



Grace Church of West Feliciana Parish

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

Newsletter for
October 16 & 23, 2016

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On Ignorance, Faith, and Love

"I don't understand. I really don't. I knelt down in the living room, right here, with my kids...and we prayed and we prayed, asking God to spare our house, but the water still came in. We lost everything." A woman recently said this to me while I was out making a needs assessment of homes affected by the historic floods in August. She was expressing a sentiment experienced by thousands, like her, recovering from a traumatic and devastating loss—the unanswered question—"why?" As a priest, I often hear questions like this – "Why did God let this terrible event happen?" And I have to resist the temptation to give an easy or simplistic answer - a response that does not acknowledge the reality of the suffering of the person in front of me or one that misrepresents my own grasp of the situation. Because, if I am to be honest, I must admit that "I don't know" is probably the truest thing I can say.

I really don't know why God allows bad things to happen to good people. Of course, I am familiar with the many ways theologians and church leaders have attempted to answer this question in the past. I am well versed in the discourse of "theodicy" (attempts to "vindicate God" in view of the existence of evil). However, these abstract theories and explanations always seem to fall flat in response to a suffering person. Theological treatises on the implications of God's permissive will and the ramifications of human freedom do not assuage the suffering heart, nor do cliched platitudes, like "everything happens for a reason," offer much consolation. In my experience, I've found that it is best to simply acknowledge that I really don't have a satisfying explanation.

It can be difficult to accept our own ignorance, to admit that we don't know why some things happen, especially when those things are so terribly painful. We have a natural tendency to search for reasons, for identifiable causes of our woes - presumably because, if we know why something has happened, we could prevent it from happening again in the future. Having explanations for everything gives us the semblance of control over our lives. Much more frightening is it to admit the truth – that we don't know why some things happen, nor can we control everything that happens to us.

Faith is seen most clearly in situations outside our control, when we admit our powerlessness to determine our fate, when we must entrust our lives to the care of another, in whom we put our faith. Having faith, as Christian, does not simply mean believing particular things to be true, but believing *in* a particular person (who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life"), Jesus Christ, Our Lord - and entrusting our lives to him.

Being a faithful Christian is certainly does not guarantee that you will never suffer, nor does it mean that you will always understand why you are suffering. What it does offer is this - the assurance that you are never alone in your suffering. Christ came down, to

be incarnate and made one of us, as “Emmanuel” (that is “God with us”). He suffered and died as one of us. And by his resurrection, defeated death and the grave and provided for us the means of everlasting life – that he may dwell in us and we in him, even in the midst of our suffering and pain and our unanswered questions, he is with us. Knowing this does not erase or prevent our suffering, but it can give it shape and meaning.

As Christians we are called to go to those who are suffering and in need - not to erase or explain away their pain, but to be with them in the midst of their trials, and by our presence offer the assurance that they are not alone. We are not called so much to give answers as we are called to love – to care for the orphan and the widow, the hungry and the oppressed, and those who mourn. We are not so much called to “fix” them as we are to *be with* them, not so much to eliminate all their suffering but to help them bear it, by bearing it with them. I am proud of our church and all the volunteers from around the country who have reached out to those in need in our communities, freely offering their own personal gifts of time, talents and treasure. And I ask that you continue to pray for those suffering from loss and disaster and those who are ministering to them. Blessings, Fr. Peter+

Confirmation and New Comers Classes to Begin Soon: If you have a child in the 8th grade or above and want to have him or her confirmed, please call the office and register for Confirmation classes, which begin the third Thursday, October 20th at 6:00PM. Likewise, if you are interested in engaging in some New Comer's classes, please let us know soon. These classes will also start on Thursday, October 20th. Fr. Peter will teach Confirmation and Fr. Roldan will teach New Comers. More information will be available soon.

Your prayers are asked for the family of Elmo Hegwood, father of Lisa Horn and Renee Sparks, who died September 28. Services were held at Charlet Funeral Home on September 30th.

St. John's Church will have a celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday, October 16 at 7:30am.

Transfers out: Craig and Michelle Roth have transferred their Church membership to St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Brevard, North Carolina where they now live.

The Finance Committee meets on Tuesday, October 19 at 4:30 pm; The **Vestry** will meet right after them at 5:30pm.

Grace Gets a New Website and Mobile App: I have a friend who used to say that "The worst thing about some crisis situations is that the fall on the full-time employed." By that he means that "the unexpected" some times happens at times when we are extremely busy and can hardly dedicate time to something else. This has been the case with us. Three days after the historic floods, at the most inopportune time, our website crushed. Long story made short, we ended up having to switch to a new website host, we built a new website, and we started the process of creating a mobile app to go along with it. This mobile app will be live within the next week. So, please check us out at gracechurchwfp.org. Thank you for your patience while we continue to "populate" this website (load up content). More information will be forthcoming. Blessings to all, Fr. Roldan+

Stewardship Month: As you can see on the next page, there is a pledge card. The card and a letter will be in the mail next week to you or you can use the pledge card in this newsletter. Thank you for all your support of Grace Church and our ministries.

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

Fern Aldridge,
David Barnes,
Carolyn Bunch,
Barbara Mitchell,
Tom Morris, Sara Nelson, Sarah Rhody, Jim Roldan, Margie Sheets, Eleanor Thomas, Wendell Wade, David Walker, Pam Willson, Jake Wray, Madeline Wright.

