



The Messenger

October 2020

Rector's Corner

Soon and very soon we are going to have a critical election. No, not that election. Why, the election of a new bishop, of course!

The election of the Thirteenth Bishop of the Diocese of Chicago will take place on December 12th, and it will be held virtually. We are allowed three electing delegates to vote on our behalf as Grace Church, and those individuals were selected last January at our annual meeting. The slate of candidates is due to be released October 5th, and the virtual “walk abouts” for meeting the candidates will be held in November. I will include those dates and times at the end.

Electing a new bishop is a complex but well-ordered process that has a long tradition. If you enjoy legal documents, or if you are having trouble falling asleep at night, I invite you to read about the process in the canons of the Episcopal Church, which can easily be found in PDF format online. For me, the most fascinating part is the tradition of the consecration itself and the laying on of hands by at least three other bishops, which is all part of maintaining apostolic succession, the tracing of the succeeding line of bishops all the way back to the apostles.

Here are two slivers of a very lengthy chart tracing bishops of the Episcopal Church here in America. Sliver one is the very first five. Sliver two is our own Bishop Lee.

No.	Bishop	Consecrators	Year	Diocese	Notes
1.	Samuel Seabury	KIL PET SKI[1]	1784	I Connecticut, I RI	PB22
2.	William White	MOO MAR MOS HIN[2]	1787	I Pennsylvania	PB1& PB4
3.	Samuel Provoost	MOO MAR MOS HIN[3]	1787	I New York	PB3
4.	James Madison	MOO POR THO[4]	1790	I Virginia	
5.	Thomas John Clagett	3 1 2 4[5]	1792	I Maryland	

(Fast Forward)

1026 Jeffrey Lee 963 950 938 945 794 815 2008 XII Chicago

You will notice that the manner in which consecrators are listed changes by No. 5, Thomas Clagett. Instead of being listed by the bishop's abbreviated name, they are listed by a number. Here's what happened - Henry the VIII split from Rome in 1534 and the Church of England was formed. The line of apostolic succession was not in jeopardy because the bishops in England at the time had technically already been consecrated in the Catholic Church pre-split.

Jump ahead two hundred years, the American colonies were still under the jurisdiction of the Church of England. After the American Revolution, it was a little hard to maintain the title of the Church of England, and even harder to find bishops to consecrate bishops in the newly formed Episcopal Church in the newly formed nation of the United States of America, especially when that consecration has the Oath of Supremacy requiring the swearing of allegiance to the monarch, the Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

Samuel Seabury, who will always get the side-eye for being a loyalist leading up to the war (he gets his own satirical number in the hit musical *Hamilton*), was elected by clergy in Connecticut. He eventually found non-jurying bishops in the Scottish Episcopal Church (bishops who

did not swear allegiance to the crown) to consecrate him as a bishop, making him our first.

By 1787, the Church of England changed the requirement of the Oath Supremacy with the Consecration of Bishops Abroad Act of 1786, and William White and Samuel Provost were consecrated by the archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the bishop of Bath and Wells. This prompts many academics of church history to playfully argue who was really first in the purest sense: Samuel Seabury or William White. You will note the “PB” means they also served as Presiding Bishop; the office currently held by the incomparable Michael Curry.

What does all this mean for Thomas Clagett? Well, by the time of his consecration, there were enough bishops in America to perform the deed. Thenceforth the bishops who served as consecrators were referenced by their number in order of consecration. You can see that Bishop Lee is number 1026 and he was consecrated by six bishops, number 963 being Katherine Jefferts Schori, the 26th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church and first woman to serve in that role.

The full chart, which is also easily found online, can be quite an enticing rabbit hole as you get lost in seeing who consecrated whom, so considered yourself warned.

With any transition to new leadership, there is a mixture of excitement, anxiousness, and even some mourning, especially as we part ways with Bishop Lee. I have only been a priest for a little over two years, but I have been working with Bishop Lee and his staff from aspirancy to ordination and beyond for nearly ten years. My personal opinion is that he has been a tremendous leader for this diocese, and a true pastoral presence through many a difficult situation, including a pandemic in the year of his retirement. People may not have always been in agreement with his decisions, but I know of no one who engages in more prayerful discernment and careful consultation than he does. Everything he does is in the best interest of this diocese and in the interest of creating a smooth transition for his successor.

I hope you will join me in wishing him and his family many blessings in their next chapter.

