



# Cross Current

April 2025

## ***Bishop to Visit Christ Church***



Mark your calendars and plan to attend church on Sunday April 27 when Bishop Diana Akiyama visits us.

Please stay for coffee hour after the service so you can meet and talk with Bishop Diana.

## ***Phishing Scams Targeting Churches and Individuals in the Diocese***

There has been an increase in “phishing” scams targeting churches and individuals in our diocese. These scams often involve emails or text messages that appear to come from clergy or church leaders, asking for money, gift cards, or sensitive information. Several members of our congregation have received these emails.

**It’s important to know that these scams are not the result of a security breach in the diocese.** Scammers use a variety of tactics to make their phishing emails seem convincing. They often impersonate trusted individuals such as clergy or church leaders by using similar-looking email addresses, a tactic known as “spoofing.” Their messages typically create a sense of urgency, claiming that the sender needs help immediately—often requesting gift cards, wire transfers, or personal information. Other scammers may spoof institutional emails and include links to fake websites designed to steal login credentials. Unfortunately, there is no way for the diocese to prevent these scams from occurring, but we can work together to recognize and avoid them.

See page 3 for examples of what to look for when you receive these phishing emails. You may not be able to see the sending email if you are using your phone. It is easier to do this on your computer. The most important thing to do is SLOW DOWN and look over the email carefully.

## ***Meet our Hospitality Committee***

Thank you to June Dodson and Barbara Morris for stepping up to lead the Hospitality Committee. These ladies will be in charge of making sure that members of Christ Church sign up to host coffee hour as well as organizing events that may come up. They can’t do it alone and will be reaching out for help when events such as potlucks, funerals, Convocation, etc. are scheduled.



June Dodson and Barbara Morris, heads of the Hospitality Committee standing in front of the Coffee Hour sign-up sheet.

## *Notes from the Vicar*

Dear friends,

The view from here to Easter seems a bit murky. To be sure there is a pin prick of light showing itself far into the distance, offering hope and reward to all those who have the discipline and fortitude to make the journey toward it. Yet, between here and there, a very real murkiness hangs in time, like an old and dusty, threadbare velvet curtain that should have long since been torn down. The curtain of Lent is like an ancient keeper of all our best intentions trying its best to clear the air of them. Yet sometimes it seems more like a catcher for our atonements, tempting us to back our penitence in its tattered musty threads grown old, so that they might never get through it to the Light beyond.

Blame the feeling on worldly unrest, national divide, the rising cost of eggs or whatever personal circumstances that plagues us, there's no denying, life often feels murky once we get into Lent. Perhaps, it's because we recognize the Lenten journey, created of vows to change ourselves for the better, never seems to change us much. Perhaps it is because, as always, we are called, if not to pull the curtain down, then to at least pull it aside enough so that we can keep our eyes firmly on the Light of promise beyond. In a world turned upside down, that's not always easy to do.

But, try to do it we must. Keeping our eyes on the Light will ease our burdens and deepen our determination as we step, yet again, into this time dimmed of Light. It is the Light waiting ahead that can give us strength for the journey. The Light is always ready to stand with us against our temptations to just give up. It is the Light that will help us put up with more murkiness than we think we need, so that, as we walk on together, in the light of the Light, deciding how to let go of our hypocrisy, our false judgements, our self-delusions or self-serving rationalizations, our false faces and our need for power and status, we might succeed in shedding just one of these heavy burdens.



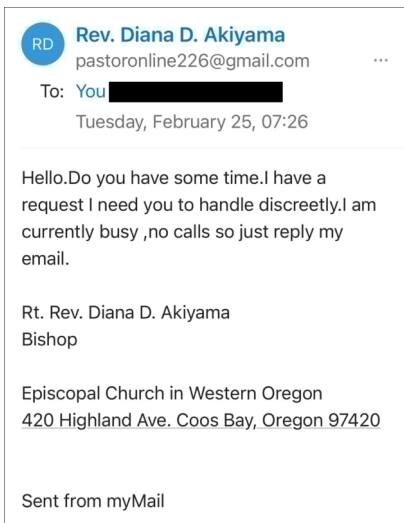
It is the Light that calls us again, to attempt to recognize and confess our weaknesses as faithful disciples of Christ so that, once our personal sins are recognized and confessed, our steps feel lighter and our pace seems to quicken. Our reward is to notice along the way, without our really noticing, the air becoming clearer, the Light becoming more defined, and our hearts beginning to find a kind of joy-filled freedom we thought had been lost to us forever.

