



The Messenger

November 2018

Rector's Message

Fr. Brian Prall

Happy Thanksgiving!

And now a word about Advent. Wait, what?

It's not that November does not have anything going on, what with the Red Door Bazaar, Diocesan Convention, St. Andrew's Sunday, and that other thing I am surely forgetting about. But Grace will have a few program offerings during Advent, so I wanted to provide some teasers well in advance.

This year during Advent we are going to host a Taizé service on the evening of December 16th. It is a contemplative or meditative service that comes from French monastics in the Taizé region in France. Our Christian Formation classes will also be taking us into deeper spiritual territory as we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of the Christ Child. Also, my offer still stands for developing an outreach opportunity of baking Christmas cookies, or other goodies, for our first responders while possibly using the book *Bake through the Bible at Christmas*. The book "contains 12 Bible stories, told in a simple, engaging style, surrounding the events of the first Christmas. Each story is supported by a cooking activity that reinforces the main teaching . . ." And the idea is to do this together with young children. If this sounds like something you'd be interested in, please let me know.

A final Advent activity that I would like to bring to your attention centers around the celebration of Las Posadas, a Latin American tradition that enacts Mary and Joseph's search for lodging so that Mary can give birth to Jesus. Our very own Laura Watson has a terrific write-up about Las Posadas and has developed a wonderful opportunity for Grace Church to participate in this drama in our own little way. For more on this, please reference her article, but the gist is for families to sign up to "host" the Holy Family for an evening or two as they continue their weary journey in search of a place for Jesus to come into the world. The Holy Family will be represented by plush figures that I will be crocheting feverishly over the coming weeks.

The search for lodging, for refuge figures prominently in our national discourse right now, making this particular Advent activity very timely. Regardless of one's political views on our nation's policy regarding how people enter this country, wherever they hail from, I believe it is safe to say that the Christian voice has been boxed out of the conversation. Loving one's neighbor as oneself, the second of Jesus' commandments to us, seems nonexistent, as does this from Leviticus:

When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. (19:33-34)

In seminary we had to earn a cross-cultural credit that required us to perform 100 hours of ministry in a context that was not our own; in my case Caucasian and Episcopalian. There was a local shelter for people with pending asylum and other immigration cases at which I had the privilege of working.

Most of the residents were there from Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Honduras, and each had very harrowing stories of making their journey to the United States, some enduring muggings, beatings, and rapes. I was tasked with taking one family to counseling at the Center of Survivors of Torture.

That was how I spent a majority of my time, transporting these folks to their appointments with various social service agencies so that they could legally obtain work in the United States and set up a residence other than this shelter. You learn a lot about people when you are trapped in a car in Austin traffic together, mainly that their English, though imperfect, is still better than my ability to speak any of the three other languages they knew. The Africans spoke their indigenous languages, French, and English, and many of them picked up Spanish or Portuguese in detention centers along their journey.

I will never forget one day when a young man from Honduras was dropped off at the shelter fresh out of a detention center with the clothes on his back and a backpack. He took one look at the shelter, which is overcrowded and not much to look at, and had this look on his face like, "This can't be the United States I have read about." After going through the intake process, he was allowed to wander the property and make himself at home. He tried to keep himself busy picking up a broom and sweeping some of the outside areas, and later picking up trash. After a while, he gave up and just stood there in the driveway.

Busy with other tasks, I passed by him about three or four times and each time he looked at me and appeared on the verge of tears. It became too much for me so finally I prayed to myself, "Lord, open my lips and let my high school Spanish come to me," and I went over to try to have a conversation. We hung in there with each other battling through about a ten-minute conversation until we both exhausted our supplies of each other's languages. I found he had a wife and two daughters back in Honduras and that the next day was his 27th birthday. As a husband, father, and one who get easily homesick, my heart just broke for this guy.

Later I found out he was here for work because the gangs in his native Honduras wanted to use the grocery store he worked at as a storage house for drugs. Refusal of such requests is not an option if you wish to keep your life. He made the difficult decision that I cannot begin to fathom to leave his family behind and go in search of a better life, hopefully being reunited with them here in the safety of the United States.

