

February 2026

THE TORCH

ST. AIDAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, CAMANO ISLAND, WA

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From the Rector

They say that after the winter solstice, which occurs just a few days before Christmas, daylight lengthens by 1-2 minutes every twenty-four hours. It's an imperceptible increase at first. When the sun sets around 4:30 an extra minute of light doesn't amount to much. The heavy and persistent cloud cover also tends to obscure it and prevent the difference from registering in any meaningful way. But bit by bit the days expand a little more and light becomes more dominant than dark. This natural occurrence has been used as a spiritual metaphor by church liturgists and theologians throughout the ages to great effect. It is, in fact, at the very center of Lent, a word which means "lengthen." Perfect for a season that takes us from winter to spring.

As one approaches the month of February one knows that Ash Wednesday and Lent are on the horizon. A season of fasting and preparation. Some look forward to these days with great anticipation and joy. It certainly is a rich and meaningful stretch on the spiritual and liturgical calendar. It invites us into beautiful and deep times of worship and reflection and many of us (most?) find this invigorating and impactful. The journey into the desert, as Jesus and many others after him discovered, is a period of recentering and renewal. Those who take the journey invariably find this to be true, but also challenging as well. It's fascinating to see numerous non-denominational churches outside the catholic tradition (broadly speaking) reach back and reclaim Lent as an essential piece for their communities. They are often rediscovering what the Church has known for millennia, that Lent lengthens — our souls and the Light we carry within us.

There are others, however, that find Lent a touch uncomfortable. Still others may find it ho-hum. Just another thing the church does. As one approaches the season of Lent one might feel the pressure to choose something to "give up" or "take on" mounting to ever greater degrees. That alone is stressful. Does one go simple and choose to give up chocolate or go hard and choose take on reading the entire Old Testament? (That would be 23 chapters a day, just in case you were wondering!) Or does one split the difference and choose something of medium difficulty, like giving up meat? There are good reasons for choosing any of the above, or many others like them. None of them in-and-of themselves will bring one closer to God. And, quite frankly, this the best news about Lent one could possibly hear. There is nothing to "achieve" with Lent. There is no one to impress when it comes to God. There is only love and our desire to love more and more. As the apostle Paul said, anything we do without love as the animating principle is as a noisy gong (1 Corinthians 13:1). Words well spoken, if I've ever heard any.

Ash Wednesday, the threshold between ordinary time and the sacred time of Lent, sets the tone for the season. The words "Remember you but dust, and to dust you shall return" accompany the ashes as they are pressed onto our foreheads. We wear them out into the world as ones marked by the reminder that it is God and God's love alone that gives life to our bodies and souls. Far from gloom and doom, this is a beautiful proclamation of hope. And this is the heart of Lent, choosing hope and living in it.

As you approach the holy season of Lent may you be graced by God's light and love increasing in you ever more and more.

Yours in Christ,
Drew+



From the Senior Warden

By the time you read this, we will have a new Senior Warden in place. If they are anything like their predecessors, they are likely wondering what the coming year will hold—and perhaps feeling a bit nervous about the looming deadline for their first Torch article!

When Father Drew first asked me to serve as Senior Warden last year, I had plenty of uncertainties about whether I was qualified for the job. But I remember my most immediate concern that day was whether I had to hurry up and write something for the February issue. Imagine my relief when he assured me that the outgoing Senior Warden handled that one!

However, the deadline for the March 2025 article arrived all too quickly. I sat there with very few ideas, praying for a spark. Eventually, a sentence or two popped into my head just in time, and I was off and running. Yet, like clockwork, as every subsequent deadline approached, I found myself sitting at my laptop staring at a blinking cursor. Invariably, my husband would walk up behind me and ask how the writing was going and what the subject was. My answer was always the same: "I have no idea."

