



The Messenger

December 2019

Christmas Services

Tuesday, December 24th

Early Christmas Eve

7:00pm

Carols & Special Music

10:00pm

Christmas Eve

10:30pm

Wednesday, December 25th

Eucharist

10:00am

Tuesday, December 24th

Eucharist at Monroe

5:00pm

Rector's Message

Last weekend was the 182nd annual Diocesan Convention, held at the Westin in Lombard. It was fairly uneventful as far as parliamentary matters in our Church governance go. The resolutions put forth were not contentious or requiring much debate, save for a little tweaking of language here and there.

Committee elections saw the inaugural use of electronic voting with these devices that looked like a pocket calculator being distributed to the delegates. There were some learning curves with the new technology that caused a fair amount of consternation. The assembled Body of Christ could have been a little more patient and gracious in my estimation, but we all survived, people were elected, and we're none the worse for wear.

The major focus centered around the office of the bishop. This was Bishop Jeffrey Lee's final convention as our bishop. He delivered a beautiful sermon about how bishops come and bishops go that I strongly encourage you to read or listen to on the newly re-vamped Diocesan website. It is a message of hope for our future as the Diocese of Chicago in this time of transition.

Speaking of which, the Bishop Search and Nomination Committee has released a timeline for the election of a new bishop. This December a Diocesan profile will be created for applicants to get a sense of who we are as a diocese. Applications will also open this month. In January the applications will close and the Search and Nomination Committee will enter into a period of discernment. By April, they will select and meet with candidates to discern their call to the episcopate, and shortly after a slate of candidates will be announced. At that time, the Standing Committee will review petitions (essentially write-in candidates) and those deemed appropriate for the position can be added to the slate.

In June candidate Walk Abouts begin. They travel throughout the Diocese for all of us to meet. On June 20, 2020, the Election Convention will be held at St. James Cathedral in Chicago.

Delegates will be selected by each congregation to go in and cast their vote. More information is yet to come, but I am hoping to select ours at our annual meeting, so stay tuned.

September of 2020, the Bishop-elect will begin their ministry and in January 2021 they will be consecrated the 13th Bishop of the Diocese of Chicago.

As those of you who have attended a Diocesan Convention know, it isn't all parliamentary proceedings. There are workshops scheduled throughout the first day and a half that engage any number of interests and issues from technology in the parish to outreach, and immigration to the spiritual practice of labyrinth walking.

Most of them that I attended dealt with outreach. We have had a pretty spectacular fall, as I referenced in the October newsletter, with the Jones-Farrar snack ministry, the Cub Foods brat stand, and the Hunger and Homelessness fundraiser for FACC. We do quite well with the treasure component of the "mission trinity" of time, talent, and treasure.

As we enter the season of Advent, a contemplative season for us as we prepare our hearts and minds to receive the gift of Christ, I ask you to prayerfully consider the other two: time and talent. How is God calling you to use your gift of time and your many talents in the service of Christ?

There is plenty of work to be done in our community and even in our church. Perhaps you can give of yourself to a committee that is dedicated to the overall health of Grace e.g. Buildings and Grounds, Vestry, Worship. A one-hour to 90-minute monthly meeting has yet to kill anyone, and it is vital to our life as a parish. Soon and very soon I will be seeking people committed to service in our community as I put together an Outreach Committee tasked with discerning and developing ideas to get ourselves out there in the community doing the work of Christ. I will be accepting volunteers for this committee right about . . . Now!

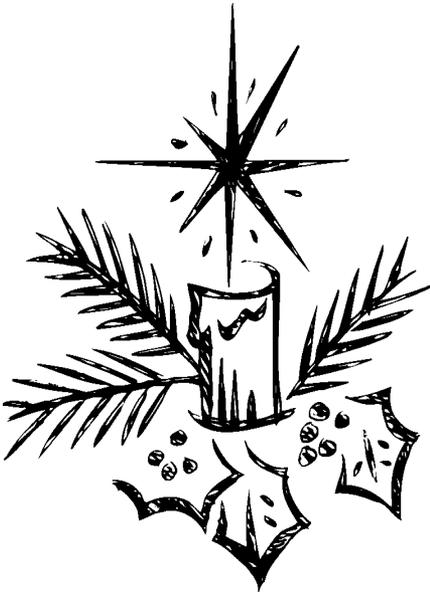
A local colleague of mine from another denomination is big into using what I call “challenge” language. To compel people, everything is a “challenge.” I’m sure if we were to go get a cup of coffee together, they wouldn’t invite me to get a cup of coffee, they’d challenge me to get a cup of coffee. It’s a new concept for me, but it seems to work for them. So, I will borrow: This Advent, I challenge you to discern ways you can offer your gifts of time and talent to Grace Church both inside and out in the wider community. Let us discover who we are and how we are called to be the Body of Christ expressed in Grace Episcopal Church, and then let us go tell it on the mountain!

I wish you all a very blessed and prayerful Advent.

Fr. Brian

Annual Meeting, January 26, 2020 All reports for the meeting need to be turned into the office no later than January 17th either electronically (gracechurch@aeroinc.net) or printed in a format ready to be copied for the annual report.

Christmas Prayer



Loving Father, help us to remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift, and good desires with every greeting.

Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen!