As promised, here are the dates and times for the virtual “walk abouts”:

Thursday, November 5 at 6pm
Friday, November 6 at 10am
Saturday, November 7 at 12pm
Thursday, November 12 at 6pm
Friday, November 13 at 10am
Saturday, November 14 at 12pm

More details are to follow as to how we are to join these. If people are interested yet do not have the technology, we might be able to set up small, socially distanced watch parties here.

Blessings, Fr. Brian

FACC Update

The Delegates of FACC held their first meeting since February on September 17th. Overall, it was a very positive and productive meeting given that morale going in was at an all-time low. FACC has gone through significant leadership transition and the organization has been dragged through the proverbial mud rather publicly in various community rumor mills. If I may be critical for a moment, this seems to be a chronic problem in Freeport, as I’m sure it is in other small communities.

February’s annual meeting, which a number of you attended at my request since I could not be there, was supposed to address some concerns over the governing and business practices that a few member churches had. Then COVID hit. Since then, Dean Wright resigned as director, though he did stay on to help through the early months of the pandemic. The board members were receiving all sorts of flak from community members, some of it being pretty vicious phone calls and emails on

their personal devices. Much of the complaints were unfounded rumors, but it did not stop five board members from resigning.

As of the meeting on the 17th, there were only three board members. The bi-laws require five for the board to be able to act. Two pastors stepped up and filled positions so the board can at least function. They are the first clergy to serve on the board since my predecessor, Fr. George. The board is seeking new members for what will be an opportunity to give FACC a fresh start, so if you are interested, please get in touch with me. It is a fairly big commitment, but a very important one.

Financially, FACC is solvent and is just about completed with an audit. Functionally, there is still no director, but Scotty, Jay, and Bob have stepped up to keep things running. The pantry has been reopened. They were doing deliveries for much of the summer. The shelter will open back up in October, which is also when churches will again be providing meals. I am still awaiting confirmation of our scheduled date.

The meeting concluded with what I felt was a renewed enthusiasm. The board admitted to complacency, which I believe the churches are equally guilty of in that department. As we move forward, my hope is that communication will be improved, delegate churches will start stepping up in their volunteering and support. Scotty anticipates a “heavy season” this year in terms of homeless clients that FACC serves. We are the only shelter between Rockford and Dubuque, and just because things were structurally in disarray, that does not mean our community’s need went away. I look forward to good things for FACC and for Grace as one of its founding members.

The next meeting is October 22, 2020 at Harmony United Methodist Church. We have one delegate. Based on our parish size, we are allowed two and a member of the clergy. If you have interest in serving as our other delegate, please get in touch with me.

Fr. Brian

News from Grace's Greens

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

Desmond Tutu

As we continue to deal with COVID-19 and its sad loss of lives and economic distress, climate change continues to loom with its exacerbation of wildfires, killer heat in the West, hurricanes, collapsing ice shelves, etc. Here in the Midwest we are predicted to have increasingly severe cycles of drought and flooding along with an increase in 100+ degree days in the summer. However, in the midst of all this bad news, in Illinois we have a chance to pass legislation in the veto session this fall that would deal with both climate change and enhance economic prosperity for the state.

The Clean Energy Jobs Act currently before the Illinois legislature would have many benefits without raising taxes. For example, CEJA would:

- Provide job training in renewable energy, focusing on disadvantaged communities and those who have lost their jobs due to coal mine closures.
- Continue to grow the number of good-paying jobs in clean energy by incentivizing solar and wind and enabling more people to install renewables.
- Commit Illinois to 100% renewable energy by 2050.
- Ensure cleaner air, a benefit to all of us, but especially those in low income communities, often the victims of poor air quality that makes them more vulnerable to asthma and lung disease and compromises their immune systems.

News from Grace's Greens (continued)

For more information on the Clean Energy Jobs Act, visit the Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition website (ilcleanjobs.org). If you agree that a clean energy future for Illinois is important, please contact your state legislators and ask them to vote "yes" on CEJA. (Find your legislators at <https://www.elections.il.gov/electionoperations/district/AddressFinder.aspx>)

A Grace Before Eating

The food which we are about to eat is Earth, Water and Sun, compounded through the "alchemy of many plants. Therefore Earth, Water and Sun will become part of us. This food is also the fruit of the labor of many beings and creatures. We are grateful for it. May it give us, strength, health, joy. And may it increase our love. Amen."