I remember asking Father Drew early on what I was supposed to write about; his answer was simply, "Whatever you want." I turned to Vonda Buse and Donna Myers, seeking their secrets for coming up with monthly topics. They both offered the same advice: "Don't worry; it will come to you."

They were right. It required a bit of trust. Martin Luther King Jr. is credited with saying, "Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase." I keep that quote in the front of my Bible. Every month, as I sat down to write these reflections, I would look at those words and ask the Holy Spirit for a little bit of guidance for the next step.

A few days ago, I asked Father Drew one last time what I should say in my final article as Senior Warden. His answer, as always, was "Whatever you want."

What I want to say is thank you. Thank you for walking this staircase with me, even when I couldn't see the next step. It has been an honor to serve this vestry and this parish. To my successor: take that first step with confidence. I pass the "Torch" you!

Candi Bialon

Thank You for Your Service to St Aidan's!

Each year three members of our congregation are elected to serve a three-year term on St Aidan's vestry. Their commitment to serving this congregation is greatly appreciated. Below are the members leaving at the end of January, Please thank them for their service.



Allen Feris served one year as the Congregational Life Liaison and two years as Technology/Communications Liaison.



Candy Trautman served two years as Outreach Liaison and one year as Christian Education Liaison.



Bob Perry served one year as the Worship Liaison. He stepped in to fill the last year of Dick Philmlee's three-year term.

**NEXT TORCH
DEADLINE**

Thursday, February 19th

Email submissions to: mcnallyk@outlook.com
Photos, suggestions and/or comments are greatly appreciated

From the Junior Warden

Its finally winter and building and grounds maintenance generally requires watching as the temps drop. That means that heating system and icy patches need to be cared for. Ice melt buckets have been placed at the stairs and ramp entrances to Dietel Hall; please spread, as necessary. Within Dietel Hall our heating system is struggling to maintain 70 degrees, so we monitor the temperature and adjust as needed. Mice found a cozy spot in the Sacristy requiring a visit and traps from our pest control vendor. Since then, the church has been mouse free.



The front doors into Dietel and into the Sanctuary were not closing properly and our Locksmith came out to correct both situations. Please remember to check that the doors close and lock behind you if you are the last one leaving.

Our last fire inspection determined that the Dietel Hall emergency lights were not working; we have had them upgraded and replaced.

Marilyn Rockwell

Women of St. Aidan's

All the women at St Aidan's are members of the Women's Group whether or not they attend meetings. We'd love to have you join us at our next meeting at 11am on February 11, 2026. Attendance at a meeting is not a commitment to volunteer for something; it is just an expression of interest in the activities of the group.

At our January 14 meeting, we decided to send a copy of the minutes of the meeting to those who attend group meetings and anyone else that is interested in the activities of the group. If you have not received a copy of the January minutes and want to be added to our email list, please let me know via email at JoannMoffett@msn.com, call me at 360-387-4080, or hand me a slip of paper with your name and email address at church.

JoAnn Moffett, Secretary for the Women of St. Aidan's

Extreme Cold Weather Shelter (ECWS) Update

Throughout January, the ECWS team continued to be thankful for many things, but most thankful for one thing in particular-- warmer temperatures.

We all feel the challenges that freezing weather brings, but not as much as our neighbors who do not have the luxury of coming inside, closing the door behind them and turning the heat up. This winter, at least so far this winter, the local unhoused community has not suffered from frigid cold nights and therefore, ECWS volunteers have not had to venture out to spend the night at the shelter. We are prepared to open, however, with volunteers signed up and pantry staples ready to prepare simple, warm meals.

We are more than grateful to see God's presence as more people throughout our community reach out to support the shelter.

Please let us know if you have questions or would like to join our ministry.

