



The Messenger

December 2024

Rector's Message

Greetings and blessings to you all during this season of Advent!

The word *advent*, as you no doubt know, simply means the arrival of a notable person, thing, or event. In the Church, it is the season in which we hold *two* such arrivals close in our hearts and minds: the arrival of the Christ child – the first advent – *and* the arrival of “the Son of Man coming in a cloud” – Christ at his second advent. We simultaneously anticipate the *already* (baby Jesus) as we look with hopeful expectation to the *not yet* (Jesus coming again in glory).

If that seems confusing, that is okay. It certainly isn't as confusing as half the town putting up Christmas decorations before Thanksgiving. People seem to have been unsure what to celebrate when or why, so they figured, where is the harm in having an inflatable Santa and a Turkey occupy the front lawn at the same time?

With the season of Advent comes a spirit of new beginnings. A new liturgical year begins (Year C). We prepare to participate once again in the story of our salvation from the beginning, as the Gospel narrative starts over. And beloved traditions within the Church and home are enjoyed once again, offering us an opportunity for a sense of renewal.

Personally, my ministry will be experiencing a new beginning of sorts...or it has? I don't know. I am not sure if I am in the *already* or the *not yet*, but I have been appointed by the bishop as the new Dean of the Rockford Deanery. A fine start I am off to since I don't know if that is official now or at the end of the calendar year.

At any rate, for those unfamiliar with the Episco-lingo, a deanery is a geographical region within a diocese. Our diocese, the Diocese of Chicago, is nearly the top northern half of the state of Illinois, and the Rockford Deanery extends as wide as Galena to DeKalb/Sycamore, and as long as Route 20 down to just south of Interstate 80 in the Illinois Valley. According to the National Church's glossary of terms,

The dean of a deanery is a priest, usually rector of one of the deanery parishes, who is elected or appointed to oversee the work of the deanery. The dean is responsible for convening the clergy and at times the lay representatives of the congregations of the deanery. Clergy who serve as deans use the title "The Very Reverend." They may wear a distinctive piping (colored trim) on the cassock.

I have no plans to add piping to my cassock; it was my grandfather's, and I only really wear it when I get cold while writing in the Rector's Study. I cannot tell you where the distinction of "Very Reverend" comes from or why, just that apparently whatever I was before, now I must be *very*...that.

It is an honor to be considered for the role, though there is no special liturgical laying on of hands or knighting ceremony involved. In fact, I think it really means I get to attend more meetings: meetings with the other deans in the diocese, meetings with the other clergy and lay leaders within our deanery. One practice that is relatively new for us is that the dean handles celebrations of new ministry, whereas once upon

a time the bishop came out to “install” the new rector of a parish. There are several parishes in the Rockford Deanery in transition right now, so that might be something I will be doing a lot of in the near future, but time will tell.

I hope you have a very blessed Advent. May you take time for yourself during this busy season to just sit and be with God. Savor the holy anticipation of what was, and what is to come: Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peace,
Fr. Brian

Living Compass Advent Devotionals are Available: You may pick one up in the narthex or outside the church offices.

Blue Christmas December 22, 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 is 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.

Christmas Services

Tuesday, December 24th

Christmas Eve

Carols and Special Music

7:00pm

Eucharist

7:30pm

Wednesday, December 25th

Eucharist

9:00am

Treasurer Report

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

	10 Month's Results	2023 Annual Budget	Per Cent of Budget
Total Revenue	186,917	219,227	85%
Expenses:			
Personnel Costs	119,531	144,472	83%
Building & Grounds	41,381	36,650	113%
Property & Liability Insurance	8,043	16,086	50%
Other	<u>22,882</u>	<u>32,300</u>	<u>71%</u>
Total Expenses	191,837	229,508	84%
Gain (Loss)	(4,920)	(10,281)	

If you have not fully paid your 2024 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 2025 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

Grace Church News

FACC First Sunday Meal Donation is Sunday, December 1st. Our goal is \$100 to \$125 to sponsor a meal for our usual slot of the second Thursday of each month.

Christmas Flower Donation It is time to place our order with the florist for the wreaths and flowers. We depend on your donations to cover the cost of the wreaths and plants. During the week following Christmas the plants are delivered to homes and nursing homes. There is an envelope included in this Messenger. Please return your donation for flowers along with any names or intentions to be remembered at the Christmas Service.

ECW News for December... FIRST FRIDAY All women of Grace are invited to attend the First Friday gathering on Friday, December 6th at 11:30. We meet in the undercroft for a "bring your own" brown bag lunch. Coffee and tea are provided. We will be assembling Christmas goodie boxes.

OUT TO LUNCH We're planning a holiday luncheon at a local restaurant on Thursday, December 12th. Time and location will be announced soon. It will be fun to get together for this event as we have done in the past.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all on the 6th and the 12th for a time of fellowship and fun! Please let me or Sandy Terpening know if you can join us.

Blessings to all,
Connie B.

cburden43@gmail.com

815-789-3181

Grace Church News (continued)

Advent Quiet Dinner This year's Quiet dinner will take place December 11 at 6:00 p.m. If you are planning to attend, could you please RSVP to Katie Enright 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 4:15 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 Katie know.

People of Grace Breakfast - Saturday, December 21st, 8:00am at 9 East Coffee Shop. All are welcome to attend.

Hanging of the Greens - Sunday, December 22nd after the 9:00am service.

Blue Christmas December 22nd, 4:00 p.m.



December

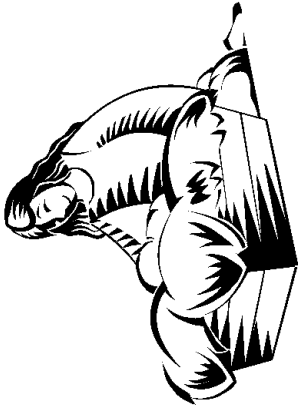
1st	Heather Becker	17th	Doris Chesterton
3rd	Brian Chesterton	20th	Charlie Prall
4th	Duane Price	21st	Mary Lockwood
6th	Marilyn Hepner		Elizabeth Maize
10th	Steve Holbert	23rd	Carol Price
14th	Elizabeth Woodward	24th	Allison Gush
17th	Bernard Lischwe	30th	Mark Helm

28th Neil & Rose Dreier

Deadline for the January Newsletter is December 18th.

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Merry
Christmas



December Newsletter