

Dear Saints and Friends of Gregory Memorial,



A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Isaiah 40:3-5

We've been rehearsing for the choral cantata for a few months now, and my favorite piece is the one in which these verses are sung.

They are a joyous proclamation of hope fulfilled, of the nearness of the Kingdom of God, of the intimate presence of God manifest in our world by the incarnation – Christ, our Messiah, the Light of God come into the world.

While some tease me about not looking forward to Christmas too soon, I maintain that Christmas is all the richer for the hopeful expectation of Advent. And I do love Christmas, all the more because of these weeks which are now before us as we daily make our journey to the manger scene. In these verses, Isaiah reflected the hopeful expectation of the people of Israel to know God intimately among them, and this is still our hopeful expectation today. And in them, Isaiah speaks to the people of God what it is to not just wait, but to wait expectantly, hopefully, and with purpose.

In our waiting, we are not to twiddle our thumbs, but rather to reshape the world around us: a straight road through the desert, an easy path in the wilderness; uneven ground made level, mountains laid low and plains lifted up. The way of the Lord is one in which the distance between us and God, between us and each other, is made short and non-existent. Christmas is the time when the distance between us and God is erased; Advent is the season in which we strive to make our world reflect this vision.

And so, as Isaiah invited the people of God, so I invite you to work to make short work of the distance between you and God, to bring closer the relationships of this world. We'll be doing this in several ways over the next weeks. For instance:

On **December 3**, we will offer cookies and cocoa again to members of the community, following the

Christmas Parade. But this year we will be assisted by the Girl Scouts who have been meeting here, and we will not only work alongside them but will again have the opportunity to greet our neighbors.

On **December 8**, we will gather for chili and soup, but this year instead of a contest that Josh would undoubtedly win, we will then go out in a couple groups to go caroling to some of our shut-in members. It will be a joyful event for all, regardless of musical capability!

On **December 18** we will offer our choral cantata, "Noel Celebration," to the community, together reveling in the joyous proclamation of the good news of Christ's arrival.

On **December 21**, on the Winter Solstice, we will remember that while our hope is in the Light, our world too often is wrapped in the darkness of grief. Those who feel keenly the loss of family and friends are invited to the Darkest Night service, to be comforted and to light a candle in remembrance of loved ones.

And then, of course, we will gather on **December 24** for our candle-light Christmas Eve services. And as Christmas Day this year is on a Sunday, we will gather informally for a brief service of celebration on December 25, where we will sing carols and share the joyful stories of our Christmases.

All of this is to say, in this season we will be celebrating community, and working to do away with the distances which separate us from one another, and from God. Join us, and may our joy, together, be complete!

With you on the journey,
Pastor Jason



WORSHIP INFORMATION FOR DECEMBER, 2016

Sunday, 4 December, 2016

2nd Sunday of Advent - Liturgical Color: Blue/Purple
 1st Reading: Joel 2:12-13, 28-29 + 2nd Reading: Luke 11:13
 Sermon: "The Coming Gift of God"

Sunday, 11 December, 2016

3rd Sunday of Advent - Liturgical Color: Blue/Purple
 1st Reading: Isaiah 61:1-11 + 2nd Reading: Luke 4:16-21
 Sermon: "Anointed Ones"

Sunday, 18 December, 2016

4th Sunday of Advent - Liturgical Color: Blue/Purple
 1st Reading: Psalm 113 + 2nd Reading: Luke 1:26-49
 Sermon: "Proclaim!"

Wednesday, 21 December, 2016


Darkest Night

Saturday, 24 December, 2016

Christmas Eve

Sunday, 25 December, 2016

Nativity of Jesus Christ/Christmas Day - Liturgical Color: White
 1st Reading: Psalm 123:1-2 + 2nd Reading: Luke 2:8-20
 Informal Service: "Christmas Stories"

 **OUR PRAYER IN TIMES OF JOY AND CONCERN...** One of our great joys and responsibilities to each other and to God here at Gregory Memorial is the regular practice of praying for each other and our community.

