

Rhythms of Grace

Thanks to All of Our Sponsors!

Grace Mission wishes to thank Fr. Randall, the ECW group and all of the parishioners at Advent Episcopal church for making the Rhythms of Grace event a huge success! Entertainment was provided by the *Grace Mission Band*, *Advent's Tucker and Mary Bidlecombe*, and of course the *Thursday Night Music Club!* The delectable menu was provided by Fit-to-Eat Catering.

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Thank You, Geoff!

Geoff Schwartz, Senior Warden and a fixture at Grace Mission since its beginnings some 14 years ago, has retired from the Vestry. During the 10 years in which the Lord has given me the opportunity to volunteer at Grace Mission, getting to know Geoff has been one of the many pleasures that I have enjoyed.

Always positive, Geoff never lets the obstacles that are thrown at us in life – whether small or large – challenge his belief that the Lord will always answer the prayers of the faithful. He lives out his Christian beliefs all day, every day.

When Pastor Sterling and Michael Henderson announced their retirement, Geoff lead the search effort to find a replacement for what many of us thought was the irreplaceable. Weeks, months and more than a year passed by. Then the day on which the Hendersons were leaving came and went. Under Geoff's leadership, the volunteer Board and supply Clergy stepped up to ensure that Grace Mission's schedule of services, children's program, meals and Bible studies continued without missing a beat. Of course, the perfect blessing was finally delivered to Grace in Pastor Amanda Nickles.

During a time when many of us would have thrown in the towel, Geoff's faith that God would answer our prayers never wavered. His devotion to and faith in Christ is an inspiration that all of us at Grace Mission deeply appreciate.

- Kurt Spitzer

From the Deacon's Desk

Deacon Jeanie Byers

During this season of Advent; as we prepare our hearts for the coming of the Christ Child, we remember that God loves us so much that He sends His son to live among us as a human being. He gives us God Incarnate....God in the flesh....God who understands our human experience.

As a human being, Jesus knew human feelings. Jesus felt hungry, cold and marginalized as he was born in a manger in a stable with no place to lay His head. Jesus' own experience was not unlike some of the people that we serve at Grace Mission.

Advent at Grace Mission is a fun, joy-filled 4 weeks where we anticipate and celebrate together the coming of Jesus. We make Christmas cards, green the Church, have a pizza party and sing carols together. Our most favorite tradition is preparing a gift bag for the 120-130 members of our Congregation who will be at our Christmas Eve Service.

We invite you to be a part of the Gift Giving on Christmas Eve. Each bag has a NEW warm sweatshirt, a NEW pair of warm socks and maybe a blanket....since some of our people don't know where they will lay their head that night. We are in need of sweatshirts in sizes L, XL, XXL and a few XXXL. Gender neutral colors are our preference and we do not need small or medium sizes. A small gift of deodorant or a billfold is sometimes included. Please indicate that your gifts are for Christmas bags and do not feel that you are being asked to fill a whole bag. We are grateful for all the generosity with which you shower the Grace Mission Community.

Love, peace and joy to each of you!

- Deacon Jeanie

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Visit www.gracemission.net Today!

Grace Mission's website has been completely updated and many new features and postings continue to be added. Be sure to visit the site regularly so that you don't miss any of the activities underway in the name of the Lord!



Grace Mission Episcopal Church
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Grace HAPPENINGS



the newsletter of
Grace Mission Episcopal Church
Advent 2011

Words of Grace

The Rev. Amanda Nickles, Vicar

Dear Saints:

Christmas, for most of us, is a time of festive celebration. It is an occasion for renewing precious friendships. It is an opportunity to reminisce about days gone by. It is a great excuse to eat too much, sing too loudly, and spend more money than we should.

For Christians, Christmas is a time of awe and wonder and reverence, when the timeless story of Christ's birth is read, once again, from the Gospels for all the world to hear. But the very familiarity of Christmas sometimes causes us to overlook the most vital expressions of what should be a meaningful season: celebrating a meaningful Christmas with a spirit of giving and sharing; with hearts full of blessing, praise and thanksgiving; and being forever mindful of the needs of others.

We can think of it as a Christmas checklist - "Have I been giving?" check. "Have I been sharing?" check, check. "Has my heart been full of praise and worship to God?" check, check and check. "Have I been mindful of the needs of others?" check, check, and double check! You see, God does not bless us simply for our own benefit. His generosity should result in our generosity to others.

This year, as you sit with family, friends or by yourself, give thanks to God and as you pray about what you can do with those many blessings, please remember Grace Mission in your generosity.

"A Christian," wrote St. Augustine, "should be an alleluia from head to foot."

Become the alleluia this Christmas season, an alleluia in someone's life. Thank you for remembering Grace Mission and have a glorious and rejoicing Christmas!

FHS,
Pastor Amanda +

Alternative Christmas Markets...Whose Birthday is it, Anyway?

Grace Mission is in two Alternative Markets in this year. Visit www.gracemission.net for more information. Come and support Grace Mission, as well as other deserving ministries.

Children's Advent Programs

Elizabeth Crowe, Grace Children's Ministries

We are almost back in Advent, one of my favorite seasons. It's a time to look back as we prepare to celebrate the first coming of Jesus in His birth in Bethlehem; a time to celebrate and be thankful for the many blessings we have and to share them; and a time to look forward as we anticipate His second coming.

Many of the children of Grace Mission have been with us on their journey since their birth. They are growing in faith and learning so much about Jesus through worship, Sunday School, Awana Club and being in programs at Grace Mission where Christian values are modeled for them. All of them can tell you their simple version of John 3:16 (God so loved the world, He gave His only Son) and what that means, and they are learning about the Bible and God's Word. If you come visit, they would love to tell you a Bible story or quote Scripture for you because they are so excited about what they have learned.

Receiving gifts and toys at Christmas is a joyous thing for them, and they know the part about looking back at baby Jesus and receiving and being thankful for their gifts. It's now time for us to help them focus on the part about sharing with others.

This Christmas they will request three toys and donations to help them purchase chickens, ducks or goats through World Vision to give to families in third world countries. We also ask for donations to support our programs, offered to the children at no cost. Donations for Grace Mission or World Vision can be made through Paypal on our website www.gracemission.net or checks sent to us at P.O. Box 10472, Tallahassee, FL 32302.

Thank you so much for helping them learn to share with others and for supporting the programs at Grace Mission! May you all have a blessed Advent and Christmas!

Your Help is Desperately Needed

Grace is in urgent need of T-shirts, sweat shirts (L, XL or larger), socks and other warm clothing.

We are also in desperate need of a volunteer to come in on Tuesday or Saturday mornings to help wash and fold towels, maintain the clothes closet and help with general needs in the office. This could be an individual or a group of people rotating different weekends. Please call Pastor Amanda...224-3817.



Grace Happens - Come and See!

Corner of Brevard and Bronough + P.O. Box 10472, Tallahassee, FL 32302

www.gracemission.net

