



Grace Church of West Feliciana Parish

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

Newsletter for
December 18 & 25, 2016

(225) 635-4065-Office
(225) 635-4410-Fax

Rector

Very Rev. Dr. Roman D.
Roldan
rector@gracechurchwfp.org

Associate Rector

Rev. Dr. Peter Kang
associate@gracechurchwfp.org

Director of Family Ministries

Meg Kendrick
Youth@gracechurchwfp.org

Parish Administrator

Anne Klein
secretary@gracechurchwfp.org

Pre-School

(225) 635-4030
Diana Weller
Preschool@gracechurchwfp.org
Stacy Loyacono
Emily Barrow

Director of Music Ministries

Melvin E. Hale
Music@gracechurchwfp.org

Vestry

Dr. Landon Anderson
Christian DeJean
Dare Didier
Heather Howle
Richard Kendrick
Mickey Melancon
Thomas Olsen
Robert Singer
Dr. Adam Whatley
Glenn Thomas, Treasurer
treasurer@gracechurchwfp.org
Stewart Hughes, Chancellor

Website

Www.gracechurchwfp.org

The Revolutionary Nature of Hope

Colombia is trending right now. Some examples of this are the recent Economist articles; the fantastic segment in 20/20 about Colombia; the placement of Medellin in the top -10 cities to visit in most European travel magazines; the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Colombian president, Juan Manuel Santos; the billions of dollars in foreign investment capital flowing back into the country, etc. There are too many accomplishments to number. I personally never thought I would live to see the day. Growing up under the tyrannical rule of the Medellin Cartel, I thought Colombia's problems were beyond repair. I had no hope in my own country.

Political corruption, street crime, an epidemic of kidnappings, narco-terrorism, and generalized poverty were just some of Colombia's problems. Perhaps the most serious obstacle to peace and prosperity was the never-ending war between the Guerillas, called FARC (Colombian Armed Revolutionary Forces,) and the Government. This war had cost the lives of over 200,000 people, had displaced millions of Colombians, and nearly killed several industries, including tourism. I grew up watching horrific news stories of car bombs, mass killings, and guerrilla-led attacks against most major Colombian institutions. To make matters worse, the guerrillas used the profitable cocaine-trade as a source of funding for the insurrection by joining forces with the mafia for almost 2 decades.

What happened in the early 2000's is nothing short than a miracle. A new generation of politicians and activists began to win in their fight against political corruption and the weakening of Colombian institutions. The greatest example of this is Medellin, where a populist mayor by the name of Sergio Fajardo began to implement a program of social renewal he called "Social Urbanism". Simply put, Fajardo decided to build a system of elegant new constructions, transportations systems, and libraries in the heart of the poorest towns. Comuna 13, the home base for many of Medellin's street criminals, received a brand new system of electric escalators, metro stations, and metro cable stops. Additionally, he built the largest public library in Latin America, at the cost of almost one billion dollars, at the very center of Comuna 13. Fajardo's program of renewal continued throughout the other Comunas and, soon, there were high-risers built throughout the poorest sections of the city, bringing new life to those overwhelmed communities.

Suddenly, there was hope throughout Medellin. The new Metro had connected the entire city and suburbs. The Metro-Cable system had connected the poorest comunas to the city and now poor people could compete for jobs in some of the affluent suburbs in the city. Unemployment went down and, soon, crime became manageable and the guerrillas, who during the time of the Cartels had taken over the city, went back to the mountains and the jungles.

The next step on the road to peace was taken by the federal government. The current president, Juan Manuel Santos Calderon, took office in 2010, following Presi-

dent Alvaro Uribe Velez, a fierce enemy of the guerrillas, who saw it as his life's mission to eradicate FARC from Colombia. Needless to say, thousands of people died on both sides as the conflict intensified. Santos believed what was needed to win the war against FARC was not more bullets but hope. Colombia had tried bullets for 60 years, and the result was death, poverty, and generalized violence. A new approach was necessary.

