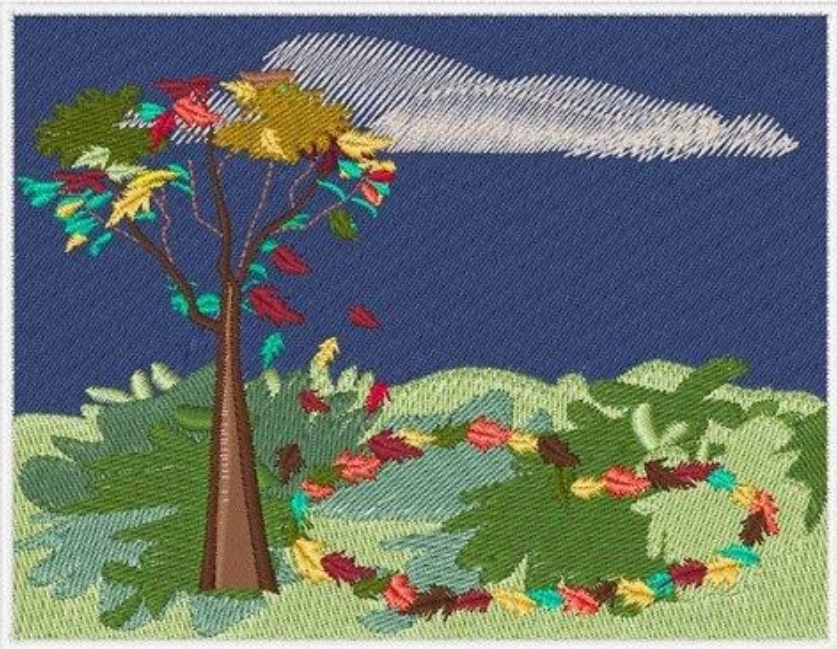




Cross Current

October—November 2020



Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.

His love endures forever.

Psalm 136:1 (NIV)

Christ Episcopal Church

35350 E. Division Road, St. Helens, OR 97051

(503) 397-1033

find us on



God is Good—All the Time

Dear Friends,

There is a call-and-response phrase that I hear sometimes in church gatherings:

God is good—all the time

All the time—God is good

I think this is more common in historically Black Episcopal congregations than in the historically white ones I have served. Maybe because our Black companions in faith have more experience in finding God's goodness even when lives are hard and circumstances are against us. This is a time when we can learn from them.

In March, when we suspended in-person services because of the Covid-19 pandemic, it never occurred to me that we would still not be gathering in November.

November is the month of All Saints Day; of Thanksgiving; of the Feast of Christ the King. I am writing these words at the end of September. In a normal year we would be introducing the theme of our Stewardship campaign; Kathy King and I would be starting to look at liturgy and music for the feast days of November and anthems for Christmas; the Tuesday class would be immersed in its fall program; I would be introducing a Sunday Adult Education class. Instead, our worship is still online; I have had to get special permission from the bishop for a small in-person gathering outside, with masks, for Blessing of the Animals; the St. Helens Ministerial Association is cancelling our annual ecumenical Thanksgiving service.

But God is good—all the time.

On All Saints Day, we will proclaim, with Psalm 34, “I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall ever be in my mouth.” Through pandemic, and anxiety, and fires, and loneliness, and unforeseen change—God’s goodness and love remains. And our faith in God, and the rhythms of prayer and reading of Scripture, anchors our lives when change would otherwise uproot them.

November will be different this year, as in some ways it is different every year. Let us continue those practices of prayer and reading of Scripture that anchor our lives in God. And let us look for signs of God’s goodness and love in this new time, in confidence that God is good all the time, in all seasons of the year and of our collective lives.

Vicar Jaime

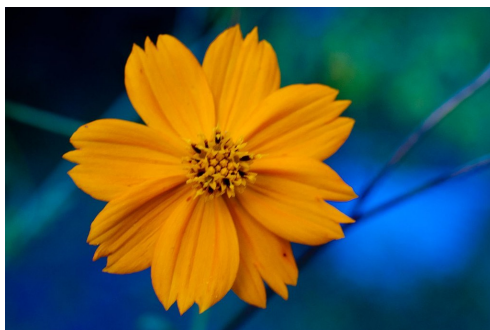
September 28, 2020



...From the Treasurer

Financial Facts—August 2020

	August Actual	2020 YTD Actual	2020 YTD Budget
Income			
Contributions	\$8,560.00	\$54,268.97	\$52,493.33
Other Income	\$7,540.32	\$8,289.22	\$1,520.00
Total Income	\$16,100.32	\$62,558.19	\$54,013.33
Expenses	\$6,670.14	\$51,371.47	\$61,443.99
Net (Deficit)	\$9,430.18	\$11,186.72	(\$7,430.66)



Thank you to everyone for keeping your pledges current during the temporary shut down due to the COVID virus.

