



Grace Church of West Feliciana Parish

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

Newsletter

Dec. 15 & Dec. 22, 2019

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Drew Nordgren
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Who is this "Papa Noel" You Are Talking About?

I can honestly say that I did not know Santa Claus (Papa Noel in Spanish) until I came to America exactly 33 years ago this week. Of course all of us had seen the Coca-Cola old man with the white beard. Of course, many of us received postcards from America depicting snow-covered scenes where the old man appeared riding a weird-looking contraption, led by the ugliest-looking dogs I had ever seen. (I once learned Americans called those unfortunate creatures "Reindeer"). Of course we knew that Christmas traditions in other parts of the world were different from ours. But, to children in Colombia, it wasn't Santa Claus that brought us presents on Christmas. This job was reserved for Baby Jesus on Christmas Eve and for the "Tres Reyes" (Three Kings) on January 6th.

Baby Jesus was welcomed in each of our homes with great excitement. All-night parties were common in many homes and dance halls; fire-works were seen in all local parks and many streets; kitchens were filled with the aromas of "Natilla" (Christmas Custard) and "Buñuelos" (Cheese Fritters), while the men prepared "Lechon Asado" (Grilled Pork) in home-made Chinese Boxes, while drinking beer and "aguardiente." Children awaited baby Jesus by doing "Novenas" (Nine days of prayer before the birth of Jesus.) On Christmas Eve they would play freely until all hours of the night and would wake up to find presents under the Christmas "Pesebre" (Manger), with the formerly empty crib now occupied by the statue of Baby Jesus. This was a time for community-wide celebrations, extended family visits, fun parties, and great food.

The idea of an overfed intruder breaking into your home in the middle of the night and eating your food, while freely walking around your home, would have brought nightmares to most Colombian children. The Christmas tree was also a rare apparition, only to be seen in the homes of wealthy folks who had gone to college in the United States and had learned to celebrate the season "Al estilo Americano" (American Style). Santa Claus, elves, reindeer, and decorated trees were all foreign to me as a growing boy in a land where Jesus was the only hope left to the poor.

Unfortunately, Baby Jesus has been laid off in many cities of Latin America and his job has been given to the famous "Papa Noel." The great influence Western culture has had in Latin America is having a profound effects in the way Christmas is celebrated. It is not uncommon to find Christmas trees and billboards of Santa Claus and other secular images of the season in many cities of Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Central American countries. We are also moving away from a communal, neighborhood-wide style of celebration to a more private, nuclear-family style of celebration. Likewise, we are losing the sense that Christmas is a church event, where the corporate body of Christ gathers to welcome the newborn Jesus.

From a religious perspective, Baby Jesus is loosing ground as well. The season has become more secular, more commercialized, and less spiritual. Jesus remains the hope of the poor and his nativity is welcomed in many villages and small towns. In the cities, however, Jesus has to compete for attention in the media, the malls, and even in the church. A healthy economy has discovered the commercial impact of Christmas and no one sells more stuff than Papa Noel. He is the symbol of American-style progress, success, and financial prosperity. He reminds people that they too can have their share of the American Dream, without having to leave Colombia to get it. He reminds them that we are a global village now with the local and the global merging daily in the new “glocal” economy of the Internet. Their future is now and Papa Noel reminds them that they too can have what they want, when they want it, if they are just willing to make 12 equal monthly payments of the equivalent of \$50 to the local bank who issued their new Credit Cards. Sadly, the days of Christmas clubs are gone, having been replaced by shinny cards from American-owned banks.

In the mean time, Jesus has a message that is stark in its opposition to this New Economy. Jesus reminds us that truth is more important than things. He calls for sacrificial love of others, even at the expense of our own wants and desires. He preaches a Gospel of exuberant forgiveness and grace, that stands in opposition to greed, selfishness, unbridled consumerism, and excess. He preaches a freedom from sin, which requires that we give up our obsession for having and hoarding things. He preaches a Gospel of joy in God’s creation, where a beautiful sunset is more important than any shiny, neon-color, plastic toy. In short, Jesus stands in opposition to what many of us see as the “spirit” of Christmas.

I pray today that many of us will discover the simple beauty of the season: God, family, friends, celebration, thanksgiving and joy. Merry CHRISTmas! Fr. Roldan+



We are very excited to officially welcome three newcomers to our Church and to celebrate the Confirmation of five parishioners. This grand celebration will take place this Sunday at the 10:00 am Service. Immediately following the service, we will have a reception in Jackson Hall in honor of our new members and to welcome Bishop Thompson back to Grace.

Christmas flowers envelopes are available in the narthex to make a donation for poinsettias for the Christmas season. Please write who the flowers are in memory of, in honor of, or in thanksgiving of. You may place it in the offering plate on Sundays or mail it to Box 28, St. Francisville. December 17th is deadline to receive donations.

