

Grace Memorial Newsletter



2023

As we enter into the season of Advent, it is easy to get caught up in the Christmas chaos. The shopping, music, lights, parties, and decorating all come together to create an atmosphere of joy and happiness. And honestly, it's lovely. I am one of those people who loves to sit in the glow of the Christmas tree, wrapped up in a holiday themed sweater, drinking hot chocolate, while the Dolly Parton Christmas album plays in the background. I look forward to it all year long! But, that is not the purpose of the church's season of Advent. In these weeks leading up to the Feast of Christmas, church takes on a more solemn tone. We light more candles. We sing different songs. We pray with words that articulate the challenges and the pains of the world alongside words of hope. Advent is not Christmas and even though the world says, "Christmas is now!" The church says, "Not yet". The church calls us to wait, listen, and prepare for Christmas in ways that have nothing to do with shopping lists or tinsel. The church calls us to turn inward and examine our hearts and lives, so that when Christ comes again, we are ready to receive him. The wonderful and mystical truth about Christmas is that we are not just remembering something that happened a long time ago, we are getting ready for what is to come, the second coming of Christ into the world. And we also prepare ourselves for the ways God is present in our hearts, minds, and lives each and every day. But "How?" you might say, "how can it be both and?" That, my beloveds, is the wonderful truth about God. The closer we get to God, the more mystery we encounter.

So how do we thoughtfully engage with the mystery of Advent in the midst of the Christmas chaos? How can we pull ourselves away from the popular cultural celebrations, even for just a moment, to prepare ourselves, as the church calls us to do? One way is to make a commitment to come to church each Sunday of Advent. Arrive a few minutes early to sit in the sacred quiet of the sanctuary, and listen deeply to the scriptures and hymns at each service. Or commit to attending Evening Prayer on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 4:30 PM. You'll hear scripture that we don't usually read in church and will get to pray a service that is foundational to our church. If you come to make an Advent Wreath this Sunday, December 3, take time each day to pray as you light your wreath. Another way is to pray with an Advent devotional like *Keep Watch with Me: An Advent Reader for Peacemakers* by The Rev. Claire Brown, or read *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by The Rev. Barbara Brown Taylor, a meditation on darkness. Join us in Mandeville for the Blue Christmas service* we are co-hosting with St. Michael's to recognize the pain and grief many feel this time of year. Or, ground yourself in meditative yoga* in our parish hall once or twice a week. If none of these speak to you, please come to see me and I'd love to help you find a way to spend this season in deep and intentional relationship with God.

While it may not be easy, stepping back and entering into the sacred season of Advent may just be the best Christmas gift you can give yourself.

Advent Blessings,
Mtr. Liz

*More information can be found below and on our website (gracemem.org)

Vestry Meeting

Sunday, December 17th following the 10 a.m.
Service in the Parish Hall.



Join the Women of Grace for the monthly Wine Down Wednesday gathering at Salty Joe's *Wednesday, December 6th at 5:30.* The event will be hosted by Jan Anderson, Lee LeGuyader, & Jo Ziller.

Come on down and bring a friend.
We always have a great time!



Day/Date: *Wednesday, December 6th*

Place: Parish Hall

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Cost: \$25

All men are welcome!

Children's Chapel on Sunday

Pre-K and up. (Older children are welcomed as helpers) are invited to come to the 10:00 church service with their parents. They will leave during the "Gloria" and have a children's sermon and activities in the church office. Their lessons will follow the same lessons as the church. They will return to the church for the Offertory to sit with their parents and take communion or a blessing. The children will have their own offertory in their lesson and one child will bring the gifts to the altar with the adults. Children may bring pennies, nickels, and any trinkets that they wish to offer. We also still need 2-3 helpers for Children's Chapel in order to keep it consistent and within diocese guidelines. Please see Jo or Heather for this as well. Heather Kemp 985-969-5177 or heather.kemp@yogarouge.com

St. Margaret's Guild / ECW

Our Christmas luncheon will be held Tuesday, December, 12th at Michabelle in Hammond at 11:00
We need to know if you are coming.
RSVP to Jan at 985-507-0132.



Christmas Poinsettias

The sign-up sheet for Christmas flowers are located in the Narthex. The deadline is Sunday, December 18th.

Grace Gift Shop

Grace Gift Shop is closing in January. As you are doing your Christmas shopping, consider the easy, quiet shopping at Grace Gift Shop. All the prices are marked down and tax is included in the prices. A BIG THANK YOU to everyone for their support and help in making Grace Gift Shop a success for all these years.

Holiday Worship Schedule

Sunday, December 24, Christmas Eve

10:00AM Advent IV

4:00 PM w/ Pageant (NO Child Care Provided)

Monday, December 25, Christmas Day

- 10:00 AM (NO Child Care Provided)



The church office will be closed for Christmas
December 22nd - January 3rd

Advent Wreath Making



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3 AT 9:00 AM & 11:30 AM
GRACE MEMORIAL EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Bishop Visitation

Join us on Sunday, December 17 for Bishop Shannon Duckworth's first annual visitation to Grace Memorial. This will be a great day in the life of our congregation as we celebrate Bishop Shannon's faithful leadership and those who are committing themselves to their faith through baptism, confirmation, and reception.

Church Staff

*The Rt. Rev. Shannon R. Duckworth, Bishop
EDOLA*

*The Rev. Liz Embler-Beazley, Priest in Charge
865-604-0178, lembeaz@gracemem.org*

*Pamela Kirk, Parish Administrator
985-345-2764, office@gracemem.org*

*Dr. Lilia Olınyk, Music Director
Music@gracemem.org*

Ellis Neal, Sexton

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

out of the darkness

AN ALTERNATE CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE



BLUE CHRISTMAS IS A SERVICE FOR ANYONE WHO IS, OR EVER HAS BEEN, BROKENHEARTED DURING THE "MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR." IT IS A PLACE AND A SPACE TO PAUSE, TO LEAN INTO OUR SORROW, AND TO BE REMINDED THAT THE LIGHT OF CHRIST SHINES EVEN IN THE DARKEST PARTS OF OUR LIVES.

6 PM
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2023
ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
4499 SHARP ROAD, MANDEVILLE
985/626-5781 | RECTOR@STMICHAELSLA.ORG

GROUNDING AT GRACE YOGA

Everyone is welcome!

Mondays & Wednesdays

Noon Express 12-12:45pm

Tue&Thu 5:30-6:30pm

Sat 9-10:00am

Stretchy Flow, Yin & Sound Bath

KIDS YOGA Mondays 4:15-5:00pm

for more info and sign up

www.yogarouge.com

heather.kemp@yogarouge.com

985-969-5177



Travis LeGuyader 12/02
Buck Maurin 12/02
Howard Nichols 12/04
Susan Nichols 12/04
Meg Travis 12/04
Chris Tucker 12/04
C.C. Gaiennie 12/05
Maude Sharp 12/07
Joshua Dameron 12/08
Peggy Barzenick 12/09
Jacob Dameron 12/09
Beverly Burgess 12/14

Madelyn Henry 12/14
Nanda Tucker 12/14
Sandy Miller 12/16
Madeliene McAllister 12/16
Carolyn Ennis 12/18
Thomas Davidson 12/19
Rick Henry 12/23
Judy Solomon 12/26
Jay Carter 12/26
Donald Fellows 12/28
Sandy Sharp 12/29
Sue Bollin 12/3