



# Grace Church of West Feliciana Parish

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

## Newsletter

December 16 & 23, 2018

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Heather Howle

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## Website

www.gracechurchwfp.org

## *Deserts are Not Empty Places*

Bishop Thompson reminded us last week that Advent begins in darkness. This week's Gospel tells us that Advent begins in the desert. Luke describes how John preaches in the desert, crying out, "Prepare the ways for the Lord." A bit earlier in Luke 1:80, we read that John, "Grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel." The wilderness, also known as desert, was not just the context of John's ministry, it was also his home. He lived in the desert and his vocation as a prophet developed over time in the arid sands and desolate places. In the darkness and silence of the desert, God revealed to John the truth about the Messiah. God speaks in silence. The desert speaks loudly of the one who is to come to save captive Israel.

God has a tendency to commune with his people in the desert. The people of God spend 40 years in the desert, before arriving at the Promised Land; David and his companions find refuge from King Saul's attacks in the desert; the prophet Elijah escapes to the desert to save his life from Queen Jezebel; Jesus spends 40 days and nights in the desert before his ministry begins; Jesus runs to desolate places every time he needs a moment of respite and prayer...

The desert experience serves as a time to listen to God's voice, to be equipped for ministry, and to be encouraged at crucial times when the prophet's courage, resolve, or energy is running low. Although the desert is a place of bareness and scarcity, in biblical tradition, the wilderness is also a place of divine provision. God provides for his people and this provision nurtures their bodies and prepares their souls for the mission ahead.

This is an important lesson for me to remember as the days are getting shorter and the darkness of winter continues to advance. I don't know about you, but I find darkness unsettling. A cold and dark desert does not conjure up images of life and supernatural provision for me. Yet, this is exactly what happens in these biblical narratives. In the silence and darkness of the desert, God's voice is heard with perfect clarity. Darkness and isolation become the very stage of John's preparation and formation for ministry. And, like Jesus himself, John learned early on to find God's voice and provision in the scarcity of the desert.

I know that many of you find yourselves going through a desert experience during the holidays. I have spoken to and prayed for you these last few weeks. As I said this last Sunday in my sermon, some of you experience crushing and unrelenting depression during the winter. The daily pressure to be happy and joyful, the Christmas music, the television specials and Christmas movies, and all the party invitations compound the problem. It almost sounds as though

you are completely alone in this suffering. Everybody else seems to be doing just fine. No one seems to understand the darkness and loneliness in your heart.

Some of you feel very isolated from God and live in a constant state of spiritual dryness. God may have been a close friend in former years, but you feel God is very distant from you now. You may feel as though perhaps God is just too busy taking care of the super-good and the super-devout and has no time for you.

Others feel trapped in the desert of worry and all they can see is scarcity. They worry about their children and how they have failed to live up to their expectations. They worry about finances and obsess about the life they could have if they had an abundance of money. They worry about health, future, world, country, and community and feel scared that everything seems to be getting worse. For many the desert can be resentment, bitterness, hopelessness, or helplessness. If this is where you are, I have good news for you today!

Even though Advent begins in darkness and in the desert, Advent points to a reality that is filled with life and possibility. Advent directs us to a new life that is possible in Jesus, the Son of God. The good news is that your desert is the very place where God has chosen to build a home. He has chosen to break into our world, deserts and all, and he knows exactly what we are going through. He is speaking to you this very moment and he knows your pain and your anguish. Listen to his voice because his voice is filled with hope. The deserts will be filled with springs of living water. The dry places will produce abundant harvests. A highway is being built in the desert this very day and this highway leads to God himself. We are not alone. Christ walks with us and he knows how desperate our condition has become. Please listen to his voice this very day. He is our Savior and we need saving, especially during this season of advancing darkness, isolation, polarization, and fear.

Deserts are not empty places. They are filled with possibility. May the God who speaks in darkness and silence help you find your way to him this very day. Merry Christmas, Fr. Roldan+

### *Christmas Services*

**Christmas Pageant Dress Rehearsals:** December 17th at 6:00pm.

**Third Sunday of Advent at St. John's:** December 16 at 7:30am

**Third Sunday of Advent at Grace:** December 16 at 7:30 and 10:00am

**Fourth Sunday of Advent:** December 23 at 7:30 and 10:00am

**Christmas Eve at St. John's:** December 24 at 3:30pm

Seventh Annual Christmas Service at **St. John's at 3:30PM**. Join Bishop Jenkins for another great afternoon of music, Communion, and fellowship. There has been plenty of seating in recent years, so please don't stay away for fear of crowding.