Donna Myers

Important Events at St Aidan's in February

February 1	Feed My Sheep Sunday
February 9	Bloodworks NW, 10am to 4pm
February 11	Women of St Aidan's, 11am
February 17	Shrove Tuesday Pancakes and Trivia, 5:30:pm
February 18	Ash Wednesday Services, Noon (w/Choir) and a smaller service at 5:30pm
February 22	Espirt Joyeaux concert, pm
February 26	Bread/Salad/Soup Supper Lenten Series with Fr Frank Spina, 5pm



See calendar on page 6 for more activities and events at St Aidan's. Check weekly ePistle for any adds or updates.



Dear Friends, many of you know, or are aware of the Foundation for Academic Endeavors (FAE) in the Skagit Valley. Many from St Aidan's have spent summers volunteering with FAE especially in the early years of the program.

FAE runs a summer school for immigrant children in partnership with Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon. The success of FAE is well documented and has proven itself over the years.

FAE has asked St Aidan's to partner with them on a new program, one that unfortunately has urgent need in the present time and one that in some cases can be vital to immigrant families. The need in question will arise if a parent or parents of a student, who is an American citizen are deported, what happens to that child or children?

FAE is partnering with various immigrant organizations to develop a program that would allow these children who are US citizens to have the necessary paperwork to remain with an appointed adult, here in the US.

The second part is to apply for and secure US passports, so the children have vital documentation proving citizenship allowing them to remain or return to the US.

The first part of this effort is raising at least \$2,000. The approximate cost for an individual passport and related paperwork is \$200, so we could sponsor 10 children. Father Drew reported that someone in our community has offered to match up to \$500 in donations so if we can raise \$500 to begin with that would be \$1,000 total. We think we have another source to get an additional \$1,000. So folks could put in \$5, \$10, \$50 or \$100 whatever one feels they can afford.

The checks should be made out to St Aidan's and in the Memo line, "for FAE" then our check counters know where the money is directed. The team thanks you in advance for any donation you may make, every dollar will help us to reach our goal, and help these kids!

Please keep these children in your prayers they are vulnerable and need our help. If you would like more information on this effort please speak with anyone on the St Aidan's/FAE team listed.

Judy Mieger
Karen O'Leary
Kevin King
Father Drew
Mark Hinrichs

Chuck Rinehart
Julie Vaux
Sue Perry
Rob Gorman

"Wayfinding"

It's a real thing and it's done. You've been hearing about it for months, probably longer. The program for this project was to design a series of signs that would help visitors find the church and other amenities on the campus once they leave their car. Most of us are members and know where the church is. It's under the steeple just behind Dietel Hall. Guests may wonder what and where Dietel Hall is, even though they may be standing in it. Parish Hall was thought to be more recognizable to guests. We might think guests will follow others and greeters will assist in getting them through the Hall to the church. However, some events don't have greeters, and other events are held elsewhere. In some cases, the main sign, off the parking lot, had to direct guests to yet another sign before they reached their destination. So, everything had to be clear while keeping the number of signs to a minimum and having them blend into the landscape. We hope you think we accomplished that with the use of stone, steel, lighting and embedment into the landscape. Now, if we could just move Dietel Hall and.....

Happy "Wayfinding" ... Greg Myers



You are cordially invited to our winter recital.

Featuring: Gretchen Pigott, Mandy Walters-Whitaker & Natalie Hagglund

Come enjoy a variety of classical and contemporary works for flute, oboe & piano.

Sunday February 22nd at 2 pm

Easy to remember! 2/22 @ 2!

St Aidan's Episcopal Church
1318 State Highway 532 Camano Island, WA

Voluntary donations gratefully accepted to benefit Stanwood-Camano Area Foundation



Coffee Hour After Sunday 10am Service



If it is your Sunday consider bringing a light snack—sweet or savory to share during coffee hour.

First Sunday (February 1)	A-D
Second Sunday (February 8)	E-L
Third Sunday (February 15)	M-R
Fourth Sunday (February 22)	S-Z

A reminder:

If you are hosting please stay after Coffee Hour to help clean up Dietel Hall and the kitchen and make sure all leftover food is taken home and take used tea towels and dishcloths home to launder.

