



Grace Church of West Feliciana Parish

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

Newsletter

December 17 & 24, 2017

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A Lesson Gone Wrong

There is a well-known skit illustration to teach congregations about tithing or stewardship. The priest calls a child from within the congregation and asks him to help him during his sermon. This is what happened to a friend of mine in Ohio, when he tried to use this skit. The priest called a well-loved child and asked him to help him preach the sermon. He then proceeded to give the child a dollar, saying the following words, "Tommy, imagine that I am God and I choose to give you this dollar because I love you. Now, how does it feel to receive a free gift from someone who loves you?" Of course, the child was thrilled and he started jumping excitedly. "Thanks, this is awesome!" He said. The whole congregation started laughing at his innocence and happiness. The priest repeated the handing over of a dollar four more times, in each case asking the same question. The child was beside himself with happiness. "This is too much! Wow, I can't believe you just gave me all this money..." The congregation kept laughing and the preacher was very pleased with the child's reaction because the child was helping him set the stage for what was coming next. After the fifth single dollar, the priest took out a five dollar bill and said, "Tommy, imagine that I am God and I love you. I want to give you this five dollars, which means I have given you ten dollars in total. How do you feel?" Needless to say, the child went bananas. He started narrating all the things he planned to buy. The congregation was totally engrossed in the child's happiness and the priest knew it was time to bring the message home. He said, "Tommy, I have just given you ten dollars, would you give God just one of those dollars to help us support all that we do here in the church?"

Tommy looked at the priest as though the cleric had just told him his mother was killed outside the church. With the loudest voice he could muster, the boy yelled, "NO!" Quickly he added, sobbing, "It's not fair. If you didn't want me to keep the ten dollars, you shouldn't have given them to me! You are in 'Indian giver'. That's what my dad calls those people who give you stuff and then want their stuff back. This is not stinking fair! I am not giving you nothing!" The patient priest tried to reason with the boy about how he didn't do much to deserve the ten dollars and how all God wants and needs is just one dollar. Just ten percent. It is not unfair at all. God didn't have to give him anything, but chose to give him all that money out of love. The child replied with audible sobs all in the uncomfortable congregation could hear, "If God needed a dollar, you should have given me only nine. Once you give me ten, it's unfair to take one back." After this, the child did something unexpected and alarming to his family. He took the ten dollars, looked at the priest with hatred in his eyes, and said, "Here, have all your darn money back, you 'Indian giver'". (only he didn't say, "darn"). After this, he threw the money at the priest's feet and ran out of the church to everyone's dismay.

The embarrassed priest calmed the congregation down and as lovingly as he could, said, "This is exactly what happens all throughout the world. Some willingly give God the dollar he needs, grateful for the nine they get to keep. Others keep it all and quickly forget about the one who gives them all they have. Tommy is unique. In fact, he is the only one I know of who gave it all back!" The congregation burst into laughter and the priest knew the sermon was finished. Although sad at Tommy's reaction, the child's behavior helped the message more than the priest himself could have ever imagined.

Now that I have set the stage, you expect a moralistic ending. Don't you? Something like this, "Don't keep it all!" or "Don't be like Tommy!" or something similar. This is not my intention. Although this true story does pack a punch when it comes to how we see money and how difficult it is to tithe, it is not my intention to guilt you into giving us your money. I do want you to think about your commitment to Grace Church, however. If you believe we are important to you and your family and you draw a benefit from our ministry and life in community, then give as you are led. The best pledges are always the result of discernment, prayer, and joyful gratitude. If you haven't sent us your pledge card, this is the time to think about us and to ask God what he expects from you this coming year. Remember that in addition to your money, we want your time and talents as well.

God continues to bless Grace with some of the most talented, generous, and committed people within this Diocese. I am constantly humbled by your generosity and filled with joy that I get to minister among you. I know we face a very hopeful future. I am glad we have grown in numbers, even though we have confirmed 79 youth in the last nine years, many of whom have left for college or relocated to Baton Rouge and other cities. Even in their absence, our Average Sunday Attendance has remained stable. This is possible because we have added new families and have welcomed new births into our congregation. We remain a vibrant and loving church.

I pray that if God has blessed you financially this year, you would consider a special gift to our Youth Ministry Trust Fund. You may also consider creating a "Future Rector's Fund" so that if our membership ever drops, we will have enough funds to hire a Rector. You may also give us a special gift towards operational expenses for 2018. Please pray about your support of our church and call me to discuss any ideas you may have. May the Christmas Child continue to bless you this season and may you have a prosperous and healthy 2018. In his Holy Name, Fr. Roldan+

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

Your prayers are asked for the family of Cecil Kelly, father of Dare Didier, who died last week in Baton Rouge. May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.

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:

Daisye Howell,
Lucile Lawrason,
Tom Morris, Eric Nelson, Sara Nelson, Olivia Pass, Kay Tengler, Wendell Wade, David Walker, Pam Willson, Jake Wray Made-line Wright.

Birthdays

Jeff Ford-Dec. 17;
Jamie Bankston-Dec. 18; Diane Christopher, Susan Davis, Irv Daniel, Cindy Nicholas-Dec. 19; Christie Reinhardt-Dec. 20; Whitney Miller, Nicholas Skaggs, Charles Fox-Smith-Dec. 21; Hayes Whatley-Dec. 22; Emily Ford-Dec. 23; John Hamilton Willis, Steven Gaudet, Sonnie Walker-Dec. 26; Cameron Boucher-Dec. 27; Nicole Mulkey, Wade Weller, Ryan McGehee-Dec. 29; Noel Parnell, Peter Kang-Dec. 30.

