



Grace Church of West Feliciana Parish

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

Newsletter

January 12 & Jan. 19, 2020

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Go to the Other Side

I just returned from a clergy conference at the Solomon Conference Center. I spent the two-hour drive thinking about what I heard and experienced these last two days. I had this feeling of worry hanging over me for the entirety of the conference. Some of my peers acknowledged the same worry at our meals and prayer sessions. This sensation wasn't the result of anything being discussed at the meeting and it wasn't related to any animosity among the clergy present. In fact, collegiality among the clerics of the Diocese has greatly improved over the last five years.

Some of the reasons for this feeling had to do with the usual concerns clergy have when meeting with colleagues. Many of us inside the nave of our Denomination remain worried about church attendance and reductions in giving. This year, however, some of my colleagues and I had additional concerns: our response to the rise of populism, questions about what symbols like the American Flag represent within our sanctuaries, and environmental issues affecting our planet. We live in difficult times and clergy are not immune to worry and anxiety. One way or another, we are all discerning our response to the deep divisions within Christianity and within our society at large.

News from outside the nave of our Denomination compounded this feeling. I am deeply worried about the safety of our troops after the retaliatory strikes from Iran and the decisions being made by those in power on both sides of the conflict. Some of us openly discussed our fear of being drawn into another seemingly endless war, the loss of civility in our national discourse, and the various crises our deeply polarized country is facing.

I entered the office in Jackson Hall feeling sad. After greeting me, our Secretary stated, "Trinity called. You are late for your Lenten reflection." I was instantaneously filled with embarrassment. Approximately two months ago, I agreed to write a lenten reflection for my Seminary, where I remain an Adjunct professor. With the hectic schedule of the holidays, I had completely forgotten about this commitment. This is uncharacteristic for me.

After an apologetic call to the school, I opened the Biblical texts for the day I was assigned in Lent. I smiled when I saw Mark 4:35-5:20 in the list of texts. I cannot think of a more appropriate text to get me out of the funk I was in. Let me set the context. In Mark 4:1-34, Jesus teaches the crowds a number of parables they don't understand. In fact, the parables of The Sower (1-9,) A Lamp Under a Basket (21-25,) The Seed Growing (26-29,) and the Mustard Seed (30-34) are so obscure that Jesus takes a break in the narrative (10-20 and 34) to explain their meaning to his disciples. Then in verse 35, Jesus tells them, "Let us go across to the other side."

The request has a clear purpose: To make disciples among the Gentiles across from Galilee in an area called the Decapolis or the Ten Cities. To the disciples, this was a journey into unclean and forbidden territory. Gentile territories were areas believed to be filled with demons, inhabited by uncleaned sinners, and chock-full of practices that were unlawful for Jews, such as the raising and eating of pigs. As if to emphasize these themes, the first miracle Jesus performs “on the other side” is to cast out a legion of demons from a possessed man, trapping them into local swine. How terrifying this must have been for the faithful Jewish disciples! They had grown up avoiding Gentiles out of fear of defilement and being expelled from their synagogues.

Before they begin their mission to “make disciples of all nations,” a great storm threatens the boat in which the disciples and Jesus are traveling (The Latin word for boat is “navis,” from which we get “nave” and navy.) After calming the storm, Jesus asks the terrified disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” After this interaction, they reach the Decapolis, Jesus performs the miracle described above, and the locals ask him and his disciples to leave because they are terrified of his powers. After Jesus returns, he performs two additional healings in Galilee and we begin to see the opposition to him begin to rise.

I want to stay with the questions at the boat. Jesus asks, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” I believe these questions apply to us today. Why are we so afraid of internal and external conflicts? Have we no faith that Jesus is more powerful than any crises in our church and world? Have we forgotten about the mighty power of our Savior to break into our lives to save us from within? What is preventing us from traveling into “the other side” to befriend those who stand at opposite theological and ideological places from us? In what ways are we contributing to the polarization in our world?

