



The Messenger

March 2023

Rector's Report

Well, I cannot say an ice storm, power outage, and downed tree limbs were what I had envisioned for our entrance into this holy season of Lent, but alas, that is precisely what happened. I am not ready to concede that these were signs of God's elevated displeasure with us. Had there been frogs and locusts, I might reconsider. Sadly, we did have to cancel our Ash Wednesday service, which is one of my favorite liturgies.

Anyway, we are officially in Lent whether we had ashes smudged on our foreheads or not, and if you have not yet picked up a copy of this year's *Living Compass* devotional for Lent, I recommend doing so at your earliest convenience. *Living Compass* devotionals follow the same format each Advent and Lent, selecting a particular theme on which to focus for the season, and then applying that theme to four quadrants of wellness: *heart, soul, strength, and mind*.

This year, the theme is "practicing compassion," which I thought was kind of different and interesting because it asks us to do *more* of something (something good) in a season we typically view as a time to do *less* of something (a bad habit or guilty pleasure). In fact, in the opening entry for Ash Wednesday, Bishop Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, an avid journal keeper, says she does not remember ever seeing a "compassion journal" in her favorite stationary stores, or seeing any "compassion

journal workshop” offered. One typically sees gratitude journals, prayer journals, or some other form of journaling, which often have corresponding workshops.

So, she invites us to try – if not journaling per sé, she says, “The 40 days that begin today give us the opportunity to reflect on the ways we participate in the suffering and brokenness of the world while holding ourselves and others with love and compassion as we seek healing.”

Though not my intended Lenten focus, I have already begun this reflection. Last week, one of my “frequent flyers” called asking for help with an issue I have already made plain I am not willing to get involved with (long story), and their persistence and sense of entitlement has left me with the compassion fatigue Bishop Baskerville-Burrows references.

No sooner had I hung up with that individual than a stranger came to the church door. They asked to sit down for a few minutes to warm up. Absolutely, I said. They proceeded to tell me their story: how they were homeless, on waiting lists at both FACC and Rosecrance (where they admitted they really needed and preferred to be), and did not even have a vehicle to sleep in. The individual just looked me square in the eye and said, “What do I do?” There I was, with a big, warm, empty church building, embarrassed to say I did not know.

Naturally, the dichotomy between the two seeking my help gave me great pause. The “ways we participate in the suffering and brokenness of the world while holding ourselves and others with love and compassion as we seek healing” are indeed worth reflecting upon.

Though these interactions were troubling, each in their own way, and I feel like I failed to a degree in the latter one, I took heart in Bishop Baskerville-Burrows statement that “It takes practice to be gentle and kind to oneself and others we meet each day. Practicing compassion need not be another ‘should’ to inspire guilt.” This is really true of any Lenten discipline we

decide to take on, and any subsequent crosses it inspires us to carry during this season.

I also found solace in what she says about practicing compassion and prayer. She says, “Simply praying for the awareness of God’s loving gaze that is cast upon the hurting and vulnerable, even and especially ourselves, is one way to begin.” In the case of the homeless person, I prayed for God to help them find refuge somewhere, perhaps on a friend’s couch, while also praying for wisdom and guidance for when and how to do more. In the case of my “frequent flyer,” well ... “Lord have mercy,” is a potent, acceptable, and necessary prayer sometimes.

However you choose to observe Lent this year, I hope your self-reflection is fruitful and your repentance genuine and life-changing. May God bless you in the holy work to which we are all called in this season, and may we all reach that Easter morning a people truly redeemed.

Peace,
Fr. Brian

On the Prayers of the People

Considering what Bishop Baskerville-Burrows said about “Simply praying for the awareness of God’s loving gaze that is cast upon the hurting and vulnerable,” I wanted to talk about the Prayers of the People.

They are exactly what their name suggests: the prayers and concerns of the congregation. Perhaps knowing extemporaneous prayer can tend to ramble on a bit, the authors of the *Book of Common Prayer* give us six things that should typically be considered when engaging in this part of the liturgy at the top of page 383. From there, we have six prescribed forms to aid us in our intercessory endeavors. However, we are certainly welcome to (and some congregations do) compose our own petitions.

