



Grace Church of West Feliciana Parish

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

Newsletter for
January 17 & 24, 2016

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"I Saw You on TV The Other Day..."

Several of you have asked me to give an opinion on the recent events in the Anglican Communion which have caused so much air time lately, and last week's blog post by a local author. In this newsletter I will comment briefly on both, trying to be as impartial as I can. First, let me set the stage.

Right after World War II, the Episcopal Church began to assume a slow, but steady, move towards progressive Christianity. In the grossest of oversimplifications, we could say that progressive Christianity is uncomfortable with many of the traditions of mainline Christianity, has struggled for the acceptance of human diversity within the life and governance of various churches, has a strong emphasis on social justice and the care of those on the margins of society, is deeply worried about environmental issues, and promotes values such as compassion, justice, mercy, and tolerance. This emphasis on social justice has led the Episcopal Church to political activism, civil disobedience, anti-war campaigns, and advocacy for issues such as the Civil Rights movement, the full inclusion of women in the work force, the ordination of women to all orders of ministry, the full inclusion of LGTBT Christians into the life of the church, and a redefinition of marriage to include gay marriage.

With a few exceptions, most of these efforts by the Episcopal Church have been accepted by many Anglicans around the world. The problem for the Episcopal Church started not so much in the area of social justice, but in the area of church discipline and church relations. Every denomination has a set of doctrines, theological understandings, catechesis, credal formulas, and canons, which give the denomination its particular identity, and its unique standing within Christianity. In this sense, every denomination is self-governing. When all else fails, a distinct set of beliefs and practices, which are sacrosanct, hold the church body together, maintaining homeostasis, encouraging unity and growth, and preventing disruption and break-up. When an individual or church body acts in opposition to these core beliefs and practices, it is the duty of the denomination to provide a corrective, in order to protect the whole. There is great diversity of opinion and flexibility within most denominations, but there is a set of core beliefs that are inviolable. When one of these is threatened, the church must exercise Christian discipline.

Beginning in the 1940's, the Episcopal Church began to have serious difficulties dealing with attacks on its theology, doctrine, and credal understandings. Most of these attacks were from within the denomination. Over and over again, Bishops, conventions, priests and others attacked the authority of scripture, the role of God as Creator, the resurrection of Christ, the place of the sacraments in the life of the church, etc. Yet, the Episcopal Church failed to discipline or correct these attacks on its doctrine, leading to more outrageous writings, teachings, and practices. Ironically, the idea that a more open-minded, inclusive, accepting, and doctrine-light church would be so

attractive to our culture that the pews would be filled was nothing but a fantasy. From 1992-2015 the church has plunged from 3.4 million to 1.8 million members and there are indications that the hemorrhage will not stop any time soon. Ironically, the church has strengthened its disciplinary canons, but with the exception of sex and money, there are almost no offenses that will get an Episcopalian disciplined. We no longer seem to have a Christian or Credal body of doctrine we are willing to protect for the sake of the whole and for the sake of our relationships with other Anglican provinces around the globe.

This brings us to the news of the last few weeks. In early 2016 the Primates (Presiding Bishops) of the 37 Anglican Communion Provinces around the globe, and other invited guests, passed a resolution disciplining the Episcopal Church for its stand on sexual morality issues. This suspension does not mean we are kicked out of the communion. In fact, there are questions as to whether the Primates had the authority to make the decision they made. None the less, what this means is that members of the Episcopal Church will not be elected to governmental boards, ecumenical commissions, or international Anglican bodies for a time of 3 years. When gatherings take place, the Episcopal Church will have voice, but no vote. This was mostly a symbolic gesture, but one that is important to notice because it points to isolation from outside, making the decline inside more of an issue of concern. The Episcopal Church has become so wedded to its current agenda that it risks isolation from the rest of the Communion, as it continues to battle serious decline, economic problems, and poor morale from within.

Meanwhile in West Feliciana Parish, Grace Church continues to grow, our ministries are solid, the Gospel is preached with faithfulness and integrity, and the Holy Word of God is studied weekly. Mission and outreach continues to work for those in need in our community, our diocese, nation, and in Honduras, and Mauritius (Indian Ocean). Our finances are solid, our people are happy and engaged, our social action is strong, and our fellowship is as solid as it ever was. It may sound a bit "Congregationalist," but the Church is both universal and local. Locally, Grace offers a traditional, yet compassionate and loving, understanding of Anglicanism that remains a vital part of this diocese and this community.

