



# Grace Church of West Feliciana Parish

*"A loving congregation seeking unity with God and each other in Christ"*

**Newsletter**  
December 3 & 10, 2017

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## **Website**

www.gracechurchwfp.org

## *Advent and the Year of Mark*

This coming Sunday we begin the season of Advent and a year-long reading of the Gospel of Mark. Mark is the shortest account of the life of Jesus, it is the oldest of the Gospels by almost 10 years, and it is the easiest to read. As we begin this year-long journey with Mark, it is appropriate to re-introduce you to the first Gospel ever written by asking three questions: When was the Gospel written? Why was the Gospel written? and, What is the Gospel's message? Let us start with the first question.

Mark was written in the year 70, approximately 40 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. We believe the author is John Mark, the son of Mary of Jerusalem and cousin of Barnabas, whom we encounter in Acts 12:12, 2:25, 13:5, 13:13-15, and 15:37-40. Paul also refers to him in Col 4:10 and Philemon 24. John Mark is closely associated with Paul's first missionary journey to Cyprus, but the two parted ways soon after. It is believed that John Mark was a close friend of the apostle Peter, who had a special friendship with Mary, his mother. Authors assume that at some point, Peter became John Mark's mentor and much of the theology and stories in the Gospel of Mark proceed from Peter's teachings. Until then, the stories about Jesus of Nazareth had been passed down in oral tradition from the Apostles and earliest disciples, but, around the year 70, John Mark decides to write these stories. This leads us to the second question, "Why?"

Chapter 13 of Mark gives us a few clues as to the context in which the Gospel was composed and the reasons for its composition: (a) This is a time of intense persecution for the church, especially in the city of Rome. The Emperor Nero died in the year 68, but, from the year 64 until his death, he blamed the Christians for the burning of Rome. Many believers have been killed, others have been tortured into giving up the names of other Christians, and many have been imprisoned. The Gospel seeks to give the Church comfort at a time of great violence. (b) There are "false Christ (s)" claiming to be the returned Messiah and they were driving disciples away from the Church. Some of these false messiahs may have been recruiting insurrectionists from within the membership of the Church. We know that the great revolt against Rome began in the year 66 and ended with the destruction of the Temple in the year 70. The Gospel seeks to clarify issues related to the second coming of Messiah in opposition to these false messiahs. (c) The temple has not yet been destroyed by the Romans, an event that takes place in AD 70, but there is mention of a "desolating sacrifice" in the temple, perhaps an image or statute of the emperor. This sacrilege was pre-announced by Daniel 9:27 as a sign of the end of times. The Gospel stands in opposition to this sacrilege and is very critical of the Roman empire, showing some sympathy for the revolutionaries. (d) Many believed the end of times had come or was taking place. The Gospel clarifies that even Jesus himself doesn't know when the end will arrive. The community is living in the "beginning of the birth pangs" stage, but no one knows

when the actual end will come. The Gospel gives the congregation comfort and invites them to endure. The suffering they are undergoing is not a punishment for sin, but the result of their faith, and this suffering will be rewarded.

So, what is the actual message of the Gospel? According to [www.esv.org](http://www.esv.org), "The central message of Mark's Gospel is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has come to earth (Mark 1:1), that 'the kingdom of God is at hand,' and that all should 'repent and believe in the gospel' (1:15)... The global significance of this is massive. Because Jesus created everything, he is the rightful ruler of everything. But the tragic reality of human existence is that life on this earth is deeply damaged by cruelty and suffering, by evil and injustice, by sickness and finally death." The believers are invited to a life of watchfulness, preparation, and hope. Jesus is ultimately in charge of history and he will return to rule as king of the whole world. Those who endure and remain faithful to the end will join him in his glorious kingdom. No earthly power will ultimately be able to overcome or destroy the people of God. We must be confident in the Good news of the Gospel. Jesus cares deeply for our suffering and he will give us the strength to overcome our suffering. Jesus means good news for the world and we are invited to a watchful expectation for his return.

Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of Jesus and, as we prepare for his earthly coming, we also prepare for that ultimate coming that will take place at the end of days. We look forward to a kingdom of peace, justice, and love. A kingdom without suffering or tears. The baby we wait for on Christmas Day, will be the victorious king that will come to reign supreme on God's appointed time. He will make all things new and for those who believe in him this will be a glorious new day. Both as a human child and as victorious King, today we say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come!" Blessings to you, Fr. Roldan+

**Congratulations** to Charles Durr, III and Lauren Pourciau who were married at Grace Church November 18th. Best wishes to this couple as they begin their lives together.

**A Festival of Lessons and Carols:** this Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> we will have the usual 7:30am Holy Eucharist, but we will have a beautiful Festival of Lessons and Carols in lieu of the 10am service. The following will be the structure: 6 lessons, a number of great carols the choir is working on, and Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament. We hope you can join us.

