



## *The Messenger* *September 2023*

### *Rector's Corner*

A few years ago, on a Saturday before Easter, I came to the church in the morning to finish preparations and make sure the building looked befitting the celebration of Jesus' triumphant Resurrection. As I opened the main doors on Cherry Ave., I looked down Stephenson St. to the former Presbyterian Church, now Our Father's House, and saw a small army of people, young, old, and in between, policing up garbage around the property, sprucing up the landscaping, sweeping the front steps, and doing a host of other cosmetic chores. I could only assume similar labors of love were underway inside, all for making the space look its finest for that glorious Easter morning.

Once upon a time, churches had sextons in their employ – jacks (or jills) of all trades necessary for rudimentary maintenance and beautification of church buildings and grounds. As parishes continue to shrink, the sexton appears to be slowly going the way of the elevator or switchboard operators. Old church buildings get neglected in their absence, and then necessary repairs become too costly for the congregations to maintain the property.

The feelgood spin that is often placed on this reality is the phrase, "The Church is not the building, it's the people." This is 100% true from a theological standpoint. We, the people, are the Body of Christ at work in the world. However, when it comes to our worship of the living God, while this can be faithfully conducted in any environment where two or three are gathered and thanks is to be given, I find no crime in wanting that environment to be a beautiful church.

Grace Church is a beautiful church, and over the last five years, I have received countless compliments from visitors (mostly for funerals, unfortunately) about how beautiful the space is, as well as the liturgy. I do not know why those kind words always warm my heart and fill me with pride like they do – I did not build the church, nor did I compose the liturgy – but they do, and they reinforce my mission to facilitate the most inviting and meaningful worship experience I can in our Episcopal tradition.

But that experience begins very simply with the outside of the building. If the aesthetics of the building communicate an indifference or complacency, what conclusions might one reach about the efforts or convictions of the folks inside. If there is garbage strewn about the shrubbery, outside lamps that do not light up, weeds and/or dying plants, fading and chipped paint, pigeon droppings, etc., it hardly gives a positive impression of the occupants of that building.

I am beyond proud to say that this summer has been as lively a season of church building stewardship as I have seen here before. Members of Grace have stepped up and taken on all sorts of projects and regular maintenance, which has been a tremendous relief for me. Raised by a consummate DIY father, serving often in the capacity of a sexton does bring me joy (and is especially helpful with writer's block), but I am outmatched and have to keep pushing projects down the road. However, this summer a small army of our own graciously provided their labor beautifying and maintaining our landscaping, tending the lawn, disposing of weeds, and even engineering a temporary system to address some drainage issues.

There is still plenty to do, some of which is out of our control, and there will always be things that need regular attention. Garbage will always get snagged on our building's nooks and crannies, weeds will always pop up, and pigeons will always do...what pigeons do.

But for now, our flora looks great, the building lights up at night, and the Episcopal flag flies proudly. Soon our famous red doors will receive a new bold fresh coat of paint. Inside, the former Youth Room transformation project, turning it into an all-purpose room – or Room of Requirement, for you Harry Potter fans – is

finished, save for one or two minor touches. We have already held meetings in that room, outside groups have been using it, and I plan to reboot an adult formation in there this fall. Also inside, we will begin to replace all our toilets one by one. Most do not flush well, either from mineral buildup or lack of ventilation, and mineral buildup has gotten to the point where basic cleaning can do little to improve their appeal.

I cannot express my gratitude enough for the ongoing ministry of beautification and maintenance that our own parishioners have taken upon themselves. Even the mere presence of people out working on the church grounds seems to contribute to Grace's pulse. As people drive by this high-traffic location and see Grace's members caring for their building, it says something – this place has life. And maybe, just maybe, they will be inspired to walk through our doors on a Sunday to discover our equally vibrant spiritual life within.

Thank you to all who have and continue to share your love through the stewardship our property.

Peace,  
Fr. Brian

Diocesan Convention – Convention will be held in-person this year at the Westin in Lombard, where it has been held in years past. The dates for Convention are November 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, with workshops on the 17<sup>th</sup> and Diocesan business on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Grace is allowed 3 delegates. If you are interested in serving as a delegate, please talk to Fr. Brian as soon as possible. Early bird registration ends September 30<sup>th</sup>.

CROP Walk will be held on Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>. Teams will begin gathering at 1:00 p.m. at Debate Square, and the walk will commence at 1:30 p.m. There is a one-mile, two-mile, and four-mile route from which walkers can choose. If you would like to walk as part of the Grace Team, please let Fr. Brian know. If you would like to donate to CROP Walk, Fr. Brian will be collecting donations as well right up until the morning of the walk. Checks can be made out to: CWS/CROP.

