

Dear Saints and Friends of Gregory Memorial,



For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare  
and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. ~ *Jeremiah 29:11*

“Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have  
prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned  
back, strengthen your brothers.” ~ *Luke 22:31-32*

This coming month marks twenty years, which is still difficult to believe and accept. Twenty years since our nation bore witness on our own shores to terrible tragedy, destruction, and loss – both of life and of our sense of security. We have grieved, and even continue to grieve the loss of life. We have still not recovered from the loss of our sense of security. And still, much has happened in these intervening two decades – conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan; housing market collapse; recession; increased vitriol in political debate; the resurgence of hate groups; contested elections; and a pandemic to top it all off. The weight, impact, and effects of all of these trials are still being revealed, and may not be fully known for yet another generation. It has been a long twenty years, indeed.

In such circumstances, we find that we are perhaps better able to relate to the people of Israel during their time(s) of exile. Jeremiah, specifically, was a prophet of God to the people in a generation that had neither been born in Israel, and was not yet being returned to Israel; they were fully encompassed as being an exile generation, removed from the place that informed their identity. It would be easy to lose sight of who you are, to forget whose you are. And to this generation, God speaks a reminder. Not yet a promise to be fulfilled of returning to your homeland. Not yet a realization of your dreams of leaving the exile reality behind. Rather, a reminder that you are not forgotten. This oft-quoted verse comes in the midst of a longer declaration that, even in such a difficult and trying time, there is something better to come, and the one hearing is not forgotten to God.

All too frequently in our culture today we read this verse and equate it with financial prosperity. “Plans to prosper you” are quickly interpreted as literal, monetary prosperity. But Jeremiah, speaking on behalf of God, is not speaking of such. Rather, he is reminding those listening, those very much in need of this reminder, that

the reality of exile and living ‘not as your own’ is not going to last. A return is coming, even if it has not yet arrived. And the people are not only to remember this promise, but to live lives that are defined by it.

Twenty years also marks the amount of time since the first “Lord of the Rings” movie came out. One of the most drawn upon lines comes in the middle of the movie, but is actually from closer to the beginning of the book. In discussion with Gandalf concerning the reappearance of the Ring of Power, Frodo states, “I wish it need not have happened in my time.” (We, too, could just as easily wish this about many of the things that have happened in our own lifetime, especially in the last twenty years). “So do I,” said Gandalf, “and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.” (*The Fellowship of the Ring*, Book 1, Chapter 2).

Jesus has attempted to prepare the disciples for what is to come, regarding his passion and death. Simon Peter isn’t sure he’s going to have it. Jesus exhorts him, instead, to tend to his own response and then do what he can to strengthen the other disciples. And so the exhortation goes for us, as well. As we reflect back on the last twenty years – of course, never forgetting; how could we? – we are called upon to consider how we will act as we move into the next twenty years. Will we build others up, or continue to tear down and debase those we disagree with? Will we be defined by what we have lost, what has been taken from us; or will we live into the promise of what is to come? For those of us who desire and claim to walk with Christ, there really is only one answer: to work for the Kingdom of God, and to build up others in the process. May our work be faithful, and may it prosper.

With you on the journey,  
Pastor Jason



## WORSHIP INFORMATION FOR SEPTEMBER, 2021

### Sunday, 5 September 2021

Holy Communion

“15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost” - Liturgical Color: Green

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Isaiah 35:4-7a \* 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: Mark 7:24-37

Sermon: "Unbound"

### Sunday, 12 September 2021

“16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost” - Liturgical Color: Green

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a \* 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: Mark 8:27-38

Sermon: "A Cross to Bear"

### Sunday, 19 September 2021

“17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost” - Liturgical Color: Green

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Jeremiah 11:18-20 \* 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: Mark 9:30-37

Sermon: (Guest Preacher)

### Sunday, 26 September 2021

“18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost” - Liturgical Color: Green

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29 \* 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: Mark 9:38-50

Sermon: "Unresentful"



**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.

Amy Townson, Josh Ingram's sister  
 Becky Scott Smith  
 Russell Heiser, Ingrid Phoenix's grandson (health issues)  
 Butch Meade, Glenda Mayhew's brother  
 Steve "Dee" Shortt, Kim Helmer Shortt's husband (health issue)  
 Verne & Clara Smith  
 Peggy Allen  
 Eddie Frankenstein  
 Grace Cibula  
 Etta Holc  
 Jerry Hasky (health issue)  
 Kay Recher, daughter-in-law of Ron & Judy Recher (head-on crash in Oklahoma)  
 Pam Henry, Mary Holc's family member  
 Sandra Elder, Kelly Knupp's mother (health issues)  
 Adele Linkenhoker, Barbara Taliaferro's friend (health concerns)  
 Bob Jones (health issues)

