

Dear Saints and Friends of Gregory Memorial,



"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it."

-Hebrews 13:2

"When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage."

-Matthew 2:10-11a

The strains are ringing in my ears, setting me into a mood for the coming weeks. "Chestnuts roasting on an open fire..." along with "it's the most wonderful time of the year" bring to my mind thoughts of comfy fires in the living room...to gatherings with family and friends and cookies next to a beautiful tree...to making the house ready to receive guests and visitors. It is a season of preparation, but more than that it is a season of hospitality, making room to welcome others.

Hospitality is a well-practiced act in our community. During the Advent season, we focus on preparing our hearts to again receive the One whose Light and Love give our lives meaning; Jesus, born on a silent night, born to restore our connection to God in Love. In him we have life; in him we offer to others what we have received. And in the spirit of the hospitality we show to Christ, we extend that hospitality to our community.

For instance, we will once again offer cookies and cocoa to our community following the parade on December 2. We will again have a gathering meal to share in fellowship, and we hope to go out and visit with some of our homebound members, offering Christmas carols and greetings (actual singing capabilities are irrelevant). Lastly, there will again be a "Darkest Night" service to help offer comfort to those who carry grief in this season.

And while these are some of the ways we practice hospitality, it has never been about the "programs;" those are simply the ways we live into the fullness of the relationship we share – with each other, with our community, and with God in Christ. Hospitality is about relationship; it has *always* been about relationship. All the programs and events are simply ways we enact and live into the fullness of relationship (it still holds true

that the most effective manner of promotion is through word-of-mouth and personal invitation from friends). Living out these relationships is the fullest practice of the gospel: living together into the good news which Christ's presence brings to the world.

This is a very hospitable season, and Gregory Memorial has a long history of extending that hospitality to others. But perhaps there are other ways we can do this, as well? For instance, while we welcome outside groups to use our building, we can reach out to personally invite them to our events.

And to revisit an option we began to discuss a few weeks ago, we can consider adopting a fire company. To provide a bit more framework of what that looks like, here are some thoughts: we can offer a meal on a regular basis to all company members, at no charge and with no strings attached; we can offer general and consistent encouragement throughout the year, by dropping off notes of appreciation and/or homemade goodies; we can designate a "First Responder Sunday" to which we invite them to attend worship and be recognized for the service they provide; we can offer a "Blessing of the Gear" during which we pray for God's protective blessing over the trucks and turnout gear used. Those are a few ideas, and perhaps you're thinking of others; I look forward to continuing this conversation.

It all comes down to hospitality: the depth of our relationships and how we honor them; how we show it to others; and how we make room in our own life for the lives of others, in the same spirit by which we make room for our Savior. It is a wonderful time of year, indeed, and it doesn't end with this month.

With you on the journey,
Pastor Jason



WORSHIP INFORMATION FOR DECEMBER, 2017

Sunday, 3 December 2017

1st Sunday of Advent - Liturgical Color: Blue
 1st Reading: Daniel 3:1, 8-30 * 2nd Reading: John 18:36-37
 Sermon: "Facing an Idol"

Sunday, 10 December 2017

2nd Sunday of Advent - Liturgical Color: Blue
 1st Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14 * 2nd Reading: John 11:25-26
 Sermon: "The Walking Dead"

Sunday, 17 December 2017

3rd Sunday of Advent - Liturgical Color: Blue
 1st Reading: Isaiah 55:1-13 * 2nd Reading: John 4:13-14
 Sermon: "Choral Cantata"

Sunday, 24 December 2017

4th Sunday of Advent - Liturgical Color: Blue
 1st Reading: Psalm 130:5-8 * 2nd Reading: John 1:1-18
 Sermon: "Grace Upon Grace"

Sunday, 31 December 2017

1st Sunday After Christmas Day - Liturgical Color: White
 1st Reading: Psalm 32:1-2 * 2nd Reading: John 1:19-34
 Sermon: "Direction in the Wilderness"



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.