Make sure the front door is locked before leaving. If you do not have a key, no problem just lock the front door from the inside and leave by the double doors that lead to the sanctuary.

A Message From the Kitchen "Angels"

Please remember to take your dishes after Coffee Hour or other social gatherings. In order to keep the kitchen tidy, after one month left behind dishes will be donated to the Festival.

Thank you!

Please **No Food** (Soiled Paper Plates or Napkins) in the Recycling Bin!



Your help and thoughtfulness are needed! The transfer station is picky about this kind of thing.

Food Bank Sunday (February 1)

"Feed My Sheep"



Collections are on the first Sunday of the month. If not attending services you can drop off donations on the porch the first Saturday or Sunday of the month.

Thank you for your donations.



Bill & Adele Lee	13
Don & Carol Avalon	22

New Group Interests?

Do you have an interest in an activity at St Aidan's that was not listed in the Annual Report?

A Bible Study Group? A Men's Group? Other?

Are you interested in leading or interested in attending if one is organized? Contact the Fr Drew to let him know.

Tuesday 10:30 am—Study Group

The group meets in Dietel Hall or the conference room.

The group will be finishing a book by Bear Grylls called "The Greatest Story Ever Told" prior to Lent. A book has yet to be selected for the Lenten season. The book will be announced in St Aidan's ePistle closer to Lent.

This is a very informal group, stop by and join in the discussions.



Patty Clark	06	Suellen Eberhart	15
Ethel Maxwell	06	Amber Ferrese	18
Robert Bialon	07	Carol Jarrett	18
Ray Riches	07	Bill Goodenough	22
Rob Gorman	11	Carole Schaefer	23
Jan Donovan	12		

February 2026—Activities Calendar*

*Check for status on St. Aidan's website, current ePistle or with organizers of specific groups for updates.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The Fourth Sunday after Epiphany 8:00 am Holy Eucharist I 10:00 am Holy Eucharist II (also live streamed on YouTube) Food Bank Sunday	5:30 pm AA	10:00 am Guided Meditation 10:30 am Study Group	10:00 am Holy Eucharist I			7 pm AA
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
The Fifth Sunday after Epiphany 8:00 am Holy Eucharist I 10:00 am Holy Eucharist II (also live streamed on YouTube)	10am-4pm Bloodworks NW Blood Drive 5:30 pm AA	10:00 am Guided Meditation 10:30 am Study Group	10:00 am Holy Eucharist I 11:00 am Women of St Aidan's			7 pm AA
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
The Last Sunday after Epiphany 8:00 am Holy Eucharist I 10:00 am Holy Eucharist II (also live streamed on YouTube)	4 pm Vestry Meeting 5:30 pm AA	Shrove Tuesday 10:00 am Guided Meditation 5:30 pm Pancakes & Triva	Ash Wednesday Noon Ash Wednesday Service 5:30 pm Ash Wednesday Service	TORCH DEADLINE	10:00 am Bedeswomen (Conference Rm)	7 pm AA
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
The First Sunday in Lent 8:00 am Holy Eucharist I 10:00 am Holy Eucharist II (also live streamed on YouTube) 2:00 pm Espirt Joyeux	5:30 pm AA	10:00 am Guided Meditation 10:30 am Study Group	10:00 am Holy Eucharist I	5:00 pm Lenten Series		10:00 am Prayer Shawl Ministry 7 pm AA
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The Second Sunday in Lent 8:00 am Holy Eucharist I 10:00 am Holy Eucharist II (also live streamed on YouTube) Food Bank Sunday	5:30 pm AA	10:00 am Guided Meditation 10:30 am Study Group	10:00 am Holy Eucharist I	5:00 pm Lenten Series		7 pm AA



Altar Servers



If you cannot serve on your assigned day please find a substitute and let the office know.