You can always mail your pledge to the church PO Box:

Christ Church
PO BOX 478
St. Helens, OR 97051

Our Next Bishop—Introducing The Rev. Dr. Diana Akiyama

Last January, Christ Church elected two delegates to Diocesan Convention, Carol Craig and Susan Wellington. On August 29th, Carol, Susan, and Vicar Jaime participated in the first online election of a bishop in The Episcopal Church. All the voting delegates and clergy gathered by Zoom and, with prayers and song and a few technical issues, elected Diana Akiyama+ as our next Bishop of Oregon.



The Rev. Dr. Akiyama impressed delegates and clergy with her intelligence, deep listening, and knowledge of Oregon. She grew up in Hood River, and was ordained priest in 1989 in the Diocese of Eastern Oregon by the Rt. Rev. Rustin Kimsey. She has a PhD in Religion and Social Ethics in addition to an M.Div.

The Rev. Dr. Akiyama presently serves as Vicar of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, Kapaau, Hawai'i and Dean of the Waiolaihui'ia School for Formation, Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i. She and her husband are presently planning their move to Oregon, and her installation as bishop is expected in January.

We at Christ Church were privileged to host The Rev. Dr. Diana Akiyama and the other candidates for a tour and informal conversation as part of their interview process. We look forward to welcoming her again as our bishop!

Worship in a Time of Pandemic

by Vicar Jaime

We continue to worship by the magic of the Internet.

Wednesday Evening Prayer is at 5 pm. Sunday Holy Eucharist is at 10 am. The first 10 minutes after I start the Zoom call is dedicated to getting everyone connected and saying “hello.”



The Zoom connection information is the same each week, and you can connect with a computer, a tablet, or a phone.

To connect with a regular phone, call the Zoom number in Tacoma, WA at the time the service is to start: **+1 253 215 8782**

You will then be prompted to enter the meeting ID and a passcode.

For Wednesday evening (5 pm), the meeting ID is **810 4127 5311**. The passcode is **944672**.

For Sunday morning (10 am) the meeting ID is **841 2200 6571**. The passcode is **240672**.

These meeting ID and passcode numbers are the same if you are connecting by computer or tablet. If you have the Zoom app installed on your device, you can use the “join meeting” function and enter the meeting IDs. Or, without installing the Zoom app, you can connect using the link I send out by email each week. If you aren’t getting those emails, and have internet access, please let me know! You can reach me at christchurchsthelens@gmail.com or motherjaime@gmail.com.

The two services each week each have their own character. Wednesday Evening Prayer draws a smaller group – between 6

and 8 people. We read one of the psalms and the gospel passage appointed for the day by the Daily Lectionary, and have a short discussion. We also pray the parish prayer list, and often enjoy some sacred music from YouTube. Recently we have been exploring some of the prayer books from elsewhere in the Anglican Communion. This night prayer from the New Zealand Prayer Book is a favorite:

Lord, it is night.
The night is for stillness.
Let us be still in the presence of God.
It is night after a long day.
What has been done has been done;
what has not been done has not been done; let it
be.
The night is dark.
Let our fears of the darkness of the world
and of our own lives rest in you.
The night is quiet.
Let the quiet of your peace enfold us,
all dear to us,
and all who have no peace.
The night heralds the dawn.
Let us look expectantly to a new day,
new joys, new possibilities.
In your name we pray. Amen.

This is a wonderful prayer for any night, not just as part of a worship service.

***Worship in a Time of Pandemic* continued**

Sunday morning, my husband Steve and I drive to the church. Steve has been bringing flowers from our garden and his greenhouse and making an altar arrangement. I set up the computer, and camera, and altar. Here is what it looks like:



The service is Holy Eucharist Rite II, Eucharistic Prayer B, shortened a bit. (We find that a shorter service works better when we are on computer and phones.) One of the lectors, on Zoom, reads the lesson and leads the psalm. There is a short homily – usually by me, sometimes by Fr. Gary (also connecting by Zoom).