Those affected by Las Vegas tragedy & the emergency responders
 Those affected by recent hurricanes & the emergency responders
 Members of Franklinville Presbyterian Church, Franklinville, NY
 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, Rick, and her brother, Martin
 (health issues)
 Becky Smith
 Russell Heiser, Ingrid Phoenix's grandson (health issues)
 Helen & Grace Cibula
 Elizabeth & H. F. Scott, Jr.
 Kenneth & Sue Andrews, Childress family's friends
 Jimmy Clark
 Elisha Beverly, Valerie Harsh's daughter (health issue recurrence)
 Peggy Allen
 Eleanor Jones
 Butch Meade, Glenda Mayhew's brother
 Teresa Knott, PG County employee (health issue)
 Michelle Coleman (health issues & recov.)
 Ralph Summerson

Courtney Stewart, friend of the Hunters (Duke Hospital)
 Adrienne Wallace, member of Hopewell News staff
 Jane & Ralph Arehart, Glenda Mayhew's friends (health issues)
 Gene Vasek (health issue)
 Gladys Wiseman
 Eddie Frankenstein, former PGPD Chief (health issues)
 Steve "Dee" Shortt, Kim Helmer Shortt's husband (health issue)
 Shirley MacNeil (health issues)
 Perry Lewis (health issue)
 Bill Langston, David Johnson's friend (recov., bypass surgery)
 Debbie Hudson, Susan Walker's friend (recov. surgery)
 Janet Shockley, Susan Walker's mom (surgery on 10/8)
 Dink Armstrong (recov. surgery)
 Verne & Clara Smith
 Kenny Overstreet (health issue)
 Brenda Wahl, Keith Spain's mother (health issues)
 Richard Harsh (recov. from surgery)
 Carol & Ed Hornbuckle (Megan Cashing's grandparents)
 Leigh Primmer, PG County Finance Dept. (health issue)
 Family/friends of Charles David ("Dave") Story, Jr., 57
 yrs. a member of & former Chief, PGVFD (d. 11/15)
 Family/friends of Logan Knupp (d. 11/16)

ANNOUNCEMENTS



GATEKEEPER:
Charles Smyth

The Christmas Card Box has been placed in the Narthex for use by those wishing to send Christmas cards within our congregation.

DEC. 2: Prince George Christmas Parade; “Cookies and Cocoa” Open House at GMPC to follow, 3:00 p.m.

DEC. 3: Angel Tree gifts due today, should be wrapped with tags on packages! Advent readings for family spiritual growth - Begin Advent readings from material distributed at Nov. 26 worship service.
Workcamp 2018 - Any youth interested in Workcamp 2018 is invited to attend an info and planning meeting

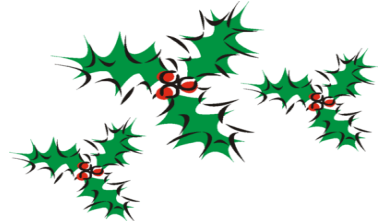
at 6:00 p.m. Interested youths and their parents are requested to attend.

DEC. 11: Christmas Poinsettias to arrive at Church Sanctuary.

DEC. 21: “Darkest Night” service to honor the grief of loss and separation painfully present in this season, 7:00 p.m.

DEC. 24: December 24 this year is both the **Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve**. During the normal 11:00 a.m. service, we will celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent, and at 7:00 pm, we will gather again to proclaim Christ’s birth with candlelight and carols! There will be only one Christmas Eve service on the afternoon of

December 24. (Due to Christmas Eve and 4th Advent Sunday being the same day, Worship Committee determined to offer one afternoon service this year.)



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

FLOWERS FOR THE SANCTUARY

DECEMBER 3	R. Scott
DECEMBER 10	
DECEMBER 17	Christmas Poinsettias
DECEMBER 25	Christmas Poinsettias
DECEMBER 31	

