

GRACE HAPPENINGS

THE NEWSLETTER OF

GRACE MISSION EPISCOPAL CHURCH

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH HELP • HEALING • HOPE

LENT 2019

Words of Grace

The Rev. Amanda L. Nickles, Vicar

Dear Ministry Partners:

Share the Love event! Don't you love that slogan? It is an ingenious marketing idea for a well-known car dealership. Additionally, 'Share the love' sounds like it applies to a church or a not-for-profit doesn't it? It ties in beautifully with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's message for the church, "**The Way of Love.**" In Curry's recent visit to Tallahassee, I had the pleasure of hearing him talk about 'The Way of Love' and how it is the center of the Gospel message. He said, "'The Way of Love' is unselfish, compassionate, and a sacrificial self-less love. This love seeks the good and welfare of others."

I believe each of us 'share the love' by caring and helping everyone have enough to eat and clothes to wear, helping disenfranchised children graduate High School, building bridges when we volunteer together, and embracing diversity and respecting our differences. When we 'share the love' and help everyone feel safe, wanted, loved and cared for then we truly begin to model 'The Way of Love.' Let me share how Grace Mission is walking in 'The Way of Love.'

Background information is important to put what we do in perspective:

The Tallahassee 'Promise Zone' was created as a roadmap for the most challenged areas of the city. Grace Mission, a 23+ year old mission, is located in this 'Promise Zone' (Frenchtown is a neighborhood largely abandoned and under a constant threat of gentrification); providing many services to those experiencing homelessness, poverty, hunger and addiction. In Frenchtown, 44% of the households earn less than \$15,000 per year, according to an independent feasibility study of Tallahassee's CRA districts. Feeding America, reports Leon County has more residents living in poverty than any other zip code in the State of Florida. Practically, this means, one in every four city residents is living below the national poverty line. In addition, one in every four children will go hungry in Leon County. Let those numbers sink in for a moment. United Way recently released a statewide report (ALICE) on the working poor and it shows more Florida families are struggling to pay for basic needs and are unable to shoulder and unexpected emergency. People are living on the fine edge of poverty.

For more than 23 years, Grace Mission has provided *help, healing and hope* to the unwanted, unloved and uncared for in Tallahassee. We provide help through a hot meal, clean clothes, showers, life-saving prescription medication, and many other services along with a 12 Step Recovery service, recovery meetings, and an active weekly Bible study, and Morning Prayer every Wednesday. Additionally, we provide

a vibrant, Gospel-centered worship on Sunday. As people experience the spirit of belonging and acceptance, healing and hope is restored in their lives.

Many of you are '*sharing the love*' at Grace Mission through your time, talent, and treasure. Thank you to everyone who contributed to Grace Mission this past year. We could not '*walk in the way of love*' and continue all the wonderful work and ministry we do at Grace Mission without our volunteers (20,000 volunteer hours in 2018 alone). Your contributions in 2018 helped us to bring *help, healing and hope* for many people and children in need:

- We provide a church home to many that feel unwanted in other area churches and unwanted in the larger community
- We baptized 13 adults
- We hosted four free health clinics and gave out 40 free flu shots partnering with FSU Medical School
- We had the Free Clothing Giveaway once a Month
- We provided free laundry service once a week for those attending worship
- We hosted four free mobile food pantries partnering with Second Harvest
- We served over 40,000 meals
- We held Tuesday night Recovery Meeting and 12 Step/ Evening Prayer Service
- We held Wednesday Morning Prayer and Bible Study
- We distributed 350 gifts donated by angels from all over our community to children at the Family and Children Christmas service partnering with St. John's Episcopal Church
- We sent our children to Camp Weed with new clothes and shoes for the entire three day camp experience
- We sponsored the Reading Academy (a week long intensive learning and reading enrichment program about Forests)
- We gave away new free backpacks and school supplies for children in our program
- We conducted numerous field trips for the youth in our program to broaden their world
- We gave lots of hugs, said many prayers and words of encouragement throughout the year to the many that come to Grace Mission.

