



Dear Gregory Memorial, Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,



*"In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.  
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."  
~John 1:4-5*

These verses are very close to my heart, and all the more so in this time of year, when the daylight relentlessly becomes shorter, with darkness claiming more and more of our waking hours. Like many, I have more and more trouble in these days getting out of bed, getting moving in the morning, keeping my energy at positive levels. The lack of sunlight truly makes for a dark time, physically and metaphorically.

It makes me think more and more of our own lives – the darkness that we live with, the spiritual lack of light that all too often feels like the norm instead of the exception. And truly, there is quite a bit that feels dark and oppressive in our lives: depression, sadness, grief, guilt, loss, stress...all these things and more feel amplified in this time of year, approaching the Winter Solstice (December 21).

This year, I can't help but think again on the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids we looked at in worship a few weeks ago (Matthew 25:1-13). You remember the tale: Ten bridesmaids go out to await the groom, only five did not bring enough oil for their lamps, and so missed out on the party.

I have thought of the times when I have found myself at camp without my flashlight, left to wander back to my cabin in the dark, alone. Everything that is warm, inviting, and familiar in the daytime suddenly becomes frightening and menacing, unfamiliar in the dark. I have often borrowed a flashlight, or convinced someone to walk with me.

We tend to fear the dark, and mistrust what may be hidden within the shadows. We seek to bring light into every situation we can, and so I wonder at the 'foolish' bridesmaids, and why they felt they could not greet the bridegroom with no lamps, when there were five others

to provide light. Surely there would have been enough light for the entire group! But...they did not trust this reality, and so they left, and sought oil at an impossible hour of the night.

As a colleague of mine writes, "To me, this was their mistake. They left, when they should have stayed ... What faith would it have taken, though, to wait in such frailty, in such honesty!" He continues to posit that the "foolish" ones, had they waited, would have been greeted warmly and welcomed, even though their lamps were no longer lit. It's a concept worth considering.

And especially for us, in this season. Advent is the season of waiting – sometimes prepared to do so, sometimes not. It is a season of waiting in darkness for the Light of the world to appear. And in that Light, no other light will be necessary; "the light of the bridegroom will be enough for all, to illumine the beauty of the darkness and to bring us in joy to the midnight celebration."

It is a dark season, and we wait in the fullness of that darkness. But it is also a season of hopeful anticipation: The Light is coming, and in its warmth we will rejoice, and invite others to do so with us! I would personally invite you to join us in this season of Advent, and wait with us in worshipful community as we look for the coming of the One who will dispel the darkness of our lives. Information on our Advent services can be found in these pages...

With you on the journey,  
Pastor Jason





## WORSHIP INFORMATION FOR DECEMBER 2014



### Sunday, 7 December 2014

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent - Liturgical Color: **Blue**  
 First Reading – 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16  
 Second Reading – Luke 1:26-38  
 Sermon: “The Covenant”

### Sunday, 14 December 2014

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent - Liturgical Color: **Blue**  
 First Reading – Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11  
 Second Reading – John 1:6-8, 19-28  
 Sermon: “The Redeemer”

### Sunday, 21 December 2014

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent - Liturgical Color: **Blue**  
 First Reading – 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16  
 Second Reading – Luke 1:26-38  
 Sermon: “The Covenant”

### Sunday, 28 December 2014

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday After Christmas Day - Liturgical Color: **White**  
 First Reading: Isaiah 61:10-62:3  
 Second Reading: Luke 2:22-40  
 Sermon: Pulpit Supply (Rev. Ginna Bairby)



**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.

Our military and their families  
 Our college students & the 2014/15 K-12 School Year  
 Lucille Link (Patsy Johnson's mother)  
 Helen Cibula  
 Mark Smiley  
 Bucky Allen  
 Beverly Childress  
 Ruby Hasky  
 Wayne Hedgepeth, Ruth Figg's nephew (health issue)  
 Bill McAllister  
 Charlie Perkins (recov. from surgery)  
 Frank Solesbee  
 Peggy Allen  
 Donna Allen  
 Audrey Turner  
 Aida Faries  
 Don Vtipil  
 Marian McDonald  
 James Hartsell (Robert Hartsell's brother)  
 Amy Townson (Josh Ingram's sister)  
 Doris Karnowski (Josh Ingram's grandmother)  
 Mike & Brenda Harrington (Valerie Harsh's friends)  
 Maryland Blanchard (friend of Grace and Helen Cibula)  
 Ben Nicely (Spain family's friend)