We do not get to choose the contexts into which we are born. Jesus teaches us to use whatever blessings we have received to treat our neighbor as we wish to be treated, with love and dignity. I hope you join us this Advent in welcoming the Holy Family into your homes providing them a place to sojourn.

Las Posadas "The Lodgings"

By Laura Watson

Las Posadas is celebrated in Mexico and other South and Central American countries during late Advent season. The celebration of Las Posadas dramatically enacts the Bible story of Mary and Joseph's search for a place to give birth to their baby, Jesus. Traditionally, this drama is acted out as a procession each evening during the nine days leading up to Christmas. Mary and Joseph lead a parade from house to house. Outside the homes, children and adults wearing costumes create different Christmas scenes. Luminaria softly light the way.

At each house, Mary and Joseph ask, "Who will give us lodging?" At each house, as in the story, they are turned away. Finally, one house invites them in. Everyone rejoices because Mary and Joseph have found lodging. Each night until Christmas Eve, adults and children repeat the procession on a different street. On Christmas Eve, a baby is placed in a manger, showing that Jesus has been born. Then everyone goes to church. Afterward, they enjoy a big Christmas dinner, and children break a piñata.

Grace Church invites you to provide lodging to the Holy couple as they seek shelter on their way to Bethlehem. Maria, José, and their donkey will be traveling through the neighborhoods that make up the parish of Grace Church during the month of December. Will you host them for a night or two at your home? They are very tired but will be very grateful for a meal and a place to stay. They will come bundled together with prayers and resources for Advent devotions. Our prayers will focus on the needs of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Sign up to prayerfully host Maria and José as they make their journey towards Bethlehem. We will create a schedule for their visits once we see who wants to participate. Each host home will have them for at least one night. Share your dinner with them, or take them along to participate in your December activities. Share your photos of their visit via Grace's Facebook page, or by email to the church office!

News from Grace's Greens

Candy has done such a great job leading our group, but finds herself with many other commitments, so I have agreed to help out with the Green group. We will be getting together at coffee after church, but not until November as the next few weeks are taken up with Vestry Meetings and Christian Formation. In the meantime, think about what sort of goals or activities you would like the group to be involved in over the coming year.

It is very easy to feel despondent when we think of how much we have to do to take care of our beautiful home planet. The consequences of the devastating weather experienced around the world are leading to loss of homes and loss of food production. Less resources will lead to even greater conflict and numbers of people migrating in search of not only a better life, but often for basic survival.

We all need to do what we can, no matter how small. But we also need to take time to appreciate how fortunate we are. As I write this the weather is still great, but even as it gets colder we should get out and enjoy our beautiful surroundings. Research has long shown the positive benefits of being in natural surroundings - lowering blood pressure, improving mood and our immune systems, to name just a few. So get out and do some "forest bathing", the art of meditating in nature. We are so blessed to have so many lovely spots in NW Illinois. Right here in Freeport we have Krape Park and Oakdale Nature Preserve, and many more in the surrounding area.

Also, Freeport has a wonderful Audubon Society. Monthly meetings are held at St. John United Church of Christ. The guest speakers are varied and very interesting.

There are also many other activities each month - birding, wild-flower walks, geology trips - and more. All activities are open to the public and most are free.

Check their website, www.nwilaudubon.org So, here's to our wonderful planet and let's think about what we can do to preserve it for future generations. Allison Gush

Grace Episcopal Church

10 S. Cherry Avenue, Freeport, IL 61032

Church office hours: 8:00 - 5:00pm Tuesday through Friday

Phone: 815-232-4422 Fax: 815-235-4542

E-mail: gracechurch@aeroinc.net

Grace Episcopal Church WEB Site gracechurchfreeport.org

In case of an emergency please call:

Priest-in-Charge Brian Prall 815-233-1828

E-mail: fr.brianprall@gmail.com

FROM THE WARDENS

All Saints' Day, Red Door Bazaar, Evensong, St. Andrew's Day.....and of course Thanksgiving. Wonderful things to look forward to in November. And, I think I heard something about a baby shower.....which is more exciting than anything..... getting ready to welcome a new baby boy into the Prall family and into the family of Grace.