(Creation Care Newsletter, September 2020)

Finance Committee

The pledge cards are due back by October 6th. It is important to return them in a timely manner so that we can complete the 2021 budget and present it to the Vestry for approval at their November meeting. As always it is a good feeling to get the budget work completed. Thank you for continuing to support Grace Church.

Music Notes from Steve

At this season of focus on stewardship in the church, what goes through your mind? Do you value and at once dread the topic of finances? Are you pleased for an opportunity to examine how to make your gifts count? Are you frustrated that the four-legged stool of “prayers, presence, gifts, and service” (to quote our United Methodist friends) feels a little wobbly this year as we reinvent how to shore up the parts of presence and service? And are you wondering what stewardship has to do with music? I’m glad you asked!

In the ministry of music, folks often readily find ways to contribute joyfully through means other than financial gifts. I have heard it said that the choir is often a church’s largest and most steady cohort of volunteers. Committee members, ushers, altar guild workers, readers, teachers, and others devote meaningful service to the church, but what other non-staff participants show up with dedication in the same capacity week after week? In this time of Covid distancing, the choir especially feels lost in the wilderness, with devotion and interest but no way to apply it. Maybe my advice to the choir will help you, too.

One sure thing you can do is to pray. About ten years ago, when my mom’s health problems had diminished her stamina significantly, she confided that she felt of no use to anyone. Her pastor quickly picked up the challenge and asked, “What is that book on your end table?” Mom confirmed that it was the annual prayer calendar of the United Methodist Women, an almanac listing causes for the focus of daily devotions. The book was at hand and full of paper clips and bookmarks because Mom already used it daily, and the pastor was wise to her. “Pray for the church; pray for the people you’ve loved and for everything we have going on,” the pastor advised.

Music Notes from Steve (continued)

Secondly, don't forget that you can sing! Now, I understand that spouses and friends may disagree that every person reading these words truly can sing, but I'll bet you do sing. Singing provides myriad benefits. First is that you praise God just by using the voice God gave you. St. Augustine is the person most often credited with saying "He who sings, prays twice." Whoever said it, take it as inspiration. Sing in the car. Sing in the shower. Sing along with YouTube, Facebook Live, and whatever you hear. Sing while you're running the vacuum, and nobody will know whether you carry a tune. Don't let the current ban on singing in groups discourage you from singing on your own.

The coming months are likely to bring new frustration if physical distancing continues. Each year we count on Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas to bring hope and festivity as days grow shorter and darker. It is my plan and my hope that we continue to provide inspirational and uplifting outreach to you.

Finally, I wish to thank you for carrying Grace Church with strength for the past six months, just as you always do. How grateful we all are for your shared commitment to supporting our staff, facilities, ministries, and needs we could never have foreseen. You prove day-in and day-out that you understand true stewardship. In the words of the singer Twila Paris, "How beautiful is the body of Christ!"

Steve McMillen

Grace Church News & Upcoming Events

Finance Committee Meeting Tuesday, October 14th at 9:00am.

Building & Grounds Meeting Wednesday, October 14th at 1:00pm

Vestry Meeting Sunday, October 18th after the 10:00am service.

Signs of Joy

1. Eagerly greeting each new day as a generous gift from God.
2. Frequent expressions of gratitude for the blessings and challenges which come throughout each day.
3. Finding delight in everyday occurrences: things said by a small child, a cat playing with a ball of string, a dog trying to figure out what you're doing, a funny story in the news paper, a joke told by a friend, etc.
4. Discovering the taste of a familiar vegetable prepared in a new way.
5. Visiting with a dear friend or family member instead of letting television create the dialogue or interrupt good fellowship.
6. Eagerly looking forward to the next Sunday when you can join the family of God at worship.

October



Wish These Friends a
"Happy Birthday!"

1st	Jean Clayton	28th	Merida Shore
3rd	Thomas Nord, Sr.	29th	Woody Burt
20th	Raelynn Shore	30th	Danielle Rogers
26th	Heidi Downing		Steve Terpening
	Peggy Isaac		



9th	John & Cynthia Bradbury
14th	Larry & Lucy Miller
18th	Bernard & Deborah Lischwe
20th	Kris & Ashly Shore
	Curtis & Stacey Terpening
21st	Don & Peggy Isaac
22nd	Heather & Ryan Becker
23rd	Jeff & Carol Francis

Deadline for the November Messenger will be October 23rd.

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