This leads us to the issue of the blogger and author about whom some of you are upset. For the sake of clarity, I must admit that I read this blogger regularly and agree with him often. Having said this, however, I believe Grace Church deserves some credit. I know he has issues with our denomination, and I know these issues "sell" well among his readers. I understand this. Hey, we all need to make a living! Beyond polarizing rhetoric, however, we are here, we are Christ-centered and Bible-believing, and we are growing. Please remain focused on the mission God has given us to do and don't worry too much about the church or its critics. This is God's church and he will take care of it. Blessings to all, Fr. Roldan+

Lenten Bible Studies: Join us from Wednesday, February 17 to March 23 at 9am in Jackson Hall for a study facilitated by Louise Jenkins, Kathryn Ward, Dixie Blue, Nicole Pinson, Dare Didier and Maria Gerry on the book *The Breath of the Soul: Reflections on Prayer* by Joan Chittister. Copies of this book are available at Conundrum Books and Puzzles on Ferdinand St. here in St. Francisville. Please sign up in the narthex if you plan to attend. Please try to read Chapters 1-7 for the first session, which will be facilitated by Kathryn Ward. The evening study will be *Prayer Book Survey* with Dr. Peter Kang, Feb. 10 to March 16. Episcopalians have been called a "Prayer Book People" - a people whose individual and corporate lives are shaped by the Book of Common Prayer. We'll have a closer look at the contents of the prayer book and discuss how it shapes us as a pilgrim and prayerful people. We'll discuss some of the history behind our prayers and the theology implied therein, examining all the while - why do we do what we do? Whether you're a "cradle" Episcopalian or a newcomer, this class promises a rich exploration and deeper understanding of the faith and life of our church. Supper will start at 6pm and the class follows.

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

Mark Armstrong, Landon Anderson, David Barnes, George Black, Wayne Blake, Russell Daniel, Cecil May Dwyer, Rob Fisher, Tom Morris, Sara Nelson, Emile Pourciau, Margie Sheets, Wendell Wade, Madeline Wright.

Birthdays

Josh Norton, Ruby Havard, Jan. 31; Chris Dwyer, Robert Singer, Emma Bell, Willis Daniel-Feb. 1; Stacy Betz-Feb. 2; Overton Nicholas-Feb. 3; Rob Howle, Tommy Thompson-Feb. 4; Bill Willson-Feb. 6; Chris Metz, Morgan Moss-Feb. 7; Braylon Farthing, Dahn Savell, Justin Williams, Dana Han- chey, Gus Hill, Eleanor Tregle-Feb. 8; Peter Truitt-Feb. 9; Patsy Hardouin, Debbie Graves-Feb. 10; Penny Reinhardt -Feb. 11; Elizabeth Feirn, Davis Bankston Sr, John Moss-Feb. 12; Elizabeth David, Kay Tengler-Feb. 13.

Wedding Anniversaries

Davis & Kathy Bankston-Feb. 1; Chris & Donna Metz-Feb. 7; Charles & Betty Sessions-Feb. 10.

Other persons prayers are asked for:

Sadie Aitken, Charles Barham, Mercer Barney, MiMi Bornman, Ben Brown, Steve Brown, Willie Bryant, Randy Bryant, Debbie Bunch, John Caruthers, Jenny Clark, Bodo & Kitty Claus, Troy Cothorn, Kathleen Davis, Debbie Desmar, Helen Desselles, Molly Douglas, Mark Ellison, Gretchen Epling, Jennifer Erickson, Louise Ewin, Mark Felner, Dennis Flynn, Matthew Gill, Myron Hamey, Roy Hardin, Parke Henderson, Elmo Hegwood, Wayne Hudnall, Joel James, Lindsey Johnson, 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, Jim Mire, Jimmy Mitchell, Rusty Melton, Alice Mier, Mike Morris, Randall Nachman, Emily Neumann, Ashley Palmer, Barton Platte, Susanna Prescott, Holly Price, Peter Purpera, Carol Ratcliff, Tammy Riggs, Gwin Shanks, Kaizlyn Shockley, Cade Stapleton, Gary Thomas, Glenn Thomas III, Denham Turner, Darold Whitmer, John 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 Ragusa, Christopher Willis, Matthew Young, 745th & 746th Exped Squads, 379th & 926th Exped. Support Squads.

"Hat Ministry": Due to the generosity of Will Gordon Plettinger, it was my privilege to wear Deacon Lucy's hats during my recent chemo treatment. Since then we have shared Lucy's and my hats with others undergoing cancer treatment. Thus the idea of a "Hat Ministry" evolved. Fr. Roldan has given his permission to let us store these hats in Jackson Hall. Will Gordon and Kathy P. Kane have agreed to serve on the committee to oversee this project with me. Soft, washable hats are the most popular. They are the most comfortable and the easiest to disinfect. If you have hats you would like to contribute to our collection or if you know of someone in need of hats; please contact Susan Leake at 635-6115. Thank you.

Food Pantry items: Please bring donations of grits and oatmeal for January and February for our collections for the local Food Pantry. They can be put in the wagon in the church or in the orange barrel outside the church office. Volunteers are still needed for work days at the Food Bank. Please call Kelly Ward, 721-2253, if you would like to help with this ministry.

