



The Messenger

December 2017

Christmas Services

Sunday, December 24th

Eucharist

9:00am

Carols & Special Music

7:00pm

Christmas Eve Mass

7:30pm

From our Interim Priest

The season of Advent is rarely heard about anywhere except Church. About the only thing I've seen in the stores are Advent Calendars. Most are imported from Germany and count off the 4 weeks, day by day with little windows. It helps to build anticipation and preparation.

The Church recalls how God planned for the coming of Christ to be our redeemer through prophecies in the Old Testament. We also are reminded of Christ's Second Coming at the End of Time from New Testament citations as well as the moving Birth Narratives.

Spiritual preparation for the Coming of Christ into our lives is refreshed by acts of devotion. Advent was once a little Lent, a penitential season of prayer and fasting. It has given way to the annual rush of holidays leading to the New Year. Thanksgiving Day and its feasting sets the tone for the following weeks. The climax is the Great Winter Festival over many days which includes St. Nicholas Day, Saint Lucy Day, the Winter Solstice, Christmas, New Year and Epiphany.

All sorts of symbols mix religious and secular messages as the year comes to a close. Wreaths, ever-greens and the Christmas Tree offer signs of everlasting life in the barren, cold, winter. Candles are points of light as the daylight diminishes calling us to hope for the Light of Lights, our Savior to come. Others are the Creche/Nativity Scene, Advent Wreath and its four candles, and the color purple or blue for royalty, hope, and preparation.

Our liturgy on Sundays will incorporate classic seasonal hymns, and a change in the text of prayers as we are drawn deeper into this wonderful time of year. If we pace ourselves, manage our plans realistically, and take time to reflect and rest, we will make ready our hearts, minds, spirits as well as our homes for Christ to come again.

Sincerely,
Thomas+, interim priest

**QUICK LOOK AT YTD 2017
OPERATING BUDGET
Month Ending October 31, 2017**

Giving Income:

<u>Oct 2017</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jan – Oct 17</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
11,058.00	12,962.11	140,339.00	127,687.45

Vanguard Endowment Income:

<u>Oct 2017</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jan – Oct 17</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
4,000.00	4,000.00	12,000.00	12,000.00

Total Income:

<u>Oct 2017</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jan – Oct 17</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
15,252.56	17,406.62	157,991.08	144,953.43

Total Building and Grounds Expense:

<u>Oct 2017</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jan – Oct 17</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
1,329.78	2,458.36	29,469.45	31,653.78

Total All Expenses Including Rector:

<u>Oct 2017</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jan – Oct 17</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
6,650.16	7,847.15	136,246.77	137,805.02

Current Assets:

<u>Checking</u>	<u>Columbarium</u>	<u>Memorials</u>	<u>Endowment</u>
28,198.15	6,295.62	28,334.11	477,432.75

From the Warden

To begin with, on this coming Sunday, December 3, (Advent 1) our 9:00 service will be Morning Prayer instead of the Eucharist as is our custom. Father Rosa will be out of town and Chuck Terpening agreed to lead us in Morning Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer. It is a service that we don't often use on Sunday here at Grace Church, so this will be a wonderful opportunity to experience this old and beautiful part of our Episcopal heritage. Come and enjoy.

Vestry met this past Sunday. It was a full agenda with the normal financial reports, minutes and committee reports along with a detailed update of work that has been ongoing at the rectory for the past several months. New shrubs have been planted and trees trimmed, the house power washed, the garage emptied of "leftovers". And that is just the beginning. We have plans to update and renovate the bathroom and kitchen, replace needed storm windows, replace the front storm door and railings, paint the interior, replace worn carpet...it is exciting to "fixup" and prepare 1414 W. Lincoln and have it ready to welcome our new rector when the time comes....hopefully the early half of 2018. When the work is finished, the last paint applied, the last nail nailed and everything spic-and-span, we will have an open house for the parish.....to come and see all that has been done to our beautiful rectory. We think you will be proud.

And, the Christmas Season of 2017 is nearly upon us. This year Advent IV and Christmas Eve are on the same day.....December 24. Every few years that happens and makes scheduling the decorating and church services a bit of a challenge.....but we are up to that challenge. The main thing for us to remember this year, because of the calendar, is that on Christmas Eve morning we will have our regular Sunday (Advent IV) Eucharist at 9:00am. Then instead of the usual 11:00pm Christmas Eve Eucharist,

that service will begin at 7:00pm with Carols followed by the Christmas Eve Eucharist at 7:30pm. There will be no service on Christmas Day.....December 25. Father Rosa will be with us on December 24 at the 9:00am and the 7:00pm services.

And then, one more thing because of the calendar.....the Christmas decoration (wreaths and tree) will be put in place on Sunday, December 17.....please plan to stay after church on that day to help. The vestry will meet on that day at 10:00am.....so some extra hands will be needed to get the decorating done. This is an exception, usually wreaths and flowers are not put in place this early.....but out of necessity that is what will take place this year.

And in closing.....have you even seen a more beautiful "Thanksgiving/Harvest" alter in all of your lives? Right here at Grace Church. Thank you Father Rosa.....you continue to amaze us.....and we love it, thank you.

This and That

THANK YOU. THANK YOU. THANK YOU. THANK YOU.

Once again, the members of Grace came together in fun, fellowship, and purpose to make the ECW Red Door Bazaar and Soup Luncheon a great success. You responded by helping set up tables, erecting the yard sign, printing flyers, promoting the event on Facebook and in the newspaper, sewing, building birdhouses, crafting beautiful keepsakes out of wood, donating heirloom Christmas items...and these were by the men of the parish! The ladies also worked tirelessly on setting up the displays, baking goodies, making soups, crafting, donating artwork, serving lunch, washing dishes, bringing guests, clerking, and being cheerful servants.