Year after year we allow the murky atmosphere, that is so hard to see through, to hang on. Yet, perhaps this year, as we walk toward the Resurrection Light of Easter, we will be able to pull aside the curtain of murkiness that keeps us from seeing our way clearly to loving one another in Christ. Let this be the year when a good number of all God's people seek to cease all that separates us from God and from each other. Let this be the year that we can become fully alive as the Easter people God longs for us to be, so that at last, there can be fashioned a curtain of peace, through which all God's people can clearly see.

We journey together,

*Mother Esme+*

# Phishing Scams—What to Look For



## PHISHING EMAIL—SPOOFED ADDRESS

This email did **not** come from Bishop Akiyama—it's a phishing scam! Here are some clear red flags:

- **Incorrect title:** Bishop Akiyama would not refer to herself as "Rev." in official communications.
- **Suspicious email address:** "[pastoronline226@gmail.com](mailto:pastoronline226@gmail.com)" is not a diocesan email. Always check the sender's actual address!
- **Unusual urgency and secrecy:** Scammers often say they need help "discreetly" and discourage phone calls to prevent verification.
- **Poor grammar and punctuation:** "Hello. Do you have some time. I have a request..." is not how our Bishop would communicate.

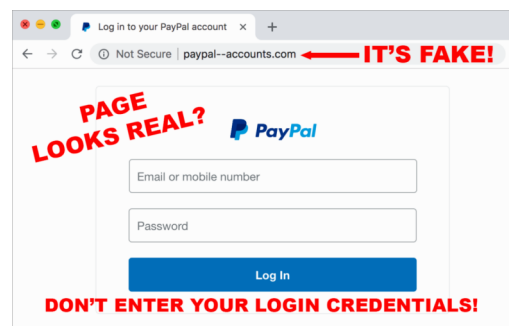
If you receive a message like this, do not reply! Instead, report it as phishing in your email platform and delete it.

## FAKE WEBSITE DESIGNED TO STEAL LOGIN CREDENTIALS

This is **not** the real PayPal login page—it's a scam designed to steal your account information. Here are some key red flags:

- **Suspicious URL:** The real PayPal website is [paypal.com](https://www.paypal.com), not "[paypal--accounts.com](https://paypal--accounts.com)." Scammers often use similar-looking web addresses to trick you.
- **Not Secure:** This page lacks a security certificate—look for "https://" and a padlock icon in the address bar when visiting legitimate, secure sites.
- **Urgency or Threats:** Many phishing sites claim your account is locked or needs urgent verification to pressure you into acting quickly.

**What to do:** Never enter your login details on a page you don't fully trust. Always go directly to the official website by typing the address into your browser yourself. If you suspect a phishing attempt, report it and avoid clicking any links!



## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- **Be skeptical of unexpected requests** for money, gift cards, or sensitive information, even if they seem to come from someone you know.
- **Verify before you act**—if you receive a suspicious message, contact the person directly using a known phone number or email.
- **Check email addresses carefully**—scammers often use addresses that look similar but have small differences.
- **Avoid posting sensitive contact information online**, such as directories or email lists.

If you receive a phishing email, do not reply, click on links, or send money. Most email platforms allow you to report phishing—look for an option to "Report Phishing" or "Mark as Spam" in your email settings. Reporting these messages helps improve email security and can prevent future scams. Or, you can simply delete the email.

