



The Messenger

November 2025

Rector's Report

Some weeks ago, I mentioned that the Diocese reached out asking if Grace Church would like to host a regional Confirmation sometime late next spring. Naturally, I said, yes.

With the vast expanse of space that comprises our diocese, not to mention its 114 parishes, it is difficult to align the needs for pastoral offices with the bishop's visitation schedule. To make those sacraments that are the duty of the episcopate more accessible, the Diocese of Chicago has been holding regional Confirmations, where a service is held in a relatively centralized location, and neighboring parishes in that region are invited to bring their candidates for Confirmation, Reception, or reaffirmation of baptismal vows.

This would be the first regional Confirmation, that I can think of, to be held way out here in the wild, wild west, so that is pretty exciting, in my opinion.

Since we have more than six months before for this regional Confirmation service, we have ample time to prepare the faithful for the bishop's visit. We might be short on confirmands – Lucy will be of age, and I believe Galena has at least one candidate – but we could potentially have several people interested in being received into the Episcopal Church.

But what do these rites mean, especially in the Church of the twenty-first century?

Confirmation is still typically regarded as a rite of passage, where one who has been baptized, likely as an infant, now expresses "a mature commitment to Christ." Often done during

a person's adolescence, though not always, they go through a time of deliberate instruction in the faith, after which they will make their public commitment to Christ, which is confirmed with the laying on of hands by a bishop.

Since it is the confirmand who is making this commitment on their own behalf, it is important that the sacrament being received is indeed their choice. For adolescent candidates, it might be the parents or grandparents who want them to be confirmed because that is just what one does at a certain age, but the sacrament finds all its meaning when it is the candidate who claims their life in Christ for themselves – something we do not get to do when we are baptized as infants.

When I was a middler in seminary, I co-taught a Confirmation course with the senior seminarian at our field education parish, and we made sure that our students understood: "This is your choice. No one else's." So, we offered to speak to any parents of kids who decided they did not, in fact, wish to be confirmed, which mercifully never happened. The thought of being a mere seminary student trying to explain these particulars to an eager parent gave me nightmares.

To be Received, then, is a special rite that happens at the same service, where those who may have been baptized and confirmed in a different denomination, wish to publicly commit themselves to the Episcopal Church. It is not technically a sacrament of the Church, but it is deemed necessary to hold lay offices within the Church, like serving on the Vestry.

It gets tricky, though, in this day and age, when church identity has become quite fluid compared to a generation or two ago. One might show up at an Episcopal Church or a Lutheran Church, or any Protestant Church, and just stick. Or not. Maybe a person will float about from one church to the next, never really identifying with one in particular. Or they might stay for decades in one congregation without ever going through any formal process of reception. Church membership simply means one

attends a specific parish and actively participates in the life of the parish.

From a practical standpoint, it can be difficult, especially in small parishes, when trying to fill lay leadership positions. A colleague of mine was quite taken aback to learn a parishioner in their parish had been attending for decades, never formally received by a bishop, yet served on the vestry multiple times. I must confess, I was a little ambivalent on that one. I am all for rules and tradition, but at the same time, that parishioner is clearly committed, seems to grasp what the Episcopal Church is about, and is willing to rise to the occasion to serve their parish. Maybe we need to consider the possibility of an ontological shift by virtue of volunteering for vestry.

The most unnerving conversation I have ever had with regards to church affiliation was at my own discernment weekend, where I was grilled for two days about why I felt called to the priesthood. My wife is Roman Catholic. "And you want to be an Episcopal priest?" Yes. "How is that even going to work?" Very carefully...?

I am a "cradle Episcopalian," baptized into the Church by my own grandfather. Naturally I have not had much interest in being anything else. Being Episcopalian has always been a personal point of pride for me, and would that more Episcopalians felt the same, the less I would have to explain what one is and how to pronounce it.

If you are like me and you love this church, if you support its mission and witness for Christ, but you have not yet taken that step to being formally received into the Church, I invite you to reach out to me for a conversation. And, if you wish to be received, or confirmed, for that matter, we can begin the necessary steps for deepening your commitment to Christ within the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement.

Blessings,
Fr. Brian

ECW First Friday Luncheon. The ladies of Grace Church (ECW) will be going out to lunch for our November gathering. Our annual holiday outing will be to the Imperial Palace on Friday, November 7th, at 11:30. Please message me if you are planning to join us as reservations will need to be made. If you need a ride, please let me know.

Peace to all,

Connie B.

