown and Cole, or Haggen's/Top Foods)
- Donate money either to Resurrección Scholarship Fund or to Resurrección general budget (send a check or donate at Resurrección website www.resurreccionepiscopal.org)

All gifts and donations must be turned in to St. Thomas Church by December 11 so they can be delivered to Resurrección in time for the Fiesta Navideña.

We hope that, by having many ways to participate in Fiesta Navideña, you will be able to contribute to the project. For questions or more information, please contact Leslie Brewer at 425-452-1860 or lesliebrewer@msn.com.

Thank you for your generosity. Feliz Navidad!

Book Notes

A Review of *Evensong* by Gail Godwin

by Harriett Gill

I love the title of this book; however, by the time I had read two chapters, I began to have some doubts. I was so wrong in my doubts. I had the erroneous thought that the author was filching her story line from Jan Karon. The story takes place in the mountain towns of North Carolina and the main characters are Episcopal priests, but there the similarities between the two authors cease. The writer Madeleine L'Engle said that comparisons are odious and she was so right.

Godwin's story is about two people, essentially loners, who love each other enough to marry but who have not yet learned to really communicate with one another. Their lives are complicated by their reticence and by the addition of two people into their already somewhat crowded home.

One is an elderly "monk" and the other is a rascally teenager. They may be hard to take, but the addition of a fanatic Baptist woman intent on persuading the woman priest to her way of serving the Lord is fascinating. It is lovely and refreshing to see someone refusing the importunities of another person while remaining both loving and adamant.

Things come to a crisis, which amazingly has nothing to do with the difficult people. I did not want the book to end. Joan Reid has told me that St. Thomas library has several books by Gail Godwin. When the somewhat wearying business of this blessed season leaves one a bit frazzled, do yourself a favor and sit down for an hour or two and read a lovely story.

The Quiet Corner

Prayer

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

The journey of prayer takes as many twists and turns as there are people. Prayer is about our ever-deepening relationship with God, and God has many ways of attracting us and drawing us ever closer.

Contrary to the stereotype, not all Swedes are Lutheran. When my grandparents immigrated, a revival was sweeping across Europe and they were considered Swedish Baptists. The church I grew up in had evolved into a nondenominational -evangelical one, but everyone was still an Anderson, Peterson, or Johnson. I knew nothing about church history. We jumped from the Acts of the Apostles to the Reformation, thus cutting out a wealth of spiritual literature. The only prayer I knew was petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise. Oh, and some prayed in tongues.



At college age, I went to the good sisters for nurses training and was exposed to the liturgy and silent retreats. What a difference from the summer revival tent meetings! One of the first books I picked up on retreats was Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*. That was the beginning of a long search into spirituality.

After the death of my first husband, church became like a spouse. I read and learned about other ways of praying and different devotional practices. I read all the books by the great mystics and desert fathers and mothers. I explored many pathways of prayer and ultimately these stepping stones led to the great abyss. Without good spiritual direction, I would not have understood what was happening to me nor would I have had the courage to make that leap. When I did, I discovered that I, too, was a mystery as well as God.

Prayer takes two basic forms: apophatic and kataphatic. *Apophatic*, or *via negativa*: God is reached in darkness and unknowing without images or symbols. Centering prayer is a form of this. *Kataphatic*, *via affirmativa*: God can be found in all things, thus the use of images and symbols are affirmed. Both forms can lead to deep silence where God resides. One form is not better than the other; it all depends on the temperament of the person and the prerogative of God who chooses how to deal with each soul. We often change styles as we journey along into contemplation to keep our prayer life fresh.

Language is another difficulty. How does one describe the ineffable experience of contemplation? For apophatic prayer, the language is paradox. For kataphatic, what comes closest is the language of metaphor, such as Teresa of Avila's "Interior Castle," or the language of erotic love, such as in *Song of Songs* in the Bible. It is the language of intimacy of spirit, of God and the soul. The closer we get, the more inadequate our words become.

Then, the "Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." When the ground falls away and there is nothing but the silent music of God's presence, one becomes fire.

Parish Life

Cabaret

The Cabaret at St. Thomas was a rousing success. On October 15, the Great Hall was filled with people happily enjoying the wonderful vocals presented by our own Alyce Rogers and Catherine Blundell. Accompanying them were Barbara Rollins at the piano, Jim Blundell on drums, Paul Johnson on vibes and percussion, Dennis Staskowski on bass, and Jon Goforth on saxophone and flute. Natalie Blundell and Tim Blok joined in on some of the vocals.

Our goal was to raise \$5,000 for our programs geared to youth and young families. With the help of a raffle, featuring a New Orleans Dinner for Six given by Father Lex and Zonnie Breckinridge, we raised \$7, 079.11.

Many thanks to those behind the scenes, as well as on stage, for a great evening. Special thanks to the Peggy Behnke Memorial Fund for their sponsorship.



Bring Greens— Make a Wreath

The Altar Guild invites everyone to the church on December 17, from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon, to help make the beautiful wreaths that decorate the church for Christmas. Donations of evergreen branches, such as pine, fir, and juniper (no hemlock) are needed. Please leave the greens in the close the week of December 11. Contact: Gerda Middleton (425-454-8051).

Thank You

Thank you to Nancy Rood, artist and parishioner, for the original line drawings she created especially for this issue of *The Collect*.

