



The Messenger

December 2023

Rector's Message

As we departed the first in-person Diocesan Convention since 2019, and the last in-person one for the foreseeable future, there were a lot of tears in the Prall vehicle. Lucy loves Convention, and she was going to miss her new friends. She also did not understand why I would not let her host a lemonade or hot cocoa stand to make up the Diocese's budgetary gap forcing us back to virtual convention. Charlie thought he had left a picture he made in the childcare room and did not understand why I was not hanging a U-turn in the middle of four lanes of I-88. And I had two crying children in the back seat. Tears all around.

Business, for the most part, ran relatively smoothly. The online voting system we had learned to use in past virtual conventions required a little learning curve on smart phones, but we got there. The following is my review of the resolutions and how everything shook out.

The first order of business was the Second Reading of a piece of legislation introduced last year for a proposed amendment to the Diocesan Constitution and Canons asking for gender neutral pronouns to be used in reference to Bishops and Clergy. Like last year, I do not think the amendment was adequately presented, leading to some to believe this was a sort of referendum on gender identity. It was not. The sponsors simply could have pointed out that currently in the Diocesan Constitution, when a bishop or clergy is referred to by pronoun it is he/him/his.

Gender identity aside, that language does not reflect the reality of our diocese as we have many female clergy and we now have a female bishop. They/them/their in this circumstance would be perfectly grammatically correct for referring to a bishop or clergy of an unspecified gender. The amendment passed, so the handful of “No” votes either did not understand, or they do not believe women should serve in ordained ministry. The latter does still exist in our diocese.

For the resolutions, “Minimum Clergy Compensation” is an annual resolution, and it always passes. There was only one voice of dissent from a small parish with a small budget, and I fully understand their concern, but a fix would require the Church to completely rethink how it funds ministry (which might not be a bad idea). We also passed the resolution renewing our relationship with the companion dioceses of Renk in South Sudan and the Diocese of Southeast Mexico for a five-year period. It has been done on a year-to-year basis during our bishop transition. A resolution called “Migration with Dignity” asked that we align with other dioceses that have passed the same resolution voicing our support for the humane treatment of migrants and refugees within the parameters of federal law. It passed after clarification was given that it was not advocating for an open boarder policy. And finally, we passed a resolution asking the Diocese to provide greater awareness and support of Episcopal Asia Ministry, which serves a growing number of Asian Anglicans in the Diocese.

The Convention held the resolution, “Solidarity with the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement,” for last, likely anticipating a long and impassioned debate. This proved fairly true as people rose in strong support both for and against the resolution. There was one call to table it in light of the current war. And there was one proposed replacement of the entire resolution, which snuck in on a loop whole where a proposed amendment, typically a sentence or two, can actually be an amendment to the entire resolution. That caused more consternation than any of the other proceedings, honestly.

I will spare you all the procedural back and forth that ensued, but long story short, it was asked that we vote by orders (lay and clergy), and it was asked that rather than just “Yes” or “No” a third option of “Abstention” be added to the ballot. Due to that third option, there were not enough “Yes” votes for the resolution to pass. So, for better or worse, depending on your viewpoint, the Diocese of Chicago has not officially joined in support of the BDS movement against Israel. Though I am curious about what the outcome would have been had the option for “Abstention” not been added, I think the process speaks to the complexity of the issue, and I also expect we will see another version of this resolution again in future conventions.

Overall, it was a good convention. The keynote speaker, the Rt. Rev. Jake Owensby, Bishop of Western Louisiana, was spectacular. It is always interesting to see Episcopal Church polity at work, and, like Lucy, I am sad we will not be meeting again in-person.

I hope you all have a blessed and prayerful Advent, as we wait with joyous anticipation for the incarnate God among us, our Emmanuel.

Peace,
Fr. Brian

Christmas Services

Sunday, December 24th
Christmas Eve
Carols and Special Music
7:00pm
Eucharist
7:30pm

Monday, December 25th
Eucharist

Treasurer Report

Below is an analysis comparing the actual results for the first 10 months of this year to the annual budget.

