

**GRACE HAPPENINGS**  
THE NEWSLETTER OF  
**GRACE MISSION EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
HELP • HEALING • HOPE

**ADVENT 2017**

***Words of Grace***

*The Rev. Amanda L. Nickles, Vicar*

Dear Ministry Partners;

Christmas means that Immanuel has come - that God is with us (Matthew 1:23). It means that our sordid, failure-fraught past can be defeated and changed by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and His victorious resurrection. It means that we can be brought into God's family, heirs of God and citizens of Heaven. Christmas means that God comes into the night of our suffering and sorrow, saying, "I am with you always" and, "I will give you rest" (Matthew 28:20; 11:28).

This is the most important message of Christmas. The prophets wrote of it, the Psalmists sang of it, the apostles rejoiced and built their hopes on it, and the Epistles are filled with it. Christ's coming in the flesh - His invading the world, His identifying Himself with sinful men and women - is the most significant fact of history.

What an incredible truth! Think of it: The God of the universe came down from Heaven that first Christmas night and took human form! If you want to know what God is like, then take a long look at Jesus Christ because He is God in human flesh. In Him were displayed not only the perfections that had been exhibited in the creation, such as wisdom, power and majesty, but also such perfections as justice, mercy, grace and love. What a wonderful and glorious hope we have because of that first Christmas!

Each day at Grace Mission we share the wonderful and glorious hope we have to those that are struggling, those in sorrow, doubt and pain, to those that have never felt a warm embrace, a kind word, or an act of love. We see so many that have deep wounds, have suffered broken promises, are angry, bitter, and disappointed. But each day brings a new hope as we are reminded, "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). I would encourage you to keep in mind all those people around us who are trapped in a cycle of poverty - the poor, the homeless, and those with medical or mental issues. They too, need to be given hope.

Please remember Grace Mission in your prayers and in your generous Christmas giving this hopeful season. Make this Christmas one of "exceedingly great joy" for someone who might be lost and is in desperate need to hear about the wonderful and glorious hope we have in Jesus Christ.

May His light shine in your life this Christmas season!

Pastor Amanda+

P.S. We are having a very difficult financial year and your generous financial support would be greatly appreciated.

***SOARing this Season***

*Elizabeth Crowe, Grace Children's Ministries*

"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." Genesis 8:22 (NIRV)

I always look forward to the change in seasons and am delighted that Fall is finally here! I take comfort in knowing the rhythm of the earth and the church don't change and in knowing what I can look forward to each season. In a similar way, our Grace Mission children take comfort in knowing the rhythm of our program and what they can look forward to each year with us.

Although they aren't necessarily delighted to be back in school, they are glad to be back in our After-School Program where they get help with homework, reading, and skills, have enrichment programs and activities, and enjoy a hot nutritious dinner before being bussed home each evening. We have a new name too! S.O.A.R. is our program for elementary school students - Success, Opportunity, Academics, and Relationships. Our goal, as always, is to help them become/remain academically proficient, be on a path of continuous improvement, and to SOAR to success. Through providing academic support and opportunities to help children be successful in school and in life, we continue to build relationships with the children and their families. You are on this journey with us too through the support you graciously give us through your prayers and donations.

You were right there with us at our Blessing of the Backpacks as the children received new backpacks and school supplies, thanks to your donations. In addition to getting physically ready for school, they started their mental school journey that day as they made their Prayerful Promise for the year. Promises ranged from being on the A/B Honor Roll, to reading two books a week and to "focusing

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***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 3**. In lieu of or in addition to a gift, you may enclose a gift card to Walmart. Attach the angel to your gift(s) or clearly mark the name of the child on the gift bag. "Teen Girl" and "Teen Boy" angels are for siblings of children in our program so we will have a gift for every child present that evening. These gifts will be given at our Family Christmas Celebration on Tuesday, December 12.

CORNER BREVARD AND BRONOUGH



P.O. Box 10472, TALLAHASSEE, FL 32302

## Notes from the Other Priest Pastor Jenni

It is hard to believe that we are looking toward Christmas and the end of 2017! Beginning this fall, we rebranded our Middle School program: LAUNCH (Learning, Academics, Unique, Character). Our philosophy for the program has also changed, as we are working on character growth, personal responsibility, and future goal setting. It has always been our belief that exposing these young people to experiences and opportunities outside of their school and neighborhood will only serve to grow a wider world view. By showing the world beyond their limited borders, we want to help grow more engaged, more responsive, and more empathetic young adults. One of the most exciting facts about our LAUNCH students is that they are all on the A/B honor roll at Griffin Middle School and they couldn't be prouder of their academic talents!