Birthdays

Jack Donnelly,
Arthur Lewis, Jordan C. Truitt-Oct. 16; Anderson Adams, Linda Pruitt, Tara Jones, Wayne Blake-Oct. 17; Ruthie Lindsey, Kevin Griffin-Oct. 18; Megan Gill, Alex Persons, Lisa Fisher-Oct. 20; Madeline Horn-Oct. 21; Jane Daniel-Oct. 22; Mark Mulkey, Natasha Kirschling, Nicole Means, Jason Bell, Betsy Daniel-Oct. 25; Lisa Horn-Oct. 27; Kyle Rhody-Oct. 28; David Treppendahl-Oct. 29.

Wedding

Anniversaries

Emilie and Nathan Johnson-Oct. 19; Sean and Katie Harrison, Larry and Susan Schneider-Oct. 20.

Other persons prayers are asked for:

Charles Barham, Walker Bell, Micaela Kell Bennett, Jolie Berry, Tommy Bishop, 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 Deselles, Molly Douglas, Mark Ellison, Jennifer Erickson, Mark Feltner, 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, Jim Mire, Jimmy Mitchell, Rusty Melton, Alice Mier, 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, Glenn Thomas III, 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 Ragusa, Christopher Willis, Matthew Young, 745th & 746th Exped Squads, 379th & 926th Exped.

St. John's Church will have their Fall Workday Oct 15th (previously announced as Oct 8th) beginning at 9am. Plans are to clean up and mow around the church, reduce the weed population, and do any maintenance on the building that is needed. Everyone is invited to help. Bring any tools that you like to work with. If you have questions, please call Bert Bayers at 225 635-6323.

Church Directory Update: Since the publication of our church directory, many of you have new phone numbers, new addresses, new email addresses and even new family members. Please send an email (gracewfpsecretary@gmail.com) or call or text Anne Klein at the church with that new information. We will then publish these corrections for everyone to edit their directories. Thank you in this effort. We are only as correct as you help us to be. Peace be with you, Dixie Blue

Honduras: We still have several spots for our Mission Trip to Honduras from January 9 to 16, 2017. If you are interested in attending, please e-mail Fr. Roldan at frroldan@gmail.com.

Graveside services will be held on Sunday, October 16 at 2pm for Terri Thompson, daughter of Jane Truitt and stepdaughter of Jordan Truitt, who passed away in August. Following the service, there will be a reception in Jackson Hall.

It's movie time! Our library will have Senior Movie Day on Friday, October 21 at 10am. The movie is "A Novel Romance" and popcorn will served. See you there!

The St. Francisville Symphony Association presents the Baton Rouge Symphony Chamber Series' first concert *Benjamin Britten: A Retrospective* on Friday, October 28 at 7:00pm in Grace Church. They are joining in a global celebration of one of the 20th century's greatest composers, Benjamin Britten. Internationally acclaimed tenor Paul Groves introduces us to the composer with works that celebrate Britten's life, loves, friendships and artistic genius. Groves will be accompanied by Angela Bagnett Finley, horn and Diane Frazer, piano. Tickets are available at Bank of St. Francisville, or at the door.

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**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 2016. (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*

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## Sunday Ministry Assistants & Calendar

### Sunday, October 16, 2016

**Acolytes:** Ethan Lyon, Mathilde Fox-Smith, Logan Reinhardt, Wyatt Olsen

**Chalice bearers:** 7:30am: Bryan McClendon

10:00am: George Newton, Sheryl Wynters

**Ushers:** Rob Howle, Richard Kendrick

**Lectors:** Glenn Thomas, Will Plettinger

**Vestry Rep:** Robert Singer

**Altar Guild Team 1**

**Altar flowers:** Ann and George Newton

**Sanctuary candle:** Don and Penny Reinhardt

**Coffee Hour:** Rob and Heather Howle

**Babysitters:** Shelby Griffin, Sara Roldan

### Sunday, October 23, 2016

**Acolytes:** Nicole Mulkey, Paul Opperman, Mary Jane Opperman, Clara Jane Hughes

**Chalice bearers:** 7:30am: Carol Stamey

10am: Landon Anderson, Maria Gerry

**Ushers:** Zed Howell, Tom Morris

**Lectors:** Donna Wright, Landon Anderson

**Vestry Rep:** Adam Whatley

**Altar Guild Team 2**

**Altar flowers:** C. Claude Barron

**Sanctuary Candle:** Tapper and Betty Sessions

**Coffee Hour:** Rob and Heather Howle

**Babysitters:** Landry Higgins, Emma Olsen

### October 16, 2016

7:30am - Eucharist

(Grace & St. John's)

8:45-9:45 - Bible Study

10:00am - Eucharist

Coffee Hour

4-6pm Youth Group

### October 23, 2016

7:30am - Eucharist

8:45-9:45 - Bible Study

10:00am - Eucharist

Coffee Hour

4-6pm Youth Group

### Wednesday, October 19

9:00am - Bible Study

5:15pm - Holy Eucharist

6:00pm - Bible Study

### Thursday, October 20

9:15am - Morning Prayer

10:00am - Worship at SF Country Manor

### Friday, October 21

7:00am - Eucharist

8:30am - Lectionary Bible Study

### Sunday, October 23

7:30am - Eucharist

8:45-9:45 - Bible Study

10:00am - Eucharist

Coffee Hour

4-6pm Youth Group

### Wednesday, October 26

9:00am - Bible Study

5:15pm - Holy Eucharist

6:00pm - Bible Study

### Thursday, October 27

9:15am - Morning Prayer

10:00am - Worship at SF Country Manor

### Friday, October 28

7:00am - Eucharist

8:30am - Lectionary Bible Study