

GRACE HAPPENINGS

THE NEWSLETTER OF

GRACE MISSION EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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

HOPE • HEALING • HEALTH

SUMMER 2015

Words of Grace

The Rev. Amanda Nickles, Vicar

Dear Ministry Partners:

To whom does God offer His gift? To the brightest? The most beautiful or the most charming? No. His gift is for all of us - beggars and bankers, judges and janitors, rich and poor. All God's children.

And He wants us so badly, He'll take us in any condition - "as is" reads the tags on our collars. He's not about to wait for us to reach perfection (He knows we'll never get there)! Do you think He's waiting for us to overcome all temptations? Hardly. When we master the Christian walk? Far from it. Remember, Christ died for us when we were still sinners. His sacrifice, then, was not dependent on our performance.

Christ's love has no strings, no expectations, no hidden agendas, and no secrets. His love for us is up front and clear. "I love you" He tells us. "Even if you let me down. I love you in spite of your failures."

Why would God choose us? The answer is at once simple and profound. He chose us because He wanted to. After all, we are His. The God who created us loves us. Isn't that the message of the Bible?

That is the message we share at Grace Mission. The simple and profound truth of God's love for each person. Beggars and bankers, judges and janitors, rich and poor. All God's children. Help us to share this message to all of God's children that come to Grace Mission. We appreciate your prayers and support!

In His Name,
Pastor Amanda+

Summer Gifts

Elizabeth Crowe, Grace Children's Ministries

God gives us so many gifts – life, love, forgiveness, grace, and so much more. With summer right around the corner, I was thinking of His gift of sunshine, fireflies, the sounds of cicadas, and children playing and laughing. In June our children's summer program begins, and they are so excited about the gift of wonderful adventures planned for them.

Our program will kick off in June when the children go to New Mt. Zion AME Church's evening Vacation Bible School. The next week, ten of our children have been invited to participate in St. John's Vacation Bible School and are so excited to be going back to what they call "the Christmas Church," where they will explore how to put their faith in action and move through life with God.

Of the thirty children in our after-school program this year, seventeen qualified by participation AND behavior to go to Camp St. Michael at Camp Weed July 5-8. We will begin getting ready in May as we outfit them with used clothes donated through the year and take them shopping for any items they may still need (like underwear, shoes, and bathing suits). Eleven campers who went last year are returning and telling tall tales of adventures to the six first-timers going this year. What wonderful gifts they are receiving from our greater church community who supports them, from the camp counselors who will shepherd and love them, and from God who has provided such a beautiful peaceful place for them to go on this amazing adventure.

After camp, we have our Reading Academy at St. Michael and All Angels July 20 – 31 from 12 – 5 pm with the theme "An Ocean of Reading." After lunch they will rotate through four activity centers on Monday - Thursday: Readers Reef I, Readers Reef II, the Craft Cove, and the Ocean Lab. Fridays are the much-anticipated field trips to IMAX on July 24 to see an underwater film and to St. George Island on July 31, a first beach trip for several of them. Another gift for the children - they get to keep their books at the end of the Academy!

We need your prayers and help to show them how, through His people, God cares for them. Please prayerfully consider helping in any of these ways:

- Pray for a safe summer and that the children will grow in God's love

Continued on back page

News & Needs:

September 19, Sixth Annual Evening of Grace Fundraiser, FSU Alumni Center, cocktails, silent auction, dinner. Time to be announced.

Donations Needed—Please remember us when cleaning out your closets – we especially need coats and blankets for next winter !

Volunteers Needed - We have been short on volunteers on certain days of the week and we could really use your help. Please consider volunteering – you don't need to make a huge commitment of time – whatever you can manage is up to you. We would love for you to join us in helping those in need.

GRACE HAPPENS – COME AND SEE!

CORNER BREVARD AND BRONOUGH

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A Goodbye To Grace
Seminarian David Tremaine

Dear Grace Mission Family,

It is coming down to the end of my year here at Grace, and what a year it has been. As I sit here writing this letter I have just over eight weeks left in my time here at Grace Mission, and I am amazed at how quickly the last nine months have gone by. It has been a year filled with so much more than I could have ever asked for or imagined. A year of growth, healing, learning, loving, laughter, tears and joy. A year filled with amazing experiences, numerous challenges and unbelievable people. So many amazing people. And I know that no matter what happens, where I go, or what my ministry looks like after this year, I will carry each and every one of you with me. You have all been a part of my transformation and growth this year. You have all, through your unconditional love and support, helped carry me through this year and bring me to a new understanding of life, God, and ministry.

So as my time here winds down and I prepare to leave and move on to the next stage of my ministry, I want to say thank you. Thank you to every single person who has volunteered their time and talents here at Grace to make this place run. We would be nothing without you. You make this place work, you fill it with life, and you each bring your own unique style of loving everyone here. Thank you to all of the people who come here for meals, showers, worship, bible study, or just to drop by and say hello. There are too many people to name individually, but I carry you all with me.

I have had so many unbelievable experiences and conversations with so many different people this year either in classes or before or after meals. So many people have thanked me for listening and for being there to hear their story, but I want you all to know that I will never be able to describe the impact that each one of those interactions and each one of you has had on my life and on my heart.

Thank you to Greg, Richard, Jim, Bones and George. It has been such a blessing to be able to play music with you this year. I guarantee that there is not an Episcopal Church in the country that plays the music we play, so I am almost guaranteed to expand the musical repertoire wherever I end up. Thank you to Cathy, for putting so much love into every meal you make for the people in this community. Thank you to Donna, for your years of service to this place and your tireless efforts to help with whatever you can whenever you can. Thank you to Delois, for all of your help and support. You bring a joy and presence to this place that is palpable and is so

A Goodbye To Grace (continued)

unique to who you are. You are an inspiring presence in this place, and you have always been there to offer a hand when I have needed it. Thank you to Elizabeth Crowe, one of the hardest working and most devoted and passionate people I have ever met in my life. I have had the pleasure of working alongside you on the children's program this year and I am constantly blown away by your love and devotion to these children and to this ministry. You spend countless late night hours and day off after day off here working tirelessly to make this program run, and this community, these families and these children are so blessed by your presence in their lives.

And last, but certainly not least, thank you to Pastor Amanda, or, affectionately, PA. I don't know what you thought when I walked into your office nine months ago to sit down with you for the first time, but I know that from the moment I started here on September 2nd you have done nothing but believe in me, and that is everything. You are the heart and soul of this place, and your love for each and every person that walks through these doors is only surpassed by your love for God. You have challenged me and given me every possible opportunity for growth and gave me the opportunity to try everything, and even more importantly the permission to fail. And what I learned is that there is no such thing as failure, only endless opportunities to learn and grow. So thank you.

Thank you everyone for your love and support. I could never explain in words what this place has meant to me, but know that I will never be the same. God bless you all.

Love,
David

Summer Gifts (continued)

- Provide gift cards to Wal-Mart for camp needs
- Clean out closets: bring us bath/pool towels and pillowcases to use as suitcases
- Donate new inexpensive pillows for camp
- Make a financial donation to the Reading Academy (for books and field trips)
- Volunteer to help in any way at the Reading Academy (prepare/serve lunch; help in an activity center; help on field trip)

If you have any questions or to volunteer, email me at elizcrowe@comcast.net or call me at 850-320-2233. We appreciate the gift of your prayers and support and wish you a blessed summer.

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