



The Messenger

February 2022

Rector's Report

At this year's Annual Meeting for the parish, I made an announcement in my verbal report to those assembled that our Assisting Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Chilton Knudsen, has instituted a mini-sabbatical program for clergy and lay employees. The plan for this program, which was the subject of a letter from Bishop Knudsen to the churches of the Diocese as well as an article published on the Episcopal News Service website, is to give clergy and lay employees one work week off. Ideally, that week is to be taken in the first quarter, sometime between now and Holy Week. It is not to count against vacation time, sick time, or continuing education time, and pay and benefits are to continue.

The mini-sabbatical program was Bishop Knudsen's response to reports of clergy from all traditions deciding to quit ministry or retire early. It is the same story for those in a number of vocations, like education and healthcare. Bishop Knudsen writes, "I am deeply concerned for our clergy and lay employees. I am concerned for the entire human community in their suffering in this pandemic, but clergy and lay employees are the special responsibility of the Bishop. I take that responsibility seriously."

Speaking strictly from the perspective of clergy, I know that exhaustion and burnout are real. Just in my small group of seminary classmates with whom I have a running messaging

thread, not a week goes by where at least one of us isn't having some crisis. We are constantly taking what we have been trained to do and trying to adapt it to Covid protocols and camera and microphone placements, often serving as our own tech teams. And it is impossible to avoid the sinking feeling that the finished "product" is somehow deficient. Plus, someone is always bound to take umbrage with the effort. Many clergy are struggling with the losses of those practices and activities that made us love ministry to begin with. There has also been an astonishing erosion of civility among parishioners towards clergy (not you guys. y'all are cool). And there has been increased isolation on top of an already solitary vocation. All of these factors have had a tremendous impact on clergy's ability to be present and thoughtful among those we serve.

For my own part, I struggled to find clear, objective measures for success under normal circumstances. It is just the nature of the business. The metrics by which most people evaluate the health of a church, including our own parochial reporting system, are ASA (average Sunday attendance), quantity and quality of programs offered, financial health, and presence of the next generation of church members. By those standards, I'm toast. But then again, these are not normal circumstances.

Regardless, there is still always more to do than can be accomplished in a day. The building is in constant need of TLC, most of it involves basic upkeep: a lightbulb here, a furnace filter there, easy DIY plumbing work, etc. There are also meetings to attend, communications to keep up with, vendors to vet, visits to make, and articles and sermons to be written. I spend portions of my Saturdays completing sermons up in the rectory attic more often than I do not. Every few Mondays I am in some board meeting because the only day everyone else could meet is my day off. And one of these days I'm going to tidy up my office (I've only been saying that for three years).

Anyway, my point is not to gripe or boast a superman complex, but simply to say, I'm tired. And I am grateful for Bishop Knudsen's mini-sabbatical. Would that more industries would put the wellbeing of their human resources above the maximization of output and profit.

What does this program mean for Grace Church? Well, my wife and daughter's Spring Breaks actually line up this year, so I will be taking my mini-sabbatical March 21st-March 27th. This week also worked well for Connie, our parish administrator, so Grace Church will essentially be closed that week. I will appeal once again to a lay leader who would be willing to lead Morning Prayer on Sunday, March 27th. Since our organists operate on a rotation and often cover for each other if they need to be away, I decided to offer that Sunday as a paid Sunday off for both. So, it will be a said Morning Prayer service, and I will continue to encourage Morning Prayer in my absence not only for a number of practical reasons, but because the Daily Office (Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer, Evening Prayer, Compline) is becoming a lost liturgical artform in many respects. It is good to keep that part of our tradition alive.

If there are any pastoral emergencies during the week of my mini-sabbatical, absolutely still call me. We are planning on going on a short family trip to Chicago, but even so, I would ask that you please reach out to me.

I appreciate your understanding, and if there are any questions or concerns about this mini-sabbatical program, please get in touch with me. The article concerning the program can be found on Episcopal News Service's website dated January 19th, or I can forward you the Bishop's letter to the parishes should you wish to read more about it.

Blessings,
Fr. Brian

Year End 2021 Assets:

<u>Checking</u>	<u>Columbarium</u>	<u>Memorials</u>
50,147.13 *	11,503.75	10,446.43
<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Thrivent</u>	<u>Reserve Fund</u>
720,041.31	50,754.98	50,510.83

* includes 2022 prepaid pledges

Treasurer's Report

One of our goals the last several years was to set up a reserve fund that would help us pay for larger expenses that we may incur that would not be covered by our operating budget. We have water drainage issues that need to be mitigated and an older boiler that probably will need to be replaced at some future date. The good news is that the amount in the reserve fund at the end of 2021 is \$101,265.81. At this time \$50,742.98 is invested in mutual funds with Thrivent Financial and the remainder is in a money market account at Union Savings Bank. Our intent is to take more of the money out of Union Savings Bank and invest it in Thrivent Mutual funds where it will make a larger return.

2021 was another good year financially as our revenues exceeded our expenses by \$28,627.20. Our revenue received was \$14,825.29 more than budgeted and our expenses were \$9,304.61 less than budgeted.

As I look forward to 2022, I am concerned about our pledge revenue. The total pledges for 2022 are \$148,752 which is \$16,220 less than our pledges for 2021. This is something that the Finance Committee and the Vestry will watch carefully as we progress in future years.

I would like to thank Connie Olson, Sandy Terpening, Laurie Gungel and Chuck Breo for all they have contributed as members of the Finance Committee. They are a very good group who ask the tough questions and make good suggestions and take their job seriously.

Duane Price, treasurer

Bits and Pieces

Annual Meeting Report If you would like a copy please contact the church office or come in to the office and pick one up.

ECW First Friday Lunch Friday, February 4th at 11:30am.

Vestry Meeting Sunday February 20th after the 10:00am service.

Telephone Directory for 2022 We will be publishing a new directory for 2022. Please let the office know of any changes (phone number, address, family changes, etc.) by February 11th.

Weekly Altar Flowers for 2022 Sign up sheet is now posted in the narthex. The cost of altar flowers is \$33.00 (Deiningor Floral notified us that this is due to their increasing prices along with supply and demand.) Sometime during the month you are signed up for weekly flowers turn in a check for \$33.00 (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.

Grace Episcopal Church

10 S. Cherry Avenue, Freeport, IL 61032

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

Fridays by appointment only

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:

Rector Brian Prall 815-233-1828

E-mail: fr.brianprall@gmail.com

Bishop Chilton Knudsen, Assisting Bishop

The Rev. Canon Paula Clark, Bishop Elect

Rector:	Fr. Brian Prall
Ministers:	The People of Grace Church
Secretary:	Connie Olson
Wardens:	Claudia Smith, Senior Warden Katie Enright, Junior Warden
Treasurer:	Duane Price
Clerk:	Mike Shore
Vestry:	Chuck Breo,* Linda Locascio, Cathy Perkins, Marissa Routson, Chuck Terpening*
Director of Music:	Steve McMillen
Organists:	Steve McMillen and Laura Watson
Altar Guild:	Peggy Isaac

* New Vestry members

February



1st Adam Moderow
8th Thomas Nord, Sr.
10th Carol Francis
12th Noah Watson
16th Evelyn Appiah
17th Wayne Conroy

20th Lan Pinney
22nd Sydney Mitchell
25th Asia Chesterton
26th Linda Locascio
27th Del Bear

If your birthday and/or anniversary does not appear on our monthly list or if there is an error please inform the church office via e-mail (gracechurch@aeroinc.net) or call 815-232-4422.



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

Deadline for the March Messenger will be February 18th.

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



Miracles
Happen

February Newsletter