



The Messenger

March 2025

Rector's Report

Over the past year or two, I have mentioned at various times that it is my canonical duty as your priest to provide some form of Christian formation. For fun, here is the exact wording from the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church:

Canon III.9.6 (b) (1) It shall be the duty of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge to ensure all persons in their charge receive Instruction in the Holy Scriptures; in the subjects contained in An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism; in the doctrine, discipline, and worship of this Church; and in the exercise of their ministry as baptized persons.

It is the one area of my ministry where I feel I have been especially neglectful. There have been attempts to provide formation opportunities, but these have bumped along with fits and starts; nothing consistent. A weekday Bible study went fairly strong early in my tenure, until interest waned. The Lenten Soup Supper spiels were not well-received. We had begun meeting after church on the second Sunday of each month, but a bishop's visit here and a vacation there, it just kind of went by the wayside.

The message I keep receiving, though, is that formation is still desired. So, I held an open meeting after the service on February 9th for anyone interested in Christian formation to brainstorm how we can offer something at Grace. “When” was the most challenging issue, and while the truth is no time will work for everybody, it seemed that no weekday time would work for even a few people; maybe two here and two there, which does not really work. “What” was a little easier. I thought maybe a two-pronged approach would cover a range of interests – one dedicated to general Christian/Church topics of interest, and the other a dedicated Bible study – and that seemed to appeal to people.

Ultimately, here is what the group came up with: general topics will be offered after the service on the 2nd Sunday of each month, and Bible study will be offered after the service on the 4th Sunday of the month. Neither needs to be led by me all the time. If you are particularly knowledgeable and passionate about a certain topic, and feel called to lead a discussion or presentation, let me know and give me some lead-time to get you scheduled.

Our first general topic session will be held after the service on March 9th, and the first topic will be on Christian Nationalism, looking specifically at the 2022 report by the House of Bishops Theology Committee titled *The Crisis of Christian Nationalism*. Attendees do not need to rush out and purchase this book, however, if you are interested, it is only 128 pages and is available through Church Publishing or Amazon.

My prayer is that we can establish some consistency with our formation, and that I can be faithful to this part of my ministry. Together, may we become more formed and faithful followers of Jesus Christ as we explore all they ways he has and continues to work in and through us.

Peace,
Fr. Brian

Ash Wednesday and the Observance of Holy Lent

Our Ash Wednesday service will be on March 5th at 6:30 p.m. If you are not comfortable driving at night, I am happy to offer Ashes to Go during the morning hours, 8:00-noon.

Once again, the *Living Compass* Lenten devotional will be available outside the church offices and in the narthex for you to utilize. May it serve as a fruitful aid in your self-reflection and fasting during this season of penitence.

Prayers of the People

Periodically, I like to check in to see if there are any names on our prayer list read during the Prayers of the People that may be removed. Often, I do not know the circumstances behind a request, which is perfectly fine, but that also means I do not know when or if circumstances have changed. So, if you notice someone for whom prayers have been offered for a while, and you know their situation has changed, simply let me know they can be taken off my list.

Again, my practice is to leave names on the list if I know the need is long-term. Names written in the prayer request notebook in the Narthex are typically for that Sunday, unless otherwise specified.

Thank you, Fr. Brian.

Don't forget! Daylight Savings Time begins on the second Sunday of March! Move your clocks ahead one hour at 2:00am on March 9th.

Server Schedule

March 2nd

Chalicerist: Carol Francis
Lector: Gail Hunt
Acolyte: Lucy Prall
Ushers: Stan Crowe & Jeff Francis

March 9th

Chalicerist: Chuck Terpening
Lector: Martha Furst
Acolytes: Lucy Prall
Ushers: Dick Hepner & Jon Watson

March 16th

Chalicerist: Chuck Breo
Lector: John Gush
Acolyte: Lucy Prall
Ushers: Stan Crowe & Jeff Francis

March 23rd

Chalicerist: Carol Francis
Lector: Phyllis Bergagna
Acolyte: Lucy Prall
Ushers: Dick Hepner & Jon Watson

March 30th

Chalicerist: Chuck Terpening
Lector: Candy Colby
Acolyte: Lucy Prall
Ushers: Stan Crowe & 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.

Treasurer's Report

Below is a comparison of the actual results for January 2025 with the January 2024 results.

	January 2025	January 2024	Difference
Total Revenue	74,238	53,754	20,484
Expenses:			
Personnel Costs	19,594	14,739	4,855
Building & Grounds	2,919	2,825	94
Other	3,086	3,699	(613)
Total Expenses	<u>25,599</u>	<u>21,263</u>	<u>4,336</u>
Gain (Loss)	48,639	32,491	16,148

January is traditionally the month when we receive the most pledge revenue. This year the amount was much more than normal. This is important this year because we will be purchasing new air conditioners this spring.

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

Bits and Pieces

ECW NEWS... All women of Grace Church are invited to the **FIRST FRIDAY** gathering on Friday, March 7th at 11:30 a.m. We meet in the undercroft for lunch. Please bring your own lunch, coffee and tea will be provided. We will continue to discuss the annual **Rummage Sale** which will be held on Friday and Saturday, **May 2nd & 3rd**. Set up will be May 1st.

We will also be discussing ideas for Grace's 175th Anniversary celebration. Please come and share your ideas. We hope you can join us for this time of fellowship!

Peace to you,

Connie B.

cburden43 @gmail.com

815-789-3181

People of Grace Breakfast Saturday, March 15th at 8:00am at Nine East Coffee Shop. All are welcome to attend.

Vestry Meeting Sunday March 16th after the 9:00am service.

Ash Wednesday Service March 5th at 6:30pm.

Do you have questions about your utility bills? On Thursday, March 6 there will be a Utility Bill Clinic sponsored by the Citizens Utility Board (CUB). During these clinics folks receive personalized one-on--one consultations with a CUB staffer to review their gas and electric bills. They can identify over usage, billing discrepancies and opportunities to tap into energy efficiency, strategies for reducing energy costs and/or clean energy programs.

The Clinic will be held on March 6, 5:30-7:30 pm at the Freeport Public Library Learning Lab (second floor). If you'd like to register for a specific time you can do so at: bit.ly/freeportubc.

For further information/questions contact Candy Colby at 815-616-8258.

March



2nd	Mark Moderow	16th	Rayma Pinney
5th	Deborah Lischwe	17th	Mary Lehnhard
9th	Becky Lafferty	25th	Cierra Mathews
10th	Chuck Terpening	26th	Lucy Prall
14th	Frances Crowe	29th	Carrie Helm
	Bob Crawford	31st	Neil Dreier

2025 Vestry

Wardens: TBD, Senior Warden
Martha Furst, Junior Warden
Vestry: Chad Enright, Deborah Lischwe,
*Shannon Lizer, *Duane Price

* new vestry members

Deadline for the April Messenger will be March 20th

- God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.

—Anonymous

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Miracles
Happen

March Newsletter