I consecrate a little bit of wine and some bread, but none of us physically receive it. Instead, we say a “Prayer of Spiritual Communion,” that I borrowed from the Washington National Cathedral:

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul. Since I cannot receive you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and in the life to come. Amen.

I record the Sunday service, so people who don't connect to it at the time can view it later on YouTube. Our current YouTube channel is Christ Episcopal Church St. Helens. You can help other people discover us by "liking" the videos. You can also leave comments.

I hope you join us in worship, in any way that works for you!

Habitat for Humanity Faith Build



Despite the pandemic, the Columbia County Faith Build project is just about done! Two partner families, and a handful of volunteers, have been

working diligently, and the interior painting was just completed. Here is a picture of the houses.



Together with our partners, First United Methodist, Plymouth Presbyterian, First Lutheran, the Christian Church of St. Helens, and Columbia County Habitat for Humanity, we are giving a home to six people, in two families! Both parents are in the kinds of professions that contribute a lot to the community but do not receive a lot of monetary compensation.

Ginny works with adults with special needs, volunteers in the community, and serves the City of St. Helens as a City Councilor. She and her two teenage children have three times been displaced from rental housing by landlords selling the property or seeking higher rent. Home ownership will give them security: a “forever home.”

Gentry is a young single mother of a three-year-old, who is also nurturing a 16-year-old who came to her needing a safe space, and now aspires to be a chef. Gentry is a caregiver and med tech at an assisted living facility for the elderly. She welcomed the opportunity to partner on a Habitat house because it gives her young son “a safe,

stable, home to grow up in.”

You may remember that when we first discussed sponsoring a house, we were afraid that it was beyond us. It was something new, and seemed like a lot of money. But we did it!

*I can do all things through him who
strengthens me.* Philippians 4:13



United Thank Offering



May 10 was the Sunday that we were going to turn in our UTO Boxes for the spring giving. That was also the first Sunday we stopped going to in-church services. So, it was my thinking that we would just continue to fill those boxes and turn them in for the fall giving. I'm not sure when we will be able to have an in-church service again. Some of you have requested a second box and if anyone else would like a second box, I would be happy to mail them to you. I think our church really enjoys the turning in our boxes on Sunday mornings, so it is my thinking that we will turn in these boxes when we can be back in church together. However, donations can be sent to UTO organization individually.

Below I am including a letter that I got from Kathy Lenox who is the Oregon Representative for the UTO organization. United Thank Offering has developed a November guide challenge that includes suggestions for practice at home. The website in the letter is the official UTO website and you can find out information about what UTO is doing this year. Scroll to the bottom of the website and you will see a blue box labeled Resources. Click on the box and under documents the first document is the November 2020 Gratitude Challenge Book. Click on that and you can print this out or just keep it on your computer. I hope this booklet will be something to help us through this challenging time.

Kathryn Brittain

Friends

Our year has certainly been one of challenges – the covid-19 pandemic, forest fires, and the loss of life and what many of us hold dear. It is not easy to think of gratitude during these stressful times. Yet there are small ways we all might give thanks and share those thanksgivings with others.

United Thank Offering has developed a November Gratitude Challenge that includes suggestions for you to practice at home to grow a more grateful heart. You can participate as much as you want; a booklet has been created to guide you through the month. You may also share your thoughts on line or by contacting others. The booklet, coloring cards, literature and more is located on the website at <https://episcopalchurch.org/united-thank-offering>.

At the end of the thirty days, you might consider continuing your practice through Advent; each week changes your focus on Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

Although some of us are practicing social distancing, there are ways to stay in touch with each other. Remember that since 1871 women have been supporting outreach ministries to support projects throughout the greater church. The mission is the same – all monies offered to United Thank Offering are granted to support ministries. All because of your continued support and gratitude

Thank you for all you do!

Peace and blessings,

Kathy Lenox

United Thank Offering Representative

Diocese of Oregon

Parish Health Ministry

Fostering Happiness in a Difficult Time

I think we can all agree that the COVID crisis makes it a challenge at times to feel happy with life in 2020. I just finished a course by Dr. Laurie Santos on the Science of Well Being, which is a free online course through Coursera. Professor Santos has five rather simple things that any of us can do to feel happier in our day to day lives. I've practiced these, and they're quite effective.

