

Grace Episcopal Church

Sterling, Illinois

2018

Our Hopes for a New Rector

We seek a new Rector who is:

- Spiritual and Christ-centered.
- A willing problem solver equipped to guide the Vestry in decision making.
- A receptive listener.
- Has a strong commitment to pastoral care within the parish and the greater community.
- Is able to delegate responsibility.



Challenges

In our future we see:

- An aging congregation.
- The need to attract and keep new pledging members, especially young families.
- Modernizing our worship service music, with guidance from the Diocese.
- Continuing to make our presence known throughout the community.
(Mass in the Grass, Kids' Club, VBS, Loaves and Fishes, Grace Gardens)



Ministries and Outreach

Holy Eucharist (Rite 2) at 9:00 a. m. on Sundays defines the basic life of Grace Church. An additional Eucharistic service is normally provided in the chapel on Wednesdays. Optionally, after the Sunday worship, our priest may take Communion and conduct a short service for residents of Avonlea Cottages in Sterling. Also, during the week following every other Sunday worship, a lay volunteer will visit homebound parishioners to conduct a short prayer service and administer consecrated bread and wine. Volunteers conduct Sunday school in the nursery for young children until the Offertory when they are brought into the sanctuary for the remainder of the service. A highlight of the year has been our Cinco de Mayo Eucharistic service with upbeat Spanish music and songs under the direction of Dent Davidson from the Diocesan Music Department.

We offer several spiritual growth opportunities at Grace. The Lenten retreat and our Advent retreat help us prepare for those seasons. The Saturday morning Anam Cara during Lent supports those who wish to do spiritual work together. Bible Study on Wednesday evening runs from September through May and has included both lively discussion and sober contemplation of such varied subjects as God's Old and New Covenants, the movie The Shack, and the prophecy of Isaiah.

Our energetic congregation knows how to do wonderful parties and special events. The annual ECW Ladies Tea remains a sold-out event that is open to parishioners and non-parishioners alike. Other favorite activities include Mass in the Grass (this year's Mass was officiated by our Diocesan Bishop, Jeffery Lee), the Tailgate Party, the Caroling Party and the Cookie and Pie Sales. These events draw many parishioners and their families and friends to our church.

As part of the Diocesan Thrive Program, we are in our fourth year of Kids' Club, an enthusiastic youth ministry developed internally by Grace Church to provide religious instruction during the school year to pre-school through middle school children from our parish and our community. Kids' Club is a once a month evening event with food, singing, biblical stories, arts and crafts and group games. The Rector and parish volunteers plan and supervise all Kids' Club activities. Another vital child-centered ministry is Vacation Bible School (VBS) during a week in July. In this ministry we and our Rector partner with five other dynamic churches in Sterling to serve over 100 children. We six partnering churches celebrate the end of VBS with a joint outdoor Communion service at Sterling's outdoor Grandon Civic Center.

Finally, Grace parishioners participate in the ecumenical work of the Loaves and Fishes food kitchen sponsored by The First United Methodist Church in Sterling.



Our Community

Situated along scenic Rock River in north-western Illinois, Sterling enjoys all the charms of quiet, small-town living, yet is only a two hours' drive via I-88 to bustling downtown Chicago, the location of our Diocesan Cathedral and administrative offices. Our local population is about 25,000 when combined with the town of Rock Falls, which is located on the other side of the river.

Sterling supports major hospital, clinic and rehab facilities, YMCA and YWCA organizations, an excellent primary and secondary school system with a 5A high school (1,100 enrollment), Woodlawn Arts Academy, and Sauk Valley Junior College. Our town also provides many recreational opportunities such as golfing, boating, fishing, biking, hiking and camping. We also have cultural events such as municipal band concerts, Musicfest, the fall Latin Fiesta, a Free Movies in the Park Series and various community theater productions.

Sterling is home to the international headquarters of Wahl Clipper Corporation, a global manufacturer of grooming products for the consumer and professional markets. Wahl Clipper employs about 700 people at its Sterling location with nearly 2,300 worldwide. Other notable local industries include Sterling Steel, Menk,USA, Boston Leather, Astec Screens, HALO and Franz Manufacturing.

Located in Sterling are the Dillon Home Museum, the Whiteside County Historical Society and the Lincoln Learning Center, which contain written and pictorial records of our town and the surrounding area.



Our Church

Grace Episcopal Church has served Sterling and neighboring communities for over 150 years. Our sanctuary and adjoining chapel, parish hall and kitchen, offices, restrooms, nursery, library, and upstairs classrooms and storage rooms are located in one building just a few blocks from the town center. The Rectory stands just a few yards to the north of the main building in the same block. Though erected in the late 19th century, it has been maintained and updated over time to allow for modern comforts and conveniences. Adjacent to the main building to the south is Grace House, which is currently the residence of our sexton and grounds keeper.

We maintain a professionally landscaped outdoor columbarium in front of the sanctuary as a fitting depository for the cremains of deceased parishioners and their family members. During the summer months, our Grace Gardens volunteers plant and nurture an abundant variety of colorful flowers and shrubs across the front of the main building to present a beautiful and inviting House of God for public view.

The Junior Warden is charged with the maintenance of our entire physical plant and our two houses. The Vestry considers the continual upkeep of Grace's buildings and grounds to be one of its primary responsibilities.



Our Diocese

The Episcopal Diocese of Chicago is led by Bishop Jeffrey Lee and has 123 member congregations, spreading from Lake Michigan on the east, to the Wisconsin border on the north and the Iowa border on the west. The Diocese is known for its leadership initiatives designed to support congregational vitality. To this end, the Diocese focuses its energies on four key programs: The College for Congregational Development, Fierce Conversations, Project Resource, and Living Compass. The Nicholas Center, located on the fifth floor of the Diocesan office building in downtown Chicago, provides classroom space and accommodations for these programs as well as other leadership events.



To apply for this position, please complete the Clergy Information Form for Transitions found on the Diocesan website:

<https://www.episcopalchicago.org/our-diocese/for-clergy/clergy-openings/>.

For more information about this position, please contact Andrea Mysen, Director of Ministries, at amysen@episcopalchicago.org or [847-372-1716](tel:847-372-1716).