**Welcome** to Lisa Kleinpeter who has joined the Preschool staff as a part-time teacher.

**St. John's Chapel** will have their **third Sunday celebration of the Holy Eucharist** at 7:30AM on Sunday, December 17th. Bp. Jenkins will celebrate.

### Christmas Services

December 24: Sixth Annual Christmas Service at **St. John's at 3:30PM**. Join Bishop Jenkins for another great afternoon of music, Communion, and fellowship. This service features great instrumentalists, a sermon by Bishop Jenkins and plenty of carols. There has been plenty of seating in recent years, so please don't stay away for fear of crowding.

December 24: **There will be no 7:30AM service at Grace**. We will have our annual Christmas Pageant at **10:00AM** at Grace (No sermon, lots of carols, and Communion) and our Principal Service at 7:00PM at Grace (Incense, Sermon and Communion).

December 25: (Christmas Day) 10:00AM

December 31: First Sunday after Christmas Day. Bp. Jenkins will preach and celebrate both services as the Rector will be on vacation until January 06.

### *Intercessory prayers are asked for Grace Church members who are ill:*

Matt Armstrong, Daisye Howell, Lucile Lawrason, Tom Morris, Eric Nelson, Sara Nelson, Kay Tengler, Wendell Wade, David Walker, Pam Willson, Jake Wray Madeleine Wright.

### Birthdays

Dare Didier, Mary Morse, Evelyn Tregle-Dec. 4; Caleb Allen Norton, Jessica McVea-Dec. 5; Landon Anderson, Austin Roldan, Edward Daniel IV, Gloria Fontenot-Dec. 6; Andrew David, Joseph Wilson-Dec. 7; Savanna Clevenger-Dec. 8; Caroline Sparks, Kell Farmer-Dec. 9; Louise Jenkins, Barbara Mitchell, Zane & Caleb Smith-Dec. 10; Joey Peno-Dec.11; Frank Farmer-Dec. 12; Lea Williams-Dec. 13; Chase Cunningham-Dec. 14; C. Claude Barron-Dec 16.

### Wedding

### Anniversaries

Al and Patsy Hardouin-Dec. 14.

*Other persons prayers are asked for:*

Sister Abigail, Claiborne Arbutnot, Charles Barham, Micaela Kell Bennett, Isabella Bertucci, Leslie Bickham, Phillip Bowen, Ben Brown, Steve Brown, Willie Bryant, Randy Bryant, Jenny Clark, Kitty Claus, Bob Crowley, Sandy Davenport, Kathleen Davis, Debbie Desmar, Helen Deselles, Cathy Doslovic, Molly Douglas, Amy Dwyer, Mark Ellison, Jennifer Erickson, Mark Feltner, Dennis Flynn, Matthew Gill, Roy Hardin, Parke Henderson, Wayne Hudnall, Joel James, Michelle Jean-sonne, Jill Joffrion, Henry Jones, Mary Jo Kaly, Cecil Kelly, Jody Lemoine, Bob Lewis, Jessica Liddle, Max, Ralph McKenzie, Laine Mar-train, Kathy Drew Mat-ter, Mary Anne McCrory, Ruby McKee, David Merritt, Robin Michel, Bill Miller, Dor-othy Anne Millikin, Jimmy Mitchell, Rusty Melton, Randall Nachman, Barton Platte, Susanna Prescott, Susan Pray, Carol Ratcliff, Tammy Riggs, Cole Rourke, Stephen Seale, Gwin Shanks, Kaizlyn Shockley, Cade Stapleton, Roland Toups, Denham Turner, Rufus Yerger.

*Those serving in the armed forces:* Parker Blanche, Amanda Browning, Jay Christo-pher, Ryan Coacher, Ben Colia, John Davis, Joseph Dooley, Bryan Geltz, Edward Jenkins, Laura Latson, Shawn Lemons, Terry Palmer, James Powers, Jeff Ragusa, Christopher Willis, Matthew Young, Aaron Zuccsro, 745th & 746th Exped Squads, 379th & 926th Exped.

**Men's Prayer Breakfast** is December 6 at 7:00am. Who would like to cook this month? Call Fr. Roldan to let him know, 245-2979. Invite your neighbors to join you.

**Confirmations and Receptions:** Bishop Thompson is making his annual visit to Grace Church on Sunday, December 10th at the 10am service for Confirmations and Receptions. We will have a reception afterwards in Jackson Hall. Please join us.

**The Over-50's group** will go to Jalapeno's Restaurant in Jackson, Louisiana on Wednesday, December 6. Meet at the Grace Church parking lot at 10:30am and we leave at 10:45am.

**Christmas flowers:** Please use the enclosed envelope with this newsletter to make a dona-tion for Christmas poinsettias for the Christmas season. Put the names on it to be put in the liturgy sheet; put it in the offering plate on Sunday or mail it to Box 28 St. Francisville.