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815-789-3181

Fall Getaway

Due to scheduling conflicts, Fr. Brian and Ellen will be taking their brief annual fall getaway November 13-15, which is a Thursday through Saturday, instead of going over a Sunday this year. You can still reach Fr. Brian for any pastoral emergencies during that time.

FACC Annual Hunger Luncheon – November 14

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is Nov. 16th – Nov. 22nd this year. Freeport Area Church Cooperative's major community fundraiser, the Hunger Luncheon, will be held on **Friday, November 16th, at St. Thomas Catholic Church.** Doors open at 11:30. Lunch is at 12:00. A short program will be from 12:30-1:00. Tickets are \$25. A table of 8 is \$200. If you are interested, please get in touch with Fr. Brian.

St. Andrews Sunday – November 16th

Our traditional observance of Grace's "adopted patron saint," St. Andrew, will take place on Sunday, November 16th. Piper Bill McInnes will be joining us once again for our worship that day, for which we are ever grateful. After the service, we will have our annual Scottish Tea, so please keep an eye out for a sign-up sheet for the various foods coming soon to a bulletin board near the kitchen. And don't forget to wear your festive tartans!

November



Wish These Friends a
"Happy Birthday!"

3rd	Katie Enright	11th	Diane Conroy
	Sandy Terpening	12th	Molly Doolittle
4th	Dorothy Nord	21st	Brian Dreier
6th	Richard Hepner	30th	Sonny Rogers
7th	Jackie Sigafus		



10th	Gregg & Shannon Lizer
23rd	Albert & Evelyn Appiah

Deadline for the December Messenger will be November 18th.

Grace Church News

Reminder Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, November 2nd. Don't forget to set your clocks back one (1) hour.

Musical Celebration previously announced for Sunday, November 2nd at 4:00pm has been postponed. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience, and look forward to future events.

FACC First Sunday Meal Donation is Sunday, November 2nd. Our goal is \$100 to \$125 to sponsor a meal for our usual slot of the second Thursday of each month.

FACC Donation for November is personal items.

Christian Formation, November 9th after the 9:00am service.

People of Grace Breakfast November 15th, 8:00am, at Nine East Coffee Shop. Please join us.

Come join us for our **annual St. Andrew's Day Tea** as we celebrate Scottish heritage, friendship, and community! Enjoy tea, treats, and good company as we honor St. Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland. A **sign-up sheet** will be available for those who wish to bring food, help serve, or assist with setup and cleanup. **Date:** November 16th Let's gather for warmth, laughter, and a wee bit of Scottish spirit! Any questions please reach out to Katie Enright- shore.kathryn@gmail.com or 815-291-5525

Vestry Meeting Sunday, November 23rd after the 9:00am service.

Bible Study Sunday November 30th after the 9:00am service.

Treasurer's Report

Below is an analysis comparing the actual results for the first 9 months of this year to the annual budget. At this time in the year we expect our revenue and expenses to be around 75% of the total amounts budgeted.

	9 Months Results	2025 Annual Budget	Per Cent of Budget
Total Revenue	180,991	224,682	81%
Expenses:			
Personnel Costs	112,363	148,458	76%
Building & Grounds	44,473	61,636	72%
Other	<u>20,361</u>	<u>32,300</u>	<u>63%</u>
Total Expenses	177,097	242,394	73%
Gain (Loss)	3,894	(17,712)	

Please call me if you have any questions.

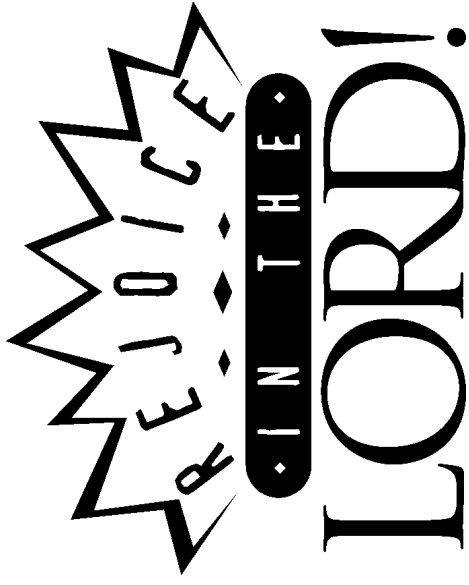
Duane Price, Treasurer

815-233-0006

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Finance Committee Report Thank you if you have returned your pledge card. And more good news...we continue to happily accept pledges. The 2026 budget will be completed and presented to the vestry for approval at the December vestry meeting.

Grace Episcopal Church
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November Newsletter