

Words of Grace
The Rev. Amanda Nickles, Vicar

New Beginnings
Elizabeth Crowe, Grace Children's Ministries

Dear Ministry Partners:

We like the idea of being used by God, but often dislike the measures God takes to prepare us for service. We like the idea of doing God's work, but dislike the reality of how much God's work will cost us. Jesus told us to count the cost (Luke 14:25-33). We like the pleasure of knowing God; we dislike the pressure that comes from knowing God. Jesus compared the experience of following him to the task of carrying the cross.

What would happen if we accepted our place as Ambassadors for the Lord? Such a shift comes so stubbornly, however. We've been demanding our way and stomping our feet since infancy. Haven't we been urged to look out for number one? Make a name for ourselves? Aren't we guilty of thinking of ourselves first? What would happen if we took our places and made it a priority to serve the Lord? If we started thinking more about what God wants and not what we want?

Max Lucado shared this story from his book *"Just like Jesus."*

There's a story about a lady who had a small house on the seashore of Ireland at the turn of the century. She was quite wealthy but also quite frugal. The people were surprised, then, when she decided to be among the first to have electricity in her home.

Several weeks after the installation, a meter reader appeared at her door. He asked if her electricity was working well, and she assured him it was. "I'm wondering if you can explain something to me," he said. "Your meter shows scarcely any usage. Are you using your power?"

"Certainly," she answered. "Each evening when the sun sets, I turn on my lights just long enough to light my candles, then, I turn them off."

She's tapped into the power but doesn't use it. Her house is connected but not altered. Don't we make the same mistake? We, too - with our souls saved but our hearts unchanged - are connected but not altered. Trusting Christ for salvation but resisting transformation. We occasionally flip the switch, but most of the time we settle for shadows.

Think carefully about the paths that your feet walk on.

Always choose the right ways. Proverbs 4:26 (NIRV)

With August here, we've just wrapped up our children's summer program. The first week in July, fourteen children enjoyed the beauty and fun of Camp Weed with all that offered – kayaking, swimming, rock wall climbing, archery, arts and crafts, and a fantastic Christian Education program. They basked in the love of Jesus and their counselors and, as every year, were not ready to come home. The last week in July we held our Reading Academy, "The Pollinators," where they read and learned about the wonderful way God created pollinators who make it possible for plants and trees to produce food for us. They enjoyed activities in the Garden Lab where they transferred pollen with their craft bee from a flower to a hive, did the bee waggle dance, and played the role of a mother bat trying to determine by smell which bat box contained her baby bat. They were so excited to tell Pastor Amanda that butterflies taste with their feet, bats are not birds, honeybees "talk" to each other, and so many more things they had learned!

August 3rd, Pastor Amanda blessed backpacks loaded with school supplies and soon the children and I will be starting a new year of school and Grace Mission programs. It is a time of new beginnings for everyone, both for the children and for Grace Mission. In July, our children's program moved to the Episcopal University Center (EUC) at FSU, where we are blessed to still be in an Episcopal space and to have easy access to and for our university volunteers. It is also an opportunity for EUC students to engage with us, joining our children for dinner, as well as to come tutor the children. We have ten new elementary school children registered to begin with us this fall, replacing three who moved and seven who graduated and are moving on to middle school.

Our graduates and their families are eager to stay connected to Grace Mission and we do not want to lose touch with these children and families with whom we have developed close relationships. It's a critical time in their lives when they need to think carefully and make wise choices to stay on the right path. We are in the process of praying about,

Words of Grace (continued)

What would happen if we left the light on? What would happen if we not only flipped the switch but lived in the light? What changes would occur if we set about the task of dwelling in the radiance of Christ?

No doubt about it: God has ambitious plans for us. The same One who saved your soul longs to remake your heart. His plan is nothing short of a total transformation!

We share this message with each person who comes to Grace Mission. It's in our tag line, "A transformative ministry of the forgotten." Maybe it's a message you need to hear as well. Maybe God has been tugging at your heart to carry the cross. Gotten any slivers lately? Paul reminds us in the book of Romans, "He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son" (Romans 8:29).

Thank you for all of your support and encouragement. We can always use volunteers for any number of tasks. Great opportunities to help someone or to work together on a project might be waiting just around the corner. Please consider volunteering and becoming part of this incredible ministry.

Faithfully in Christ,
Pastor Amanda+

I want to give a huge shout-out **Thank You** to my entire staff, Board members and a host of volunteers who stepped up and cared for Grace Mission in my absence. I could not have taken this necessary time to recover from hip replacement surgery without the dedication of all the incredible people who are Grace Mission!

News & Needs:

September 24—Blues & BBQ, 6:00 p.m., American Legion Hall at Lake Ella, music at 7:00 p.m. featuring Brett Wellman and the Stone Cold Blues Band. \$10 admission, \$8 suggested meal donation.

Donations Needed—We especially need men's undershirts and underwear (M, L, XL XXL), socks, disposable razors and deodorant. Please also remember us when cleaning out your closets for coats and blankets for the winter and gently used items for children's summer camp next year!

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.

New Beginnings (continued)

discerning, and designing a program for these middle school children and envision having them join the other children for our Thursday worship as well doing off-site fun activities. We need people who would be interested in helping mentor and walk down the right path with them. It could make a huge difference in the outcome of their lives! If you are interested in helping shape the future for a child, or for more information please contact me at elizcrowe@comcast.net or text or call 850-320-2233.

Thank you for your support and prayers,
Elizabeth

In Appreciation of Cathy Mitchell

Dear Mrs. Cathy,

I am writing to thank you for the opportunity to serve those who are often forgotten in society: the homeless, poor, underemployed, addicted and people with AIDs at Grace Mission. Serving with the needy has been an enjoyable learning experience. I've learned that they're not so different from me. Even though their lives are hard, most have a good sense of humor. I've learned that through talking with and listening to them. They are good people; they just are struggling because they're lacking a job or a home to live in. I'm now less likely to judge people for how they look. Serving at Grace has led me to be more empathetic now.

I learned many things working with you: one of which is that I learned how to clean tables and chairs without bleaching my pants. I also learned how to hand-wash dishes in a sink. A specific thing that I learned was how to cut and put pie on the carts to be taken and eaten. I've also taken on new responsibilities after each meal: taking out the trash and recycling.

Working here has made me learn that homeless people aren't just bums who sit on street corners asking for money. Being around the people at Grace Mission has made me see the value of helping others.

This experience that you have provided for me has been great. I wanted to thank you with the entirety of my soul. I hope this job has given you as many good things to look back on as it has with me. Thank you for teaching me so many things that I will need in life. Your helpfulness is a gift I will always treasure. Thank you for being such a wonderful person and drilling into my head how to be a good young man.

God Bless You Now and Always,
Pierce Jackson
Member, St. John's Episcopal Church

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