St. Francisville Symphony Association of the Baton Rouge Symphony presents its third concert of the year on Friday, February 12 in Grace Church at 7pm. Willis Delony offers a fascinating glimpse into the connection between the worlds of Classical and Jazz in his original production, *Willis Delony: Intersections*. Join us to see Willis Delony on the piano; tickets are available at Bank of St. Francisville, 225 635-6397.

Youth Group Pancake Brunch: Our Youth Group will be having a Pancake Brunch Fundraiser on Sunday, February 7 following the late service from 11:30am to 1:00pm. The event will take place in Jackson Hall and the donations will benefit the West Feliciana Food Bank. Come have a light brunch before the serious snacking for the Super Bowl begins.

At the Annual Meeting elected as the 3 new vestry members were Christian DeJean, Heather Howle, and Richard Kendrick for a term of 3 years. Congratulations!

Financial Update: At the Annual Meeting we reported that our approved budget for 2016 started with a \$58,000 dollar prospective deficit, which we had plans to correct by the end of the year. One of the strategies to solve the problem was to speak to a few parishioners who had not yet pledged. I am happy to report that since the day of the meeting we have received over \$30,000 dollars in additional pledges and now our deficit stands at less than \$30,000 dollars. Please pray for additional contributions and pledges to make up the difference. Thank you all for your love and support. Fr. Roldan+

During the Annual Meeting the signup sheets got stopped before making it all around the room. We have these dates available for **Altar Flowers:** Jan. 31; Feb. 7; greenery only for Feb. 21 & 28; greenery for March 13; flowers on May 1, 15, 22, 29; July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31; Aug 28; October 16 & 23; and greenery for Nov 27, Dec 4, 11 & 18. **Youth Group suppers** are needed for Feb. 14, March 13, April 3, 17, 24. If you want any of the dates, please call the office, 635-4065, to sign up. Thanks, Anne

Ash Wednesday: We will have three Ash Wednesday Services on 2/10/16. The first is a 45 minute service of Holy Communion with the imposition of ashes at 7:00AM. This service is ideal for those who must be at work by 8:30 or 9:00AM. The second service will be at 10:00AM and it is a casual didactic service for our preschool children. The service will explain why we put ashes on our foreheads, will adapt the readings to make them more child friendly, and will not offer a sermon per se or Holy Communion. The entire service will be no more than 20 to 25 minutes. The third service will be at 5:15 and it will be our traditional Wednesday evening service with the added imposition of ashes. Please plan to attend.

Grace Church
of West Feliciana Parish
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Address Service Requested

Sunday Ministry Assistants & Calendar

Sunday, January 31, 2016

Acolytes: Ethan Lyon, Paul Opperman, Clara Jane Hughes, Logan Reinhardt
Chalice bearers: 7:30am: Bryan McClendon
10:00am: Rucker Leake, George Newton
Ushers: Tony Horn and Zed Howell
Lectors: Justin Peno, Glenn Thomas
Vestry Rep: Landon Anderson
Altar Guild Team 4
Altar Flowers: Volunteer needed
Sanctuary Candle: Meg and Richard Kendrick
Coffee Hour: Carol Ridenour/Dixie Blue
Babysitters: Landry Higgins, Maggie Higgins

Sunday, February 7, 2016

Acolytes: Mary Elizabeth Barrow, Hayden Howle, Wyatt Olsen, Paul Opperman, James Kirschling, Matthew Skaggs
Chalice bearer: 7:30am: Sharon Gauthier
10am: David Bunch, Landon Anderson
Ushers: Robbie Howle and Sara Rhody
Lectors: Will Plettinger, Donna Wright
Vestry Rep: Robert Singer
Altar Guild Team 1
Altar Flowers: Volunteer needed
Sanctuary Candle: Colleen and Jean Hill
Coffee Hour: Youth Group Pancake Brunch
Babysitters: Shelby Griffin, Madie Kane

January 31, 2016

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

February 7, 2016

7:30am - Eucharist
8:45-9:45 - Bible Study
10:00am - Eucharist
11:30am - 1:00pm
Pancake Brunch by Youth
Group to benefit the
Food Bank

Wednesday, February 3, 2016

7:00am - Men's Prayer Breakfast
5:15pm - Holy Eucharist

Thursday, February 4, 2016

9:15am - Morning Prayer
10:00am - Worship at SF Country Manor

Friday, February 5, 2016

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

Sunday, February 7, 2016

7:30am - Eucharist
8:45-9:45 - Bible Study
10:00am - Eucharist
11:30am - 1:00pm Pancake Brunch

Wednesday, February 10, 2016

5:15pm - Holy Eucharist
6:00pm - Supper and Prayer Book Survey

Thursday, February 11, 2016

9:15am - Morning Prayer
10:00am - Worship at SF Country Manor

Friday, February 12, 2016

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

Sunday, February 14, 2016

7:30am - Eucharist
10:00am - Eucharist
Coffee Hour
4-6:00pm - EYC meetings and supper