Communities affected by Hurricane Matthew
 Communities affected by recent acts of violence
 Marion McDonald
 James Hartsell, Robert Hartsell's brother
 Amy Townson, Josh Ingram's sister
 Doris Karnowski, Josh Ingram's grandmother
 Maryland Blanchard, Grace and Helen Cibula's friend
 Mary Chadwick, Dink Armstrong's sister
 Evelyn Lichvar, her son, Martin, and her brother, Rick Lichvar (health issues)
 Becky Smith
 Russell Heiser, Ingrid Phoenix's grandson (health issues)
 Helen & Grace Cibula
 Elizabeth Scott
 Kenneth & Sue Andrews, Childress family's friends
 Jimmy Clark
 Terry Robertson, Billy Robertson's son
 Elisha Beverly, Valerie Harsh's daughter (health issue recurrence)
 Peggy Allen
 Tiffany Portser, Melissa Johnes's cousin (health issue)
 Mila Campen, Ann Hartsell's mother (rectal cancer diagnosis)
 Eleanor Jones

Vivian Johnes (improved, at-home rehab)
 Butch Meade, Glenda Mayhew's brother
 Teresa Knott, PG County employee (health issue)
 Billy Robertson (home, feeling better)
 Emily Hudson, Rose Scott's niece (continued recov., home)
 Eileen Mozucha (continued recov., home)
 Michelle Coleman (health issues & recov.)
 Mae Grammer, Dianne Overstreet's friend
 Ralph Summerson
 George Poulson
 Aida Faries (unable to receive transplant)
 Mary Tate, Grace & Helen Cibula's great-niece (health issue)
 Inez Paul, Mary Holc's mother (moved into Brighter Living)
 Courtney Stewart, friend of the Hunters (Duke Hospital)
 Adrienne Wallace, member of Hopewell News staff & former Dir., Local Emerg. Planning Bd.
 Ed Armstrong (health issues)
 Donald Hunter (recov., home)
 Irma Honeycutt, Dave & Patsy Johnson's friend (health issue)

ANNOUNCEMENTS



GATEKEEPER:
Doug Holc

Cookies n' Cocoa/Open

House at GMPC after PG Christmas Parade will be on Dec. 3. Our Gregory Girl Scouts will provide the cookies, and Gregory volunteers will handle the cocoa. To volunteer for cocoa duty, contact Judy Recher or Brenda Bond.



Christmas Poinsettias

arrive Dec. 8. Remember to take yours home after Christmas Eve service!



Chili, Soup, & Caroling, Dec. 8:

We'll gather for dinner and fellowship, and then go out to spread good cheer to our shut-in and homebound members.

Christmas Cantata, Dec.

18: Join as we proclaim in song the joyful coming of Christ! Cantata begins at 3:00 p.m. in our Sanctuary, light reception to follow.



Angel Tree gift deadline:

Dec. 18. The Gregory Choir will meet at 2:00 p.m. on Sundays & also at 7:00 p.m. on **Wednesdays until Dec. 14** to prepare for the Dec. 18 Christmas Cantata..



Darkest Night Service, Dec. 21: In times of joy and celebration, our grief can feel much more real. Come, and join us as we seek the comfort and peace only God can provide, and remember that into the darkness of our lives the Light of God still shines.

Christmas Eve Services, Dec. 24: As we have in years past, we'll gather with candlelight as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, by proclaiming Scripture, singing carols, and celebrating communion (intinction). We'll have 2 services: 6:30 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Service, Dec. 25: We'll meet in the Fellowship Hall at 10:30 a.m. for cookies, cocoa/coffee,

carols and share our stories of what makes Christmas so meaningful in the world and in our lives. Come relaxed; this will be a brief and 'informal' service! (NOTE: There will be NO Sunday School on this day.)

YOU ARE INVITED!

Christmas Cantata
Sun., Dec. 18
3:00 p.m.

Save the date!