—Robert Louis Stevenson

This and That

ECW First Friday - Out to Lunch December's gathering of the ECW will be held at the Imperial Palace on December 6th at 11:30am. All women of Grace are invited to this Dutch - treat luncheon. Reservations are needed. Please RSVP to Connie B. via email or phone: cburden43@gmail.com or 815-789-3181

Thank you to everyone who gave to the United Thank Offering. Grace will be presenting \$247.00 to our Diocesan UTO Coordinator at the Diocesan Convention. A special thanks to our costumed little helpers: Lucy, Maddie, Merida, Raelynn and Lexi.

ECW Prayer

Almighty God, we pray that You will bless our work in mission and ministry to the world. We give thanks for the gifts of joy and wonder to be found in Your works. Make us so thankful for the power of Your love, given through Your Son, Jesus, that we may pray, labor and give liberally to make known that love throughout the world. Bless us that our lives may shine forth the joy and wonder we share in your Name. Amen. God's Peace, Connie B.

Advent Quiet Dinner Wednesday, December 11th at 5:30pm in St. Stephen's Hall. Please join us for food and fellowship as we enter into this holy season.

Weekly Altar Flowers for 2020 Sign up sheet is now posted in the narthex. The cost of flowers is \$29.00. Families are welcome to share a Sunday. 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.

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 drop your envelope into our Sunday collection plate or send your donation to the church for flowers along with any names or intentions to be remembered at the Christmas Service.

Thank you to all who brought food for the St. Andrew's Day Tea. Once again it was a wonderful celebration and plenty of treats for all. Your support is greatly appreciated.

St. Peter's Grand Detour is the second oldest Episcopal Church in Illinois. The tiny stone building has been restored to its original condition, now deconsecrated, it is run by a local preservation society. Every year in Advent, St. Peter's holds a carol service followed by hot cider and cookies in a local home. The service this year is on December 8th at 4:00pm. We invite you to join us in Grand Detour, and following the reception, for a soup, bread and cheese supper at our house at 2783 S. Brooks Isle Rd, Oregon 61061, six miles north on IL Rte 2. Please let us know if you plan to attend. Allison & John Gush 815-493-2505

Notes from Grace's Greens:

Grace's Greens will be hosting coffee hour after church on December 8th. Apart from our usual cookies and bird-friendly coffee we will also be having a food tasting. We are hoping to have all sorts of foods-unfamiliar grains, vegan cheeses, unusual proteins, and forgotten and neglected vegetables. Hopefully we will have an assortment of foods that are not only good for our health, but also good for the environment.

We invite everyone to experiment a little at the tasting, and also to bring something for us all to try, if you can. Who knows? Climate changes may force us to modify our diet in the future, so this will be a good opportunity to try something different.

Also, we will have a suggestion box, so if there is anything that you would like Grace's Greens to focus on next year, or any activity you would like us to organize, please let us know.

Some tips on how to eat "Green"

The choices we make when deciding what to eat have a huge impact, not only on our own health, but also that of the planet. It is estimated that the global food system has the highest potential to reduce emissions and sequester carbon. We can all make a difference by doing small things.

- Use renewable grocery bags
- Recycle cans and bottles
- Eat local to reduce transportation effects and support local producers
- Have a predominantly plant based diet
- Choose grass fed meat where possible
- Buy from producers using sustainable practices where possible

- Eat with the seasons - freeze and can to enjoy foods out of season
- Reduce waste - the USDA estimates that about a third of food produced is wasted
- Compost where possible
- Drink bird-friendly coffee
- Share and celebrate food

Grr

Did you ever consider that the word grudge starts with the letters gr? Mean animals often “grrr” and so do some mean-spirited people — at least by their nasty demeanor. In order to have the Christmas spirit, our grudges and our “grrrs” are going to have to be eliminated.

- Christmas is love tugging us back to God with the powerful clasp of a tiny hand reaching out from a bed of straw.
—Unknown
- I’ve learned that love is a great investment. No matter whom you give it to, it returns great dividends.
—Anonymous



Bible Study Fridays, December 6th and 20th at 10:00am

ECW First Friday All women of Grace Church are invited to come to Imperial Palace on Friday, December 6th at 11:30am. Contact Connie B. to make your reservation.

Grace's Greens Sunday, December 8th during coffee hour. Apart from our usual cookies and bird-friendly coffee we will also be having a food tasting. We invite everyone to experiment a little at the tasting, and also to bring something for us all to try, if you can.

Quiet Advent Meal Wednesday, December 11th at 5:30pm in St. Stephen's Hall. No need to bring anything. Questions call Nicole Bolotnik at 815-990-1375.

Christmas Open House at the Rectory Saturday, December 14th from 2:00pm to 5:00pm

People of Grace Breakfast Saturday, December 21st, 8:00am at 9 East. All are welcome to attend.

Hanging of the Greens Please plan to join us after church on December 22nd to decorate the church for Christmas.

December



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

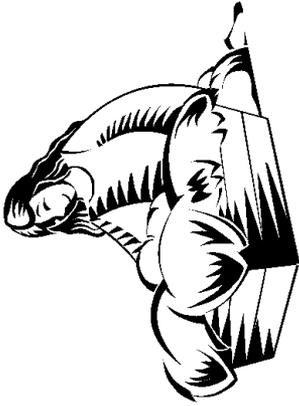
28th Neil & Rose Dreier

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Deadline for the January Messenger will be December 18th.

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

Merry
Christmas



December Newsletter