

January 15, 2026

Dear Ones,

I think I've shared my 'Ten Tiny Things' practice before, but I'll give a refresher for any who have forgotten. When the world is just too much or I need an attitude adjustment, I go looking for "ten tiny things" to photograph. One of the things I appreciate about this practice is that what begins as an attempt to shut out all the big scary things that have me overwhelmed becomes a way of making space for the bigger stuff. I gain some perspective as I see the mountains or the lake and remember that in terms of the universe, they, too, are tiny things.

Here are some of my tiny things this week: fresh cat prints in the snow around my car; the container I use to hold the ashes on Ash Wednesday; cat's whiskers; the beauty of a very light layer of fresh snow on everything; the clean smell of freshly washed floors (okay, I can't photograph that, but it's a wonderful tiny thing!) Even the very colorful bruise on the toes I banged and crushed Sunday morning before church—because it makes me notice that they don't hurt nearly as much as they did as I stood at the altar!

This practice doesn't deny the ugliness of the violence and division that has infected our country, but it does help to counterbalance it with a reminder that there is still beauty all around us. I invite you to give this a try, and then share with me the things you noticed.

In the meantime....*keep the faith*,
Nancy+

THIS SUNDAY'S READINGS

Isaiah 49:1-7 * Psalm: 40:1-12 * 1st Corinthians 1:1-9 * John 1:29-42

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Nancy Moore, Ordination 1/19

CREATION CARE TIPS

Get the lead out!

I don't know the origin of this phrase. I remember my parents and older sister using it when someone was being implored to "HURRY!" It could easily have been used in the 40s, 50s and 60s when lead was being phased out of paints. When tuna, swordfish, and shellfish were (and may still be) susceptible to lead contamination because of runoff, an environmental action campaign could have used this same phrase. And "Get the lead out" was an appropriate phrase to remember when lead was removed from gasoline.

But today we're looking at lead occurring in a place you have probably never worried about: CHOCOLATE. Chocolates contain three heavy metals: lead, cadmium, and arsenic. Each offers its own portfolio of health dangers.

Lead can permanently affect children's brain development, resulting in reduced intelligence quotient (IQ), behavioral changes including reduced attention span and increased antisocial behavior, and reduced educational attainment. Lead exposure also causes anemia, hypertension, renal impairment, immunotoxicity and toxicity to the reproductive organs.

Cadmium exerts toxic effects on the kidneys as well as the skeletal and respiratory systems. It is classified as a human carcinogen.

Arsenic exposure problems include skin lesions, peripheral neuropathy, gastrointestinal symptoms, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, developmental toxicity, and cancer of the skin and internal organs.

Each of these heavy metals occurs in chocolate in very small amounts, but because heavy metals don't wash out of the body's organs, bones, or muscles (depending on the specific metal), the amount within a body will continue to increase as long as the person continues to eat the contaminated chocolate.

YIKES! So what's a chocoholic to do? Milk chocolate, though sometimes considered boring, has lower levels of each of these metals. Some brands have lower levels than others – Ghirardelli, Mast, Taza, and Valrhona.

The bottom line – and it’s relatively good news – is that a study done by Tulane University and published in Food Research International (2024) determined that one ounce of milk chocolate per day posed no threat to adults’ health, and minimal threat to children’s health.

– Patty Watts, Christ Church Earth Keeper

Hurt not the earth—neither the sea—nor the trees. Revelation 7:3

CALENDAR

SUN: 10:15 AM Eucharist
WED: 9:00 AM Eucharist/Bible Study
THU: 9:00 AM Christ Church Book Group/Zoom
7:15 PM Zoom Compline

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday School on hiatus We put Sunday School on hiatus through this season of Epiphany to give us time to consider how to best design a program for our kids. Parents, we would like to gather together for a meeting on January 25 after church, if possible.

Annual Meeting, February 1 We will meet following the service to review 2025; look ahead to 2026; elect a warden, vestry members, and convention delegates; and accept the 2026 budget.

Annual Reports due January 18

Church Closers One of the important duties every week is to make sure we leave church with lights off, doors locked, fans turned off, etc. We call these folks the “closers” and our list has grown rather short. It does *not* require being the last person to leave, and there is a checklist to follow. Please let us know if you can help with this task, so we can give our faithful few a break! Thanks.

Budapest to Bamako Rally Allan (aka Dexter) Mulandi leaves on Monday, 1/19, to participate in this race, which has been held for more than 25 years. More info can be found here: <https://www.budapestbamako.org/> The race covers 9000 KM (about 6000 miles), 2 continents and 10 countries in two weeks. Right now, the end of the race has been shifted to Freetown in Sierra Leone, due to political unrest in the region. A documentary, “From Rust To Glory” can be found on Amazon. (to view the trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8x9trILyRM>) Prayers please for him and his team - for smooth travels, safety, health, and so on. And also for his family and friends who will wait and watch with some anxiety.

2026 United Thank Offering Friends, I can't help but notice that the basket of UTO boxes in the hallway is too full! So, this is a reminder to start the new year right by picking up one or more boxes to keep in a very visible and accessible place to drop in coins and bills as we notice and experience things that remind us of God's presence and grace in our lives. Here's something someone else said that I think is a great reminder of the reason for developing and nurturing an Attitude of Gratitude and for trusting in the Lord's provision: The act of giving best reminds me of my place on earth. All of us live here by the goodness and grace of God—like the birds in the air and the flowers of the field, Jesus said. Those creations do not worry about future security and safety; neither should we. Giving offers me a way to express my faith and confidence that God will care for me just as God cares for the sparrow and lily. *Nancy Mering*

The bishop is coming! The Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Brown will be with us at worship and fellowship on Sunday, March 15. This is an opportunity for confirmation, or being received into the Episcopal Church (from the Lutheran or Roman Catholic traditions). Please speak to Nancy if you wish to do so. We will begin preparation by the end of January.

Lenten lunch We may still have Christmas hymns ringing in our ears, but we need to look ahead to Lent which begins on February 18. The clergy association is once again offering community lunch on Fridays, but need help in preparing the meal (soup, sandwiches, cookies).

For ongoing and up-to-date information about diocesan activities and news, as well as news from other congregations, sign up for **the DioLog**. <https://episcopalmaine.org/newsletter/>

MINISTRIES LIST

	This week:	Next week:
Lector 1:	VOLUNTEER	Jason Long
Psalmist:	Thelma C	Bella Long
Lector 2:	Michelle Christoph	Allison Long
Acolyte:	Mary Bickford	Peter Hammond
Euch. Minister:	Michelle Christoph	Peter Bickford
Shepherd:	<i>on hiatus</i>	<i>on hiatus</i>
Usher:	Tom Knight	Rosemary Laban
Altar Guild:	Caroline Leonard	Jan Wall
Coffee Hour:	Jan Wall	Kathy L & Fran M
Counter:	Tom Knight	Jeff Stuhr
Closer:	Tom Knight	Jen Lehr