The president created a small commission to advise him on new ideas. The commission turned to add man Jose Miguel Sokoloff from a prominent marketing firm in Bogota. Sokoloff and his team studied ways to bring hope to the guerrillas in the mountains. They created a campaign called "Trees of Light", where they chose 9 large trees in guerrilla territories and under the cover of night hanged 2,000 Christmas lights. They also hanged signs that said, "Come Home for Christmas." This initial campaign was so successful in re-integrating hundreds of guerrilla soldiers that soon they created "Rivers of Light." Realizing that the guerrillas seldom travel in Colombia's highways but use a complex system of rivers and tributaries to travel at night, Sokoloff's team asked civilians, as well as friends and relatives of the guerrilla soldiers, to send a Christmas letter in floating LED-illuminated balls. The letters were moving and filled with hope. Soon after this, the team aired a number of television commercials of empty chairs next to mothers, fathers, and siblings of guerrilla soldiers in all sorts of situations: empty chair at a soccer stadium, dinner table, movie theater, etc. The caption was always the same, "We are waiting for your return, come home!" Next, the team deployed thousands of soccer balls from helicopters into the jungles. Each soccer ball said, "Come play again", "Remember how much fun it was?", "Your team is waiting for you", etc.

This year many of us watched what appeared an impossible dream just 15 years ago. The FARC and the Government, seating at a negotiations table in Havana, signing a peace agreement that ended the 60-year war. It was not bullets and violence that brought an end to Colombian's scourge and returned over 20,000 guerrilla soldiers home. It was hope and love! It was a refusal to do what the government had always done. It was a desire to try something new, to breathe new life into decaying bones, to seek resurrection in the midst of death. This is a deeply Christian story that works well for us this Christmas.

The Christmas child will bring new life into the world in just a couple of weeks. I pray that you open yourself to the life he brings. May his light fill you with hope and courage to try new approaches for whatever afflicts you. May his birth re-ignite your hope.

Blessings, Fr. Roldan+

Congratulations and welcome to those who were confirmed this past Sunday, Emma Olsen, Mathilde Fox-Smith, Angus Armstrong and to John Flippen who was received.

2017 Liturgical calendars are for sale in the Church office for \$3.

The Christmas Angel Tree is up with several angels left. 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 others (with just their names). The last day we can receive the wrapped gifts will be Sunday, December 18, so we can make the deliveries to the families. Thank you for your generosity, Maria Gerry

Your prayers are asked for the family of Johnnie Reeves King, mother of Rev. Peggy K. Scott. Services were held on Thursday, Dec. 15 in Andalusia, Alabama.

Your prayers are also asked for the family of Joe Savell, Sr., father of Joe Savell who died in Mobile last weekend. Funeral services will be held this Friday at Radney Funeral Home in Saraland, Alabama.

Christmas Flower donations should be mail to Church office or put in offering plates by this Sunday.

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

David Barnes, Susan Dardard, Joe Dardard, Tom Morris, Sara Nelson, Margie Sheets, Kay Tengler, Wendell Wade, David Walker, Pam Willson, Jake Wray, Madeline Wright.

Birthdays

Jamie Bankston-Dec. 18; Diane Christopher, Susan Davis, Irv Daniel, Cindy Nicholas-Dec. 19; Christie Reinhardt-Dec. 20; Nicholas Skaggs, Charles Fox-Smith-Dec. 21; Hayes Whatley-Dec. 22; Emily Ford-Dec. 23; John Hamilton Willis, Katherine T. Cebul-Dec. 24; 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

Christian and Jaime DeJean-Dec 23; Landon and Connie Anderson-Dec. 24; Robbie and Heather Howle-Dec. 27; Tommy and Cindy Robinson-Dec. 28; Brent and Katherine Cebul-Dec. 29; Josh and Bettie Norton-Dec. 30.

Other persons prayers are asked for:

Charles Barham, Walker Bell, Micaela Kell Bennett, Jolie Berry, Phillip Bowen, Leo Brown, Ben Brown, Steve Brown, Willie Bryant, Randy Bryant, Mac Bullock, John Caruthers, Jenny Clark, Kitty Claus, Scott Dardenne, Kathleen Davis, Debbie Desmar, Helen Desselles, Molly Douglas, Mark Ellison, Jennifer Erickson, Mark Feltner, Juanita Ferguson, Dennis Flynn, Matthew Gill, Roy Hardin, Parke Henderson, Wayne Hudnall, Joel James, Michelle Jeansonne, Jill Joffrion, Mary Jo Kaly, Cecil Kelly, Jody Lemoine, Bob Lewis, Jessica Liddle, Max, Paul McGuff, Ralph McKenzie, Laine Martrain, Mary Anne McCrory, Ruby McKee, Robin Michel, Dorothy Anne Millikin, Jimmy Mitchell, Rusty Melton, Randall Nachman, Barton Platte, Susanna Prescott, Peter Purpera, Carol Ratcliff, Tammy Riggs, Cole Rourke, Joseph Savell Sr, Stephen Seale, Gwin Shanks, Kaizlyn Shockley, Cade Stapleton, Roland Toups, Denham Turner, Darold Whitmer, Zane Woodward.

