**GRACE MISSION**

**Episcopal Church**

***…a transformative ministry of the forgotten***

Dear Ministry Partners,

This is from a wonderful section on God’s love from the book *Embracing the Love of God* by James Bryan Smith:

“I have come to believe that God is madly in love with us. God loves us with a passionate love. It is too great for us to comprehend; we do not have the words to describe it fully. It is too vast to grasp completely. But we can know it. And we can feel it. It is in his hands as he holds us. It is in his gentle words as he comforts us. It is written all over his face” (Numbers 6:23-26).

And yet, many of us feel alienated from God. We are a technologically advanced society, but our souls are sick. One of the most difficult Christian doctrines to believe is the incredible value of human beings. It is difficult for many of us to accept God’s love, to believe that God looks upon us and smiles. It is hard, noted William Blake, *to bear the beams of God’s love.* What we long to know is that we are loved. To be more specific, we hunger to know that we are accepted as we are, forgiven for all we have done, and cared for by a gracious, loving God. When we know this, we walk away well.

When this love begins to penetrate our hearts, it will naturally flow out to those around us. Loving one another will be less difficult and more natural. When we realize we have been accepted as we are, we are enabled to accept others as they are. When we grasp that we have been forgiven for all that we have done, we find that we are empowered to forgive others for what they have done. When we comprehend that we are valued and cared for by God, we are provided the means to value and care for others.

Love comes from one source: God. *We love*, said John, *because God first loved us* (1 John 4:19). And when that love is known and felt by us, it affects how we view ourselves and, ultimately, how we view one another.

Our goal at Grace Mission is for people to know the love of God and walk away well. For them to hear God’s gentle voice calling to them

“I love you…. I love you…I love you…”

Thank you for your love and support. May you be filled with the fullness and love of God!

Pastor Amanda+

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