



The Messenger May 2022

Rector's Corner

Yesterday, April 25th, our Diocese and Deanery lost one of its own. Mother Lorie Lowe, who had been serving the past few years at Grace Church in Sterling, died unexpectedly. She and her husband, Bill McLemore, also a priest, had just recently left the Diocese of Chicago for Atlanta to be closer to family. Sadly, she suffered a brain bleed Sunday evening and passed away on Monday.

Both Lorie and Bill are remarkable people; kind, compassionate, and funny. Their banter as a married couple at our Deanery meetings was both amusing and full of love. Lorie served faithfully as our Dean for the Rockford Deanery in 2021, and her leadership was inspirational. I was heartbroken at the announcement that they were leaving the Diocese, as they are two of my favorite people, and now my heart breaks further. Please keep her husband, Bill, and their family in your prayers.

Switching gears entirely, as we come out of the pandemic it has been and will likely continue to be a little choppy on the reentry into what was once "normal". I ask that the grace and patience you showed me at the beginning of the pandemic please continue during this time. There are some atrophied muscles and there are some details we just haven't had to worry about for the past two years.

To help ease our reentry, I have reintroduced the community events calendar to the bulletin board by the kitchen. We have gone from having next to nothing going on to having a traffic jam, which is a good problem to have. This calendar is simply a public display of the

central calendar in the church office. Please do not take it upon yourselves to edit the calendar. If you have questions about an event or would like to schedule something, please contact the church office.

Next to this calendar, I am going to start posting Vestry agendas and minutes. By rule, these have to be approved minutes, a process that doesn't happen until the following meeting, which does mean the information will be dated. But, if you see something on an agenda that you are curious about, ask. Also, Vestry meetings are open to the parish if you wish to attend. If you have something you wish to present to the Vestry, please let me know ahead of time so I can get you on the agenda.

Please do not leave things in the kitchen or elsewhere without some indication as to who or what it is for. Definitely do not put stuff in the bookshelves. At all. Ever. Unless it's a book. I am relinquishing my table of publications that come to the church by mail back to its former catch-all glory. I don't think there is much demand for those materials anyway. If something does come in that I think people might find interesting, I will put it on the pretty table across from my office.

With an election cycle coming up, I would also like to remind you that we may not distribute candidate materials, regardless of what color jersey they wear, or otherwise engage in campaigning activities in the Church. The Church serves the Kingdom of God, so we are allowed to speak in favor of or against individual *policies* (typically those involving human rights) that align with or run contrary to God's Kingdom and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We can also serve as a polling place, providing a public and politically neutral environment for people to exercise their civic duty and constitutional right. But we cannot say, "Vote for..." or "Vote against..." or really in any way name particular politicians or political parties.

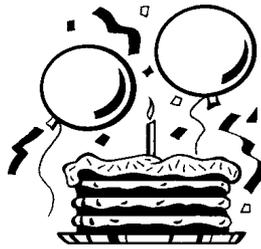
Lastly, I want to remind you that Monday is my day off and that Grace Church is closed. So, if you email me about something or call the church and do not get an answer, please do not be offended if you do not get a response until Tuesday. Obviously,

I expect you to call me at home in the event of a pastoral emergency, like death, hospitalizations (including of family members, if you need prayer), damage to the church property, and things of that nature.

I hope you all have a wonderful May and that the weather figures out what it wants to do and sticks with it. I will not be here on Sunday, May 8th. Ellen and I are taking our annual Mother's Day/my birthday/Yay, we survived Holy Week reprieve out of town.

Blessings,
Fr. Brian

May



Birthdays &
Anniversaries
This Month!

1st	Jeremy Sigafus	11th	Albert Appiah
2nd	Cheri Haack		Marsha Holden
3rd	Arneta Reining	16th	Sarah Marten
4th	Susan Bokemeier	20th	Bruce Helm
6th	Gabriella Hornung	21st	Lynn Davis
9th	Stephanie Deganhardt	24th	Don Isaac
10th	Fr. Brian Prall	28th	George Davis
	Erich Moderow	30th	Zhenya Bolotnik

5th Mark & Karen Moderow

Grace Church News & Upcoming Events

ECW'S FIRST FRIDAY GATHERING All women of Grace Church are encouraged to attend the monthly gathering on the first Friday of each month. May's meeting will be held on Friday, the 6th, at 11:30. Please bring your own lunch. We will be voting on sending a donation to Episcopal Relief and Development to provide humanitarian aid to the people of Ukraine.

We will also discuss the new date of the Rummage Sale and this year's upcoming events.

