

“Christmas Comes”

*Christmas comes every time we see God in other persons.
The human and the holy meet in Bethlehem
or in Times Square,
For Christmas comes like a golden storm on its way
to Jerusalem –
determinedly, inevitably...*

*Even now it comes
in the face of hatred and warring –
no atrocity too terrible to stop it,
no Herod strong enough,
no hurt deep enough
no curse shocking enough,
no disaster shattering enough.*

*For someone on earth will see the star,
someone will hear the angel voices,
someone will run to Bethlehem,
someone will know peace and goodwill:
the Christ will be born!*

Ann Weems, *Kneeling in Bethlehem*



WORKCAMP SUNDAY AGAIN INSPIRES

The story of Gregory's youth and their adult advisors helping to bring the love of Christ to neighbors with hammer and saw inspired us once again in worship on Sunday, October 30. At this annual service led by our summer Workcampers, both teens and adults shared their moving testimonies of how the Spirit reshaped them as they encountered both the families they helped and workers from other congregations.

Our youth led in all aspects of the worship service. The accompanying photo shows the Workcampers (and Gregory youth group member Nikki Blount) leading the congregation in singing this year's Workcamp "anthem," *Our Voices* by Matthew Barber... *Sing this song with me!*

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The format of worship reflected the weekly routine of Workcamp itself. We were pleased to have the Rev. John and Connie Romaine, the founders of Tri-Cities Workcamp with us in worship.

Youth and their leaders participate in the Tri-Cities Workcamp each July and are enthusiastically supported by the Gregory membership through a fundraiser, lunches at the worksites and notes of support. Those participating this year included youth Bradley Cooper, Pamela Harsh, Herb Schroeter, Jacob Spain and adults Bobby Allen, Dennis Allen, Debra Bailey, Josh Ingram, and Keith Spain.

CLERK'S CORNER DECEMBER 2011

The Session had their regular scheduled monthly meeting on November 15th. The following action items were approved:

1. The purchase and mailing of 1,000 Christmas postcards at a cost of \$526.
2. Transfer \$75 from the Designated Gifts Food Bank Fund to the Prince George Food Bank.
3. Minister and staff salaries will be increased by 2.8% in 2012.
4. Purchase of a new sound system for the sanctuary.

The elders-elect attended the above Session meeting, and had a training class with Rev. Sprowl on Saturday, November 19.

Verne Smith, Clerk

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Our committee did not meet in November, but desires to express its thanks to the children and youth and their supportive parents who are preparing to present the musical and spoken work, *The Night Before...* We encourage everyone to support this joyous and inspiring production on Sunday, December 11 in worship.

FACILITIES

The facilities committee continues to work on our church. Thanks to everyone for your continued support! We wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas!

MISSIONS

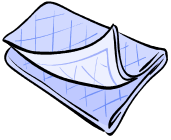
ANGEL TREE FOR CHRISTMAS – Missions will again this year have an Angel Tree for our two Prince George families. Please participate in this gift-giving project to provide Christmas for those who are less fortunate. All gifts will be due back to the church no later than December 18.

Special Offerings for December
Joy Offering – December 18



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The Blanket Project has a donation box in the fellowship hall. If you would like to make a donation, please do so any time. Winter means warmth is needed!

New members to our committee are always welcome.

Please join us on the first Monday of each month at 6:30 pm at Gregory.

OUTREACH

Wasn't it wonderful to have such a full sanctuary on Visitors Sunday!?! Maybe we need to advertise a special Visitors Sunday every Sunday. Thanks to all who shared their culinary specialties with us at the luncheon. Even needing to quickly set up more tables was a pleasure with so many in attendance! Most important, we did not run out of food! Our visitors received beautiful pansy plants and the children a snow globe.

The Prince George Christmas Parade is scheduled to kick off at 3:00 pm on Saturday, December 3. Gregory will be participating for the third straight year as well as hosting the Open House after the parade. Hot chocolate and cookies will be served. Due to the overwhelming number of guests last year, we are praying that all of our bakers will be very generous with their donations of cookies, brownies, etc. (finger type goodies). We also hope to have many members of our congregation present to welcome our guests. This is one of our most successful outreach events, and your help is needed. Your donations can be brought to the Fellowship Hall on Friday, December 2 from 9-1 or on Saturday, December 3 from 1-3.