Wedding

Anniversaries

Stewart & Megbe Hughes-Dec. 17;
Christian & Jaime DeJean-Dec 23;
Landon & Connie Anderson-Dec. 24;
Rob & Heather Howle-Dec. 27;
Tommy & Cindy Robinson-Dec. 28;
Josh & Bettsie Norton-Dec. 30.

Other persons prayers are asked for:

Sister Abigail, Claiborne Arbuthnot, 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.

Congratulations and welcome to our confirmands: Walker Hosford, Paul Opperman, Sarah Roldan, and Grant Rome. **Also** welcome to Dennis and Cathy Keith who were received into Grace Church by Bp. Thompson.

Many thanks to Rob and Heather Howle, Dixie Blue, Mickey Melancon and their commit-tee who made the Bishop's Reception on Sunday so beautiful and prepared delicious food that was enjoyed by everyone.

A Christmas Poinsettia Sale - Sunday, December 17th during Coffee Hour hosted by our Youth Group as a fundraiser. The cost of each poinsettia is \$10 and the youth group will also be selling crosses made from the original 1858 attic lathing that was replaced during the renovations in 2015. The crosses are \$10 each. They have a plaque that gives a short history and make unique, one of a kind Christmas gifts. The proceeds from the fundraisers will help purchase food and blessing bag supplies to serve the homeless population of Baton Rouge when the youth group will serve with The Lot Project in January and April. Support our ministries and brighten your home with a beautiful poinsettia and cross.

The Christmas Angel Tree: we have put up the Angel Tree in Jackson Hall. The last day we can receive the wrapped gifts will be **Monday, December 18**, so we can make the deliveries to the families.

Vestry Nominations: We are gathering names of parishioners who will join our vestry from 2018-2020. Speak to them first, obtain their approval, and then send Fr. Roldan an e-mail.

The Finance Committee meets on Tuesday, December 19 at 4:30pm followed by **Vestry meeting** at 5:30pm.

Epiphany Bonfire - Saturday, January 6th: We will celebrate Epiphany with our annual bonfire on Saturday, January 6th at Dan & Ellen Klein's property. 9862 Hwy 965 West. We will have hot dogs & s'mores to roast, bring a potluck dish to share and lawn chairs to sit in. The bonfire will start at 6 p.m. Bring the whole family to this wonderful event!

Youth Group Blessing Bag Supply Drive: The Youth Group will be collecting supplies for blessing bags to be delivered to the Lot Project on Sunday, January 14th when we help to serve the homeless population of Baton Rouge. We will be collecting the following until January 10th, 2018: **hygiene:** deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, lotion, feminine hygiene products, fingernail clippers, chap stick; **first aid items:** band aids, Neosporin, hand sanitizer; **clothing:** socks, blue jeans, jackets, blankets, hand towels, tennis shoes, reading glasses, backpacks; **non-perishables:** packs of crackers, granola bars, bottled water; **gift cards:** The Lot Project plays BINGO and hands out \$5 gift cards to winners. Suggested restaurants are McDonald's, Sonic, & Raising Canes (others are welcome, just make sure there is a location near downtown Baton Rouge)

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

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 14
St. Francisville LA 70775

Sunday Ministry Assistants & Calendar

Sunday December 17, 2017

Acolytes: Hayden Howle, Ella Corinne Howle,
Emma Olsen, Wyatt Olsen

Chalice bearers: 7:30am: Bryan McClendon
10am: Sheryl Wynters, Landon Anderson

Ushers: Shannon Pollet, Richard Kendrick

Lectors: Heather Howle, Dixie Blue

Vestry Rep: Heather Howle

Altar Guild Team 4

Altar Greenery: Tommy and Stacy Loyacono

Sanctuary Candle: Stewart and Megbe Hughes

Coffee Hour: Rob and Heather Howle

Babysitters: Landry Higgins, Shayn Rayford

Sunday, December 24, 2017 7pm

Acolytes: 10am: Mary E. Barrow, Landry
Higgins, R.E. Barrow, Lilly Higgins

7:00pm: Paul Opperman, Fiona Tully,
Mathilda Fox-Smith, Charles Fox-Smith

Chalice bearers 7:30am: **No Service**

7:00pm: Mark Mulkey, Drew Nordgren

Ushers: Will Plettinger, Tom Morris

Lectors: Ellen Klein, Bill McClendon

Vestry Rep: Sue Steib

Altar Guild Teams 1 & 2

Sanctuary candle: Roy and Alma Ruth Skaggs

Coffee Hour: Heather and Rob Howle

Babysitters: Lorna Klein, Madie Kane

December 17, 2017

7:30am - Holy Eucharist
(Grace and St. John's)

Bible Study

10:00am - Holy Eucharist
Coffee Hour

December 24, 2017

7:30am - Eucharist

Cancelled

10:00am - Christmas
Pageant

3:30 pm - St. John's
Christmas Eucharist

7:00pm - Grace Christmas
Eucharist

Wednesday, December 20

5:15pm - Eucharist

5 - 7pm - Youth Group Christmas Party

Thursday, December 21

9:15am - Morning Prayer

10:00am - Worship: SF Country Manor

Friday, December 22

7:00am - Eucharist

8:30am - Lectionary Bible Study

Sunday, December 24

7:30am - Eucharist **Cancelled**

9:15am - Bible Study

10:00am - Children's Christmas Pageant
And Eucharist

3:30pm - St. John's Christmas Eucharist

7:00pm - Grace Christmas Eucharist

Monday, December 25

10:00am - Christmas Day Eucharist

Wednesday, December 27

5:15pm - Eucharist

No Youth Group

Thursday, December 28

9:15am - Morning Prayer

10:00am - Worship: SF Country Manor

Friday, December 29

7:00am - Eucharist