



The Messenger

December 2022

Christmas Services

Saturday, December 24th

Christmas Eve

Carols and Special Music

7:00pm

Eucharist

7:30pm

Sunday, December 25th

Eucharist

9:00am

Rector's Message

Being an Episcopal priest married to a Roman Catholic, Ellen and I get to have lively theological and liturgical discussions from time to time. Often this happens at the dinner table, much to our children's chagrin, as they find themselves no longer the center of attention, but you take good conversation when and where you can.

Last night we were discussing the significance of the pink candle in the Advent wreath for the Third Sunday of Advent. Now, I may have shared this with you in a previous year, but I commend to you an article from 2015 called "What's up with the pink candle in the Advent wreath?" from the site Clergy Confidential. It is as informative as it is amusing.

<https://www.clergyconfidential.com/2015/11/whats-up-with-pink-candle-in-advent.html>

The pink candle aside, the Third Sunday of Advent "has traditionally been a respite from the penitential themes of Advent emphasizing instead the joy of the coming of the Lord." Ellen and I agreed with each other on this interpretation, especially since there is a complimentary Sunday in our other penitential season of Lent – the Fourth Sunday or Laetare Sunday. But it was noted in our conversation that while the Catholic Church has no qualms about maintaining the penitential nature of Advent, the Episcopal Church is a little more wishy washy.

In my personal library, I have three books that comment on the subject. One says Advent is penitential. Another says it is most definitely not. The third simply points out the waning of Advent's penitential mood in the past few decades. The funny thing is, all three books were my textbooks for the same class: Liturgical Studies. So, one is really at the mercy of the local parish custom, i.e., the way we've always done it.

Regardless of how one views the season of Advent, there is one thing abundantly clear – it is a *contemplative season*.

This morning I was scrolling through the pictures I asked you to share that first Advent of the pandemic of your nativities, prayer corners, Advent wreaths, or other items or decorations that help you immerse yourselves in this contemplative season. Each photo had a common element: they all emitted a warmth, a soft light, much like a candle (some even were candles), that I know helped sustain me during that difficult time, as the sense of being a people who walked in darkness was particularly palpable. By your participation in that exercise, we were all given the gift of a great light.

As we continue to slowly return to some semblance of normalcy, I have decided to dedicate my Advent contemplation, my preparation for the coming Christ, to rethinking my ministry. For the last two years, I have felt like I have been flying by the seat of my pants; granted it was only my first pandemic. Any sense of personal discipline, spirituality, or intentionality that I cultivated in seminary took a backseat to dealing with issues as they arose or making the most of the limited resources before me.

So, this Advent I will be praying about what sort of priest and pastor God is calling me to be, and how I can most effectively translate that into my ministry here at Grace. I will also pray about practices or habits I wish to adopt and those I wish to discard to make room in my heart for Christ. In this holy season of Advent, how might you, too, prepare him room?

Peace,
Fr. Brian

Treasurer Report

Below is a summary of the revenue and expenses for the first 10 months of 2022 compared to the first month of 2021.

	2022	2021	Difference
Total Revenue	181714	186995	(5281)
Expenses:			
Personnel Costs	110097	105171	4926
Building & Grounds	35403	32062	3341
Diocese Pledge	7083	6813	270
Other	13909	17706	(3797)
Total Expenses	<u>166492</u>	<u>161752</u>	<u>4740</u>
Gain (Loss)	15222	25243	(10021)

At the end of October we had an excess of \$15,222. I am still expecting to end the year with a deficit of about \$10,000.

I want to thank all who pledged for next year and especially for your generosity. The total pledges for 2023 is \$161,862 which is an increase of 9% more than 2022. Thank you.

Because of your generosity, we now have a balanced budget for 2023. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Duane Price, Treasurer
815-233-0006
daprice68@yahoo.com

Grace Church News

ECW FIRST FRIDAY GATHERING All women of Grace are invited to our monthly gathering on the First Friday of December. We'll meet at 11:30 in the undercroft. Please bring your own lunch. We plan to make Christmas gifts for our Shut-ins.

Any questions or concerns, please contact me at 815-789-3181 or cburden43@gmail.com

Peace,
Connie B.

FACC First Sunday Meal Donation is Sunday, December 4th. Our goal is \$100 to \$125 to sponsor a meal for our usual slot of the second Thursday of each month.

Advent Meal - Wednesday, December 7th at 5:00pm.
Reservations are required.

We are collecting 110 packages of Christmas luncheon napkins (paper) for the FACC Christmas Baskets, **due December 13th.**

People of Grace Breakfast - Saturday, December 17th at 9 East Coffee Shop. All are welcome to attend.

Hanging of the Greens - Sunday, December 18th after the 9:00am service.

Advent Study Opportunities The *Living Compass* Advent devotionals are here. You may pick one up in the narthex or stop by the church office. If you contact the office, I have even been known to deliver. Otherwise, you can download a PDF version for free from livingcompass.org.

Deadline for the January Newsletter is December 21st.

Grace Church News (continued)

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 send your donation for flowers along with any names or intentions to be remembered at the Christmas Service.

Annual Meeting, January 22nd, 2023 All reports for the meeting need to be turned into the office no later than January 13th either electronically (gracechurch@aeroinc.net) or printed in a format ready to be copied for the annual report.

Weekly Altar Flowers for 2023 Sign up sheet is now posted in the narthex. The cost of altar flowers is \$33.00. 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.

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

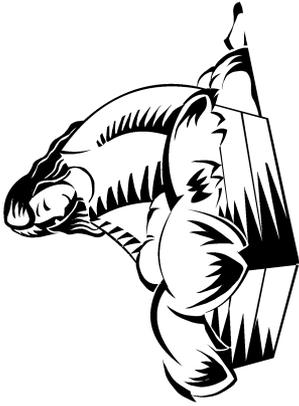
1st	Heather Becker	17th	Doris Chesterton
3rd	Brian Chesterton	20th	Charlie Prall
4th	Duane Price	21st	Mary Lockwood
5th	Dick Worthington		Elizabeth Maize
6th	Marilyn Hepner	23rd	Carol Price
10th	Steve Holbert	24th	Allison Gush
14th	Elizabeth Woodward	30th	Mark Helm
17th	Bernard Lischwe		

28th Neil & Rose Dreier

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

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10 S. Cherry Avenue
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815-232-4422

Merry
Christmas



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