

To the Saints and Friends of Gregory Memorial:



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A PRAYER FOR WALKING INTO A NEW YEAR

by Karen Rohrer

Holy God,

As we look out on the horizons of a new year, it is hard to see your promise with fresh eyes. The memories we carry in our bodies, the patterns we know from the lives we have lived, and the stories we have told cloud our vision. We are weighed down by the fears of all the years, the old fables, the generational wounds, the trusty and cautious hopes that got us through this far.

But God, you are not the slowly bending arc of history. You are not the past warmed up to meet us yet again in infinite and gently looping cycles. You are not likelihood and probability, plausible outcomes and logical conclusions. You do not come to us in the slow march of progress or the incremental degradation of structures and institutions.

Your story is the deeper magic from before the drums of history, before our forming stories and earthen bodies set us here to walk this particular, human road — and yet you walk with us even here in this in-between space.

As we look to a new year, we ask that you dispel the ghosts we conjure and fear. Meet us again with genuine newness. We are so tired of what has been,

so afraid of what may come again. Stay with us as we wait for what will be.

Spirit of new life, give us eyes to see what feels implausible. Grant us the hope and the diligence to follow the seeds of revolution and revelation already planted. Point us again to the surprise and delight of nature and neighbor. Reintroduce us to the people you have made and the communities to which you have called us. Grant us the presence and good sense to look up and out, to seek eyes that might meet our own and sun to touch our skin. Remind us that the past we drag with us does not govern your future, that the future you bring is broader and wider and newer than all we have ever known.

As we look out on the horizon of a new year, give us the courage and trust to see you even there. Join us as we walk into your new morning.

Amen.

Karen is a Presbyterian at Princeton Theological Seminary as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. She lives in Central New Jersey with her Presbyterian Minister husband, Andy Greenhow, and her beloved three-legged pit bull, Melody.

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WORSHIP INFORMATION FOR JANUARY, 2025

Sunday, 5 January, 2025

“2ND Sunday of Christmas” – Liturgical Color: White
 Service by: Rev. Dr. Katherine C. Jackson

Sunday, 12 January, 2025

“Baptism of the Lord” – Liturgical Color: Liturgical Color: White
 Service by: Rev. Dr. Katherine C. Jackson

Sunday, 19 January, 2025

“2ND Sunday after Epiphany” – Liturgical Color: Green
 Service by: Rev. Marvin Daniel

Sunday, 26 January, 2025

“3RD Sunday after Epiphany” – Liturgical Color: Green
 Service by: Rev. Marvin Daniel



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.

<p>First-responders, world-wide Our deployed U.S. service personnel & their families Families, persons, communities affected by weather disasters & gun violence All families affected by the Israeli-Gaza Strip war, Lebanon & civil unrest in Syria People & Sovereign Country of Ukraine Those who are suffering from illness/loss/grief/hardship Amy Townson, Josh Ingram’s sister Becky Scott Smith Russell Heiser, Ingrid Phoenix’s grandson (health issues) Butch Meade, Glenda Mayhew’s brother Verne & Clara Smith Eddie Frankenstein Etta Holc Jerry & Ruby Hasky (health issues) Lee Harsh, Valerie Harsh's brother-in-law (health issue) Larry Brown of Chesterfield, Larry Johnson's friend (health issue) Emily Henry, Mary Holc’s sister (health issue)</p>	<p>Paula McDaniel, Pam Elder's sister (health issue) Renee' Renier, Diana Flaherty's long-time friend (health issue) Moneka Suprenant, Susan Shockley’s & Sandy Eickmeyer’s friend (health issue) Mary Kay & Mike Schroeter (health issues) Dr. Joseph Hillier of Matoaca, Lykins family friend (health issue) Alex Courtney of Florence, SC, business associate of Dianna L. Flaherty, Mary Lykins' daughter (injured, vehicle accident) Peggy & Dennis Allen (health issues) Corey Whelan, Pat Hunter’s grandson (health issue) Judy Recher (health issue) Shirley MacNeill (health issues) Sean Godwin, grandson of Bill & Cheryl Godwin (health issue) Charlie Perkins (health issue) Evelyn Foster Michael Evans, former son-in-law of Nancy & A. W. Adams and son of Bobby & Sandra Tipton and Ray Evans (health issue; he’s now at home) Frank (“Butch”) Reiter, Jr. (health issue)</p>
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ANNOUNCEMENTS (and there's a TON!)

