



The Messenger

March 2022

Rector's Message

As we begin the month of March, we enter an interesting crossroads. A new month; a new liturgical season, with Lent beginning on Ash Wednesday, March 2nd; and the anticipation of new COVID protocols for the state of Illinois all converge at this time. It is hard to say what this will mean for our worship together moving forward, which I realize has become an oft repeated theme of the past two years.

The Diocese has yet to weigh in on how or if it plans to adopt new state guidelines, specifically concerning a return to mask-optional gathering, which we saw for about a minute last summer. What will this mean for singing as a congregation? Will I be chanting the Great Litany this year (better warm up just in case)? What will this mean for methods of administering ashes? Will I need to practice my Q-tip crosses again this year? What will this mean for the offertory? Can people other than the priest handle the elements? Guidance on all these details and more remains to be seen.

While liturgically things might be up in the air, I can tell you that the Diocese has given the go-ahead to resume a quintessential Christian practice: eating together. During the omicron surge, Bishop Chilton called a moratorium on social gatherings that would have us in close proximity and removing our masks to eat or drink. That included coffee hour and any other fellowship meals, which we had

already put the brakes on due to high rates of infection and hospitalization in our region. Bishop Chilton has since lifted that moratorium, and our numbers appear to be improving enough to follow suit.

So, let's spend the rest of our newsletter together talking about food. Coffee hour will resume the first Sunday of the month, March 6th. The Pralls will bring provisions for that first one, and there will be a signup sheet posted like the good old days for future hosts. I have never been a tremendous fan of our coffee hour system. It always seemed an inevitability that someone was missing out on part of the service to run the store for supplies. I have also not been successful at reforming the system. However, the Church will see that there are at least the bare essentials of coffee, tea bags, sugar, juice, and a modest compliment of unexpired creamers available. That way beverages can always be counted upon, and those that sign up to host coffee hour need only focus on snacks.

In the spirit of food, the Worship Committee has decided to bring back the Wednesday evening Lenten soup suppers this year. The first will be March 9th at 6:00pm, and I will post a signup sheet in the narthex for those who would be gracious enough to share their soup making talents with the rest of our Grace Church family. In the past there has been a brief educational component at each meal. I'm going to forego that, though, as I think we are all just eager to have some fellowship time together. I will continue to stream Wednesday night Compline, but during this time it will be a half hour earlier at 5:30, followed by the Lenten soup suppers. Those who wish to attend in-person before the meals are welcome and encouraged to do so.

With the return of fellowship involving food, this means we can finally utilize our new kitchen we had remodeled shortly before the world imploded (I feel like I've said this before). Real dishes, cups, and flatware should be used since we have that

beautiful high-powered dishwasher that currently only gets to stretch its legs once a week when I have piled up enough of my own dishes. As I have said a number of times before, it is easy to use and I'm happy to show anyone how to use it. Basic operating instructions are also posted on the wall next to it.

I am not sure anyone has ever been excited about Lent before, but I am excited that there seems to be a bit of a reprieve on the horizon with a return to a few of the activities that make our common life in Christ feel a little fuller. COVID is not gone and we have been at this particular juncture before, so I welcome these small measures with immense gratitude. We will continue to exercise caution and adhere to whatever guidelines the Diocese sets forth, while praying that conditions only continue to improve.

I look forward to being in fellowship with you. I also look forward to observing this holy season of Lent with you. May it be for you a season of deep self-reflection and prayer as we prepare to walk with Jesus to the cross of our salvation.

Blessings,
Fr. Brian

Office Closed

The Rt. Rev. Chilton Knudsen, has instituted a mini-sabbatical program for clergy and lay employees.

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 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.

Weekly Altar Flowers for 2022 Sign up sheet is now posted in the narthex. The cost of altar flowers is \$33.00 (Deininger 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. There are eight (8) Sundays open yet this year.

Bits and Pieces

FACC Donation for March is canned corn or peas.

Ash Wednesday Services 12:15pm and 7:00pm

Memorial Service Saturday, March 12th for Jack Colby at 11:00am with visitation at 10:00am. All are invited to a reception after the service at Cimino's in Freeport.

Don't Forget! Daylight Savings Time begins on the second Sunday of March! Move your clocks ahead one hour at 2:00am on Sunday, March 13th.

Vestry Meeting Sunday, March 20th after the 9:00am service.

Deadline for the April Messenger will be March 25th.

Flowers for Easter ...each year the sanctuary is decorated with Easter flowers. If you would care to donate in memory and/or thanksgiving, please print the name(s) on the outside of the envelope. A list of those being honored or held in memory will appear in the Easter Sunday bulletin. Envelopes for donations are included in this newsletter and will also be available in the narthex.

Easter Schedule

Ash Wednesday, March 2nd
12:15 & 7:00pm

Palm Sunday, April 10th
9:00am

Maundy Thursday Agape Meal, April 14th
6:00pm

Good Friday, April 15th
12:15pm

Easter Vigil, April 16th
8:00pm

Easter Sunday, April 17th
9:00am

March



2nd Mark Moderow
Laurie Gungel

5th Deborah Lischwe

9th Becky Lafferty

10th Chuck Terpening

16th Rayma Pinney

17th Mary Lehnhard

18th Duane Fitzpatrick

25th Cierra Mathews

26th Lucy Prall

29th Carrie Helm

31st Neil Dreier

- God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.

—Anonymous

- People see God every day; they just don't recognize him.

—Pearl Bailey

- When you get to your wit's end, you'll find God is right there to offer you strength and guidance.

—Anonymous

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The Grace
of God is
with you!

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