## MORE RESOURCES

### General Phishing Awareness & Prevention

- Federal Trade Commission (FTC) – [Phishing](#)
- Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) – [Phishing Guidance – Stopping the Attack Cycle at Phase One](#)
- Anti-Phishing Working Group (APWG) – [Phishing Awareness & Reporting](#)
- StaySafeOnline (National Cybersecurity Alliance) – [What Is Phishing and How To Avoid It](#)

### Email & Online Account Security

- Microsoft Support – [Protect Yourself from Phishing](#)
- Google Support – [Avoid and Report Phishing Emails](#)
- PayPal Support – [How do I spot a fake, fraudulent, or phishing PayPal email or website?](#)

### Reporting Phishing Attempts

- FTC Report Fraud – [Report Phishing Emails & Scams](#)
- Google – [Report Phishing Website](#)
- Microsoft Report Phishing – [Report a Phishing Email](#)



## Volunteers Help Grow Nature Park

Recently we have had volunteers step forward to help plant a big load of trees purchased with funds from a generous donor. On March 9, Mo Brown and Jennifer Warner from the church and Sian Williams (the late Ross Williams' daughter) and her husband John Donovan worked all afternoon planting the new trees.

Soon after, Latter Day Saints missionaries Mike and Porter worked with Mo to finish the project.

We planted Douglas Fir, Incense Cedar, Black Twinberry, Flowering Currant, Ceanothus, Ponderosa Valley Pine, Mock Orange and Dogwood. We hope with time and patience (and watering this summer) that they grow and add beauty to the park.

We received a lovely Oregon Oak purchased by the Heide family in memory of Joan and it is planted near the labyrinth for your enjoyment. Anyone wishing to purchase memorial trees or benches for the nature park please talk to me.

*Nancy Tarnai*

*Blessing Woods Nature Park Coordinator*



The Native Plantscapes NW crew planted a lovely oak just in time for Joan Heide's memorial service.



Jennifer Warner, Mo Brown, John Donovan and Sian Williams worked up a sweat planting hundreds of trees in the nature park.



Volunteers Mike and Porter planted trees in the rain.



## Updates

It came down to some nail biting drama at the end of last month, but we had a Habitat client finally close on her first home! Through a combination of the Oregon IDA savings program, down payment assistance through Habitat for Humanity of Oregon and a USDA Rural Development loan, Leslie found a home for her and her children locally in St. Helens where she works in the school system. She first started her IDA with us in November of 2022 and she has worked diligently since then to save money, manage her family's finances and navigate her first home purchase transaction. We are so proud of her and the work she's done in the past two years to accomplish this dream. Our IDA funding (state-matched funds for saving money) is drawing to a close at this time but we hopefully will have more funding this summer. Please let us know if you or someone you know could benefit from this great Oregon program!

*Angela Carlson*

*Family Services/Admin*

*Columbia County Habitat for Humanity*



## *From the Senior Warden*

At our March meeting, the BAC approved a plan proposed by master gardener Flora Brown to care for the rhododendron and other shrubs planted around the church building. Our first volunteer work-morning will be Saturday 29 March at 9am.

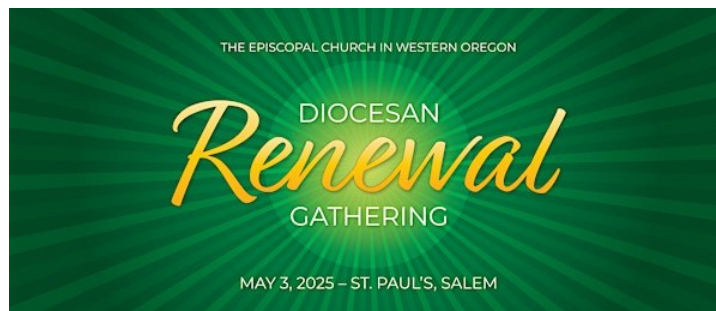
Our old rhodies and pieris can look magnificent, a gift of their age. They need to be cared for and properly pruned for overall shape, consistent with their natural growth and their location. Our goal is plantings that look cared for and are thriving.

We will prune using hand tools to gently lower the larger plants to the roofline or eaves and avoid touching the building. Those by the bell tower have space for more height. We will shape the individual bushes to allow air circulation and minimize crowding. Removing the crossed, interior branches will lighten the appearance. We are mindful to prune immediately after they bloom, before next year's buds begin to form.

The soil needs improving, by loosening and renewing with compost, mulch and fertilizer.