Mila Campen (Ann Hartsell's mother)  
 Gary Coates (friend of the Rechers)  
 Mary Chadwick (Dink Armstrong's sister)  
 Cookie Wicker (friend of Glenda Mayhew)  
 David Childress (Beverly Childress' brother)  
 Inez Paul (Mary Holc's mother)  
 Sara-Lynn Prefontaine  
 Bonnie Walling (Smyth family's friend)  
 Tracy Taliaferro  
 Joanne Overstreet  
 Kenny Overstreet (contin. recov.) & sister, Joanne (health issue)  
 Brittany Mason, Kenny's niece (surgery)  
 Peyton Audrey (Audrey Turner's great-granddaughter)  
 Mark Chariton (new health issue)  
 Martin Bauer, Evelyn Lichvar's brother (health issue)  
 Joanne Overstreet, prayers for next steps in her illness  
 Becky Smith, recovery from procedure  
 David Johnson, upcoming surgery  
 Henry Parker, recovering from surgery  
 Ed Smiley, continued health issues  
 JOY: Joe Baxter's health issue is resolved!

**QUICK CALENDAR:**

- 12/01- PG Churches Outreach/Food Bank qtr. meeting, 11 am
  - 12/05 - Chrismon tree decorating & cookie drop-off for Open house
  - 12/06 - GMPC Christmas Open House & PG Christmas Parade, 3 pm
  - 12/07 - Holy Communion (intinction)
  - 12/08- Committee reports due 9 am; Boy Scouts District Dinner 6 pm
  - 12/10 - Relay for Life meeting, 6 pm
  - 12/11 - News articles due 9 am; Advent Celebration, 6 pm
  - 12/15 - PG TRIAD Mtg., PG Recreation Ctr, (Old Stage Rd.) 1 pm
  - 12/16- Session meeting, 7 pm
  - 12/17- Preschool Christmas Field Trip
  - 12/18 - GMPC Preschool Christmas program for parents, 12 pm
  - 12/21 - "Darkest Night" Christmas Service, 7:30 pm
  - 12/24 - Christmas Eve Service & Holy Communion (intinction) , 6:30 pm & 11 pm
  - 12/25 - Christmas Day
- GMPC OFFICE HOURS: 9 am - 2 pm**  
 Week of Christmas: Dec. 22, 23, 24  
 Week of New Year's: Dec. 29, 30, 31

**THE CLERK'S CORNER**

By: Donald R. Hunter



The Session of Gregory Memorial Presbyterian Church met on Tuesday, October 21, 2014 and approved the following:

- GMPC Office hours during the 2014 Christmas and New Year's holidays .
- Pastor's request for a vacation day December 28.
- Christmas Eve services at 6:30 pm and 11:00 p.m.; communion by intinction; also a special "Darkest Night" Christmas Service at 7:30 p.m. on December 21.
- Congregational Care Committee's request for Advent Celebration with Chili/Soup Contest and a silent auction on December 4 at 6 p.m.; giftboxes for college kids and Christmas Card exchange for congregation.
- Hawks family's request to hold a memorial service at GMPC on November 11 for Mrs. June Hawks to be led by Rev. Beverly Bullock.
- Mission Committee to provide Thanksgiving and Christmas assistance to a family referred by Social Services.