What's New in Life Center Campaign? Ask Me

Parishioners wearing "Ask Me" badges are members of the Vestry or the Building Committee who will be happy to update you on the progress of our planned new Center at St. Thomas. If you have any questions about this project, check with an "Ask Me" representative to hear the latest information.



Save the Date!

Our Annual
New Year's Eve Gala

Music from Jazz to Opera
Saturday • December 31
7:30 pm

Featuring...

Alyce Rogers, singer and host
Hyun-Ja Choi, organ
Barbara Rollins, jazz piano
Natalya Ageyeva, piano
Jenny Shotwell, soprano
Marié Rossano, violin
John Brookes, baritone
Jack Clay, actor

Dessert and champagne in the Great Hall following. Hot wassail and standard jazz at 7:00 pm in the Church. Sponsored by the Peggy Behnke Memorial Fund.

Invite Your Friends!

Yoga at Women's Retreat

Yoga will be offered each morning at the Women's Retreat on January 20 through January 22. Please bring mats, straps, and blocks. If you do not own yoga props but want to participate, please contact teacher Gini Davis and she will provide the necessary items. Contact Gini at 425-228-1887 or gadavis612@juno.com.

1. December 2011 @ St. Thomas

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 7:30a Morning Prayer 12:30p Film Fellowship	2 6:30a Morning Prayer	3 9:00a Altar Guild 9:00a Poverty Simulation Experience
4 8:00a Eucharist 9:15a Forum 10:15a Eucharist 11:45a Come to the Quiet 3:00p Concert: Piano 5:15p Eucharist	5 7:30a Morning Prayer 9:00a Centering Prayer 1:30p Tai Chi 8:00p AA	6 9:30a Needlepointers 10:30a Bible Study 4:00p Choristers 7:00p Boy Scouts	7 7:30a Morning Prayer 9:00a Sandwich Makers 9:30a Yoga 10:00a Eucharist 11:00a Bible Study	8 7:30a Morning Prayer 12:30p Film Fellowship 7:30p Choir	9 6:30a Morning Prayer	10 9:00a Altar Guild 7:30p NW Boychoir Festival of Lessons and Carols
11 8:00a Eucharist 9:15a Forum 10:15a Eucharist 11:30a Moms' Group 3:00p Concert 5:15p Eucharist	12 7:30a Morning Prayer 9:00a Centering Prayer 1:30p Tai Chi 5:00p Property Comm. 6:30p Finance Comm. 8:00p AA	13 9:30a Needlepointers 10:30a Bible Study 4:00p Choristers 7:00p Boy Scouts	14 7:30a Morning Prayer 9:30a Yoga 10:00a Eucharist 11:00a Bible Study	15 7:30a Morning Prayer 12:30p Film Fellowship 7:30p Choir	16 6:30a Morning Prayer	17 9:00a Altar Guild Wreath Making 7:00p Concert:Cascadian Chorale
18 8:00a Eucharist 10:15a Eucharist Choristers Sing 2:30p Concert: Ukrainian Carols 5:15p Eucharist	19 7:30a Morning Prayer 9:00a Centering Prayer 1:30p Tai Chi 7:00p Quiet Christmas 8:00p AA	20 9:30a Needlepointers 10:30a Bible Study 4:00p Choristers 6:30p Vestry 7:00p Boy Scouts	21 7:30a Morning Prayer 9:30a Yoga 10:00a Eucharist 11:00a Bible Study	22 7:30a Morning Prayer 12:30p Film Fellowship 7:30p Choir	23 6:30a Morning Prayer	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 9:00a Altar Guild 4:00p Eucharist/Pageant 7:00p Eucharist 10:00p Eucharist
25 CHRISTMAS DAY 10:00a Eucharist	26 7:30a Morning Prayer	27 7:00p Boy Scouts	28 7:30a Morning Prayer	29 7:30a Morning Prayer	30 6:30a Morning Prayer	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE
CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED						
	8:00p AA				7:30p AA/Alanon	7:00p Gala
<p>These are just some of the events happening on the St. Thomas campus this month. To schedule meetings or other activities, please call or email the church office • 425-454-9541 • office@stthomasmedina.org A link to the current calendar can be found on the Parishioners' Page at our web site. Church Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm</p>						

Christmas Services

Quiet Christmas

Monday, December 19, 7:00 pm
The words, "... 'tis the season to be jolly..." suggest the merriment so often associated with the Christmas season. Yet for those of us experiencing loss or grief, Christmas can be especially difficult. The death of a beloved friend or family member, a divorce or job loss, an illness or frightening diagnosis or myriad other personal struggles can make this time of year particularly tender. And so we offer a special worship service, A Quiet Christmas Holy Eucharist, for those who find themselves sad or in need of any sort of healing during this Christmas season. This service is open to everyone, and is especially meaningful for those who are experiencing loss. Please join us.

Christmas Eve

Saturday, December 24, 4:00 pm
Children's Pageant & Eucharist

The Christmas story unfolds in tableaux created by the children of St. Thomas, with favorite carols for all to sing.

7:00 and 10:00 pm

Festival Eucharists

Join us at 7:00 pm for traditional carol singing and music led by the St. Thomas organ, brass, timpani, and Chamber Choir.

Our 10:00 pm service will include traditional carol singing with Christmas music led by the St. Thomas Singers, brass, timpani, and organ.

Christmas Day

Sunday, December 25, 10:00 am
Holy Eucharist

Celebrate the Feast of the Nativity in a simple and uplifting service with familiar carols.



Practicing the Hospitality of God

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