Eventually, we may fill in with shorter plants along the front. We expect the entire plan will take a year or two, or three!, to achieve the full potential of our mature evergreen, blooming "wrap" around the church. Think of them like a cozy shawl wrapped around our building

If you're interested to join our work parties, call Flora Brown at (360) 624 2206.



The Diocesan Renewal Gathering on **Saturday, May 3**, at St. Paul's, Salem is coming up soon! This special event is an opportunity to step away from the busyness of life and reconnect—through worship, learning, and fellowship—with others from across the diocese.

We are honored to welcome the Rev. Dr. Miguel A. De La Torre, a renowned ethicist, author, and activist, as our keynote speaker. His thought-provoking talks will challenge us to engage deeply with issues of immigration, political hopelessness, and faithful action in today's world. Dr. De La Torre will also preach at our opening Holy Eucharist

### **What to Expect:**

- Holy Eucharist
- Two plenary talks with Dr. De La Torre
- Lunch Provided and time for fellowship
- Gift Basket Raffle supporting Latino Ministries.

This gathering is for everyone—clergy and laity alike! If you haven't registered yet, we encourage you to do so. Don't miss this chance to be renewed in faith and community.

**Date:** Saturday, May 3

**Location:** St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Salem

**Cost:** \$20 (includes lunch)

Register today: [eventbrite.com/e/1236579987029](https://eventbrite.com/e/1236579987029)

***We look forward to gathering with you!***





## ***Lent and Holy Week Schedule***

### **Wednesdays during Lent**

**(March 12, 19, 26 and April 2, 9. )**

**6:30 – 7:30 pm Lenten Program:** (Zoom) Note to Self (Charles LaFond) An introduction to creating our own rule of life.

**Compline: 7:30 p.m. – 7:45 pm.**

### **Saturday – April 12th Pre-Holy Week Contemplative Quiet Day and Labyrinth Walk**

**10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.** (Mother Esme)

(Morning refreshments provided. Bring your own lunch)

### **Sunday – April 13th Palm Sunday**

**9:45 a.m. Procession of the Palms**

**10:00 a.m. The Liturgy of the Palms**

### **Thursday – April 17th 6:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service**

### **Good Friday – April 18th 6:00 p.m. Holy Communion (Reserved Sacrament)**

### **Holy Saturday – April 19th 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon-The Rite of Reconciliation (Mother Esme: Sanctuary)**

### **Easter Sunday – April 20th 10:00 a.m. Festal Eucharist and the Flowering of the Cross**



## ***Calendar***



**Sunday Services** - Eucharist—Sundays 10 am

**Men's Fellowship Breakfast**—First Saturday of the month at Warren Country Inn 9 am.

**Prayer Shawl Group**—2nd Thursday of the month at 1:30 pm

**Ecumenical Good Friday Service**—Friday April 18 at Noon at the Christian Church in St. Helens on 12th Street.

**Church Grounds Work Party**—March 29 at 9 am

**Bishop's Visit**—April 27

**Diocesan Renewal Gathering**—Saturday May 3 at St. Paul's, Salem See page 4 for details.

## ***Prayer Requests***

Send requests to Kathryn Brittain by email at [kathjbritt@gmail.com](mailto:kathjbritt@gmail.com) or phone 503-438-5908.

## ***Christ Church Contact Information***

Our Website is: [www.sthelenschristchurch.org](http://www.sthelenschristchurch.org)

Email: [office@StHelensChristChurch.org](mailto:office@StHelensChristChurch.org)

Phone: (503) 397-1033

Search Facebook: Christ Episcopal Church

Mother Esme's email:

[MotherEsme@StHelensChristChurch.org](mailto:MotherEsme@StHelensChristChurch.org)



To receive the "Cross Current" newsletter via email rather than printed or "snail mail" email us to be put on the list.

## ***Church Buildings for Rent***

Do you know of any nonprofits seeking space for meetings or events? We are making the Parish Hall and other spaces (including outdoors) available for rent for reasonable prices. Please contact Nancy Tarnai, [socialmedia@sthelenschristchurch.org](mailto:socialmedia@sthelenschristchurch.org) if you have ideas or questions.



# Cross Current

April 2025

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

*Collect for Easter, Book of Common Prayer*



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Home of:



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