

Dear Gregory Memorial, Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,



“The Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting...saying,
‘Take a census of the whole congregation of Israelites, in their clans, by their ancestral homes...’”

~Numbers 1:1a, 2a

Two weeks ago I attended a quarterly meeting of an organization with which I volunteer. The organization has thirty-five or so members, and dinner was being offered to show appreciation for our efforts. When I arrived, there were maybe eight other volunteers present. A few minutes after I arrived, I was joined at my table by one of the other members who is a retired minister, and his first words to me were, literally, “Wow. I can’t believe how few people are here. I sure hope more people show up!”

It struck me that the first words out of his mouth would not be a greeting, but a commentary on the level of attendance at our meeting. It reminded me that we tend to put a lot of stock in the numbers of any given organization or group, using them to determine our worth, and/or whether or not we’re living into our potential. And the Church, at levels local and denominational, has been doing this for decades (most recently with some attendant hand-wringing). ‘Is there enough to keep us going?’ we ask. ‘Is there enough to go around?’ we wonder. ‘Are we doing something wrong?’ we fear.

I don’t like to put too much stock in numbers. I find that they are useful tools, that they are a helpful way to make sure that our understanding of a given situation is realistic, but I also believe that the numbers themselves do not define us. The degree of meaning in our lives and relationships, the ways in which we live out the good news of the gospel...these are much more realistic and accurate ways of determining where we stand on any given day.

But this conversation with my fellow volunteer got me curious, and had me thinking about our own congregation. So, I went through the directory and did some tallying of my own, using the benchmark of those who have come even occasionally in the past year (not just on Christmas/Easter). Here’s what I found:

If *EVERYONE* who has occasionally come in the past year were to come to church on the same Sunday, we would have the following:

- Attendance in worship would be 116 (we currently average 55-70).
- We would have 23 youth under the age of 21 (currently average 6-10).

- The anthem would be sung with the melody of 16 voices (currently average 12).

And that’s just out of the people who have occasionally come to worship over the past year! If we were to reach out into the community inviting others in, as the gospel encourages us to do, imagine where we might be then! Imagine the heights to which the Kingdom of God would be made known!

If you are reading this newsletter then you are part of the group from which I took the above census. I would suggest that we challenge ourselves to come to worship, all of us, on “Back to Church” Sunday, September 13, 11:00 am. Or come earlier for a delicious breakfast, and stick around to be spiritually fed! I think we will be pleasantly surprised at the results.

After I finished this census of people, I took my curiosity a step further, looking to our finances. Based on the current number of giving units (families or individuals), if each unit increased their giving by \$5/week, we would receive another \$9,100 in yearly offerings. Or, \$20/month from each unit would yield an annual increase of \$8,400.

Imagine the ministries that could be supported and encouraged, both within our congregation and in the larger community with those gifts!

As fascinating as these statistics are, at the end of the day they are just numbers on paper. We truly measure our meaning and worth by the faithfulness we offer to God, the discipleship we live out, the gospel we proclaim. This is our challenge, and this is our calling. May we all live into this calling, and may we nurture our lives of faith in community along the way. This is the blessing the church has to offer to her members and communities, if we are willing to receive. I look forward to seeing you on Sunday, and on every day in between!

With you on the journey,
Pastor Jason



WORSHIP INFORMATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2015

Sunday, 6 September 2015

("Labor Day Weekend")

15th Sunday after Pentecost - Liturgical Color: Green

1st Reading: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

2nd Reading: Mark 7:24-37

Sermon: "Living Wisdom"

Sunday, 13 September 2015

("Back to Church Sunday")

16th Sunday after Pentecost - Liturgical Color: Green

1st Reading: Proverbs 1:20-33

2nd Reading: Mark 8:27-38

Sermon: "Sophia's Voice"

Sunday, 20 September 2015

17th Sunday after Pentecost - Liturgical Color: Green

1st Reading: Psalm 1

2nd Reading: Mark 9:30-37

Sermon: "The Right Place"

Sunday, 27 September 2015

18th Sunday after Pentecost - Liturgical Color: Green

1st Reading: Esther 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22

2nd Reading: Mark 9:38-50

Sermon: "With Us or Against Us"



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.