## ***Treasurer's Report***

Below is an analysis comparing the actual results for the first seven months of this year to the annual budget.

	7 Months Results	2023 Annual Budget	Per Cent of Budget
<b>Total Revenue</b>	147,328	219,832	67%
Expenses:			
Personnel Costs	81,425	138,922	59%
Building & Grounds	39,687	50,767	78%
Other	<u>17,337</u>	<u>30,550</u>	<u>57%</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	137,449	220,239	63%
Gain (Loss)	8,879	(407)	

After the first 7 months our revenue has exceeded our expenses by \$8,879. This is to be expected since a large amount of our pledges come in the first part of the year. So far our revenues and expenses have been what we expected.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you,

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

***Stewardship Kick-Off Potluck*** Sunday, September 24th, after the 9:00am service. Bring a breakfast item to share.

## ***Grace Church News & Upcoming Events***

ECW - FIRST FRIDAY LUNCH There will be no September gathering on the first Friday of the month due to the Labor Day Weekend and everyone recovering from baking cookies (100° today) and working at the Eats and Beats festival. Thank you all for your contributions! Now, rest. And keep cool!

~Connie B.

[cburden43@gmail.com](mailto:cburden43@gmail.com) 815-789-3181

***FACC Donation*** for September is crackers or cookies.

***Rector's Discretionary Fund Donation Sunday*** is September 3rd.

(This will take the place of our regular FACC First Sunday Meal donation)

***Choir Practice*** starts September 6th at 6:30pm.

***ROCK River Canoe/Kayak Trip*** Saturday September 9th. Depart Oregon 10:00am. Sign up to paddle (or drift!) down the Rock River from the White Pelican boat launch in Oregon to the Gush house at 2783 S Brooks Isle Rd, Oregon for a potluck lunch. The arrangements and prices have changed since our last outing, but there are discounts for nonprofits! If you don't wish to paddle please join us for lunch, bring a dish to share, and plan to arrive at the house around 11 am. Canoe rental \$55.00 per boat. (at least 5 boats) Kayak \$40.50 per person.

I will need the first and last names of each person, signed waivers, and full payment by Friday, September 1 to secure our reservation. You will also need to have watched a safety video before getting on the water. If you have been on the trip before you will have done this.

Questions: John Gush 815 541 0048 Allison Gush 815 297 3311

## Server Schedule

### September 3rd

9:00   **Chalicerist:**   Chuck Terpening  
  
          **Lector:**       Gail Hunt  
          **Acolyte:**     Lucy Prall  
          **Ushers:**     Dick Hepner & Jon Watson

### September 10th

9:00   **Chalicerist:**   Chuck Breo  
          **Lector:**       Candy Colby  
          **Acolytes:**   Lucy Prall  
          **Ushers:**     Chad Enright & Jeff Francis

### September 17th

9:00   **Chalicerist:**   Carol Francis  
          **Lector:**       John Gush  
          **Acolyte:**     Lucy Prall  
          **Ushers:**     Dick Hepner & Jon Watson

### September 24th

9:00   **Chalicerist:**   Chuck Terpening  
  
          **Lector:**       Gail Hunt  
          **Acolyte:**     Lucy Prall  
          **Ushers:**     Chad Enright & Jeff Francis

If you are unable to serve on the dates assigned, please make sure you get someone to replace you and notify the church office.

**Deadline** for the October "Messenger" will be September 21st

*September*



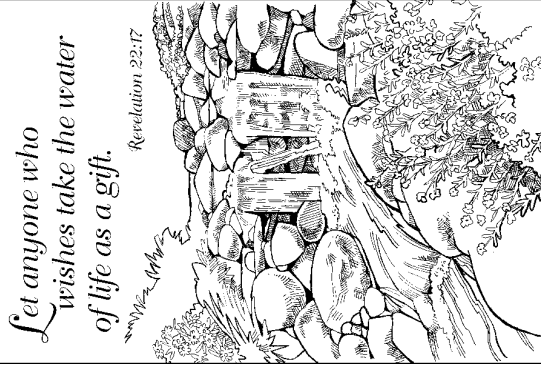
6th Cynthia Bradbury  
9th Phyllis Bergagna  
Skip Lehnhard  
12th Kathy Helm  
13th Sue Norman

15th Ashly Shore  
20th John Gush  
28th Carol Russell  
30th Nancy Bender  
Cathy Perkins

9th Chad & Katie Enright  
23rd Stephen & Susan Lafferty

- 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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September Newsletter