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***Privacy Disclaimer:** Gregory Church safeguards its members' personal information and does not include it in Newsletters and Bulletins (unless requested) that are published on the Church website. However, this information may appear, if requested, within the text of printed Newsletters and Bulletins distributed to the Church congregation.*  
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**STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE REPORT: OCTOBER, 2014**

	General Fund	Capital Improvements
<b>Beginning of the Month</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>10/1/2014</b></span>	\$ 297.06	\$ 2,311.37
<b>Cash receipts</b>	\$ 12,295.75	\$ -
<b>Cash disbursements</b>	\$ (11,589.03)	\$ (6,096.37) \$700.00 downpymnt
<b>Interest /Dividends Earned</b>	\$ -	\$ 0.14
<b>Transfers(to) from General Fund</b>	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Transfers(to) from Investment Cash Account</b>	\$ 6,800.00	\$ -
<b>Transfers(to) from DGA</b>	\$ (34.20)	\$ -
<b>Transfers(to) from CI</b>	\$ ( 6,800.00)	\$ 6,800.00
<b>End of the month</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>10/31/2014</b></span>	\$ 969.58	\$ 3,015.14



## From the Pastor's Desk.....

**Christmas Eve Services** will be held on December 24, 2014, at 6:30 p.m. and again at 11:00 p.m. We invite you to join us for these two wonderful and meaningful services, celebrating the arrival of the Christ-child again into our world, our lives, and our hearts! Communion (by intinction) will be served at both services.

**In this season of anticipated joy and hope**, it is sometimes difficult to reconcile

the pain we carry from loss and grief, with the 'over-the-top' joy that is present everywhere else around us. But we recall, in this season, that, in Christ, God was incarnate precisely because the world and its people were hurting, grieving, sorrowful. And so, we will be offering a special service ("Darkest Night Service") on the evening of December 21, at 7:30 p.m. in which we will be mindful of the grief and sorrow that many of us still carry, while at the same time seeking to open our hearts

to the love and light of God. Come to this reflective service to find peace, comfort, and community in times that do not always feel as joyful as others may expect."

**Jason will be on vacation** for Sunday, December 28, but trusts that you will welcome Rev. Ginna Bairby, Managing Editor of Unbound and native of the Presbytery of the James to lead worship on this Sunday.



## ADVENT TRADITION: POINSETTIAS IN THE CHURCH SANCTUARY

The tradition of placing memorial poinsettias in the Gregory Memorial Presbyterian Church Sanctuary began decades ago. Living red poinsettias purchased by congregational members and their families are displayed in

the Sanctuary during Advent.

Under the watchful eye of a volunteer, the plants are watered and tended until the night of the Christmas Eve service. After the service, the poinsettias may be taken home for the enjoyment of family and

friends, or gifted to a special someone.

A Special Remembrance List that will include the names of those to whom the poinsettias are dedicated will be included in the Bulletin for the last Sunday of December.

### **COOKIES & HOT COCOA ... GREGORY'S CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE- DEC . 6**

Don't forget to sign up to either bring cookies or to serve on December 6 for Gregory's Open House!



We need 10 volunteers to provide 20 dozen cookies (or brownies). Contact Judy Recher for details.

### **CHRISTMAS ANGELS!**

Missions is putting up the Angel tree again this year. In this season of giving to us God's greatest gift, what better time to give back to someone not as fortunate.

On the morning of December 7, you will see the trees in the Narthex decorated with angels for the children and food gifts for the family. Please have your gifts and food back to the Church by December 21.

What a warm feeling it gives to know that a child will have a smile on Christmas morning!



*Thank you  
and Christmas  
blessings to  
each of you!*

## THE BEST GIFT

On Christmas Eve a young boy with light in his eyes  
 Looked deep into Santa's, to Santa's surprise,  
 And said as he sat on Santa's broad knee  
 "I want your secret. Tell it to me."  
 He leaned up and whispered in Santa's good ear  
 How do you do it, year after years?

"I want to know how, as you travel about,  
 Giving gifts here and there, you never run out.  
 How is it, dear Santa, that in your pack of toys  
 You have plenty for all of the world's girls and boys?  
 How is it that sack on the back of your sleigh  
 Is full, never empty, as you make your way  
 From rooftop to rooftop, to homes large and small,  
 From nation to nation, reaching them all?"