**Furniture donation:** Have you noticed the beautiful antiques in the narthex of Grace Church? These were donated by Jim and Susan Roland and are very much appreciated. Thanks to Patrick Tandy for picking them out and arranging for their delivery and setup.

**Congratulations and welcome** to Thomas Matthew Kendrick, son of Richard and Meg Kendrick, who was baptized this past Sunday and to Alice Davis Bankston, daughter of Meg Bankston, who was also baptized. They are the newest members of Grace Church.

**The Christmas Angel Tree:** Although it is later than in years past, we will put up the Angel Tree beginning this Sunday, December 3. Please choose the angel(s) you want and sign them out with your signature on the provided list. After your gifts are wrapped, please put your angel on the gift. If you buy more than one gift per angel, please make a tag for the other gifts (with just their names). The last day we can receive the wrapped gifts will be Monday, December 18, so we can make the deliveries to the families. Thank you for your generosity, Maria Gerry

**Vestry Nominations:** We are starting to gather names of parishioners who will join our vestry from 2018-2020. This is what we are looking for: (1) Church Members, (2) Confirmed or Received into the Episcopal Church, (3) Pledgers or Contributors of record to the minist-ries of Grace Church, (4) Willing to allow us to run a background screen, required by new Safeguarding God's Children Diocesan Policy, (5) Willing to serve the Church in a leader-ship capacity, which entails monthly meetings, an annual retreat, attending special meetings as appropriate, coordinating one full month of coffee hours (you will find a team of volun-teers to help), and serving in subcommittees as appropriate. If you would like to nominate someone, please speak to them first, obtain their approval, and then send Fr. Roldan an e-mail. The nomination process will end December 31, as we need several weeks to complete the vetting process. There will not be nominations from the floor. Blessings, Fr. Roldan+

**2018 Pledge Card**

In Thanksgiving for God's goodness, and support of the ministry of our Church, I / we will give \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per week / month / year in 2018. (circle one)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

I / we would like offering envelopes \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Address \_\_\_\_\_

This is an expression of faith and intent, and not a legal obligation. Contact the Church Treasurer to make any adjustment. Please return your pledge card as soon as possible by mailing to Box 28, St. Francisville, by dropping it off at the church office or put it in the offering plate on any Sunday.

**Grace Church**  
of West Feliciana Parish  
P.O. Box 28  
St. Francisville LA 70775

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## Sunday Ministry Assistants & Calendar

### Sunday December 3, 2017

**Acolytes:** Hayden Howle, Paul Opperman,  
James Kirschling, Wyatt Olsen  
**Chalice bearers:** 7:30am: Sharon Gauthier  
10am: Rucker Leake, Mark Mulkey  
**Ushers:** Kelly Ward, Carl Fontenot  
**Lectors:** Donna Wright, Landon Anderson  
**Vestry Rep:** Dare Didier  
**Altar Guild Team 2**  
**Altar Greenery:** Ronnie and Pat Martin  
**Sanctuary Candle:** Sharon Gauthier  
**Coffee Hour:** Rob and Heather Howle  
**Babysitters:** Shayn Rayford, Sarah Roldan

### Sunday, December 10, 2017

**Acolytes:** TBA  
**Chalice bearers** 7:30am: Lucie Butler  
10am: Drew Nordgren, Brandie Olsen  
**Ushers:** Shannon Pollet, Richard Kendrick  
**Lectors:** Rachel Howell, Dixie Blue  
**Vestry Rep:** Zed Howell  
**Altar Guild Team 3**  
**Altar Greenery:** Mary Thompson  
**Sanctuary candle:** Bryan & Laura McClendon  
**Coffee Hour:** Rob and Heather Howle  
**Babysitters:** Julie DeJean, Landry Higgins

### December 3, 2017

7:30am - Holy Eucharist  
Bible Study  
10:00am - Holy Eucharist  
11:30am - Confirmation  
Class  
Coffee Hour

### December 10, 2017

7:30am - Holy Eucharist  
Bible Study  
10:00am - Holy Eucharist  
With Confirmations and  
Receptions  
Lunch in Jackson Hall  
With the Bishop

### Wednesday, December 6

5:15pm - Eucharist  
5 - 7pm - Youth Group

### Thursday, December 7

9:15am - Morning Prayer  
10:00am - Worship: SF Country Manor

### Friday, December 8

7:00am - Eucharist  
8:30am - Lectionary Bible Study

### Sunday, December 10

7:30am - Eucharist  
9:15am - Bible Study  
10:00am - Eucharist

Bishop's Reception

### Wednesday, December 13

5:15pm - Eucharist  
5-7pm - Youth Group  
6:00pm - Newcomers Class

### Thursday, December 14

9:15am - Morning Prayer  
10:00am - Worship: SF Country Manor

### Friday, December 15

7:00am - Eucharist  
8:30am - Lectionary Bible Study