Junie "Bug" Treaster (recovering from surgery)  
 Lee Harsh, Valerie Harsh's brother-in-law (health issue)  
 Rev. Paul Luthman, our previous pastor (recovering from surgery)  
 Sharon Reed & family, Susan Shockley's co-worker (health issue)  
 Jennifer Caldwell, friend of Grace Cibula (health issue)  
 Reese Etheridge, Wayne Powers' uncle (health issue)  
 Randy Warthan (health issue)  
 Inez Paul, Mary Holc's mother (health issue, rehab)  
 Floyd M. Brown, Sr. (health issues)  
 Pam Landrum, Doris Harmison's daughter (orthopedic issue)  
 Trevor Fine, Susan Shockley's neighbor's son (health issue)  
 Traci Wells, Glenda Mayhew's friend (health issue)  
 The Rolley Family, Marguerite Bishop's friends (health issues)  
 Judy Recher (recovering from surgery)  
 Debbie Pearson, wife of Butch Pearson, PGPD Ret. (orthopedic issue: foot)  
 Family/friends of Richard A. Harsh (d. 7/22)

## UPDATED WORSHIP GUIDELINES...

### **GREETINGS SAINTS AND FRIENDS OF GREGORY MEMORIAL!**

Your Session has been diligent in faithfully assessing how we continue to worship and move forward, and now especially, in light of the updated guidelines and proclamations from both CDC and local and federal leaders. Please note the following:

#### ***IF YOU ARE FULLY VACCINATED,***

- You no longer need to wear a mask when entering/exiting, or moving about the Sanctuary. Of course, if it is your personal comfort level to do so, then please be happy in doing so.
- We will no longer physically block off every other pew. We encourage you to sit where you are comfortable sitting, and with whom, but please be respectful of others as we make this transition --- there may be some who are still more comfortable sitting with a bit of distance, and that's ok.

#### ***IF YOU ARE NOT FULLY VACCINATED,***

- Please be responsible and continue to wear a mask when entering/exiting, or moving about the Sanctuary. And if there are any questions you still have about the vaccines, please contact Jason. Your confidentiality is assured, and he is happy to be of assistance in your decision-making.

#### ***IF YOU ARE FEELING "UNDER THE WEATHER",***

- Please know that we join with you in spirit, and wish you well, but you are encouraged to stay home and take care of your own health. Or, if you feel that you can still be out and about, and attending worship, please continue to wear a mask and maintain social distancing.

Love and Peace to You All!

#### **\* ONLINE WORSHIP**

Moving forward in September, we will be discontinuing the streaming of worship via Zoom, as it has not been widely used recently. We will continue, unaffected, the streaming of worship on the church's FaceBook page - that will not change! If you wish to join us virtually on Sunday morning (or catch the recording later in the week) it will still be available on the church's FaceBook page - [www.facebook.com/gmpcva](http://www.facebook.com/gmpcva).

#### **\* SINGING OF HYMNS**

We have begun taking baby-steps to resuming some of the aspects we have suspended, specifically the singing of hymns! Hymnals and Bibles are back in the pew racks. We must strongly ask, though, that when we sing together we put our mask on to do so. Inconvenient as that may be, it is still necessary. Thank you for your understanding.

#### **\* CELEBRATING COMMUNION**

This month we'll be celebrating Communion on Sunday, September 5, and the elements will be served to you in the pews, though with slight modification – the bread will be in individual cups to minimize handling.

And if you'll be joining us at home, please remember to have some bread and juice at hand so that you can celebrate Christ's Table with us, wherever you may be!

### **THOSE WHO SERVE**

The Worship Committee has temporarily suspended publishing the Sunday Servants schedule due to on-going Pandemic constraints.

## TO BRIGHTEN YOUR DAY

### GETTING PAST IT...

1. Never in a million years could I have imagined going to a bank teller with a mask on and asking for money.

2. My body has absorbed so much soap and water, hand sanitizer and disinfectant that now when I pee it cleans the toilet.