And Santa smiled kindly and said to the boy,  
 "Don't ask me hard questions. Don't you want a toy?"  
 But the child shook his head, and Santa could see  
 That he needed the answer. "Now listen to me,"  
 He told the small boy with light in his eyes,  
 "My secret will make you sadder and wise."

The truth is that my sack is magic inside,  
 It holds millions of toys for my Christmas Eve ride.  
 But though I do visit each girl and each boy,  
 I don't always leave them a gaily wrapped toy.  
 Some homes are hungry, some homes are sad,  
 Some homes are desperate, some homes are bad.  
 Some homes are broken, and children there grieve.  
 Those homes I visit, but what should I leave?

"My sleigh is filled with the happiest stuff,  
 But for homes where despair lives, toys aren't enough.  
 So I tiptoe in, kiss each girl and boy,  
 And pray with them that they'll be given the joy  
 Of the spirit of Christmas, the spirit that lives  
 In the heart of the dear child who gets not, but gives.

"If only God hears me and answers my prayer,  
 When I visit next year, what I will find there  
 Are homes filled with peace, and with giving, and love  
 And boys and girls gifted with light from above.  
 It's a very hard task, my dear little brother,  
 To give toys to some, and give prayers to others,  
 But the prayers are the best gifts, the best gifts indeed,  
 For God has his own way of meeting each need.

"That's part of the answer. The rest, my dear youth,  
 Is that my sack is magic. And that is the truth.  
 In my sack I carry on Christmas Eve Day

More love than a Santa could ever give away.  
 The sack never empties of love, or of joys  
 'Cause inside it are prayers and hope, not just toys.  
 The more that I give, the fuller it seems  
 Because giving is my way of fulfilling dreams.

"And do you know something? You've got a sack, too.  
 It's as magic as mine, and it's inside of you.  
 It never gets empty, it's full from the start.  
 It's the center of light and love; it's your heart.  
 And if, on this Christmas, you want to help me,  
 Don't be so concerned with the gifts 'neath your tree.  
 Open that sack called your heart, and share  
 your joy, your friendship, your wealth, your care."

The light in the small boy's eyes was glowing.  
 "Thanks for your secret. I've got to be going."  
 "Wait, little boy," said Santa. "Don't go.  
 Will you share? Will you help? Will you use what you  
 know?"  
 And just for a moment the small boy stood still,  
 Touched his heart with his small hand and whispered,  
 "I will."

*~Betty Werth, from CHICKEN SOUP  
 FOR THE SOUL CHRISTMAS TREASURY*






**HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS : 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.**  
 Week of Christmas: Dec. 22, 23, 24  
 Week of New Year's: Dec. 29, 30, 31



**PG TRIAD meets 1 pm, Dec. 15 in PG Recreation Center on Old Stage Road**  
 (reservation req. by Nov. meeting). Non-perishable food donations for PG Food Bank are accepted at TRIAD meetings.  
 All are welcome to attend!



**SUNDAY SERVANTS – December, 2014**

<b><u>GATEKEEPER:</u></b>  Doug Holc	December 07	December 14	December 21	December 28
<b>Ushers</b>	Sheila Fields Janet Swinton Marguerite Bishop Valerie Harsh	Robert Hartsell Dianne Overstreet Wayne Powers Les Mayhew	Keith Spain Ruby Spain Morgan Ingram Josh Ingram	Bobby Allen Donna Allen Velma Allen Jerry Bond
<b>Acolytes</b>	Chayse Hartsell Justin Ellis-Bowman	Brianna Hunter Jamie Meurer	Chayse Hartsell Justin Ellis-Bowman	Breeana Hunter Kaitlyn Hartsell
<b>Announcements</b>	Dianne Overstreet	Jerry Bond	Mary Kay Schroeter	Rose Scott
<b>Junior Sermon</b>	Megan Cashing	Minister	Susan Walker	Valerie Harsh
<b>Junior Church</b>	Pat Hunter Breeana Hunter	Rose Scott Kaitlyn Hartsell	Mary Holc Jamie Meurer	Tara Foster Madison Foster
<b>Nursery</b>	Ruby Spain	Rose Scott	Susan Walker	Glenda Mayhew
<b>Counting</b>	Donald Hunter Glenda Mayhew	Kevin Foster Rose Scott	David Johnson Pat Hunter	Sandy Hunter Ron Recher