Hope to see you on May 6th Connie B.

Building & Grounds Committee Wednesday, May 11th at 11:00am in St. Stephen's Hall.

Vestry Meeting Sunday, May 15th, after the 9:00am service.

FACC donation for May is canned green beans.

Weekly Altar Flowers The cost of altar flowers is \$33.00. When you sign up for flowers you are responsible for paying for them. Sometime during the month you are signed up for turn in a check for \$33.00 (made out to Grace Episcopal Church). You can put this in one of the offering plates, turn in to the office or mail to the church. Just indicate on the check that it is for altar flowers.

We're in need of volunteers to keep our landscaping looking nice as we go into spring. Time commitment is about 1/2 hour a week - pulling any weeds, deadheading spent flowers, picking up trash, watering if no rain in the past week. Thank you!

Deadline for the June Messenger will be May 20th

Treasurer's Report

I am providing a summary of the revenue and expenses for the first 3 months of 2022. Since it is so early in the year I am not comparing our results to the budget, I am comparing 2022 results with 2021 to give us a feel for how we are doing.

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Total Revenue	60,779	93,087	(32,308)
Expenses:			
Personnel Costs	33,787	32,033	1,754
Buildings & Grounds	11,907	12,527	(620)
Diocese Pledge	2,125	1,925	200
Other	<u>2,612</u>	<u>3,547</u>	<u>(935)</u>
Total Expenses	50,431	50,032	399
Gain (Loss)	<u>10,348</u>	<u>43,055</u>	<u>(32,707)</u>

The revenue for the first 3 months of 2022 is \$32,308 less than the firsts 3 months of 2021. The pledge revenue received in March was only \$6,327. In March 2021 the pledge revenue was \$28,421. I am assuming that the shortfall will be made up as the year progresses. However, this shortfall has created a cash flow issue and we had to transfer funds from our reserves to make sure we could pay our bills and payroll.

The cost of natural gas has been a concern this year. In the first 3 months we have paid \$4,371 which is 70% of the annual amount budgeted. I am assuming that we will be over budget at the end of the year for this expense. This increase is being driven by the increase in natural gas cost not an increase in usage. If you have any questions please contact me.

Duane Price, Treasurer 815-233-0006

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News From Grace's Greens

“Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth.” 1 Chronicles 16:33

Do you love trees? I thought I did, but after hearing a public radio program featuring University of British Columbia ecologist Suzanne Simard, I realized how shallow my regard for trees was and how little I actually knew about them and all the wonderful benefits they provide.

For example, did you know:

- ◆ Trees around the world removed about one-third of fossil fuel emissions between 1990 to 2007 (U.S. Forest Service). Trees provide food for people and animals far beyond what we can imagine.
- ◆ The absorption of water by trees can limit flooding from heavy rain, especially in low-lying areas like river plains. By helping the ground absorb more water, and by holding soil together with their roots, trees can reduce the risk of erosion and property damage from flash floods.
- ◆ Restoring mangrove forests has proved more effective in managing coastal flooding than building seawalls.
- ◆ In the U.S. alone, pollution removal by urban trees is estimated to save 850 lives per year and \$6.8 billion in total health care costs.
- ◆ When humans are exposed to chemicals released by trees known as phytoncides, research has shown results such as reduced blood pressure, reduced anxiety, increased pain threshold and even increased expression of anti-cancer proteins. (Hence, the Japanese concept of “forest bathing” to benefit health!)

- ◆ Trees in a forest can 'talk' and share nutrients through an underground internet built by soil fungi. As Professor Simard has found, these networks include older, larger hub trees (or "mother trees") that may be connected to hundreds of younger trees around them. Mother trees may even help forests adapt to human-induced climate change, thanks to their "memory" of slower natural changes in past decades or centuries. "They've lived for a long time and they've lived through many fluctuations in climate. They curate that memory in the DNA."

When we realize how much trees do for us, we might ask what can we do to help trees – certainly planting more trees and protecting old-growth forests should be paramount. Switching to paper alternatives when possible is another choice we can make. For example, companies such as Cloud Paper will ship toilet tissue and paper towels made from bamboo directly to you. It is estimated that if everybody in the USA switched to bamboo toilet paper and paper towels, we would save 526 million trees every year. Other simple actions could include only using cloth napkins and going to paperless billing. We can all do our part to help these wonderful living beings who do so much for us!

Candy Colby

Thank you to my Grace Church family for the kindness and prayers given to me since the passing of my son Craig.

Rita Ayre

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The Grace
of God is
with you!

May Newsletter