**Christmas Eve Pageant at Grace:** December 24 at 4:00pm

**Christmas Eve Principal Service:** December 24 at 7:00pm.

**Christmas Day at Grace:** December 25 at 10:00am.

**The First Sunday after Christmas at Grace:** December 30th at 7:30 and 10:00 am.

Bp. Jenkins will preach and celebrate both services as the Rector will be on vacation.

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

Brianna Blanchard,  
Diane Christopher,  
Jason Kennedy, Char-  
lotte Maxwell, Tom  
Morris, Eric Nelson,  
Sara Nelson, John Pow-  
ell, Kay Tengler, Bob  
Toburen, Wendell  
Wade, Pam Willson,  
Jake Wray, Madeline  
Wright.

### *Birthdays*

C. Claude Barron-Dec  
16; Jeff Ford-Dec. 17;  
Jamie Bankston-Dec.  
18; Diane Christopher,  
Susan Davis, Irv Dan-  
iel, Cindy Nicholas-  
Dec. 19; Christie Rein-  
hardt-Dec. 20; Whitney  
Floyd, Nicholas Skaggs,  
Charles Fox-Smith-Dec.  
21; Hayes Whatley-  
Dec. 22; Marcy Duna-  
way, 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; Nicole  
Mulkey, Wade Weller,  
Ryan McGehee, Sawyer  
Louis-Dec. 29

### *Wedding Anniversaries*

Stewart and Megbe  
Hughes- Dec. 17;  
Christian and Jaime  
DeJean-Dec 23; Lan-  
don and Connie An-  
derson-Dec. 24; Rob  
and Heather Howle-  
Dec. 27; Tommy and  
Cindy Robinson-Dec.  
28.

*Other persons prayers are asked for:*

Claiborne Arbuthnot, Charles Barham, Walker Bell, Micaela Kell Bennett, Wayne Bergeron, Isabella Bertucci, Leslie Bickham, Phillip Bowen, Ben Brown, Steve Brown, Mason Brudewick, Willie Bryant, Randy Bryant, Jenny Clark, Kitty Claus, Sandy Currier, Frances Woods Curry, Sandy Davenport, Kathleen Davis, Debbie Desmar, Helen Desselles, Cathy Doslovic, Molly Douglas, Amy Dwyer, Mark Ellison, Jennifer Erickson, Ellen Ewald, Sara Fahey, Mark Feltner, Dennis Flynn, Matthew Gill, Jane Hamilton, Roy Hardin, Parke Henderson, Wayne Hudnall, Joel James, Michelle Jean-sonne, Jill Joffrion, Henry Jones, Mary Jo Kaly, Cathy K., Jody Lemoine, Jessica Liddle, Max, Charlotte Mayeaux, Ralph McKenzie, Laine Mar-train, Mary Anne McCrory, Ruby McKee, Robin Michel, Bill Miller, Jimmy Mitchell, Randall Nachman, Barton Platte, Susanna Prescott, Carol Ratcliff, Tammy Riggs, Cole Rourke, Gwin Shanks, Kaizlyn Shockley, Cade Stapleton, Roland Troups, Deborah Vines, Emily Walz, Trey Watson, Dennisia Williams, Rufus Yerger, Grayson Zeringue, Lynn Zinn.

*Those serving in the armed forces:* Parker Blanche, Amanda Browning, Jay Christopher, Ryan Coacher, John Davis, Joseph Dooley, Polly Finley, Bryan Geltz, Edward Jenkins, Laura Latson, Shawn Lemons, Terry Palmer, James Powers, Jeff Ragusa, Christopher Willis, Matthew Young, Aaron Zuccaro, 745th & 746th Exped Squads, 379th & 926th Exped. Support Squads, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

**Dear Grace Church Family,**

Many thanks to all who contributed a dish for the reception following our Bishop's visit to Grace on Dec 2nd. It was a bit unconventional due to the unavailability of Jackson Hall, but God blessed us with beautiful weather. We enjoyed good food and fellowship under our beautiful oak tress after the service. In addition to the food, a special thanks to Beverly Walker for the lovely flowers and to Leonard for his help setting up. Also, we could not have done this without the support of our Parish Administrator, Meg- Thank you all, may our many blessings continue during this beautiful Christmas season.

Linda and Tom Flynn  
Kathy and David Beauchamp

**Grace Events**

**Please continue to send vestry nominations of parishioners who are** (1) a church member, (2) confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church, (3) pledgers or contributors of record to the ministries 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 leadership capacity, which entails monthly meetings, attending special meetings as appropriate, coordinating one full month of coffee hours (you will find a team of volunteers to help), and serving in sub-committees 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. Nominations will end January 13, 2019. There will be no nominations from the floor.