I noticed as I looked out from the choir loft the very next morning that almost everyone sitting in the pews had played a part in making the event such a success. That filled my heart with so much pride. We have a very dedicated, loyal, and loving family here at Grace.

2017 bazaar receipts - \$1,891

2016 bazaar receipts - \$1,540

Thank you! Connie B.

Weekly Altar Flowers for 2018 Sign up sheet is now posted in the narthex. The cost of flowers is \$29.00. Families are welcome to share a Sunday. When you sign up for flowers you are responsible for paying for them. Sometime during the month you are signed up for weekly flowers turn in a check for \$29.00 (made out to Grace Episcopal Church). You can put this in the offering plate, turn in to the office or mail to the church. Just indicate on the check that it is for altar flowers.

Thank you to all who helped provide food for the St. Andrew's Day Tea. It was wonderful and everything as always tasted delicious. Also a big thank you for all who helped with cleanup afterwards. Without your help, this wonderful tradition would not be able to continue. In Christ's Love - Mike Shore

Christmas Flower Donation It is time to place our order with the florist for the wreaths and flowers that decorate our walls and doors for the Christmas season. We depend on your donations to cover the cost of the wreaths and plants, and it is, at the same time, an opportunity for a special remembrance of your loved ones, or a celebration of God's blessing in your life. During the week following Christmas the plants are delivered to homes and nursing homes carrying thoughts and love from Grace Church. There is an envelope included in this Messenger. Please send your donation for flowers along with any names or intentions to be remembered at the Christmas Service.

Annual Meeting, January 28, 2017. All reports for the meeting need to be turned into the office no later than January 16th either electronically (gracechurch@aeroinc.net) or printed in a format ready to be copied for the annual report.

Notes from Grace's Greens:

Advent and Christmas is a good time to reflect on and enjoy the wonder of God's creation and consider ways we can protect it – here are some ideas for a “Green” Christmas (courtesy of Green Mountain Energy):

1. If you're planning a get-together with friends or large groups, consider a white elephant gift exchange where everyone brings something they already have at home (no purchased gifts allowed). More fun, less consumption!

2. It's tempting to use paper or plastic plates, cups and utensils when planning a holiday party, but stick with reusable materials and enlist a close friend or two to help you clean at the end of the party.

3. Choose high-efficiency, long-lasting LED lights for holiday decorating.

4. Bring the outside in by decorating with natural materials from the outdoors like pinecones and discarded evergreen branches.

5. If you're buying a live Christmas tree, look for one that's grown locally (to minimize the emissions associated with long-distance transportation) and look for a post-holiday tree mulching program.

6. Give children gifts that inspire curiosity about the natural world: a membership card to a zoo or children's museum, an ant/butterfly farm, a science kit, a kite or a tree you can plant together.

7. For electronics or toys that require batteries, give rechargeable batteries and a recharger.

8. Instead of wrapping paper, make the packaging part of the gift with decorative baskets or use gift bags, which are easy to fold up and reuse. Better yet, package gifts in attractive reusable shopping bags to encourage friends and family to skip plastic bags.

9. Research shows that experiences make us happier than possessions, so consider skipping material gifts and give memories instead: performance/event tickets, a camping trip, cooking classes or a hot air balloon ride.

10. If you're a ComEd customer, give yourself and the Earth a gift by signing up for a free home energy audit – get FREE LED bulbs, smart power strips, low-flow showerheads, and more.

From the Treasurer~

THANK YOU!!! We were hoping that we would complete our Stewardship Campaign by Stewardship Sunday so the Vestry could accomplish their important financial work at the November Vestry meeting. We had a 97.9% return rate prior to our Vestry meeting! That is remarkable and we are extremely grateful. The majority of cards were returned on Stewardship Sunday. So many of you commented about the good feeling you experienced as we collectively placed our pledge cards in the alms basin at the foot of the altar.

Thank you.



ECW First Friday All women of Grace Church are invited to come to the church undercroft on Friday, December 1st, for our monthly gathering. Please bring your own lunch. Coffee and tea will be provided. We meet at 11:30am and spend time getting to know each other and discussing ECW programs and events. This month would also be a time to vote on any outreach opportunities. We hope you will join us. Please contact Connie Burden with any questions. cburden43@gmail.com or 815-789-3181.

Advent Meal Wednesday, December 6th at 5:30pm in St. Stephen's Hall. No need to bring anything. Questions call Nicole Bolotnik at 815-990-1375.

Building & Grounds Meeting Tuesday, December 12th at 1:15pm in St. Stephen's Hall.

Men of Grace Breakfast Saturday, December 16th, 8:00am at 9 East. All are welcome to attend.

Hanging of the Greens Please plan to join us after church on December 17th to decorate the church for Christmas.

December



1st	Heather Becker	14th	Nicole Bolotnik
3rd	Brian Chesterton	17th	Bernard Lischwe
4th	Kate Peterson		Doris Chesterton
	Duane Price	19th	Pat Lockwood
5th	Jack Heitz, Jr.	21st	Mary Lockwood
	Dick Worthington		Elizabeth Maize
6th	Marilyn Hepner	23rd	Carol Price
10th	Steve Holbert	24th	Allison Gush
13th	Rita Ayre	27th	Annie Peterson
14th	Elizabeth Woodward	30th	Mark Helm

19th Fred & Billie Hawley

28th Neil & Rose Dreier

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Deadline for the January Messenger will be December 15th.

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December Newsletter