Outreach is happy to announce that their request for the mailing of 1000 Christmas postcards was approved by Session at the November meeting. In addition to these, 250 cards will be distributed by volunteers on foot to prime areas not covered in the postal bulk mailing zoning. If you are interested in this effort, please let Judy know.

Again, many thanks to all who help us in our mission which is to convey to the local community the love of Jesus Christ through the ministry of our church and welcome the participation of the community into our church life. - *Judy Recher*

WORSHIP

The Worship Committee had a great deal on its "liturgical plate" in November as we reviewed the special services coming up for Advent and Christmas including the lighting of Advent candles, the children's Christmas pageant, and Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship.

In order to shorten the length of the Christmas Eve service, we decided that there will be four communion servers – the interim pastor and three elders – to serve the sacrament "by intinction" at the front of the church. Also, since Rev. Sprowl will be on vacation Sunday, January when we'll have a guest preacher, we decided to ask the Session to move the regular communion date from the first Sunday of the month to Sunday, January 15. (The Session sets the day and time for the service of the Lord's Supper.) Last, in order for the 2012 budget to more closely reflect actual expenditures in 2011, we recommended reducing the worship budget by \$200 to \$1,085.

Members of the Worship Committee include chairperson Jerry Bond, Valerie Harsh, Sandra Perkins, Rose Scott and Marquita Simpson. Rev. Sprowl also attends the meetings.



SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER...

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4 – *Second Sunday in Advent* – After centuries of prophecy foretelling the event, God still felt the services of John the Baptist were needed to “prepare the way” for Jesus. “Why?” Pastor Mark explores possible reasons the work of J.T.B. in his message, *Crying Out in the Wilderness*. Read Isaiah 40:1-11 and Mark 1:1-8 to prepare.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11 – *Third Sunday in Advent* – Our children and youth present the story of Christmas in their musical and spoken presentation, *The Night Before...* You won’t want to miss this energetic re-telling of the old story with its angels, innkeeper, wise men, shepherds, lambs and, of course, the holy couple and baby Jesus.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18 – *Fourth Sunday in Advent* – The popular Christmas tune, *Mary, Did You Know?* asks the haunting question as to how much of his divinity Jesus’ mother Mary understood from early on. Mary’s “song” which she shared with her cousin Elizabeth called *The Magnificat* suggests, however, that Mary understood quite a bit about her son’s mission in the world. Pastor Mark helps us to reappraise Jesus through Mary’s eyes in his message, *Mary, You DID Know!* Read Luke 1:26-56 and Isaiah 7:14 to prepare.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25 – *Christmas Day* - An informal worship service of familiar carols and a brief meditation by Pastor Mark. Worship is at 11:00 am, and there will be no Sunday School that day.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP – 6:00 PM

On December 24, Christmas Eve, once again we will tell Luke’s old story which today continues to give new life. We will sing the familiar carols and invite you to bring bells to accompany our carols. We will celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper in small groups at the front of the church and conclude worship by lighting our lights as a sign of Christ’s light having entered our world. Children are welcome. (*Note the earlier time for this service!*)



INTERIM PASTOR ON VACATION

Pastor Mark will be on vacation December 26 – January 1. If you have an emergency pastoral need during that time, please call the church office or members of our Congregational Care Committee Glenda Mayhew, 458-7682, or Marguerite Bishop, 541-3101.

Advent Meditations from the writings of
HENRI NOUWEN



SEASONAL DEVOTIONAL GUIDES

In addition to our popular quarterly devotional guide, *These Days*, we are also offering a special resource to inspire you during each day of Advent (the four weeks before Christmas), *Living in Hope* by Henri Nouwen. Each is available free of charge in the sanctuary lobby. Please feel free to give a copy to a friend or loved one!

SPECIAL ADVENT SEASON CLASS

Pastor Mark continues to lead his informative Advent class entitled, *Through the Eyes of Those Who Waited*, on Sundays, December 4, 11 and 18.