It has been my practice to include names of people or

other concerns that are given to me to lift up in our corporate prayer. I also include names and concerns written in the notebook in the narthex prior to each service. Typically, I leave names on the list if I know theirs is a long-term need. With those in the notebook, I tend to only put them on for that week. That said, I am not always consistent, so you could help me by indicating, either verbally or in the notebook, if you would like a name to stay on my list long-term or not. Similarly, if you notice someone who has been prayed for a while, and you know their ordeal has passed, simply let me know they can be taken off my list.

I mention this because I had a name on my list for a long, long time. The person randomly sent a contribution to Grace one time, for which I thanked them. However, nobody knew who they were. A year later, I was contacted by Monroe Hospice and asked if I would do this same person's funeral once they eventually passed. I said I would and promptly put them on my prayer list, but I never heard another word about it. A few weeks ago, on a whim, I looked the person up and found their obituary from a year ago. Hospice nor the family ever contacted me. I guess the plan had changed, which is perfectly fine, but proved my need to audit my list from time to time, and for that, I ask your help. Thank you.

Tentative Easter Schedule

Palm Sunday, April 2nd
9:00am

Maundy Thursday Agape Meal, April 6th
6:00am

Good Friday, April 7th
12:15pm

Easter Vigil, April 8th
8:00pm

Easter Sunday, April 9th
9:00am

Treasurer's Report

Below is a comparison of the January 2023 financial results compared to January 2022.

	2023	2022	Difference
Total Revenue	60976	35060	25916
Expenses:			
Personnel Costs	14424	13733	691
Building & Grounds	11047	2930	8117
Diocese Pledge	750	-	750
Other	3393	671	2722
Total Expenses	<u>29614</u>	<u>17334</u>	<u>12280</u>
Gain (Loss)	31362	17726	13636

The total revenues for January 2023 was \$24916 more that what we received in January of 2022. Our total amount of 2023 pledges paid in January was \$58141 which includes \$38500 that was prepaid last year. The fact that we received so much pledge revenue does not mean that we will receive more that what was pledged for the year, but it helps alleviate any cash flow problems we may have during the year.

You will notice that the amount paid for Buildings & Grounds was \$8117 more that what was paid in January 2022. In January we paid \$7000 for the first six months property and liability insurance premiums. Last year that payment was made in December. It is simply a timing issue.

In 2022 there was no payment made to the Diocese in January. January and February were paid in February.

Our FACC line item is higher because we gave \$2000 to them for Their transportation program. This is considered a Community Outreach expense.

We are off to a good start this year financially thanks to the generosity of our parishioners and their concern for the church.

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

Bits and Pieces

Wednesday Lenten Soup Suppers: a signup sheet will be in the narthex for people who would like to share their culinary artistry in soup making with the congregation for our weekly Wednesday evening Lenten soup suppers. There will be three slots total – two soups (one vegetarian option) and bread. It doesn't matter if we have more than one person for each slot, just so long as each slot is covered by someone. The soup suppers will begin at 5:30 p.m. Fr. Brian will be reintroducing a formation/education component, as we have done in the past. The topic this year will be the Psalms.

FACC Monthly Donation for March is crackers.

ECW First Friday Lunch Friday, March 3rd at 11:30am.

People of Grace Breakfast Saturday, March 18 at 8:00am at Nine East Coffee Shop. All are welcome to attend.

Vestry Meeting Sunday March 19th after the 9:00am service.

Bits and Pieces (continued)

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 the newsletter and will also be available in the narthex.

Don't forget! Daylight Savings Time begins on the second Sunday of March! Move your clocks ahead one hour at 2:00am on March 12th.

Deadline for the April Messenger will be March 22nd.

March



2nd	Mark Moderow	14th	Francis Crowe
	Laurie Gungel	17th	Mary Lehnhard
5th	Deborah Lischwe	25th	Cierra Mathews
9th	Becky Lafferty	26th	Lucy Prall
10th	Chuck Terpening	29th	Carrie Helm
		31st	Neil Dreier

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



Miracles
Happen

March Newsletter