EPIPHANY LUNCHEON: Jan. 5 - Rev. Katherine Jackson and the Faith Committee hope you are planning on joining us for an Epiphany Luncheon to be held immediately after worship Sunday, Jan., 5th. Menu is soup, sandwiches and a special dessert. No cooking is required for the luncheon. Faith Committee is handling it all! Come join the fun, and you might learn some facts on Epiphany you didn't know!!

THESE DAYS (Jan. – Mar.) Copies are available in the Narthex. Free to Gregory's congregation! Pick up your copy today for some inspired daily reading.

SESSION NEWS - Session meets on 3rd Sundays. Next Stated Session meeting will be held after worship service on Sunday, Jan., 19, in the Session Meeting Room (or Parlor). **A big welcome to newest Session Elder, Jonathan Mendoza!**

2025 Session Elders & Clerk(s):

- Doug Holc (Class of 2025; serving 1st term)
- Patsy Johnson (Class of 2025; serving 1st term)
- David E. Johnson (Class of 2025; serving 1st term)
- Mary Holc (Class of 2026; 1st term)
- Sandy Hunter (Class of 2026; 1st term)
- William Shill (Class of 2026; 1st term)
- Blake Bishop (Class of 2027; 2nd consec. term)
- Jonathan Mendoza (Class of 2027; 1st term)
- Susan Shockley (Class of 2027; 2nd consec. term)

Donald Hunter – 2025 Clerk (1 yr. term, no limit)
Susan Shockley, Clerk *pro tempore*

Elected by congregation. Term for a Session member is 3 years; may serve 2 consecutive terms and go off Session for a year before being elected again (serving a partial term does not count). Identified by Class of last year of term.

2025 COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN are as follows:

- Congregation Nominating Cmte – Patsy Johnson
- Faith Cmte– Patsy Johnson
(Missions-Outreach; Christian Ed Congregation Care)

- Personnel Cmte – Mary Holc
- Stewardship Cmte – David Johnson, Moderator
 - Finance Subcmte – David Johnson
 - Scholarship Subcmte – Sandy Hunter
 - Facilities Subcmte – Doug Holc

BOARD OF TRUSTEES NEWS – GMPC's 2024 Trustee Board (Hunter, Recher, Hare) has completed the sale of Property Lot #2 as directed by the congregation. The congregation joins with the Trustees in extending its sincere and heartfelt appreciation to Mr. Ron Recher for his many years of dedicated service as Trustee.

Trustee Board meets as needed. Elected by congregation. Term for a Trustee is 3 years; may serve 2 consecutive terms and go off Trustee Board for a year before being elected again (serving a partial term does not count). Identified by Class of last year of term.

2025 Board of Trustees members:

- Kevin Foster (Class of 2025; partial term
1/1-12/31/2025 replace R. Recher)
- Gail Hare (Class of 2026; 2nd consec. term)
- Donald Hunter (Class of 2027; 1st term)

ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING FOR 2024 in Sanctuary after worship on Sunday, Jan. 26.

ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS FOR 2024 – All 2024 committee Chairs are advised to submit their annual committee reports to the church office by Jan. 14.

CHRISTMAS CARDS - Please check to make sure you have picked up all of your Christmas cards!

CONGREGATION DIRECTORY – There's still some Directories available in the Narthex. Be sure to pick up your copies (2 copies for each congregant).

HOLY COMMUNION SCHEDULE FOR 2025

February 2, 2025 April 6, 2025	June 1, 2025 August 3, 2025	October 5, 2025 December 7, 2025
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ANNOUNCERS FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

January 5 Patsy Johnson	January 12 Sandy Hunter	January 19 Larry Johnson	January 26 Susan Shockley
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BE INSPIRED



DID YOU EVER WONDER HOW POINSETTIAS BECOME ASSOCIATED WITH CHRISTMAS?



Poinsettias were originally cultivated by the Aztecs.

In its natural habitat in Mexico, a poinsettia can grow to a maximum height of 15 feet. Although they are a multi-million-dollar business in the U. S. today, these fiery plants have ancient roots---they were first cultivated by the Aztecs hundreds of years ago.