Lucille Link, Patsy Johnson's mother
Wayne Hedgepeth, Ruth Figg's nephew (health issue)
Don Vtipil
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
Ben Nicely, the Spain family's friend
Mila Campen, Ann Hartsell's mother
Mary Chadwick, Dink Armstrong's sister
David Childress, Beverly Childress' brother
Mark Chariton
Evelyn Lichvar (health issues)
Martin Bauer, Evelyn Lichvar's brother (health issue)
Rick Lichvar, Evelyn Lichvar's son (chronic illness)
Becky Smith
Audrey Turner (health issues)
Chuck Barnes, the Ingrams' friend
Dawn Kriigel
Dianne Overstreet & Jaylon
Dr. Shannon Bowman (health issue)
Peggy Allen
Bob Hogsett, father-in-law to the Rechers' daughter
Russell Heiser, Ingrid Phoenix's grandson (health issues)

Aida Faries
Frances Sebera (recovering, health issue)
Helen Cibula
Cheryl May, Susan Walker's employee (& coping w/dads health issues)
Elizabeth Scott
Ruth Figg
Brandon Quinton Lambert, son of Morgan Ingram's coworker,
Micah Murphy (newborn, MCV) & parents, Jennifer & James Murphy
Kenneth & Sue Andrews, Childress family's friends
Justin Ellis-Bowman (wrist injury)
Charlie Curtis, father of PGHS staff member (health issues, improving)
Etta Holc, Doug's mom (recovering, surgery)
Elisha Beverly (Valerie Harsh's daughter), kidney problems
Jimmy Clark, out of hospital
Philip Harris, co-worker of Morgan Ingram
Travis, Bridgette, & Kyle Walker, traveling to 3-yr. deployment: Italy
Valerie Harsh, injured ankle
Eleanor Jones (moved to Johnston-Willis)
Robert Hunter, Don's brother (recovering, surgery)
Family/friends of Joe Yanovitch (d. 8/22)
Family/friends of Charlie Curtis (d. 8/19)
Family/friends of Mitchell Harris (d. 8/22)
Family/friends of Roy Stout (d. 8/22)
Joanne Overstreet, (serious health issue: relapse)

From the Pastor's Desk...



RETURN TO REGULAR HOURS FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL & WORSHIP...

Say "Goodbye" to summer hours for Sunday School and Worship at Gregory as we usher in the month of September with our regular hours of 9:45 a.m. for all Sunday School classes and 11:00 a.m. for Worship!

Classes for Children, Youth, Fellowship and Spiritual Enrichment will return to their regular meeting times and locations beginning Sunday, Sep. 6.

SEPTEMBER 11 ("PATRIOTS DAY")... Gregory's Sanctuary will be open on Friday, Sep. 11 from 11:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. for those who wish to privately make prayerful observance of Patriots Day.

FALL FESTIVAL

Mark your calendars now for the 2015 GMPC Fall Fest! We'll have hot dogs, s'mores, a DJ, games and activities for youth and adults, and more fun than you can shake a stick at! Plus, there will be an opportunity for you to serve your community with the Virginia BloodMobile – making an impact while having a great family outing together! Saturday, October 24, from 10:00am-2:00pm. See you there!



BULL HILL ROAD CLEAN-UP...

Fall clean-up of Bull Hill Road by the Missions Committee "Adopt-A-Highway" team is set for Saturday, Sep. 19 (Rain date: 9/26).

Participants are encouraged to meet at GMPC at 8:45 a.m. before proceeding to trash pickup site. *(Many hands make light work!)*

YOU ARE INVITED...

Back to Sunday School Celebration

Sunday, September 13, 2015 is the date.

GMPC Fellowship Hall is the place.

9:15 AM is the time.

You are the VIP (Very Important Presbyterian)!!

Fun, Food, and Fellowship abound.

Breakfast will be provided by some of Gregory's finest cooks.



CHRISTINE M. BELSCHES MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Christine M. Belsches Memorial Scholarship fund was established in 2015 as a memorial to Christine M. Belsches to provide financial assistance for ongoing educational opportunities. Christine was a long time member of Gregory Memorial and very much valued furthering the education of her own children. Her son, Alan, stated “she skimped and saved so that we would be able to continue our education.” The scholarship is a way to honor her memory, a tribute to his mother who struggled and worked hard to make sure he and his brother were able to go to college.

Eligible applicants include members of Gregory Memorial Presbyterian Church, children and grandchildren of members of Gregory, and friends of Gregory who are actively involved and engaged in our church.

Awards are determined by the applicant’s needs, the number of applicants, and the amount available for distribution. Applications will be accepted from January to April for fall semester and awarded in June; and August to November for spring semester and awarded in January.

Recipients are not obligated to repay these scholarships. They are awarded in love as part of our Christian ministry. However, we encourage former recipients, as well as others to contribute to this fund. All gifts (memorials, etc.) would be invested as part of the principal; thus, the initial gift is perpetuated and interest only will be awarded.

If a person chooses to contribute to this fund or memorials are given to this fund, a notation on the check or in writing must accompany the check. All gifts and memorials will be acknowledged and parties involved will be notified.

All applications will be handled on an individual basis and can be sent to the church office:

Gregory Memorial Presbyterian Church
PO Box 182
6300 Courthouse Road
Prince George, VA 23875
Attention: Christine M. Belsches Scholarship Committee

Committee members include: Susan Walker, Chairperson, Mary Holc, Greg Webber, & Sandy Hunter

HOLY HUMOR

By Sandy Hunter

GOD & LAWN CARE

GOD to ST. FRANCIS: Frank, You know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there on the planet? What happened to the dandelions, violets, milkweeds and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honey bees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colors by now. But, all I see are these green rectangles.

