



The Messenger

November 2023

Rector's Message

When our daughter, Lucy, was of the age where she still enjoyed watching *Sesame Street* (which never really caught on with our son, Charlie), I would regularly get the “Letter of the Day” song stuck in my head. In seminary, she and I would watch *Sesame Street* while eating breakfast, I would drop her at her sitter’s, and then I was off to Liturgy or Christian Ethics while humming that irresistible tune about the letter of the day. What kind of day is it going to be, Brian? I do not know, but it will be brought to us by the letter “A.”

In the spirit of *Sesame Street*, this month’s newsletter is brought to us by the letter “O,” with a focus on two important words from our liturgical lexicon: *Offertory* and *Oblations*. You no doubt know what these words mean, but according to the little liturgical pocket dictionary, *Words of our Worship*, the Offertory is “The action which inaugurates the second half of the Eucharist, during which representatives of the people bring forward the gifts of bread and wine and alms.” Oblations are “The people’s gifts of bread and wine and of alms which are offered during the eucharistic prayer.” And Alms (“What happened to the letter ‘O?’” Shhh.), alms are the “Offerings of the people, especially at the Eucharist, for the work of the Church, its ministry, and its mission, etc.”

Often, we are compelled to think of the collection of our alms (our money and the fruits of our labor) at the Offertory in a very

practical sense as the means by which the Church pays its bills. That is especially true during this time of year when most parishes talk about stewardship campaigns. Unfortunately, we seldom hear about the “work of the Church, its ministry, and its mission” at the heart of the definition of alms. I would like to change that with this edition of the *The Messenger*.

Over the past year, we have given of our oblations substantially more alms to our community compared to previous years. Our offerings have gone to support our usual ministries, like FACC, the local shelter and pantry, as well as utility and rent assistance for individuals in need. But we have also begun to diversify our giving to support some new-to-Grace ministries that I am really excited about.

We gave \$500 to Freeport Police Department’s Shop with a Cop program, which helps children from needy families purchase Christmas gifts for themselves and family members. Another \$3,000 was given to the Children’s Hands-On Museum, which is a wonderful place located in the Lincoln Mall for small children to learn through play by interacting with their many educational exhibits. Between the ECW, our Outreach fund, and our earnings from the Eats and Beats festival, we gave approximately \$2,500 to Hope Wins, a budding non-profit started by a local kindergarten teacher, Linsey McDanel, which seeks to give parents and kids the tools they need to succeed. They recently held a parent coaching class focused on topics like “trauma informed practices, family connection ideas, homework hacks, organizational strategies, meal prepping and gratitude.” There were about 20 families in attendance! In the summer, they run Mac Camp, which provides daycare, field trips, and educational opportunities for children, especially ones that might have more needs than a traditional daycare can provide.

Of course, I am truly excited to report that Grace Church donated \$20,000 to VOICES of Stephenson County, which provides shelter and resources for those experiencing domestic violence. Due to unforeseen circumstances, about \$150,000

of federal funding became unavailable and many of their services were on the chopping block. Treasurer and Endowment Committee Chair, Duane Price, suggested Grace, through a charitable giving stipulation written into its endowment, give a donation that would “make a splash.” And a splash it made. My heartfelt thanks to the Endowment Committee for hatching the idea and voting unanimously to send this tremendous gift of love and support to an incredibly important local ministry.

With Thanksgiving on the horizon, I think is important to remember that one of the Christian ways we show “thanks” is by “giving.” In our Eucharist, that weekly celebration of thanksgiving for all God’s blessings and for our salvation through Jesus Christ, we give thanks by offering to God our oblations, our gifts, of praise and the fruits of our labor – “All things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee.” I could not be prouder of the way Grace Church has shown its gratitude to God this year in its giving to the community.

Blessings,
Fr. Brian

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week – FACC fundraising activities:

Nov. 15 Wednesday – FACC volunteers will be collecting cash donations at the intersection of Stephenson St. and Park Blvd. The board is looking for 8 volunteers (4 from 9:00-12:00 and 4 from 12:00-3:00). If you are interested, please see Fr. Brian for more details.