Native to western Mexico and Guatemala, the poinsettia, these plants was used for medicinal purposes: The milky white sap was thought to increase milk production in humans and animals, the dyes that were derived from the leaves (what we call “bracts”) were used in coloring textiles, and some war rituals involved the actual plant itself. They were also believed to hold magical properties: There is even one native legend saying that just the smell of a poinsettia could cause infection of the reproductive organs!



So, how exactly did these ancient Aztec plants become so closely associated with the winter holidays?

Well, the first reason is their biology. Poinsettias are typically red and green (also pink, yellow and white)---colors that have long been associated for millennia with Christmas. The plant also often reaches its full bloom in the month of December.

The second part of the equation arrived in the 17th Century, when the Spanish Franciscan friars in Mexico used the plant to decorate their altars and nativities. And when the Vatican eventually used the plant for decoration, other Catholic churches throughout the world were not far behind.

In the early 20th Century, farmers in California began mass-producing the plant in the U. S., and the venerable poinsettia has since become a modern “must-have” for the Christmas holidays. Fun fact: Figures show the number of live poinsettias imported into the U. S. in 2023 as 2.2 million plants.



Poinsettias are named after a person.

This beautiful plant that adorns mantles and dining tables during the holiday season is known by many names. The Aztecs called the plant “*cuatlaxochitl*”, meaning “flower that withers”, while the Maya used the phrase “*k’alul wits*”, meaning “ember flower.” The Spanish friars of the 17th Century called it “*flor de Nochebuena*”, or “Holy Night flower” while other parts of Latin America used “*flor de Pascuas*”, or “Easter flower.” But in the U. S., *Euphorbia pulcherrima* (the botanical name for the plant) goes by another name: “POINSETTIA.”

The name is an homage to Joel Roberts Poinsett, the U. S.’s first ambassador to Mexico. Mr. Roberts was an amateur botanist who became enamored with the plant when he came across it while staying in Taxco, Mexico. In 1825, Poinsett brought back specimens to his greenhouses in the U. S., and sent clippings to a specialist in Philadelphia, who eventually christened the plant “*Euphorbia poinsettia*.”

Article by Darren Orf; edited by Bess Lovejoy; Florida Daily, Dec. 21, 2024.

JANUARY, 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New Year's Day Church office open	2 6a Clean church 6-8p BSA Cub Pack 910 (Fellowship Hall)	3	4 8p PG Study Group AA (Fellowship Hall, Kitchen)
5 2nd Sunday of Christmas 9:30a Sunday School 11a Worship service Service by: Rev. Dr. K. C. Jackson 12p Epiphany Lunch (Fellowship Hall) <i>Bring a friend!</i>	6 Epiphany of the Lord	7	8 7p Faith Cmte	9 6a Clean church 7-9p GSA Tr 5000 (Fellowship Hal)	10	11 8p PG Study Group AA (Fellowship Hall, Kitchen)
12 Baptism of the Lord 9:30a Sunday School 11a Worship service Service by: Rev. Dr. K. C. Jackson	13 6:30-9p BSA Crater OA (Fellowship Hall, kitchen)	14 1p Circle meeting @ GMPC 7p Finance Cmte	15	16 6a Clean church 2p Newsletter (Feb) articles due in office 6-8p BSA Cub Pack 910 (Fellowship Hall)	17	18 8p PG Study Group AA (Fellowship Hall, Kitchen)
19 2nd Sunday after Epiphany 9:30a Sunday School 11a Worship service Service by: Rev. Marvin Daniel 12p Stated Session Meeting Moderator: Rev. Daniel	20 ML King Birthday	21	22	23 6a Clean church 2p Newsletter out	24	25 8p PG Study Group AA (Fellowship Hall, Kitchen)
26 3rd Sunday after Epiphany 9:30a Sunday School 11a Worship service ➤ 5 Cents-a-Meal Offering Service by: Rev. Marvin Daniel 12p Ann. Cong. Meeting for 2024 Moderator: Rev. Daniel	27	28 2p Annual Church Statistical Report (2024) due	29	30 6a Clean church	31 2p Cmte reports due	

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

STAMP

JANUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER



COME AND JOIN US!
Sunday School 9:30 A.M.
Worship 11:00 A.M.

We're on: [Facebook.com/gmpcva](https://www.facebook.com/gmpcva)