New Christmas Eve Service Times

- Christmas Pageant at 11:00 am at Grace - No Sermon, no Incense
- Christmas Eve at St. Johns at 3:30 pm - Sermon by Bp. Jenkins. No Incense
- Christmas Vigil at Grace: 4:00 pm - Sermon by Fr. Roldan, Incense
- Christmas Day at Grace 10:00 am - Sermon by Fr. Roldan, some incense

**Intercessory prayers
are asked for Grace
Church members who
are ill.**

Valerie Barnes, Libby Dart, Jason Kennedy, Charlotte Maxwell, Elizabeth Denton Mitchell, Tom Morris, Eric Nelson, Sara Nelson, Shane Pollet, Carolyn Porche, Cozette Stevens, Kay Tengler, Glenn Timmons, Wendell Wade, Marcia Willis, Pam Wilson, Jake Wray, Madeline Wright.

Birthdays

Lisa Foster-Dec 15; C. Claude Barron-Dec 16; Jeff Ford-Dec. 17; Jamie Bankston-Dec. 18; Susan Davis, Irv Daniel, Cindy Nicholas-Dec. 19; Christie Reinhardt-Dec. 20; Whitney Floyd, Nicholas Skaggs, Charles Fox-Smith-Dec. 21; Hayes Whatley-Dec. 22; Marcy Dunaway, Emily Ford-Dec. 23; John Hamilton Willis-Dec. 24; Steven Gaudet, Susan Tomlin, Sonnie Walker-Dec. 26; Cameron Boucher-Dec. 27; Gannon Achord-Dec. 28

**Wedding
Anniversaries**

Stewart and Megbe Hughes- Dec. 17; Christian and Jaime DeJean-Dec 23; Landon and Connie Anderson-Dec. 24; Rob and Heather Howle-Dec. 27; Tommy and Cindy Robinson-Dec. 28;

The Spirit of Community

Today at our Adult Formation Study one of the participants spoke about the spirit of cooperation, volunteerism, and community involvement in St. Francisville. This fact makes me deeply grateful for the gift of community. We have a deeply inter-connected community where people of all generations, denominations, races, and political affiliations come together to celebrate, fundraise for worthy causes, remember the past, plan for the future, and spend time with friends around food, music, art, and frivolity. This is an incredible blessing and a model of true community in our polarized world. In St. Francisville, Louisiana, we have come to believe that "We are more alike than we are unlike," as a wise poet once said. In many ways, we are building Jesus' kingdom in our own context. Thank you all for this incredible gift. Blessings, Fr. Roldan+

Introducing the Vestry Nominees: We will feature the nominees for vestry in newsletters throughout the next month so that the congregation has time to learn more about those who have been nominated to vestry. Our hope is this will enable you to prayerfully consider each nominee in advance of your vote. Our second nominee is Trish Toburen.



Trish Toburen grew up in Tallulah, LA, attended All Saints Episcopal School in Vicksburg, MS, and undergraduate and graduate schools at LSU. Her undergraduate degrees are in Speech and French, with master's degrees in Speech and Educational Leadership, and certification in school counseling K-12, English, and Religious Studies. Three years ago, Trish retired after 40 years of working as a high school teacher, counselor, and administrator – all roles she truly loved which makes her hesitate to even label them as “work.” Half of those years were in Pointe Coupee, as she lived for over 30 years in New Roads. The other half was with the

West Feliciana Public School District. She has four grown children, four young grandchildren, a stepdaughter, and four teenage step-grandsons. She is married to Bob Toburen, a retired political science professor and a Kansas-Ruston transplant. Have mercy!

When asked by a priest at a Commission on Ministry meeting last January why she loved the Episcopal Church, Trish immediately responded: the liturgy, the solemnity, and the people. The people Trish had in mind at the time were the people of Grace Church. After a long sojourn, she joined Grace just a few years ago, because it is here Trish feels at home. Trish sees people who were born and raised at Grace, yet warmly welcome newcomers. She sees conservatives, liberals, theological anchors, and spiritual explorers, all sharing an underlying foundation of faith and love. From newborns to old-borns, the members of Grace form a beautiful kaleidoscope of patterns that sparkle. And that is what she loves. Ministries and activities, Trish is involved in include the following: Lecturer, Chalice Bearer, Youth Group, Vacation Bible School, Adult Formation Committee, Prison Ministry, Centering Prayer Group, Seekers and Sages Book Club, and the initial stages for the Diaconate Ministry formation and training.

Trish believes we at Grace should continue to strengthen the ministries we have rather than add more and spread ourselves too thin. Grace is known for her heroic efforts in response to catastrophes such as flooding and hurricanes, and that compassionate, generous outreach should remain at the forefront. In addition, let us continue to raise awareness and knowledge of social justice issues as we evolve daily into stronger lights of Christ's love in the world today.

