

Rectors Report 12/14/2023

Worship Report

I'm excited to report that I don't have anything HUGE to report.

For 8am, no major changes have occurred. Our attendance is consistent and, of course, has room to grow. With that said, we have a new family (the one we baptized for) who are now periodically showing up. I would classify them as visitors but they are dangerously on the cusp of being full-on members.

For the 9:30am service, attendance continues to be very healthy. We have regular participation from everyone under the sun. If we had everyone on a given Wiggle Worship Sunday, I suspect we might have somewhere in the neighborhood of 80 folks. Not bad.

The 11am timeslot is the most interesting to me right now. Ben, a young 9-year-old, is officially an acolyte and had a blast a couple of Sundays ago. I have other kids biting as well. More to follow in the coming weeks. The yuletide is, I think, going to give us a lot of data on where we are between it being Christmas and our Stewardship campaign.

Formation Report

Formation is having a lot of traction. As far as I can tell, the kids plan of "do stuff with George" has been going very well, with the service project piece happening which allowed me to train Ben and Rebecca Ho's daughter, Marian, in acolyting.

This past Sunday, we did sardines in the basement after preaching on the themes of waiting and hope. This worked well as, not only did the kids have a blast (see attached image) we solidified the importance of waiting, the reality that disappointments happen (i.e. you don't immediately get to be the one hiding) and that hope is often rewarded (everyone WILL get a chance to hide). Hokey? Possible. Fun, related to the Gospel, and were the kids begging for more when we ended? Absolutely. The teens helped out too.

Not only this, Blaise has been going to town with adult formation. He and a sizable cadre of parents were doing a bible study in the formation room as I was down with the kids. I also attended the Thursday Night Bible Study on zoom which was spectacular. I'm hoping to, with Blaise and buy-in from others, open this to the public come January with messaging around welcome everyone. I hope to have special attention to folks who bring doubt and different perspectives.

Oh! And Chloe and the teens kicked off our youth space in the basement. This seemed to work well and I think can help in transitioning kids and parents into the 11am space.

St. C.'s Outreach

The sense I get is that our outreach efforts impact everything we do at St. C.s'. I continue to meet one-on-one with parishioners and virtually all tell me how they have brought something for the toiletries chest for Housing Forward or have done a shift for the migrant closet. I continue to look largely to Paul and Emily for my cues.

Staffing

Ann is up and running! We're taking it one piece at a time, starting with the bulletins and the messenger. She's already immensely helpful as she is stating what she needs and telling me when I DON'T need to be doing something. The advice that I got is hire for your weaknesses. Ann has already begun a helpful habit of boundary-ing submissions for our materials and having an eye for details that I would otherwise miss. More personally, it's also really helpful for me to have an office buddy.

Systems Changes

Ann has a close relationship with an office supply company administrator that is based in Carol Stream. She's showed me some cost savings pieces that would decrease our reliance on Amazon and Office Max. We'll spend less money and send less of it to Jeff Bezos. We'll keep an eye on this and change back if needed. That said, here's hoping it works.

I'm also seriously considering dumping Ministry Scheduler Pro. While Ann has expertise in it, Trish has some history with it now, and I am led to believe that there are no paid services that are comparable that are better, all signs point to it being a system that is not worth the cost.

While I anticipate us using it in the coming months, my goal (unless anyone can talk me off the cliff) is to be off of MSP by the end of October/ordinary time in 2024.

Upcoming

After the holidays, there are quite a few things coming up. We have the annual meeting coming up at the end of January, with the vestry nominating committee having come up with the following names, in order of asking:

I will keep the vestry up-to-date on acceptances as they come via email.

We also have a bishop's visit of which I was notified at the end of last week coming up on February 3rd. I'm checking to see if we can invite confirmations and receptions and, if so, I'm going to figure out an Episcopal 101 class.

Current Calendar of Planned Events:

12/17 Sunday – Lessons and Carols (5 pm)

12/21 Thursday – Blue Christmas (7pm)

12/24 Sunday– Christmas Eve 4pm family service 10:30pm midnight mass

12/25 – Christmas Day 10am spoken service

01/07 – Epiphany Pageant with Baptism for Baptism of our Lord

02/04 – Bishop Visit

Late Feb/ Early March Chili cook off