Our last vestry meeting was pretty straight-forward....we talked about the budget/pledge drive, the continued good attendance at the Wednesday 5:30 Eucharist and how much people enjoyed it, two Bible studies going on...both well attended. We are still working on plans for new landscaping for the church yard and that may not happen until Spring....we'll see. We also talked about once again using LEMs (Lay Eucharistic Ministers) to take communion to our shut-ins. On yet another note, it seems the water issue in Fr. Prall's office has been taken care of with new gutters to drain rain water from the roof into the yard rather than into the office. We plan on no more floods.....his office has been newly painted, and the wall repaired. And, a new heating/cooling system was recently installed in the third floor (attic) of the rectory, giving the Pralls some extra usable space for their family.

We recently learned of the deaths of two long-time members of Grace Church. Irene Seeley died on Oct 10 in Colorado. A memorial service is planned later with her ashes interred in our columbarium. Doris Wahler died on October 25 in Normal, IL and her memorial service will also be held here later. She will be buried in Chapel Hill Cemetery next to her husband, Richard. These two women were active and valued members of this church family for many years. We give thanks for their lives and send prayers and love to their families.

As always, if you have any concerns or special interests, please let a vestryman, warden, or Fr. Prall know.

At this time of year, we are filled with God's goodness....Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

Grace to Celebrate Choral Evensong Our choir and musicians will lend music to the service of Evening Prayer to offer a new worship experience when Grace Church hosts Choral Evensong on Sunday afternoon, Nov. 4, at 4:00 p.m. The music department at Grace, together with Fr. Brian, hopes that our service will touch worshipers with just such a sense of comfort and connection. In commemoration of the Feast of All Saints, key selections will be drawn from writings and prayers associated with the saints. Please mark your calendar now and plan to bring friends to share in Choral Evensong at Grace.

Grace Church News

Bible Study

Everyone, yes...EVERYONE is invited to a new Bible Study which will be held at 10:00am on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month at Grace. Father Brian will be leading us on this journey. There will be no Bible Study on November 16th due to the Diocesan Convention.

ECW meets the First Friday of November. All women of Grace Church are invited to the monthly fellowship gathering. We bring our own lunch and meet in the undercroft at 11:30am. Coffee and tea are provided. We will be finalizing plans for the Red Door Bazaar.

And speaking of the Bazaar on November 10th...we have several opportunities for you to help. A few of our “worker bees” are not able to be with us next week. We need volunteers for serving during the luncheon, kitchen help, clean up and helping our guests. We also need donations of baked goods, etc., for the Bake Sale and your offering of handmade items for the bazaar. I would like to thank everyone who has agreed to make soup and cookies for the luncheon. And thanks to those who have already turned in their volunteer form. A special thanks to those who are chairing a section (Unique Boutique, Book Table, Bake Sale, Cashier, Christmas Table). If you have any questions, please contact Connie B. at 815-789-3181 or cbur-den43@gmail.com

Grace Church News (continued)

Red Door Bazaar and Soup Luncheon The Red Door Bazaar will be held on Saturday, November 10th from 9:00am - 2:00pm, the Soup Luncheon will run from 11:00am - 1:00pm. Soup choices include our popular Cheesy Ham Chowder, an Italian Sausage & Pasta Soup, and a vegetarian Pumpkin Squash. Assorted breads, cookies and coffee will also be included. Cost \$6.00. Featured in the **Bazaar** will be handmade gifts, cookies, pies, breads, gourmet dog biscuits, and more. Our **Unique Boutique** offers like-new home décor, jewelry and holiday decorations. Don't forget to check out the used **Book Table**. Monies raised will be used for outreach and funding a commercial dishwasher. Please come to help, to shop, to have lunch, to spend time with your church family and greet friends from the Freeport area. Invite your friends and family!

Weekly Altar Flowers for 2019

Sign up sheet is now posted in the narthex. The cost of flowers is \$29.00. Sometime during the month you are signed up turn in a check for \$29.00 (made out to Grace Episcopal Church) in to the church office or drop in to the collection plate on Sundays. Make sure to put "Altar Flowers" in the memo line. Please remember when you sign up for altar flowers you are responsible for paying for them.