8:00 AM	February 1	February 8	February 15	February 22	March 1
Lector	Kathy Hosley	JoAnn Moffett	Ann Morgan	Mary McConnaughey	TBD
Chalice Bearer	Ann Morgan	Ann Morgan	JoAnn Moffett	Ann Morgan	TBD
Acolyte	Jim Miller	Jim Miller	Jim Miller	Jim Miller	TBD
Usher	JoAnn Moffett	Kathy Hosley	Kathy Hosley	Kathy Hosley	TBD
10:00 AM	February 1	February 8	February 15	February 22	March 1
Lector	Rob Gorman	Nancy Pates-Riches	Jeff Maxwell	Jackie Humes-Fear	TBD
Chalice Bearer	Jeff Maxwell Mary McConnaughey	Jackie Humes-Fear Bob Perry	Mary McConnaughey Dean Nelson	Freda McKeown Peter Dunphy	TBD
Acolyte	Mary McConnaughey	Bob Perry	Dean Nelson	Peter Dunphy	TBD
Usher	Suellen Eberhart Marshall Eberhart	Susie Johnson Jeff Johnson	Dick Bingay Joey Sontheimer	Ethel Maxwell Bill White	TBD
Counter	Kathy McNally Patty Dunphy	Julie Vaux Jackie Humes-Fear	Patty Dunphy Marilyn Rockwell Mary Burns (watch)	Pam Sontheimer Ethel Maxwell	TBD
Childcare	Vonda Buse Donna Myers	Sue Perry Marilyn Rockwell	JoAnn Moffett Ethel Maxwell	Deb Hubenthal Pam Sontheimer	TBD
	February 1	February 8	February 15	February 22	March 1
Altar Flowers	Gayle Thomas	Mary McConnaughey	Marilyn Rockwell	Mary McConnaughey	Mary McConnaughey

Special Services	February 28 Ash Wednesday Noon 5:30 pm	
Lector	Jeff Maxwell	Mary McConnaughey
Chalice Bearer	Ann Morgan	Freda McKeown
Crucifer/ Acolyte	Jim Miller	Volunteer Crucifer: as needed
Ushers	Kathy Hosley	Volunteer : as needed

Altar Guild Teams for February

February 1-15
Team 2: Judy Bingay, Gayle Thomas, Candi Bialon

February 16-28
Team 3: Susie White, Micki-Jo, Sue Perry

St. Aidan's Technology Issues?

If you have an questions or concerns about the operation of St. Aidan's website, Facebook pages, or YouTube please contact St Aidan's Office until new Liaison for Technology appointed.

Need Help?

If you need help please contact the church office.

Lenten Series at St Aidan's with Fr Frank Spina
Thursdays beginning at 5 p.m. with a Bread/Salad/Soup Supper
"Encounters with God in a Biblical Mode"

In the Lenten season, typically as we try to observe a "holy Lent" we attempt a variety of spiritual practices. For example, we might try to pray more regularly or try different styles of prayers, or read Scripture more systematically, or try meditation, perhaps seek spiritual direction, and the like. This is all to the good. In a sense, these are efforts to "encounter God." As it turns out, there are biblical stories in which encounters with God are the dominant theme. In this Lenten season we will deal with a variety of stories in which biblical characters encounter God. Almost everyone has an element of surprise.



February 26: "Jacob's Ladder Dream: Accepting God's Promise or Hedging His Bets?" (Genesis 28:10-22)

March 5: "A Nighttime Wrestling Match: A Divine or Human Opponent?" (Genesis 32:22-32)

March 12: "Moses and the Burning Bush: Excuses Galore" (Exodus 3:1—4:17) "

March 19: "Samuel's Nighttime Summons: Why Did God Have to Be So Repetitive?" (1 Samuel 3)

March 26: "Meeting Jesus on the Damascus Road: Paul's Transition from Persecutor to Proselyte" (Acts 9:1-31)

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