	10 Month's Results	2023 Annual Budget	Per Cent of Budget
Total Revenue	178,342	219,832	81%
Expenses:			
Personnel Costs	115,834	138,922	83%
Building & Grounds	48,912	50,767	96%
Other	<u>26,559</u>	<u>30,550</u>	<u>87%</u>
Total Expenses	191,305	220,239	87%
Gain (Loss)	(12,963)	(407)	

If you have not fully paid your 2023 pledge and are unsure of the unpaid balance, call or email Connie at the church and she will answer your questions.

If you have not turned in your 2024 pledge card and intend to do so, please do it this month.

Please call me if you have any questions.

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

FACC First Sunday Meal Donation is Sunday, December 3th. Our goal is \$100 to \$125 to sponsor a meal for our usual slot of the second Thursday of each month.

Grace Church News

Episcopal Church Women NEWS - First Friday Lunch is December 1st, this will be the final ECW gathering of 2023. We'll meet in the undercroft at 11:30 for lunch (bring your own lunch) before our work begins. Yes, we have good work to do that day. We will be assembling the holiday boxes for our shut-ins. We need everyone to bring wrapped items for these gifts. Please let me know which of the following items you will be bringing. We need 15 of each item.

- 1-3 cookies, wrapped in Saran wrap or a small ziploc bag
- snack baggies (approx.1/2 cup) of Chex mix (or something similar)
- packets of cocoa
- wrapped tea bags
- wrapped chocolates
- small candy canes
- snack baggies of caramel corn (approx.1/2 cup) or something else??

Sandy has purchased the gift boxes and the Christmas cards we will be signing. Thank you all for helping provide a bit of cheer from Grace to our dear friends who cannot be with us at this holiday season.

Peace to you,

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

St Andrew's Day Thank You I want to thank everyone who helped contribute food to our Annual St. Andrews Day tea. It was a beautiful service and plenty of food to enjoy afterwards. It is with careful and prayerful thought that I will be stepping down as the chairperson for the St. Andrew's Day Tea effective immediately. I have served in this capacity for several years and feel it is time to pass the hat to someone else. Whoever takes on this venture next year, I am available to consult and share any materials from previous years. Again thank you for all your support over the years. Mike Shore

Grace Church News (continued)

Advent Quiet Dinner This year's Quiet dinner will take place December 6 at 6:00 p.m. If you are planning to attend, could you please RSVP to Mike Shore at 815-233-0507 or theshorefamily@comcast.net by December 4, so we can have enough places set for the dinner. If you require a vegetarian option, please let us know as well. The church will provide the meat, salad, vegetable and wine. We need help in the following areas.

- Set up – that afternoon at 4:00 p.m.
 - 5 people to donate a hash brown casserole (recipe can be provided if needed) THIS NEEDS TO BE BROUGHT ALREADY COOKED- we don't have enough oven space.
 - 5 people to donate 2 dozen dinner rolls
 - 5 people to bring 2 dozen of your favorite Christmas cookies
- Help with clean up after the dinner. If you can help with any of the following areas, please let Mike know.

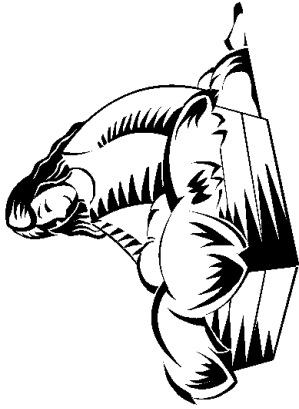
People of Grace Breakfast - Saturday, December 16th at 9 East Coffee Shop. All are welcome to attend.

Blue Christmas December 17, 4:00 p.m. – Grace Church will be holding what is commonly called a Blue Christmas service. It is a time for us to acknowledge through the liturgy that not everyone experiences December as the “most wonderful time of the year.” There are a myriad of reasons people may struggle this time of year, and this service provides an opportunity for reflection and to lift those feelings up to God in prayer.

Hanging of the Greens - Sunday, December 24th after the 9:00am service.

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Freeport, IL. 61032
815-232-4422

Merry
Christmas



December Newsletter