Holiday Office Hrs.-Dec. 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Mon., Tues., Wed. (12/19-21)
& Mon., Tues., Wed., (12/26-28)

Missed the sermon? GMPC's sermons are on YouTube each week. Check Gregory's Facebook page for the links, or search YouTube.com for Sunday's sermon

FLOWERS FOR THE SANCTUARY

DECEMBER 4	Rose Scott
DECEMBER 11	Christmas Pionsettias
DECEMBER 18	Christmas Poinsettias
DECEMBER 25	

For assistance with this list, please call Church office at 732-1081 (9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Tuesday-Thursday)

THOSE WHO SERVE – DECEMBER, 2016

GATEKEEPER: Doug Holc	DEC. 4	DEC. 11	DEC. 18	DEC. 25 Christmas Day
Ushers	Rose Scott Wayne Powers Morgan Ingram Josh Ingram	Bobby Allen Donna Allen Velma Allen Larry Johnson	Jerry Hasky Wayne Powers Glenda Mayhew Les Mayhew	Sheila Fields Janet Swinton Marguerite Bishop Valerie Harsh
Announcements	Mary Kay Schroeter	Larry Johnson	Rose Scott	Dianne Overstreet
Junior Sermon	Pat Hunter	Minister	Megal Cashing	Susan Walker
Junior Church	Tara Foster Justin Ellis-Bowman	Valerie Harsh Breeana Hunter	Morgan Ingram Josh Ingram	TBA
Counting	Morgan Ingram Sandy Hunter	Donald Hunter Glenda Mayhew	Kevin Foster Rose Scott	David Johnson Pat Hunter

WHAT'S JASON READING



For school: As One with Authority (Jackson W. Carroll); Spiritlinking Leadership (Donna J. Markham); Seeing Systems (Barry Oshry);

Faith-Rooted Organizing (Alexia Salvatierra); Leadership and the Art of Struggle (Steven Snyder)

A CHRISTMAS CREED

I believe ... in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

I believe ... in the one whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit still brings music to persons all over the world, in towns both large and small.

I believe ... in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room, and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.

I believe ... in the one who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

I believe ... in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible:

I believe ... in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.

I confess ... my ever-lasting need of God: The need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold.

I believe ... in God who gives us the best of Himself.

I believe ... in Jesus, the son of the living God, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and for the world.



DECEMBER, 2016

GATEKEEPER: Doug Holc

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
				2-8:00 pm Cleaning		3:00 pm Cookies 'n' Cocoa Open House/PG Christmas Parade
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9:45 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship & Holy Communion 2:00 pm Choir		12:30 pm Circle 5:30-8:30 pm GS Troop 5000, Fellowship Hall /kitchen 6:00 pm Cong. Care	7:00 pm Choir	2:00 pm Session agenda out 2-8:00 pm Cleaning 5-7:00 pm Advent Kick-off/Chili/ Soup supper followed by caroling at homebound locations Poinsettias arrive!		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9:45 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship 2:00 pm Choir	5-8:00 pm GS Tr. 553, Fellowship Hall/kitchen		1-9:00 pm BS Court of Honor (6 pm Christmas gathering), Fellowship Hall/kitchen 7:00 pm Choir	2:00 pm News articles in 12:00 pm Preschool Christmas Program for parents 2-8:00 pm Cleaning 7:00 pm Stewardship & Finance		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9:45 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship <i>Christmas Joy Offering</i> 3:00 pm Christmas Cantata, GMPC Sanctuary followed by light refreshments in Fellowship Hall	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN 7:00 pm Session	OFFICE OPEN 2:00 pm Newsletter Out 7:00 pm Darkest Night Service	OFFICE CLOSED 2-8:00 pm Cleaning		6:30 pm 1 st Christmas Eve Service & Holy Communion (by intinction) 11:00 pm 2 nd Christmas Eve Service & Holy Communion (by intinction)
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
<u>Christmas</u> 10:30 am Relaxed/Informal worship service, refreshments <i>5 Cents a Meal Offrg</i>	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN 7:00 pm Choir	OFFICE CLOSED 2-8:00 pm Cleaning		2:00 pm Committee. Reports in

Gregory Memorial Presbyterian Church
6300 Courthouse Road ~ PO Box 182
Prince George, VA 23875-0182

STAMP

--
DECEMBER NEWSLETTER
--



COME AND JOIN US!
Sunday School 9:45 A.M.
Worship 11:00 A.M.

We're on: Facebook.com/gmpcva
Sermons on Youtube.com
WWW.GREGORYMEMORIAL.ORG