3. I ate 12 times and took 5 naps and it's still today.

4. Because of the huge increase in deliveries, FedEx and UPS have joined forces and are now Fed-Up.

5. Corona virus and all its iterations has turned us all into dogs. We roam the house looking for food. We're told "no" if we get too close to strangers. And we get really excited about car rides and walks.

6. Note to Self: Until further notice, the days of the week are now called: Thisday, Thatday, Otherday, Someday, Yesterday, Today and Nextday.

7. Paranoia has reached almost absurd stages... I sneezed in front of my laptop and the anti-virus started a scan on its own.

8. I need to practice social distancing from the refrigerator.

9. And, just like that, no one ever asked a stay-at-home mom what she does all day ever again!

10. People keep asking me, "Is this Covid-19 really that serious?" Listen, ya'll, the casinos and churches are closed! When Heaven and Hell

agree on the same thing, it's probably pretty serious.

### BACK TO SCHOOL!

Every time you stop a school, you will have to build a jail. What you gain at one end, you lose at the other. It's like feeding a dog on his own tail. It won't fatten the dog. ~ *Mark Twain*

If there were no schools to take the children away from home part of the time, the insane asylums would be filled with mothers. ~ *Edgar W. Howe*

When I say I miss school, I mean my friends and the fun. Not the school. ~ *Unknown*

You're off to great places. Today is your 1st day! Your mountain is waiting, so get on your way!  
~ *Dr. Seuss*

The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet. ~ *Aristotle*

### TOP 10 WAYS THE BIBLE WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT IF WRITTEN BY COLLEGE STUDENTS:

10. Loaves and fishes would be replaced by pizza and chips.

9. The 10 Commandments would actually be only 5, but due to being typed with large font in double-spacing, they look like 10 and would be posted on Facebook.

8. Forbidden fruit would have been eaten because it wasn't dorm food.

7. Paul's Letters to the Romans also would be reduced to a Facebook posting.

6. Reason Cain killed Abel: They were roommates.

5. The Plains of Armageddon would include as the place where the end of the world occurs would be replaced by Finals.

4. A Book of Armaments would be in there somewhere.

3. Reason why Moses and followers walked in desert for 40 years: They didn't want to ask directions and look like a freshman.

2. Tower of Babel gets blamed for the Foreign Language requirement.

1. Instead of creating the world in 6 days and resting on the 7<sup>th</sup>. He would put it off until the night before it was due, then pull an all-nighter and hope no one noticed.

### HOLY HAIR, BATMAN!

A pastor's son who had just gotten his driving permit asked his father about using the family car. His father answered, "Son, I'll make a deal with you. If you bring up your grades, study your Bible more, and get your haircut, then we will talk."

Two months later, the boy again approached his father about using the car. His father said, "Son, I'm really proud of you. You have brought up your grades and studied your Bible diligently. But why haven't you gotten your hair cut?"

The young man replied, "Samson had long hair. Even Jesus had long hair."

His father said, "Yes, son and as you will recall, they walked everywhere they went!"

GATEKEEPER: TBA

## SEPTEMBER, 2021

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 2p Church cleaning	4
5 9:30a Sunday Sch.  11a Worship serv. (communion elements will be passed on trays along pews)	6 Labor Day	7 1p Circle  6p Cong. Care Com.  6p GS Tr. 5000  7p Facilities Com.	8	9	10 2p Church cleaning	11
12 9:30a Sunday Sch.  11a Worship serv.	13	14 7p Christian Ed. Com.  7p Missions Com.  7p Outreach Com.	15	16 2p News articles due  7p Stewardship & Finance Com.	17 2p Church cleaning	18
19 9:30a Sunday Sch.  11a Worship serv.	20	21 6p GS Tr. 5000	22	23 2p Newsletter out	24 2p Church cleaning	25
26 "Sunday in the Park"  No Sunday Sch.  11a Worship serv. at Scott Park  & <u>5 Cents-a-Meal Offering</u>  12p Picnic Lunch In the Park	27	28	29	30 2p Committee reports due		

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## ***SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER***



**COME AND JOIN US!**  
**Sunday School 9:30 A.M.**  
**[WWW.GREGORYMEMORIAL.ORG](http://WWW.GREGORYMEMORIAL.ORG)**

**We're on: [Facebook.com/gmpcva](https://www.facebook.com/gmpcva)**  
**Worship 11:00 A.M.**