Other persons prayers are asked for:

Claiborne Arbutnot, Charles Barham, Walker Bell, Micaela Kell Bennett, Wayne Bergeron, Isabella Bertucci, Leslie Bickham, Luanne, Phillip Bowen, Ben Brown, Steve Brown, Mason Brudewick, Willie Bryant, Randy Bryant, Darby Buras, Jenny Clark, Daryn Conrad, Rob Cox, Frances Woods Curry, Sandy Davenport, William David, Kathleen Davis, Jessica DeLee, Debbie Desmar, Helen Desselles, Cathy Doslovic, Molly Douglas, Amy Dwyer, Mark Ellison, Jennifer Erickson, Ellen Ewald, Sara Fahay, Mark Feltnr, Dennis Flynn, Matthew Gill, Jerry Green, Jane Hamilton, Roy Hardin, Parke Henderson, Wayne Hudnall, Joel James, Michelle Jean-sonne, Henry Jones, Mary Jo Kaly, Cathy K., Pat Laurent, Jody Lemoine, Jessica Liddle, Max, Charlotte Mayeaux, Ralph McKenzie, Laine Martrain, Mary Anne McCrory, Ruby McKee, Cheryl Meaux, Robin Michel, Bill Miller, Jimmy Mitchell, Randall Nachman, Walter Oliveaux, Barton Platte, Elizabeth Poole, Susanna Prescott, Tammy Riggs, Butch Ritchie, James and Sylvia Roach, Cole Rourke, Gwin Shanks, Kaizlyn Shockley, Rusty Snyder, Cade Stapleton, Kaitlyn Templett, Roland Toups, Millie and Howard Varner, Deborah Vines, Emily Walz, Jake Washington, Dennisia Williams, Deacon Zeles, Lynn Zinn.

Those serving in the armed forces:

Parker Blanche, Amanda Browning, Jay Christopher, Ryan Coacher, Carlile Coimint, John Davis, Joseph Dooley, Polly Finley, Bryan Geltz, Edward Jenkins, Laura Latson, Shawn Lemons, Terry Palmer, James Powers, Jeff Ragusa, Christopher Willis, Aaron Zuccaro, 745th & 746th Exped Squads, 379th & 926th Exped. Support Squads, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), 1st 222 Aviation Regiment.

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

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St. Francisville LA 70775

Sunday Ministry Assistants & Calendar

December 15, 2019

Acolytes: Lilly Higgins, John Barrow Klein, Andrew Klein, Hayes Whatley

Chalice bearers: 7:30 a.m.: Bryan McClendon
10 a.m.: Sara Klein, Richard Kendrick

Ushers: David Treppendahl, Tony Horn

Lectors: Missy Higgins, Meg Kendrick

Vestry Rep: David Treppendahl

Altar Guild: Team 1

Children's Church: Carlin Kendrick, Alyssa Louis

Altar Greenery: Tommy and Stacy Loyacono

Sanctuary Candle: Ben and Sarah Klein

Coffee Hour: New Member Reception

Babysitters: Grant Rome, Angelina Hardin

December 22, 2019

Acolytes: Grant Rome, Evelyn Pollet, Crew Rome, Colt Rome

Chalice bearers: 7:30 a.m.: Carol Stamey
10 a.m.: Drew Nordgren, Karen Snyder

Ushers: Zed Howell, Tom Morris

Lectors: David Opperman, Rachel Howell

Vestry Rep: Dr. Sue Steib

Children's Church: Charlotte Peno, Alyssa Louis

Altar Guild: Team 2

Altar Greenery: Hunter and Whitney Floyd

Sanctuary Candle: Alma Ruth Skaggs

Coffee Hour: Sheryl Wynters

Babysitters: Ashleigh Godke, Andrew Godke

December 15, 2019

7:30am - Holy Eucharist

Grace and St. John's

8:45 am - Bible Study

10:00am - Holy Eucharist

Coffee Hour

December 22, 2019

7:30am - Holy Eucharist

8:45 am - Bible Study

10:00am - Holy Eucharist

Coffee Hour

December 24, 2019

11:00am - Christmas
Pageant

3:30pm - St. John's

4:00pm - Christmas
Vigil

December 25, 2019

10:00am - Christmas Day
Eucharist

Wednesday, December 18

5 - 7pm - Youth Group

5:15pm - Eucharist

6 - 7pm - Adult Formation

Thursday, December 19

9:15am - Morning Prayer

10:00am - Worship: SF Country Manor

Friday, December 20

7:00am - Eucharist

8:30am - Lectionary Bible Study

Sunday, December 22

8:45am - Bible Study

10:00am - Eucharist

Tuesday, December 24

Office Closed

Wednesday, December 25

Office Closed

Thursday, December 26

Office Closed

Friday, December 27

7:00am - Eucharist

8:30am - Lectionary Bible Study