



The Messenger

February 2019

Clergy Report from the Annual Meeting, 2019

In the mid to late aughts, the Chicago Bears football team was coached by a man named Lovie Smith. Smith's post-game press conferences, regardless of wins or losses, always seemed to have a very matter-of-fact, low-emotion evaluation of the game that had just taken place and of his team's performance. I remember watching these press conferences and picking up on a recurring phrase he used: "I saw some good things. I saw some things we could improve on."

Hardly the profound biblical or theological reference one might expect for a report from the clergy, I find Smith's assessment on par with my own self-evaluation at this moment in my tenure at Grace Church. These seven months have flown by, and in that time, in keeping with Lovie's words, I have seen us do some wonderful things together. We engaged in new worship opportunities with Evensong and Taizé, as well as resurrecting the Wednesday evening service with an Enriching Our Worship liturgy. We have a terrific Bible Study twice a month and are slowly but surely implementing a regular Christian Formation gathering. We have also increased our outreach, visiting shut-ins and increasing our activity with FACC and other area resource groups.

In the past seven months, I have seen some areas in which I need to improve upon as your priest, as well. Communication and organization are probably at the forefront. As I work to establish a rhythm, my focus tends to be all over the place, which makes scheduling extracurriculars with any consistency difficult. The website unfortunately took a backseat to getting myself settled here,

but I hope to revisit that in the very near future. There are some other projects I would like to accomplish that have been on the docket for some time so that we can move on to other ventures that really feed us spiritually.

At “The Examination” in the liturgy for ordination to the priesthood, there is a substantial paragraph laying out all the specifics the ordinand will be responsible for as a priest. The truly important charge, however, comes with the final summation paragraph right before the bishop asks, “do you believe that you are truly called by God and his Church to this priesthood?” (i.e. Last chance to hit the ‘eject button’). That final charge states, “In all that you do, you are to nourish Christ’s people from the riches of his grace, and strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come.”

For me, this immediately calls to mind the exchange between Jesus and Simon Peter in the last chapter of John’s Gospel when Jesus asks him three times, “Do you love me?” Each time Peter assures Jesus that he does, to which Jesus then tells him to feed and tend his sheep. The nourishment of Christ’s people (spiritually, emotionally, liturgically) is something I take very seriously because, as my vows indicate, I believe I am truly called by God and his Church to do just that: To feed and tend Christ’s people. What I have benefitted from a life in Christ is more than I could ask or imagine, and how could I not want to help others experience that too?

That said, I realize that I have ten tons of enthusiasm backed by an ounce of knowledge. I cannot thank you all enough for extending to me the grace and support to learn and grow into this role as your priest. It has been a beautiful ride thus far, and your patience with me has made all the difference.

I am excited to step into a new year with you here at Grace Church and to worship the Lord with you in the beauty of holiness.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Brian Prall, Priest-in-Charge

Bits and Pieces

Evensong for Candlemas Cancelled Since winter weather seems determined to complicate our choir rehearsal schedule, we have decided to cancel the February 2nd service of Evensong to celebrate Candlemas. The choir looks forward to leading future programs, and we know you look forward to joining us.

Weekly Altar Flowers for 2019 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. During the month you are signed up for weekly altar 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.

ECW - Episcopal Church Women We will be taking a “vacation” from our FIRST FRIDAY lunch gatherings.

First Lutheran Church in Freeport (303 S. Galena) is hosting Leaning on the Everlasting Arms - A hymn sing giving thanks and praise for God’s abiding presence in our lives on Sunday, February 17, 2019 at 2:00pm. Chris Parkinson will be the organist/pianist for the hymn sing. There will be congregational singing, a variety of instrumental accompaniments, and a combined choir anthem. Please join us as we sing our praises and give thanks to God!

Notes from Grace's Greens:

The Byron Park District have a Winter Lecture Series starting on February 10 and running for five weeks. Lectures are free and start at 2:00pm, all are on Sunday afternoon.

The award winning Jarrett Nature Center building houses very interesting exhibits and dioramas explaining prairie ecosystems and animals. It has three lecture rooms and a large deck overlooking the prairie. The prairie has well kept trails for hiking.

What better way to spend a cold winter afternoon, than to attend a lecture followed by a brisk walk?

Check the schedule on the bulletin board outside the kitchen.

February 10th

Corn: How it Changed Itself and Then Changed Everything Else

February 17th

Restoring Soil Habitats to Rebuild Biodiversity and Prairie Ecosystems

February 24th

Much More Than Just the Jarrett Prairie: The Many Natural Areas of the Byron Forest Preserve District

March 3rd

Charles Darwin: Journey of Discovery

March 10th

The Secret Lives of Paleo-Indians

Dates to Save:

February 22nd (Friday) 7:00pm Movie and Popcorn at Grace

March 24th (Sunday) after church. Talk on Native Plants by Pam Richards, Master Naturalist

2019 Vestry Doris Chesterton and Glenn Gungel will be the two new members going on vestry this year and will each serve for 3 years. Carol Price will move to the Jr. Warden's position with Candy Colby moving to the Sr. Warden's position for the next year. Current vestry members are: Chad Enright, Laurie Gungel, John Gush, Marissa Routson and Nicholas Smith.

Grace Episcopal Church WEB Site gracechurchfreeport.org

E-mail Address - gracechurch@aeroinc.net

Love is a fruit in season

At all times and within reach of every hand!
Spread love everywhere you go
First of all in you own house
Give love to your children
To your husband or wife
To a next door neighbor
Let no one every come to you
Without leaving happier
Be the living expression of God's
Kindness, kindness in your face
Kindness in your eyes
Kindness in your smile
Kindness in your warm greeting!



—Mother Teresa



Calendar of Events

Bible Study Fridays, February 1st and 15th at 10:00am.

Eucharist every Wednesday at 5:30pm.

Building & Grounds Meeting Wednesday, February 13th, 1:00pm in St. Stephen's Hall.

Men of Grace Saturday, February 16th, 8:00am at 9 East. All people of Grace Church are welcome.

Vestry Meeting Sunday February 17th after the 9:00am service.

Fr. Brian Leadership Institute Wednesday, February 20th from 7:30am to 4:00pm.

Grace's Greens Friday, February 22nd at 7:00pm Movie and popcorn at Grace Church.

February



1st	Adam Moderow	20th	Lan Pinney
6th	Malia Spellman	22nd	Mark Spellman
8th	Thomas Nord, Sr.		Sydney Mitchell
10th	Carol Francis	24th	John Reining, Sr.
12th	Noah Watson	25th	Asia Chesterton
14th	Heidi Seals	26th	Linda Locascio
15th	Bryton Dreier		Chuck Nord
16th	Evelyn Appiah	27th	Del Bear
17th	Wayne Conroy		



4th	George & Lynn Davis
18th	Dick & Nelda Worthington

Deadline for the March Messenger will be February 19th

Grace Episcopal Church of Freeport
10 S. Cherry Avenue
Freeport, IL. 61032
815-232-4422



Miracles
Happen

February Newsletter