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, 2017

 GATEKEEPER: Charles Smyth	DEC. 3 1 st Sunday in Advent	DEC. 10 2 nd Sunday in Advent	DEC. 17 3 rd Sunday in Advent	DEC. 24 4 th Sunday in Advent “Christmas Eve”	DEC. 31
Ushers	Jerry Hasky Brenda Bond Glenda Mayhew Les Mayhew	Sheila Fields Janet Swinton Marguerite Bishop Valerie Harsh	Robert Hartsell Dianne Overstreet Rose Scott Wayne Powers	Charles Smyth Jared Smyth Morgan Ingram Josh Ingram	Bobby Allen Donna Allen Velma Allen Larry Johnson
Announcements	Rose Scott	Dianne Overstreet	Valerie Harsh	Mary Kay Schroeter	Larry Johnson
Junior Sermon	Megan Cashing	Minister	Susan Walker	Valerie Harsh	Patsy Johnson
Junior Church	Patsy Johnson	Tara Foster	Valerie Harsh	Patsy Johnson	Morgan Ingram Josh Ingram
Counting	David Johnson Rose Scott	Sandy Hunter Glenda Mayhew	Morgan Ingram Ron Recher	Donald Hunter Mary Kay Schoreter	David Johnson Blake Bishop

WHAT'S JASON READING?



STILL READING....

For School: "The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma" by Bessel van der Kolk

For Church: "The Work of the Chaplain (Work of the Church)" by Naomi K. Paget

For Fun: "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" by J.K. Rowling



HOLY HUMOR

HIDDEN MEANINGS: "THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS" (a whole new meaning to the song)....

People often think of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" as the days preceding the festival. Historically, Christmas is the season of the Christian Year for the days beginning on December 25 and lasting until January 6 (the Day of Epiphany) when the church celebrates the revelation of Christ as the light of the world and recalls the journey of the Magi. From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not allowed to practice their faith openly. During that era someone wrote "The Twelve Days of Christmas" as a kind of secret catechism that could be sung in public without risk of persecution. The song has two

levels of interpretation: the surface meaning, plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the church. Each element in the carol is a code word for a religious reality.

The "partridge in a pear tree" is Jesus Christ.

The 2 turtledoves are the Old and New Testaments.

The 3 French hens stand for faith, hope and love.

The 4 calling birds are the four Gospels.

The 5 gold rings recall the Torah (Law) the first five books of the Old Testament.

The 6 geese a-laying stand for the six days of creation.

The 7 swans a-swimming represent the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit.

The 8 maids a-milking are the eight beatitudes.

The 9 ladies dancing are the nine fruits of the Spirit (Gal.5).

The 10 lords a-leaping are the 10 Commandments.

The 11 pipers piping stand for the 11 faithful disciples.

The 12 drummers drumming symbolize the 12 points of belief in the Apostles Creed.

*There you have it:
The hidden meaning of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" and the secret behind the song!*

~ DECEMBER 2017 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 3p Cookies & Cocoa after PG Xmas Parade
3 1 st Sunday of Advent 9:45a Sunday Sch. 11a Worship Service 11a Holy Communion 11a Angel Tree gifts due today	4 11a PG Churches Outreach/Foodbank Xmas meeting	5 12:30p Circle 6p Cong. Care 6p GS Tr5000	6 7p Choir Practice	7 2p Church Cleaning	8	9 9a-9p Fellowship Hall Reserved
10 2 nd Sunday of Advent 9:45a Sunday Sch. 11a Worship Service	11 Poinsettias arrive to church Sanctuary <i>(Time T/B/A)</i>	12 6p GS Tr553	13 7p Choir Practice	14 2p Church Cleaning 2p News articles due	15	16
17 3 rd Sunday of Advent 9:45a Sunday Sch. 11a Worship serv. 11a Xmas Cantata	18	19 OFFICE OPEN 6p GS Tr5000	20 OFFICE OPEN 7p Choir Practice	21 OFFICE OPEN 2p Church Cleaning 2p Newsletter out 7p "Darkest Night" service	22	23
24 CHRISTMAS EVE 4 th Sunday of Advent 9:45a Sunday Sch. 11a Worship serv. & Xmas Cantata 11a 5 Cents-a-Meal Offering 11a Christmas Joy Offering 7p Xmas Eve service & Holy communion	25 CHRISTMAS DAY 	26 OFFICE OPEN	27 OFFICE OPEN	28 OFFICE OPEN	29	30
31 9:45a Sunday Sch. 11a Worship serv. 2p Reports due						

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Gregory Memorial Presbyterian Church
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STAMP

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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