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

Thanks to all who provided food and refreshments for the celebration of the life of Carolyn Bunch. The reception was beautiful and your generosity fed our souls as much as our bodies. The outpouring of love for Carolyn brought much comfort to the family. Thank you for all the acts of kindness you showed throughout her life. Blessings, the Bunches.

Christmas Services

December 24: Fifth Annual Christmas Service at Saint 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.

December 24: Services at Grace will include our annual Christmas Pageant at 4:00PM at Grace (No sermon, lots of carols, and Communion) and our Principal Service at 7:00PM at Grace (Incense, great instrumentalists, augmented choir, sermon and Communion).

December 25: 7:30AM (Fr. Kang) and 10:00AM (Bp. Jenkins)

January 01: First Sunday after Christmas (Holy Name) at Grace Church. Fr. Kang will preach and celebrate both services as the Rector will be on vacation until January 06.

Save your Christmas Tree for Friday, January 6, the Feast of Epiphany. Bring your tree out to Brandie and Tiger Olsen's home, 9847 Island Road, for a hotdog supper and a bonfire made of Christmas trees. Directions on how to get there will be given later. (The bridge is still out from the August flood)

2017 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 2017. (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 THIS Sunday.

Any donation to the church for 2016 needs to be postmarked December 31, 2016 or before to be credited for the 2016 giving record. Any donations received after December 31, 2016 will be credited to 2017.

The 2017 Annual Meeting will be held on January 29th. If you would like to nominate someone to serve on the Vestry, (a confirmed/received Episcopalian, giver of record, who has regular attendance at church) get their permission, then email their name to Fr. Roldan by January 16th.

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

Address Service Requested

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Sunday Ministry Assistants & Calendar

Sunday, December 18, 2016

Acolytes: Elizabeth Hughes, James Kirschling,
Clara Jane Hughes, Mary Jane Opperman
Chalice bearers: 7:30am: Carol Stamey
10am: Richard Kendrick, Sara Klein
Ushers: Tom Morris, **volunteer needed**
Lectors: Sarah Rhody, Glenn Thomas
Vestry Rep: Dare Didier
Altar Guild Team 2
Altar greenery: John Fred Pray
Sanctuary Candle: Stewart and Megbe Hughes
Coffee Hour: Richard and Meg Kendrick
Babysitters: Emma Olsen, Austin Roldan

Sunday, December 24 2016 (7:00pm)

Acolytes: Fiona Tully, Emma Olsen, Madison
Pollet, Ella Corinne Howle, Wyatt Olsen,
Charles Fox-Smith
Chalice bearers Drew Nordgren 4:00pm
Maria Gerry 7:00pm
Dec 25:-Sheryl Wynters 10am
Ushers: 4pm: Olsen, Reinhardt, Plettinger,
Rhody
7pm-Dwight Singer, **volunteer needed**
Lectors: Will Plettinger, Landon Anderson
Vestry Rep: 4pm H. Howle. 7pm R. Kendrick
Altar Guild Teams 3 & 4
Sanctuary candle: Sharon Gauthier
Babysitters: Sara Roldan, **volunteer needed**

December 18, 2016

7:30am - Eucharist
8:45-9:45 - Bible Study
10:00am - Eucharist
Coffee Hour
4-6 Youth Group

December 25, 2016

7:30am - Eucharist
10:00am - Eucharist
Coffee Hour

Wednesday, December 21

5:15pm - Holy Eucharist
Thursday, December 22
9:15am - Morning Prayer
10:00am - Worship at SF Country Manor

Friday, December 23

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

Saturday, December 24

3:30pm - Eucharist at St. John's
4:00pm - Christmas Pageant & Eucharist
7:00pm - Eucharist

Sunday, December 25

7:30am - Eucharist
10:00am - Eucharist

Wednesday, December 28

5:15pm - Holy Eucharist
Thursday, December 29
9:15am - Morning Prayer
10:00am - Worship at SF Country Manor

Friday, December 30

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

Sunday, January 1 2017

7:30am - Eucharist
10:00am - Eucharist
Coffee Hour