1. Practice deep belly breathing. Take a deep breath and blow it slowly out. That's it. You'll feel more relaxed and more ready to manage the stressors of daily life.
2. Do an act of kindness. You'll be amazed at how helping someone out can bring you happiness.
3. Focus on what you can control. So much is out of our personal control in this COVID world, but there's still many things that you get to decide—what will you do around the house? What will you choose for dinner? There's many things that you get to control.
4. Exercise every day, get at least 7 hours of sleep and eat as healthfully as you can. Exercise can start out at just ten minutes, but do it every day and slowly increase. Remember those fruits and vegetables!
5. Actively practice gratitude. I can't say enough about this: when I remember what I have (as opposed to what I don't have) in my life and am grateful, I feel much better.

If you find this interesting, drop into Professor Santo's course. It's free, it's interesting, and it's fun. Just go to this address:

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being>. It's quick and easy to register and you're on your way to helping yourself by creating a happier life even in these tough times.

Carol Craig

Throwback Arts & Crafts Faire

In a normal year, we would be working diligently and getting excited about our Annual Arts & Crafts Faire...preparing decorations, shopping for ingredients for the kitchen, deciding what to bake for the bake table. Sadly, 2020 will not be a year for the Arts & Crafts Faire. Here are some photos of fun that we had in the past:



Disaster Preparedness

While we were spared from the wildfires that have caused so much devastation, it is another wake-up call to be prepared. The following information is from our diocesan website on disaster preparedness:

(<https://www.diocese-oregon.org/september-is-national-preparedness-month/>)



The Episcopal Diocese of Oregon [Disaster Preparedness Program](#) would like to remind you that September is National Preparedness Month.

They offer the following resources even as several major wildfires currently burn across Oregon devastating hundreds of thousands of acres, consuming thousands of structures, forcing widespread evacuations and taxing our emergency responders to their limits, including [‘Ready, Set, Go’](#) guidelines and an [Evacuation Checklist](#).

With the ongoing threat of COVID-19 and potential for earthquakes, flooding, ice storms, structure fires and tsunamis in our area, it is never too early (or too late) to start preparing. Make a plan that considers the specific needs of your household. Assemble an emergency kit. After an emergency, you may need to be self-reliant for several days. Stay informed! Tune into OFFICIAL sources of information and immediately follow the direction of emergency responders.

Check out the following links for more information on preparing a plan, assembling your emergency kit, wildfire preparedness and pet evacuation supplies.

Emergency Kit Planning: <https://www.ready.gov>

Ready, Set, Go! Wildfire Info: <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/ready-set-go/>

National Fire Protection Association: <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Preparing-homes-for-wildfire>

Pet Evac Kits – www.petevacpak.com

For current wildfire information visit:

Updates regarding firefighting progress can be found on Inciweb – <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov>

Oregon Office of Emergency Management – <https://www.oregon.gov/oem/>





Prayer Requests

Send requests to Kathryn Brittain by email at kjbritt44@gmail.com or phone 503-543-6870 or cell phone 503-438-5908.

FYI

Our Website is: www.christchurchsthelens.org

Email: christchurchsthelens@gmail.com

Phone: (503) 397-1033

Search Facebook: Christ Episcopal Church



To receive the Cross Current via email rather than printed or “snail mail” email christchurchsthelens@gmail.com to be put on the list.

When Can We Resume In-Person Services?

Vicar Jaime, with input from the BAC has written a “Re-Engaging Plan” which has been approved by the bishop. Since we are experiencing more COVID cases in the state, that plan has been deferred. You will be notified when that plan can be implemented and can return to church.

Until we are able to gather again, please check the church website calendar to read Vicar Jaime’s blog and to see if any events are scheduled.

Look on our Facebook page or check your email for invitations to watch streaming church services, Wednesday Evening Prayer on Zoom or “Zoom Coffee Hour”. If you would like to receive email notification about the virtual services please send an email to christchurchsthelens@gmail.com to be added to the list.

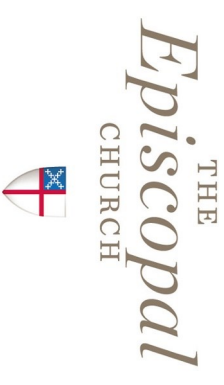
- OR -

You can access the YouTube channel for morning prayer services via the church website: christchurchsthelens.org. Scroll down to the bottom and click the YouTube icon:





Christ Episcopal Church
PO Box 478
St. Helens, OR 97051



welcomes you