While all of this life giving and Gospel inspired work continues, the yearly contribution by the Diocese of Florida to Grace Mission has been significantly reduced. Grace Mission will receive \$38,500 less from the Diocese in 2019. This is a devastating reduction for a struggling and financially vulnerable city mission.

Grace Mission is committed to raising money to support ministry. We continue to raise between 30-40% of our income each year through fundraisers. This is a reflection of

Words of Grace (continued)

the dedication and commitment of all the volunteers, sponsors, staff and donors who 'share the love' by helping the most vulnerable people in society.

I am appealing to you for financial help for Grace Mission to continue our 'Walk in the Way of Love.'

Each day at Grace Mission we share the wonderful and glorious hope we have in Jesus Christ for those who are struggling, those in sorrow, doubt and pain, for those who have never felt a warm embrace, a kind word or an act of love. We see so many brothers and sisters with deep wounds, who have suffered broken promises, are angry, bitter, and disappointed. However, each day brings a new hope as we are reminded, "The Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Please keep us in prayer and help us to Share the Love by Walking in the Way of Love.

Many blessings to you in 2019

Rev. Amanda L. Nickles

Congratulations to Ke'marion Bostic!

We were excited this January 2019, to celebrate with Grace Mission S.O.A.R. student Ke'marion Bostic who was honored as a Martin Luther King, Jr. "Dreamer and Doer." Ke'marion has been mentored by Grace Mission's after-school program, his family church, and his parents to be a kind and loving young man. Ke'Marion is described as being friendly, compassionate, fun to be around, and an all-around great guy who stands up for the underdog. He is an excellent student role model, enjoys playing the drums and baseball, and dreams to serve his community as a Firefighter or State Trooper. Grace Mission's staff and volunteers are very proud of him and all of our students that are growing and developing into loving and wise young individuals that will pursue their dreams. The relationships that are forming between our church and students are filled with love through support, conversations, attention, resources, care, and encouragement. Your efforts to support the S.O.A.R. and LAUNCH programs throughout the year are greatly appreciated



Thank You!!

A special thank you to all the volunteers and helpers who made both our Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations/dinners such wonderful events! Everyone who attended was so appreciative and thankful for your kindness and generosity. Thank you for being a blessing to those in need. Pastor Amanda+

From the Other Priest's Desk

The Rev. Dr. Jenni Liem

The LAUNCH middle school and youth group is off to a fantastic start this year! All 5 of our students have returned and are excited about our plans for the spring. We are still working on math and reading, and comprehension, as those tend to be subjects that they struggle with. The 8th graders are doing some kind of complicated math that looks a lot like pre-trigonometry. Well beyond my skill set! But we have tutors who are quick to settle in with the students and work out what they can. I was impressed to hear Conner talking with his tutor just last week about the intricacies of civics and Kera asking her tutor to explain the pre-algebra work in her text book. We have started a new book this term – The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe. We'll make C.S. Lewis fans out of them yet!

Our five students are such wonderful characters who have so many gifts and talents. Kera and Tonineshia have really stepped up in to leadership, especially at Big Fish Chapel, where they have taken on mentoring our elementary students.

One of the challenges we have with all of our students is building their self-esteem and compassion. Ms. Dawn and I have been thinking and talking about how we can help them build on these two character traits. The last two weeks we have been working practicing the language of love. On February 13, we will be distributing homemade valentines to students on the FSU campus. We will show that love is the way and that even in the midst of our own internal crises and development; we can share the language and expression of love. This will be a challenge for our students to move out of their comfort zones and be comfortable with sharing love instead of frustration and dispassion. Pray for us as we all work on our languages of love.

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

10th Annual An Evening of Grace

Mark your calendars for **March 30, 2019!** The Woman's Club of Tallahassee will become a lively bayou setting featuring a cash bar, a Cajun-inspired menu, music, dancing, and a raffle prize for a 3-day, 4-night trip for two to New Orleans. A fun evening should be *guar-an-tee'd!*



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