ST. FRANCIS: It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers 'weeds' and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

GOD: Grass? But, it's so boring. It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees; only grubs and sod worms. It's sensitive to temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

ST. FRANCIS: Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.

GOD: The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites happy.

ST. FRANCIS: Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it-sometimes twice a week.

GOD: They cut it? Do they then bale it like hay?

ST. FRANCIS: Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

GOD: They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

ST. FRANCIS: No, Sir, just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

GOD: Now, let me get this straight. They fertilize grass so it will grow. And, when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

ST. FRANCIS: Yes, Sir.

GOD: These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

ST. FRANCIS: You aren't going to believe this, Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it, so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

GOD: What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn, they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. It's a natural cycle of life.

ST. FRANCIS: You better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

GOD: No!? What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?

ST. FRANCIS: After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

GOD: And where do they get this mulch?

ST. FRANCIS: They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

GOD: Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

ST. CATHERINE: 'Dumb and Dumber', Lord. It's a story about....

GOD: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.



Contributed by David Johnson.

Thanks, David!

FLOWERS FOR THE SANCTUARY

SEPTEMBER, 2015

September 6	
September 13	
September 20	
September 27	

Please write in your name beside the Sunday you wish to provide flowers
on the Flowers Chart in the Sanctuary's rear hallway

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



MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS




GATEKEEPER: Bobby Allen

RELAY FOR LIFE - Meets Thursday, Sep. 17 at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall; thereafter, on 2nd Thursdays.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE COMMITTEE – Sep. meeting date changed to Tues., Sep. 22 at 6:00 p.m

THE HERALD, Gregory's newsletter, is now available by email for those who sign up for this money-saving convenience. Sign up on form in the Narthex and get yours emailed to you beginning with the next issue!

SUNDAY SERVANTS – September, 2015

GATEKEEPER:  Bobby Allen	SEP. 6	SEP. 13	SEP. 20	SEP. 27
Ushers	Rose Scott Wayne Powers Morgan Ingram Josh Ingram	Bobby Allen Donna Allen Velma Allen Rose Scott	Jerry Hasky Wayne Powers Glenda Mayhew Les Mayhew	Sheila Fields Janet Swinton Marguerite Bishop Valerie Harsh
Acolytes	Breeana Hunter Owen Hunter	Chayse Hartsell Justin Ellis-Bowman	Kiley Johnes Ella Johnes	Jaime Meurer Kaitlyn Hartsell
Announcements	Mary Kay Schroeter	Rose Scott	Rose Scott	Dianne Overstreet
Junior Sermon	Megan Cashing	Minister	Susan Walker	Valerie Harsh
Junior Church	Pat Hunter Kaitlyn Hartsell	Mary Holc Jamie Meurer	Marguerite Bishop Madison Foster	Tara Foster Kevin Foster
Nursery	Susan Walker	Glenda Mayhew	Ann Hartsell	Ruby Spain
Counting	Kevin Foster Glenda Mayhew	Donald Hunter Rose Scott	Sandy Hunter Ron Recher	Morgan Ingram Donald Hunter

SEPTEMBER, 2015

GATEKEEPER: Bobby Allen

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
		12:30 pm Circle 7:00 pm Facilities 7:00 pm Worship	6:00 pm Personnel 7:00 pm Choir	2-8:00 pm Cleaning 6:30 pm Preschool Parents' Orientation		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9:45 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship <i>Homecoming Committee meets After worship</i>	<u>Labor Day</u>	<u><i>Begin 2015/16 School Year</i></u> 6:30 pm Outreach	7:00 pm Choir	2-8:00 pm Cleaning 7:00 pm Stewardship & Finance	<u>Patriots Day</u> 11:30 am-1:00 pm GMPC Sanctuary Open	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
<u><i>"Back to Sunday School" Sunday</i></u> 9:15 am "Back to Sunday School" Celebratory Breakfast, Fellowship Hall 9:45 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship		6:30 pm Missions	7:00 pm Choir	9:00 am News articles in 2-8:00 pm Cleaning 6:30 pm Relay for Life meeting		8:45 am Bull Hill Rd. Cleanup (Missions)
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
9:45 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship	10:00 am PG Churches Outreach /Food Bank Qtr. Meeting (location TBA)	6:00 pm Cong. Care	6:00 pm Scouts Court of Honor & dinner, Fellowship Hall 7:00 pm Choir	2:00 pm Newsletter out 2-8:00 pm Cleaning		8:45 am Bull Hill Rd. Cleanup <u><i>Rain date</i></u>
27	28	29	30			
9:45 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship <i>5 Cents a Meal Offering</i>	1:00 pm PG Triad, Scott Park 7:00 pm Christian Ed.		9:00 am Committee reports in 7:00 pm Choir			

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

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STAMP

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SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER



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

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

