

GRACE HAPPENINGS

THE NEWSLETTER OF

GRACE MISSION EPISCOPAL CHURCH

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH HELP • HEALING • HOPE

SUMMER 2019

Words of Grace

The Rev. Amanda L. Nickles, Vicar

Dear Ministry Partners;

Several years ago I had a seminarian intern helping me at Grace Mission. I asked him what his impressions were of Grace Mission after he had been here several months and he replied, "It's a place that's wonderfully uncomfortable." I thought his response was so poignant and I began thinking how 'wonderfully uncomfortable' Jesus, through His parables and commands, can make us think and feel.

So what is it that God asks of us?

One of the things is to be more generous in our judgments of others, for we possibly can't know all there is to know about another. This generosity comes from a degree of humility, recognizing that while we work as partners with God, we are not God, and it's not for us ultimately to judge another.

But it's so easy to judge others isn't it? Again, the 'wonderfully uncomfortable' part is not to judge others even though we've done it for years.

Like humility, generosity comes from seeing that everything we have and everything we accomplish comes for God's grace and God's love for us. It also comes from realizing that we could not be alive, nor could we accomplish anything, without the support, love and generosity of all the people who have helped us to become the people we are today.

Learning gratitude and to be generous to others is or can be a 'wonderfully uncomfortable' experience. We hear about the suffering in the world but we become paralyzed to help or chose not to help. We all have a natural desire to help and to care, and we simply need to allow ourselves to give from our love and do what we can to help.

Perhaps the ultimate expression of seeing with the eyes of the heart is when we are able to see each other as God sees us – not our earthly human bodies but the divine light that shines through each person. We would look at one another and see the beauty of God, and we would treat each other with appropriate reverence and awe. What can be 'wonderfully uncomfortable' is when we suddenly discover the divine shines through each person that was thoroughly unpromising, unlikely, and improbable. We begin to see no one is a totally hopeless case.

God does not give up on any one of us! The uncomfortable part is when we acknowledge to ourselves that we haven't seen people this way (or maybe haven't seen that in yourself) but the wonderful part is beginning to see everyone (including yourself) as your brother and sister in Christ no matter how different they may be from you. As we begin to look for the light of God in people, an incredible thing happens. We find it more and more in people – all people!

Join us at Grace Mission and be 'wonderfully uncomfortable' – love incarnated in the harsh reality that forms the ordinary life setting of so many of God's children. Allow God to draw you into the 'wonderfully uncomfortable' places – who knows – you may discover yourself.

Thank you for your prayers and financial support!

Faithfully,

Pastor Amanda+

S.O.A.R.'s Flight Itinerary

Dawn Adams, Director of Family and Children Services

In the Spring of 2019, Grace Mission's S.O.A.R. children experienced success by learning how to use the dictionary, telling time, completing homework, overcoming fears, learning foundational skills, for example; practice, study, and perseverance. Opportunities and partnerships by college volunteers from the Department of Leadership and Social Change, FSU Sustainable Campus, College of Social Work, and College of Medicine Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences, FSU Black Excellence, FSU Caribbean Student Organization, and more helped to provide incredible learning experiences for the children. Academics were a primary focus as we continued to teach the children through homework and skills-building activities. We paid special attention to help them overcome their frustration by encouraging follow-through and teaching them where to seek additional knowledge. This approach sparks the child's curiosity and the love for learning takes flight. Grace Mission helped the children through positive relationships, social skills, and building friendships along with teamwork; but most importantly our relationship with Jesus and loving one another.

Summer Reading Academy titled, 'Friends of the Earth' shared lessons on climate control, global warming, carbon emissions, sustainability, recycling, pollution, and

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S.O.A.R.'s Flight Itinerary (continued)

how God calls us to be good stewards of the Earth. Children received lessons from Climate Citizens Lobby, met with Charlotte Stuart-Tilley, a climate control youth advocate, environmental attorney Susan Stephens, Sustainable Tallahassee, FSU Sustainable Campus, Hot Tamales, and more. The week ended with a fun visit to Wakulla Springs.

Camp Weed Outer Space Camp was a huge success with eight students attending camp this year. They enjoyed swimming, archery, sports, and kayaking. My heart was warmed when we picked them up from camp during chapel worship and we were able to share in the Eucharist and watch them sing and dance the youth camp songs. They received so many hugs goodbye from friends they had made at camp and from the counselors. You could just feel the energy and support that they had experienced all week long.

All of these gifts of joy and assistance the children received are made possible through your support, passion and generosity to serve others by giving selflessly which makes an impact and a difference in the lives of our children every day. Thank you!

The new school year is gearing up with our upcoming open house in which 27 children (so far!) will receive backpacks to be successful in the school year. In addition, we are providing to the teachers extra supplies much needed for the school year. The backpacks and supplies were provided through collaborative efforts from our ministry partners and community members. In addition, a special offering of 'Fill the Gap' backpacks will be provided by Holy Comforter Episcopal Church. Thank you!

Recruitment is ongoing for new 1st-4th graders and volunteer opportunities begin September 17th. If you are interested in learning more about how you can help our children and family programs, please contact me at 850-320-2233 or dawn@gracemission.net. We'd love to have you join us this Fall. Thank you for your blessings!

Sincerely,

Dawn Adams, Director of Family and Children Services

Come S.O.A.R. with us during Grace Mission's children's programs by providing success, opportunity, academics, and relationships!

Grace Mission Position Available

Bus driver needed for the Grace Mission After School children's program. Hours are 2:30pm to 6:30pm – Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday approximately 4 hrs per day or 12 hours per week, \$10.00/hour. If interested call 850-224-3817 This is a paid staff position.

Thanks from Pastor Amanda

I give thanks for my incredible staff that did such an amazing job while I was off on an extended medical leave – well done!

Thank you to Holy Comforter Church, especially Julian Chester, for providing great looking backpacks and school supplies for the children attending our SOAR Afterschool Program.



Julian Chester is shown with Dawn Adams

Goodbye to Shauna Allen

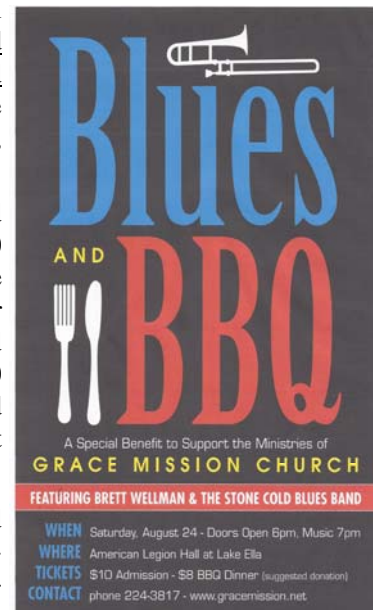
On a sad note, Shauna Allen the Administrative Assistant/Volunteer Coordinator at Grace Mission has moved on to pursue a full-time career. She did a remarkable job at Grace Mission and will be truly missed! As of this printing, we haven't found her replacement, but stay tuned.

Grace Mission Blues and BBQ Fundraiser

Join us along with local favorite Brett Wellman and the Stone Cold Blues Band for a fun night at The American Legion Hall, 229 Lake Ella Drive.

Doors open at 6:00 pm and the band begins at 7:00 pm. \$10.00 entrance fee (purchased at the door or through local churches) and optional dinner for \$8.00 (Pulled BBQ pork, baked beans, potato salad, dessert and tea).

This year the money raised will go to update our shower room as we are in desperate need of a handicapped shower stall. We look forward to seeing you there. Thank you for your support.



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