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The class seeks to bring to life figures of faith like John the Baptist, Jesus' mother Mary and Elizabeth, the mother of John that we might

share their longing and dreams for the promised messiah. Participants are encouraged to read the brief student materials each week before the class, available at exit doors in the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall. Downloadable ".pdf" file copies are also available by e-mailing the church office or Pastor Mark. The class is open to both adults and youth and meets in the parlor at 9:45 am.



SECRETARY MATERNITY LEAVE

Our church secretary, Julie Jacobs, is scheduled to deliver a baby boy sometime in the middle of this month. She will be taking several weeks of maternity leave and hopes to be back in the office in early February. During Julie's absence, we are pleased that Carolyn Gentry, who previously served as Gregory's secretary, will be with us for three days a week beginning December 14. We wish Julie well during this special time with her newborn and welcome back Carolyn!

PRAYER CONCERNS

Dick Mann	Ruby Hasky, Family of Brandon Hasky
Christine Belsches	Katherine Tompkins
Aida Faries	Tammy Pelter (<i>Gladys Vtipil's niece</i>)
June Hawks	Mary Chadwick (<i>Dink Armstrong's sister</i>)
Marian McDonald	Virginia Mika (<i>Sister of Grace & Helen Cibula</i>)
Peggy Surfield	Matt Mauger
Helen Cibula	Donald Cousins (<i>friend of Glenda Mayhew's father</i>)
Harry Johns	



THOSE WHO SERVE IN



December

CHILDRENS MINISTRIES

“Teaching Christian Values for Life”

Date	Nursery	Junior Sermon	Junior Church
Dec 4	Robbi Foster	Susan Walker	Valerie Harsh Pam Harsh
Dec 11	Glenda Mayhew	Mark Sprowl	Jessica Mauger Kevin Foster
Dec 18	Debra Bailey	Pat Hunter	Jennifer Smyth Jared Smyth
Dec 25	Ruby Spain	Mary Kay Schroeter	Rose Scott Pam Harsh

OTHER WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Sunday Servants	December 4	December 11	December 18	December 25
USHERS	Keith Spain Ruby Spain Jacob Spain Herb Schroeter	Bobby Allen Donna Allen Velma Allen Brenda Bond	Gladys Wiseman Verne Smith Rose Scott	Sheila Fields Janet Swinton Mary Holc Doug Holc
ANNOUNCEMENTS	Rose Scott	Jerry Bond	Rose Scott	Jerry Bond
COUNTING	Morgan Ingram Sandy Hunter	Donald Hunter Glenda Mayhew	David Johnson Ron Recher	Verne Smith Rose Scott

FLOWERS

We're thankful for the families providing Poinsettias for the Sanctuary this holiday season!



DECEMBER GATEKEEPERS

Keith Spain, 862-3294
& Josh Ingram, 334-5460



DECEMBER ~ 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Pre-School to Swift Creek	2	3 Angel Tree Up 3:00pm Open House - PG Christmas Parade
4 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship	5 11:00am PG Churches Outreach & Christmas Luncheon 2:00pm Line Dancing 6:30pm Missions & Outreach	6 12:30pm Day Circle 6:00pm Cong. Care & S&F 7:00pm Facilities & Worship	7 7:00pm Choir	8 2-8:00pm Volunteer Cleaning	9	10
11 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship -Children's Program	12 Noon Widows 2:00pm Line Dancing 6:00pm Christian Ed	13 6:30pm P&O 7:30pm Evening Circle	14 Committee Reports & Newsletter Articles Due 1-9pm Boyscouts Ct. of Honor 7:00pm Choir	15 Pre-School Christmas Program	16	17
18 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship - Minute for Missions & Christmas Joy Offering	19 2:00pm Line Dancing	20 7:00pm Session Meeting	21 7:00pm Choir	22 2-8:00pm Volunteer Cleaning	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 6:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service
25 CHRISTMAS DAY 11:00am Worship No Sunday School	26 2:00pm Line Dancing Rev. Sprowl on vacation through Jan. 1	27	28	29	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE

CELEBRATING ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT GREGORY!



Saturday, December 3, 3:00 pm

P.G. Christmas Parade and Open House at Gregory

Sunday, December 11, 11:00 am

Children's & Youth Christmas Pageant

Saturday, December 24, 6:00 pm

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Worship

Sunday, December 25, 11:00 am

Christmas Day Worship

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



COME JOIN US!!