From the Treasurer ~

2018 OPERATING BUDGET Month Ending September, 2018

Giving Income:

<u>Sept. 2018</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jan – Sept.18</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
9,267.00	12,405.19	124,534.01	111,796.43

Vanguard Endowment Income:

<u>Sept. 2018</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jan – Sept 2018</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
0.00	0.00	33,000.00	33,000.00

Total Income:

<u>Sept. 2018</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jan – Sept.18</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
9,440.96	12,792.70	157,166.26	148,283.90

Total Building and Grounds Expense:

<u>Sept. 2018</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jan – Sept.18</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
5,280.44	2,484.88	51,050.36	54,115.86

Total All Expenses Including Rector:

<u>Sept. 2018</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Jan – Sept.18</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
17,941.69	15,099.52	142,793.57	170,025.08

Current Assets:

<u>Checking</u>	<u>Columbarium</u>	<u>Memorials</u>	<u>Endowment</u>
62,031.16	6,573.40	29,467.85	472,353.62

There were two larger expenses outside of payroll and insurance. We paid \$3,965.00 to Loescher Heating for the rectory heater/cooling system needed in the attic room. It was discovered that the older system had failed.

Treasurer's Report (continued)

WOW! What a fantastic response! Thank you! Thank you!
91.6% of you returned your pledge card by October 14th!
And more good news...we continue to happily accept pledges.

The finance committee and the Vestry have been working on the 2019 Budget and plan to have it completed by the November Vestry meeting on November 18th. It is always a good feeling to get the budget work completed.

We are happy that we were able to purchase a new copy machine for the office. It is far more efficient than the older machine in time and expense. We were able to purchase this color copier for less than the original black and white copier that was under consideration. The company has also given us free maintenance for the first year.

Thank you for all that you do to us meet our financial responsibilities. We are an amazing parish!

Heidi Downing, Treasurer

Bible Study Friday, November 2nd at 10:00am

ECW First Friday Lunch November 2nd at 11:30am. Coffee and tea will be furnished.

Choral Evensong November 4th at 4:00pm

Red Door Bazaar and Soup Luncheon Saturday, November 10th from 9:00am to 2:00pm. Lunch will be served from 11:00am to 1:00pm

Vestry Meeting Sunday, November 11th, after the 9:00am service.

Building & Grounds Meeting Tuesday, November 13th at 1:15pm in St. Stephen's Hall.

Men of Grace Breakfast Saturday, November 17th, 8:00am at 9 East.

Diocesan Convention Friday, November 16th and Saturday, November 17th. Attendees: Fr. Prall & Ellen, Connie Burden, Chad Enright, Carol Francis, and Marissa Routson

Come all ye bonnie lads and lassies!

Our annual St. Andrew's Day liturgy and tea will be held on November 18th. Dig out that tartan and come join us as we enjoy listening to the bagpipes. Sign up sheet is downstairs on the bulletin board by the kitchen for assistance with treats for the tea.

Thanksgiving Worship Celebration Monday, November 19th at St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church. Hospitality 6:30pm, Worship 7:00pm. Hosted by Freeport Clergy Group

November



3rd Katie Enright
Sandra Terpening
4th Dorothy Nord
6th Richard Hepner
7th Jacquelyn Sigafus
9th Jack Colby

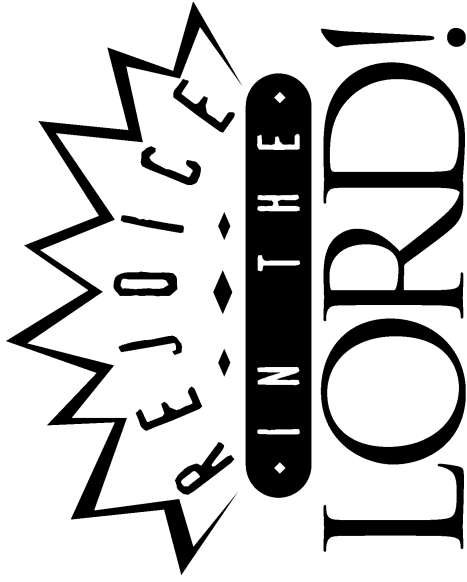
10th Ingrid Standish
11th Diane Conroy
21st Gary Downing
Brian Dreier
24th Wendi Chesterton
28th Keagan Miller



23rd Albert & Evelyn Appiah

Deadline for the December Messenger will be November 21st

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Freeport, IL. 61032
815-232-4422



November Newsletter