This is a message of comfort for us today. Jesus is in control and we need to trust in his love and provision. We also must be messengers of hope and unity in a fractured world. I believe many of us, unconsciously, contribute to the polarization in our politics and the lack of civility of our speech. By doing so, we choose to see “the other” as the Jews saw the Gentiles. I know it is terrifying to approach “the other.” It may require that we go “To the other side.” It may require tremendous courage and a conscious effort to do our part to advance God’s kingdom of justice, forgiveness, and love in our own context. It may require vulnerability and humility. But, have courage, Jesus is not calling us to go where he hasn’t gone himself. He has been there and he will guide us in our journey. May he continue to bless you, Fr. Roldan+

Lenten Retreat featuring Mary C. Earle



On February 29th renowned theologian and Episcopal Priest, Mary C. Earle, will return to Grace to lead another riveting Lenten retreat. Throughout the day, Rev’d Earle will lead us through reflections and prayers from her book *The Desert Mothers: Spiritual Practices from the Women of the Wilderness*. At the dawn of Christianity, holy women went into the deserts of northern Egypt to devote themselves to lives of prayer. Almost forgotten in today’s contemporary society, now *The Desert Mothers* provide you with the writings of these holy women and apply their spiritual practices to modern day life. Each chapter contains a summary of the spiritual practice and a closing prayer,

making it a useful tool in your devotional practice. Lunch will be provided during the retreat, tickets will be on sale soon on our website. If you have any questions, please call the office, 225-635-4065. We pray you can join us as we begin Lent in prayer and reflection.

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

Zed Howell, Rob Reinhardt, Jan. 13;
Anna Davis-Jan. 14;
David Stewart, Meg Bankston, Lillian Frances Weller, Ariel, Laura, Jacob, Macon Roland-Jan. 15;
Diana Claire Davis, Emily Roldan, Carl Metz, Julius Metz, Bethany Luneau-Jan. 17;
Katie Thompson, Joe Dardard, Anne Timmons-Jan. 18;
Alex Daniel, Beth Smith-Jan. 19;
David Bunch, Decker Dunaway, Caroline Marchive, Charles Reichman -Jan. 20;
Genie McClendon, Lori Gore-Jan. 21;
Melanie Ferris-Jan. 22;
Travis Thornton-Jan. 23;
Joseph DeJean, Robyn Mann-Jan. 24;
Billy Williams-Jan.25;

Wedding Anniversaries

Joseph and Catherine David-Jan 15;

Grace Calendar and Events

Other persons

prayers are asked for:

Claiborne Arbuthnot, Charles Barham, 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, Sara Fahey, Mark Feltner, Dennis Flynn, Matthew Gill, Terri Gerace, Jerry Green, Jane Hamilton, Roy Hardin, Parke Henderson, Wayne Hudnall, Joel James, Michelle Jeansonne, 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 Templet, Roland Toups, Millie and Howard Varner, Deborah Vines, Emily Walz, Jake Washington, Denisia Williams, Deacon Zekes, Lynn Zinn.

Those serving in the armed forces:

Parker Blanche, Amanda Browning, Jay Christopher, Ryan Coacher, Carlile Cointment, 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.

Sign-up lists for Altar flowers, Sanctuary Candle and Coffee Hour are in the Narthex. Please sign up if you can help with these ministries.

Offering envelopes are in the Narthex for those who signed up for them. There will be extra sets in case you don't see your name. Please take the next extra box and **sign your name** to the corresponding envelope number.

Many thanks to Dan and Ellen Klein for hosting the Epiphany celebration this Friday on their property. This is a joyful way to end our Christmas season, thank you to all who will attend and contribute to this great annual event.

Is your child interested in becoming an Acolyte? Children in 2nd grade or higher are welcome to acolyte. There will be an acolyte training today following the 10:00 a.m. service for new and current acolytes. We will have a pizza party after the training as well. Please let Richard Kendrick know if you are able to join us by calling 225-25-4442.

The Senior Adult Movie, will be shown on Friday, January 17th at 10:00 a.m. at the Library

St. John's Chapel will have the Holy Eucharist at 7:30AM on Sunday, January 19th.

Church Mice will return this month on Sunday, January 19th from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in the preschool room. This program is open to all children in preschool through 5th grade. Children will enjoy the fellowship of their peers, do biblical activities, and will have dinner. If you have any questions, please reach out Alyssa Louis at youth@gracechurchwfp.org.

