

GRACE HAPPENINGS

THE NEWSLETTER OF

GRACE MISSION EPISCOPAL CHURCH

... A TRANSFORMATIVE MINISTRY OF THE FORGOTTEN ...

HOPE • HEALING • HEALTH

ADVENT 2015

Words of Grace

The Rev. Amanda Nickles, Vicar

Dear Ministry Partners:

Many people offer their opinions of the real meaning of Christmas...some are sentimental, saying Christmas is a family time, a time for children and so on. Others are humanistic, seeing Christmas as time to celebrate love for one's fellow man, the spirit of giving, and that sort of thing. Others are crassly hedonistic, viewing Christmas as just another excuse to party. But I'm convinced most people miss the real meaning of Christmas.

Isaiah 7:14 says, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Emmanuel." The virgin's name was Mary. Christmas offers its wonderful message. He who resided in Heaven, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, willingly descended into our world. Emmanuel. It is a Hebrew name that means literally, "God with us." It is a promise of incarnate deity, a prophecy that God Himself would appear as a human infant, Emmanuel, "God with us." This baby who was to be born would be God Himself in human form.

If we could condense all the truths of Christmas into only three words, these would be the words: "God with us." The Hope that was born that night welcomes any and all who place their faith in Him - Emmanuel, "God with us," the real meaning of Christmas.

The message that we share at Grace Mission is one of comforting encouragement and hope to know that God is, indeed, with us. Thank you for your prayers and support in bringing this message of Hope to the hearts of many who come to Grace Mission.

What a wonderful and glorious hope we have because of that first Christmas!

Pastor Amanda+

Grades, Gifts, and Gratitude

Elizabeth Crowe, Grace Children's Ministries

We ended our summer program with our two-week Reading Academy to help the children brush up on reading to get ready to start a new school year. Two of the children who attended were held back in school for reading and worked diligently in the Academy at improving their skills. I'm delighted to report both of them have an A in Reading/Language Arts on their report cards they received last week! The other wonderful news is that 54% of the children in our after-school program are on the A/B Honor Roll for the first nine weeks of school. They have adjusted to our new location at St. Michael and All Angels and, with the help of individual tutors, are staying focused on their schoolwork.

In a few weeks we'll be in the season of Advent and we are already in the midst of preparations for our Family Christmas Celebration for the children and their families. Please see the boxes in this newsletter for information about our angels placed on your church's angel tree/bulletin board and for information on joining us for worship and/or volunteering to help with the Family Celebration on Tuesday, December 15, at 5:30 p.m. at St. John's Episcopal Church. We are grateful for your help in providing a wonderful Christmas celebration for our children.

Angel Trees

Please take an angel from your church's angel tree/bulletin board and think of the joy you'll bring that child! Return unwrapped gifts to your church or to Grace Mission by **Sunday, December 6**. In lieu of or in addition to a gift, you may enclose a gift card to Walmart. These gifts will be given at our Family Christmas Celebration on Tuesday, December 15. Attach the angel to your gift(s) or clearly mark the name of the child on the gift bag. "Not Named" angels are for siblings of children in our program so we will have a gift for every child present that evening.

GRACE HAPPENS — COME AND SEE!

CORNER BREVARD AND BRONOUGH

P.O. BOX 10472, TALLAHASSEE, FL 32302

WWW.GRACEMISSION.NET

Be a Part of Amazing Grace

Lou Armesto, Volunteer Recruiter

I joined the staff part-time on April 17th as the new Volunteer Recruiter. It's been six months now and it has confirmed everything I already knew about Grace from my ten years as a volunteer. 1) Grace is a fun and fulfilling place to volunteer. With an environment as open and inclusive as Grace, every day is an adventure! 2) Grace is worthy of my time, talents, and treasure. Pastor Amanda and our Board leaders are good stewards of everything given to support our ministry, ensuring Grace continues as a beacon of God's light and love. 3) Grace is humbling. I'm never more carefree than when faced with how generous God has been to me in comparison to most of the people who come through Grace's doors.

These months have also taught me how much I didn't know! With the diversity of our volunteers comes a wealth of different skills, experiences, outlooks and interests, literally providing the fuel that makes Grace Mission run. We can't thank them enough. We have 32 different opportunities to get involved at Grace. With the holidays (and harsh winter weather) we will be busier than ever. As the Bible says, "Faith without works is dead." By yourself or as part of a group, come live your faith at Grace this holiday season.

Blessings

lou@gracemission.net

News

In April 2016, Grace Mission will celebrate 20 years of ministry. Stay tuned for more information on the celebration event, which will replace the 2016 Fall Evening of Grace.

Donations Made Easy: Save time and money by paying Grace Mission directly through PayPal or your bank account each month. Money received goes directly to helping those in need!

2015 Evening of Grace: The 6th Annual Evening of Grace gala was held on September 19, 2015 at the FSU Alumni Center. Thank you all for making it such a glorious event generating a net profit for Grace of \$23,400. Well done gala committee!

Worship! Volunteer!

Come be a part of the Grace Mission Family Christmas Celebration! We welcome you to worship with us Tuesday, December 15, at 5:30 p.m. at St. John's Episcopal Church. Sitting and worshipping with families not familiar with our Episcopal service would help in making this a special evening for them. We also need volunteers to help with this event: checking families in, setting up, serving dinner, cleaning up, or distributing gift bags. Please call Grace Mission at 224-3817 to volunteer or for additional information

Alternative Christmas Markets

Alternative Christmas Market is an object lesson in Inspired Philanthropy, the concept of being intentional about what causes and organizations you support with your time, talent and treasure. Grace Mission participates in the two Alternative Christmas Markets, each featuring "**gifts that make a difference**" from more than 30 non-profit charitable organizations. Honor those on your Christmas list who have enough already by sharing with those in need. Receive an attractive hand lettered card detailing the honorarium or memorial gift which explains exactly how the donation benefits a less fortunate person or family. It is a convenient and heart-warming shopping experience so bring a friend, stop by our table and share the tastes, sights and sounds! Admission is a non-perishable food item.

John Wesley UMC 1689 Old Saint Augustine Rd.

Saturday, Dec. 5 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 6 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Christ Presbyterian Church 2317 Bannerman Rd.

Friday, Dec. 11 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 12 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Needs

We are in need of Christmas Cards and Stamps. At Grace Mission we provide Christmas cards to our members. We also provide stamps and then mail the cards for everyone. It's a wonderful gift for people to connect or reconnect with family and friends. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Donations Needed. Please remember us when cleaning out your closets – we especially need coats and blankets for the winter! We also need T-shirts (L or XL) and men's white socks.

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