Nov. 17 Friday – Hunger Luncheon at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church from 11:30-1:00. Tickets are \$25. A table of 8 is \$200. To-Go orders are available for pick-up 11:00-12:30. If you are interested, please ask Fr. Brian for a reservation form.

Treasurer's Report

Below is an analysis comparing the actual results for the first 9 months of this year to the annual budget.

	9 Months Results	2023 Annual Budget	Per Cent of Budget
Total Revenue	160,623	219,832	73%
Expenses:			
Personnel Costs	105,540	138,922	76%
Building & Grounds	45,182	50,767	89%
Other	<u>20,692</u>	<u>30,550</u>	<u>68%</u>
Total Expenses	171,414	220,239	78%
Gain (Loss)	(10,791)	(407)	

After 9 months we have a deficit of \$10,791 which is quite a bit more than the anticipated \$407 in our budget. I do expect our deficit to decrease as parishioners finish paying their pledges.

Please call me if you have any questions.

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

Finance Committee Report 81% of you have returned your pledge card. And more good news...we continue to happily accept pledges. The 2024 budget will be completed and presented to the vestry for approval at the December 3rd vestry meeting.

November



Wish These Friends a
"Happy Birthday!"

3rd	Katie Enright	10th	Ingrid Standish
	Sandra Terpening	11th	Diane Conroy
4th	Dorothy Nord	12th	Molly Doolittle
	Kate Worthington	21st	Brian Dreier
6th	Richard Hepner		Gary Downing
7th	Jacquelyn Sigafus		



3rd Albert & Evelyn Appiah

Deadline for the December Messenger will be November 15th.

Grace Church News

Attention: All Women of Grace

Hola!

At last month's meeting, our group decided to have the November gathering (Friday, November 3rd) at La Jarocho Restaurant, 21 W. Stephenson St., at 11:30. Please let me know if you will be joining us.

Bendiciones para todos,

~Connie B. cburden43@gmail.com 815-789-3181

Reminder Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, November 5th. Don't forget to set your clocks back one (1) hour.

People of Grace Breakfast November 18th, 8:00am, at Nine East Coffee Shop. Please join us.

St. Andrew's Day Celebration Sunday, November 19th

This will include bagpipes and a celebration tea following the service. There is a signup sheet posted by the kitchen window. Any help with food is greatly appreciated, please bring food ready to serve on your own dish. Mike Shore

Vestry Meeting scheduled for November 19th is being moved to December 3rd after the 9:00am service.

Mark your calendars for the Advent Quiet Dinner December 6th at 6:00 p.m. We will be going back to the previous format of the meat being provided and assistance for side dishes will be requested. Watch for further details and signup sheet to be posted. Mike Shore

Server Schedule

November 5th

Chaliciest: Chuck Terpening
Lector: Gail Hunt
Acolyte: Lucy Prall
Ushers: Chad Enright & Jeff Francis

November 12th

Chaliciest: Chuck Breo
Lector: Claudia Smith
Acolytes: Lucy Prall
Ushers: Dick Hepner & Jon Watson

November 19th

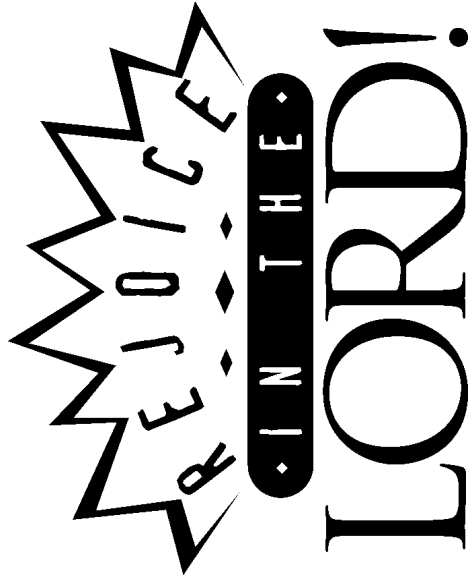
Chaliciest: Carol Francis
Lector: Phyllis Bergagna
Acolyte: Lucy Prall
Ushers: Chad Enright & Jeff Francis

November 26th

Chaliciest: Chuck Terpening
Lector: Candy Colby
Acolyte: Lucy Prall
Ushers: Dick Hepner & Jon Watson

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

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