Parent Fellowship will also return this month! Parent Fellowship is open to all parents of children 18 and under. It is held in the Golsan House on Royal Street. We hope you can join us.

Our Annual Meeting will be on Sunday, January 26th following the 10:00 a.m. service. If you are in charge of a ministry, your report for the Annual Meeting booklet is due to Meg (administrator@gracechurchwfp.org) by Friday, January 17th. During our annual meeting we will review 2019, and honor our outgoing vestry members: Leslie Daniel, Zed Howell, and Sue Steib. We will also vote for three new members to the vestry. Our nominees are Maria Gerry, Trish Toburen, and Hamilton Willis. Please join us on the 26th. If you are in need of a ride to the Annual Meeting, please contact the church office at 225-635-4065.

Adventures in Grace is a new ministry open to all age levels with purpose of enhancing fellowship opportunities for our church members. Our first event will be a trip to the LSU Rural Life Museum at the end of January, stay tuned for more details and events. If you would like to join in on planning the upcoming events, please let Meg Kendrick know.

Lent Adult Formation Series will continue the study of the *The Desert Mothers*. During our weekly meetings, we will continue to explore the writings of the women of the desert while reflecting on how we can continue to apply the spiritual practices in our lives today. We will begin the study on Ash Wednesday, February 26th and continue through April 1st. Please stay tuned for more details.

We're raiding the pantry before Lent begins! Join us for a delicious pancake breakfast benefiting the youth group on Sunday, February 23rd. The breakfast will take place between the 7:30 a.m. and 10 a.m. services. Come devour some delicious pancakes and enjoy fellowship between the services. If you would like to help with this event, please contact Maria Gerry or Alyssa Louis.

Grace Church
of West Feliciana Parish
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Sunday Ministry Assistants & Calendar

January 12, 2020

Acolytes: Hannah Adams, Jesse Means, Olivia Adams, Cecile Means

Chalice bearers: 7:30 a.m.: Bryan McClendon

10 a.m.: Karen Snyder, Trish Toburen

Ushers: Tony Horn, Richard Kendrick

Lectors: 7:30 a.m.: Dr. Pat Schneider

10 a.m.: Bill McClendon, Karen Snyder

Vestry Rep: Tommy Loyacono

Altar Guild: Team 3

Children's Church: Alyssa Louis, Charlotte Peno

Altar Flowers:

Sanctuary Candle:

Coffee Hour: David and Coco Treppendahl

Babysitters: Emma Olsen, Grant Rome

January 19, 2020

Acolytes: Clara Jane Hughes, Andrew Klein, John Barrow Klein

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

10 a.m.: Sheryl Wynters, Landon Anderson

Ushers: Zed Howell, Tom Morris

Lectors: 7:30 a.m.: David Opperman

10 a.m.: Rachel Howell, Glenn Thomas

Vestry Rep: Zed Howell

Children's Church: Carly Whatley, Renee Wilson

Altar Guild: Team 2

Altar Flowers:

Sanctuary Candle:

Coffee Hour: Molly McGraw

Babysitters: Madie Kane

January 12, 2020

7:30am - Holy Eucharist

8:45 am - Bible Study

10:00am - Holy Eucharist

Coffee Hour

January 29, 2020

7:30am - Holy Eucharist

8:45 am - Bible Study

10:00am - Holy Eucharist

Coffee Hour

Wednesday, January 15

5 - 7pm - Youth Group

5:15pm - Eucharist

Thursday, January 16

9:15am - Morning Prayer

10:00am - Worship: SF Country Manor

Friday, January 17

7:00am - Eucharist

8:30am - Lectionary Bible Study

Sunday, January 19

8:45am - Bible Study

10:00am - Eucharist

Wednesday, January 22

5 - 7pm - Youth Group

5:15pm - Eucharist

Thursday, January 23

9:15am - Morning Prayer

10:00am - Worship: SF Country Manor

Friday, January 24

7:00am - Eucharist

8:30am - Lectionary Bible Study