**To purchase Advent Candles (\$5) and wreaths (\$10), please speak to Sharon Gauthier.**

**2019 Liturgical Calendars are available for \$3 in the church office. Pick one up today.**

**St. John's Chapel** will have their third Sunday celebration of the Holy Eucharist at 7:30AM on Sunday, December 16th. Bp. Jenkins will celebrate.

**Church Mice is Sunday, December 16th** from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the preschool. This program is open to all preschool through 5th graders. There will be a meal, lesson and Christmas fun!

**Our second Parent Fellowship night** will be on Sunday, December 16th from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Open to all parents of children 18 years and younger; please join us for a festive Christmas Party at the Golsan House, bring your own refreshments, an appetizer, or dessert.

**We have added more names to the Angel Tree.** Please fill out the provided list and deliver wrapped gifts, with your Angel attached, to the Church Office by Thursday, December 20.

**The Finance Committee will meet on Tuesday, December 18th** at 4:30 p.m. in Fr. Roldan's Office. **The Vestry will meet on Tuesday, December 18th** at 5:30 p.m. in the Golson House.

**St. Luke's Episcopal Church** invites you to their Longest Night Service on December 20th at 6 p.m. A service of hope and healing for those who have suffered a loss of any sort. Come light a special votive candle in memory of a loved one, an unrealized dream, or victims of tragedy. Located at 8833 Goodwood Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806. For more information, please call (225) 926-5343.

**We need a few volunteers** to help pack and move furniture in the upstairs classrooms and offices. The Preschool and the upstairs will have their flooring replaced over the Christmas Holidays (December 24<sup>th</sup> - January 4<sup>th</sup>). If you are available please let Meg know as soon as possible.

**Please review the prayer list** and let Meg know if anyone needs to be removed as the prayers have been answered at this time. Thank you!

**The Church Offices will be closed** December 24–26th for the Christmas Holidays.

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

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## Sunday Ministry Assistants & Calendar

### Sunday December 16, 2018

**Acolytes:** Paul Opperman, Karina Mulkey, Joey Peno, Jesse Means, IV.

**Chalice bearers:** 7:30 a.m.: Bryan McClendon;  
10 a.m.: Landon Anderson, Joey Gammill

**Ushers:** Joe Savell, Dwight Singer

**Lectors:** Landon Anderson, Donna Wright

**Vestry Rep:** Zed Howell

**Altar Guild:** Team 2

**Children's Church:** Meg Kendrick

**Altar Greenery:** Stacy & Tommy Loyacono

**Sanctuary Candle:** Heather & Rob Howle

**Coffee Hour:** Linda & Tom Flynn

**Babysitters:** Grant Rome, Shelby Griffin

### Sunday December 23, 2018

**Acolytes:** Clara J Hughes, Wyatt Olsen, Emma Olsen, Evelyn Pollet

**Chalice bearers:** 7:30 a.m.: Carol Stamey;

10 a.m.: Maria Gerry, Rucker Leake

**Ushers:** Robert Singer, Kelly Ward

**Lectors:** Missy Higgins, Heather Howle

**Vestry Rep:** Heather Howle

**Children's Church:** Lisa Foster

**Altar Guild** Team 3

**Altar Greenery:** Cheryl & Robert Singer

**Sanctuary candle:** Anne Klein

**Coffee Hour:** Linda & Tom Flynn

**Babysitters:** Marleigh Jaehnel, Madie Kane

### December 16, 2018

7:30am - Holy Eucharist

8:45 a.m. Bible Study

10:00am - Holy Eucharist

Coffee Hour

### December 23, 2018

7:30am - Holy Eucharist

8:45 a.m. Bible Study

10:00am - Holy Eucharist

Coffee Hour

### Wednesday, December 19

5 - 7pm - Youth Group

5:15pm - Eucharist

### Thursday, December 20

9:15am - Morning Prayer

10:00am - Worship: SF Country Manor

### Friday, December 21

7:00am - Eucharist

8:30am - Lectionary Bible Study

### Sunday, December 23

7:30am - Eucharist

8:45am - Bible Study

10:00am - Holy Eucharist

### Wednesday, December 26

Church Office Closed

5 - 7pm - Youth Group

5:15pm - Eucharist

### Thursday, December 27

9:15am - Morning Prayer

10:00am - Worship: SF Country Manor

### Friday, December 28

7:00am - Eucharist

8:30am - Lectionary Bible Study