DECEMBER, 2014



GATEKEEPER: Doug Holc



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
	<p><b>11:00 am</b> PG Churches Outreach/Food Bank Qtr. meeting</p> <p><b>6:30 pm</b> Missions</p>	<p><b>12:30 pm</b> Circle</p> <p><b>6:00 pm</b> Cong. Care</p> <p><b>7:00 pm</b> Facilities</p> <p><b>7:00 pm</b> Worship</p>	<p><b>7:00 pm</b> Choir</p>	<p><b>2-8:00 pm</b> Cleaning</p>	<p><b>9:30 am</b> Decoration of Sanctuary Chrismon tree &amp; cookie drop-off for Open House</p>	<p><b>3:00 pm</b> PG Christmas Parade &amp; GMPC Christmas Open House @ GMPC</p>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<p><b>9:45 am</b> Sunday School</p> <p><b>11:00 am</b> Worship</p> <p>Holy Communion (Intinction)</p>	<p><b>9:00 am</b> Committee reports due</p> <p><b>9:30 am</b> Line Dance</p> <p><b>6:00 pm</b> Boy Scouts District Dinner</p>	<p><b>6:30 pm</b> Outreach</p> <p><b>7:00 pm</b> Stewardship &amp; Finance</p>	<p><b>7:00 pm</b> Choir</p> <p><b>6:00 pm</b> Relay for Life meeting</p> <p><b>2-8:00 pm</b> Cleaning</p>	<p><b>9:00 am</b> News articles due</p> <p><b>2:00 pm</b> Session Agenda out</p> <p><b>6:00 pm</b> Advent Celebration, Chili/ Soup Contest &amp; Silent Auction</p>		
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<p><b>9:45 am</b> Sunday School</p> <p><b>11:00 am</b> Worship</p>	<p><b>9:30 am</b> Line Dance</p> <p><b>1:00 pm</b> TRIAD @ PG Rec. Ctr.</p>	<p><b>7:00 pm</b> Session meeting</p>	<p><b>7:00 pm</b> Choir</p> <p><i>Preschool Field Trip: Swift Creek Mill Playhouse</i></p>	<p><b>12:00 pm</b> Preschool Christmas program for parents</p> <p><b>2-8:00 pm</b> Cleaning</p>		
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<p><b>9:45 am</b> Sunday School</p> <p><b>11:00 am</b> Worship</p> <p><i>Christmas Joy Offering</i></p> <p><b>7:30 pm</b> "Darkest Night" Christmas service</p>	<p><b>OFFICE OPEN</b></p> <p><b>9:30 am</b> Line Dance</p> <p><b>7:00 pm</b> Christian Ed</p>	<p><b>OFFICE OPEN</b></p>	<p><b>OFFICE OPEN</b></p> <p><b>2:00 pm</b> News Letter out</p> <p><b>6:30 pm</b> 1<sup>st</sup> Christmas Eve Service, Holy Communion (intinction)</p> <p><b>11:00 pm</b> 2<sup>nd</sup> Christmas Eve Service, Holy Communion (intinction)</p>	<p><b>OFFICE CLOSED</b></p> <p><b>Christmas Day</b></p>	<p><b>2-8:00 pm</b> Cleaning</p>	
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>			
<p><b>9:45 am</b> Sunday School</p> <p><b>11:00 am</b> Worship</p> <p><i>5 Cents A Meal Offering</i></p>	<p><b>OFFICE OPEN</b></p> <p><b>9:30 am</b> Line Dance</p>	<p><b>OFFICE OPEN</b></p>	<p><b>OFFICE OPEN</b></p>			

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Gregory Memorial Presbyterian Church  
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Prince George, VA 23875-0182

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***DECEMBER 2014 NEWSLETTER***



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

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