So, we have been working on some really exciting things in the last few weeks. The LAUNCH students are working on an extracurricular project on the Civil Rights Movement. We want them to be able to do a research project, take notes, and present in public. In support of this project, the LAUNCH students went to see *Changing America: The Emancipation Proclamation* at the Old State Capitol Museum. They heard the "I Have A Dream" speech delivered by Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1963. Additionally, the LAUNCH students have been reading, as a group, the young adult novel *As Brave As You* by Jason Reynolds. The students selected this book and have been enjoying it as we read.

There are many adventures that we have planned for them in the coming months, including viewing the new movie *Marshall* about Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, a trip to Florida Caverns at Marianna, a trip out to the Tallahassee Museum, and more epic bowling!

This holiday season, Grace Mission hopes to make this a Christmas to remember for our LAUNCH students. It will be through your support of our Christmas Angel project that we can make this a reality. Thank you so much for your continued care for all the ministries at Grace Mission and in particular, your support of the children's and youth ministries.

### New Advisory Board Members

Please join us in welcoming our new Advisory Board members, Tracy Sumner and Joe McCann.

Tracy is a lawyer with 26 years of experience. She is currently employed with the Florida House of Representatives as the Policy Chief of the Criminal Justice Subcommittee. Tracy is a member of the Episcopal Church of the Advent, where she serves on the vestry. Tracy is the mother of three—Jake, Justice and Olivia.

Joe served in the U.S. Navy and is a retired broker of insurance, financial services and securities. His prior experience was in the fields of advertising and communications. Joe and his late wife moved from Connecticut to Tallahassee upon retirement to be near their two sons and their families. Joe is a member of Holy Comforter Episcopal Church.

### Soaring this Season (Continued)

more on my school work." They are making progress towards their goals and I'm eager to see how high they can soar!

Another beat in the rhythm of the year the children look forward to is our Family Christmas Celebration at St John's Episcopal Church. Their entire family is invited to attend and all children go home with wrapped gifts for Christmas morning. While giving their wish lists, a child asked if we would be going to the "pretty church" again this year. When told we were, she said she was glad because she heard the angels sing there (the St John's Choir). We invite you to join us for worship and to hear the angels sing at 5:30 pm on Tuesday, December 12, at the pretty church, 211 N. Monroe Street.

### Worship! Volunteer!

We would love for you to be a part of the Grace Mission Family Christmas Celebration. We welcome you to worship with us on Tuesday, December 12, at 5:30 pm at St. John's Episcopal Church. Sitting and worshipping with families not familiar with our Episcopal service would help them navigate the service and make this a special evening for them. We also need volunteers for 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 Market

Grace Mission is an agency that is represented in the John Wesley UMC Alternative Christmas Market. This market features "gifts that make a difference" from more than 30 non-profit charitable organizations. Honor those on your Christmas list who have enough by sharing with those in need. It is a convenient and heart-warming shopping experience! Admission is a non-perishable food item.

### John Wesley UMC, 1689 Old Saint Augustine Rd.

Saturday, December 2 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Sunday, December 3 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

### News

**2018 An Evening of Grace:** Mark your calendars for **April 14, 2018 when An Evening of Grace will again present "Cheeseburgers in Paradise."** In a casual and laid-back nod to Jimmy Buffett, the Woman's Club of Tallahassee will be transformed into a beachy Key West setting featuring a cash bar, cheeseburgers and the fixin's, music, dancing, and one major exciting raffle to be given away at the event.

The **2017 Blues & BBQ** was a success generating over \$4,500 to benefit Grace Mission. Thanks to all.

### Needs

**Children:** Wrapping paper, bags, tape, and gift wrap volunteers for gifts for 80+ children.

**Adults:** Christmas cards and stamps so that members can connect or reconnect with family and friends, opening doors of reconciliation and forgiveness.

**Christmas Dinners:** Volunteers needed for the children's dinner December 12 and the adult dinner December 21.

**Donations:** When cleaning out your closets, remember we especially need coats, blankets, and sweaters for the winter! We also need T-shirts (L or XL) and men's white socks.

GRACE MISSION EPISCOPAL CHURCH

GRACEMISSION@GRACEMISSION.NET

850-224-3817

WWW.GRACEMISSION.NET