

GRACE HAPPENINGS

THE NEWSLETTER OF

GRACE MISSION EPISCOPAL CHURCH

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH HELP • HEALING • HOPE

SPRING 2019

Words of Grace

The Rev. Amanda L. Nickles, Vicar

Dear Ministry Partners;

After thoughtful prayer, I thought it might be a good idea to share the mission and vision of Grace Mission. I have had these thoughts rattling around for some time and have been asked several times, 'Who are we?' (Grace Mission). So I want to articulate our mission and vision.

Jesus reminds us that the 'poor will always be among us' and that captures the mission and vision of Grace Mission. As an incarnational ministry and a ministry of presence within the greater church and larger Tallahassee community, we focus first on the Gospel. (NB – Let us take a step back and ponder what incarnation means, in the theological sense. Incarnation means to take on flesh, specifically God taking on human flesh in the manner of Jesus Christ to walk among and bring salvation to God's people. When thinking about incarnation at Grace Mission, this is done through walking close with God's people, the broken and misheard, the lost and lonely. In that walk we mirror the love God has for God's people as we treat them as Christ has treated us. We give flesh to Jesus' word, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Incarnational ministry is also done without ego. It isn't done for a shiny prize. Incarnational ministry, as it is lived at Grace Mission, is done so that all people will know that God's first language is love and that love is given freely and generously.)

Although a cliché, sometimes the response to what we do and why we do it needs to be, 'What Would Jesus Do?' Everything else is secondary to this mission and vision for Grace Mission. As we read in Acts 2 beginning in the 43rd verse, we see what life is like among the Lord's followers. In these passages we hear the message of fellowship, teaching, generosity, kindness, grace, sharing lives, with the primary focus on relationships and helping one another. As an integrated and

diverse church, Grace Mission is an Acts 2 church. As the boundaries of societal life continue to get further separated by the 'have and have nots,' it is more and more imperative as Christians to live into and through our Baptismal Covenant (Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? BCP p.305); to meet people at the margins of society; and to step in the 'gap' if you will to help where needed. The mission and vision of Grace Mission is not a corporate model or even a traditional model of the church. It is an Incarnational Gospel model for Grace Mission. This incarnational model focuses on a holistic approach to help those in need (help and healing) while always praising God (hope). We are called to be Christ's Ambassadors to the world. And, of course we do this by embracing and helping others in the love of Christ.

Thank you all for your prayers and continued support for this incredible Incarnational Gospel model—Grace Mission!

In His Name,

Rev. Amanda L. Nickles+

10th Annual An Evening of Grace

Thank you to everyone who supported and attended the 10th annual Grace Mission gala "Benefit on the Bayou."

Everyone had a wonderful time and the evening was a tremendous success. Special thanks to John "JB" Babich, Acme Rhythm & Blues, Fit-to-Eat Catering, Southern Wine and Spirits, and the many volunteers who helped make the night so special. This event netted over \$39,000 to support the ministries of Grace Mission. From all of us, thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



### *Soaring into Summer*

*Dawn Adams, Director of Family and Children Services*

The S.O.A.R. children have wrapped up the spring semester with a renewed spirit and love of learning through perseverance, motivation, and self-discipline. The children focused on reading above their accelerated reader level, improving phonics and comprehension by dictionary challenges. In addition, many of our students embraced writing lessons by practicing paragraph topics, essay, poems, and speeches. Summer is here! The Friends of the Earth Reading Academy will be held for our S.O.A.R. students from June 17th-June 21st. Volunteer opportunities are available for this exciting literacy week focused on environmental awareness! We are planning a field trip to a local park and beach, as well as learning from local organizations, such as Re-Think Energy Florida and FSU Sustainable Campus. The children will also enjoy an informative science-focused event as they travel to Outer Space during Camp Weed in July. With your support, we can provide educational opportunities to our students that will have valued impact engaging them in their responsibilities and accountability to the world around them. Come S.O.A.R. with us this summer by contacting Dawn Adams, [dawn@gracemission.net](mailto:dawn@gracemission.net), or by phone (850) 320-2233.

### *Upcoming Event*

Join us on August 24, 2019 for a night of fun at Grace Mission's annual fundraiser, "Blues & BBQ." Party with local favorite Blues group, Brett Wellman and the Stone Cold Blues Band. Doors at the American Legion Hall (229 Lake Ella Dr.) open at 6:00 p.m. and the band begins playing at 7:00 p.m. \$10 admission fee at the door or buy tickets at your church or online at [gracemission.net](http://gracemission.net). Optional dinner is \$8 (dinner tickets sold at the event on-

### *Needs*

Scholarship donations are needed for children to attend summer camp. Please make checks payable to Grace Mission, memo line - Children & Families Program and indicate for:

Camp Weed - \$350  
Summer Reading Camp - \$100

### *From the Other Priest's Desk*

*The Rev. Dr. Jenni Liem*

I am sitting in the youth room at Grace Mission on the last day of the LAUNCH after school program for this school year. When the students came in this afternoon, they were asked to write a short essay about themselves. The goal is to get them to articulate how they are great, smart, and successful and to write a letter to their future selves. I want them to think about this question, "What kind of person am I?"

This is a unique group of students. They are challenging and diverse and sensitive and lovely. They come with baggage and brokenness and struggles. However, all that stuff isn't the sum total of who they are, and my hope through the time we have spent together in the LAUNCH program is that they can see themselves with a clearer vision. Kera is an artist, Tonineshia is a leader, Conner is thoughtful, Thomas is a lovable scoundrel, Kayla is live wire. Each of them is their own person and collectively they are delight.

As we look forward to the next academic school year, we will be facing and visioning for transitions. Three of our students will be moving up to the 9th grade (yea for High School). One of our discernment conversations circles around inviting these three to become junior mentors to the S.O.A.R. program. It will be exciting to see how they will step into dynamic leadership. The goal of all of our after school programs is to see these young people develop a strong desire for learning and set and accomplish goals that will put them in college. By asking them to stretch these leadership muscles in working with the S.O.A.R. program, we are assisting them in setting their sail toward that college goal.

So the answers to the question, "What kind of person am I?" looked like this: Tonineshia – I am a person who finishes school, so my grandparents will be proud; Kayla – I am a person with a good heart; Thomas – I am a smart person, but not all the time; Conner – I am a person who is empowered to never give up; Kera – I am a person who solves problems. Pretty impressive!

**GRACE MISSION EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

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