

Dear Saints and Friends of Gregory Memorial,

RESURRECTION AND THE “EASTER BUNNY”

It’s not unusual to find early medieval religious paintings of the Madonna and the Christ child depicting a toddler Jesus cuddling a white rabbit, or hare. (*Mary and Infant Jesus With a Rabbit, c. 1530.*; *Madonna and Child with St. Catherine and a Rabbit, Madonna with the White Rabbit, to name a few.*)



As a Christian, you may have wondered: how in the world did the Easter story of Jesus’ resurrection and the empty tomb (John 20:1-18) ever translate into a bunny that delivers eggs to backyards? Where did this Easter symbolism even come from? What on earth do rabbits have to do with the resurrection story? As far back as the Anglo-Saxon period, the idea of the Easter Bunny evolved from a pagan deity to a rabbit that leaves treats for all the good boys and girls.

Religious role of the Easter hare. Easter is a celebration of spring and new life. Eggs and flowers are rather obvious symbols of female fertility, but in European traditions, the bunny, with its amazing reproductive potential, is not far behind. In European traditions, the Easter bunny is known as the Easter hare. Hares were given ritual burials alongside humans during the Neolithic age in Europe. Archaeologists have interpreted this as a religious ritual, with hares representing rebirth. Over a thousand years later, during the Iron Age, ritual burials for hares were common, and in 51 B.C.E., Julius Caesar mentioned that in Britain, hares were not to be eaten due to their religious significance.

Caesar would likely have known that in the classical Greek tradition, hares were sacred to Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Meanwhile, Aphrodite’s son Eros was often depicted carrying a hare symbolic of unquenchable desire. From the Greek world through the Renaissance, hares appeared as symbols of sexuality in literature and art. The Virgin Mary is often depicted with a white hare, symbolizing that she overcame temptation.

Hare meat and witches’ mischief. The folk traditions of Europe specifically connect the figure of the hare to Easter, describing children hunting for Easter eggs hidden by the Easter hare, much like in the U. S. today. Written accounts also mention Easter hare in terms of traditional Easter hare hunts and include the eating of hare meat at

Easter. An English tradition, known as the “Hare Pie scramble,” held at Hallaton, in Leicestershire, England, involved eating pie made with hare meat and people “scrambled” to get a slice. The custom still continues.

The eating of the hare was also associated with various folk traditions of scaring away witches at Easter, as it was widely believed throughout northern Europe that witches would often take the form of a hare, usually for causing mischief among humans.

Pagan origins. In 1835, the Brothers Grimm, argued that the Easter hare was connected to an ancient German goddess called “Ostara.” In 731 C.E. , the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre, was mentioned by the Venerable Bede (an early medieval monk considered the father of English history) who wrote that the month of April was called Eosturmonath, or Eostre Month, after the goddess Eostre, with worship of the Eostre hare as her main symbol. Bede’s writings included details of a pagan festival of spring in the name of the goddess that had assimilated into the Christian celebration of the resurrection of Christ.

While most European languages refer to the Christian holiday with names that come from the Jewish holiday of Passover, such as *Pâques* in French or *Påsk* in Swedish, the German and English languages retain the older, non-biblical word: Easter. The Easter bunny itself harkens back to pre-Christian celebrations of spring, heralded by the Vernal Equinox and personified by the goddess Eostre. Thus, after a long, cold, northern winter, it was only natural for people to celebrate themes of resurrection and rebirth, with flowers blooming, birds laying eggs, baby bunnies hopping about.

As new life emerges in spring, the Easter bunny hops back once again with his basket of eggs, providing a longstanding cultural symbol to remind us of the cycles and stages of our own lives.

Chocolate bunnies and eggs are always welcomed!

Happy Easter!

Source: *Compilation of public domain Wikilinks articles*; ¹*Young Hare*, Albrecht Dürer, circa 1502; ²*Mary and Infant Jesus With a Rabbit*, circa 1530; ³*The Truth of Myth, a textbook for World Mythology*, Tok Thomson (with Gregory Schrempf).

To share an article in THE HERALD, please send it to the church email: office@gregorymemorial.org or drop it in the church office door mailbox.

WORSHIP INFORMATION FOR APRIL, 2023

Sunday, 2 April 2023

"Palm/Passion Sunday" - Liturgical Color: Purple
Guest Preacher: Dr. James Taneti

Thursday, April 6, 2023

"Maundy Thursday" – Liturgical Color: Purple
Service at Rosewood Presbyterian Church: Rev. Charles Philips

Sunday, 9 April, 2023

"Easter Sunday"/Resurrection of the Lord" – Liturgical Color: White
Guest Preacher: Rev. Marvin Daniel

Sunday, 16 April 2023

"2nd Sunday of Easter" – Liturgical Color: White
Guest Preacher: Rev. Charles Philips

Sunday, 23 April 2023

"3rd Sunday of Easter" – Liturgical Color: White
Guest Preacher: Rev. Marvin Daniel

Sunday, 30 April 2023

"4th Sunday of Easter" – Liturgical Color: White
Guest Preacher: Rev. Renita Page



OUR PRAYER IN TIMES OF JOY AND CONCERN...One of our great joys and responsibilities to each other and to God at Gregory Memorial is the practice of praying for each other and our community. Please let us know of any updates.

Those affected by earthquakes and cholera in Turkey and Syria
First-responders, world-wide
Families, persons, entities impacted by Hurricane Ian
Families, persons, communities impacted by gun violence
People of Ukraine
Those in our community suffering from mental/physical illness, loss, grief or hardship
Amy Townson, Josh Ingram's sister
Becky Scott Smith
Russell Heiser, Ingrid Phoenix's grandson (health issues)
Butch Meade, Glenda Mayhew's brother
Verne & Clara Smith
Peggy & Dennis Allen
Eddie Frankenstein
Grace Cibula
Etta Holc
Ruby & Jerry Hasky (health issues)
Lee Harsh, Valerie Harsh's brother-in-law (health issue)
Jennifer Caldwell, friend of Grace Cibula (health issue)
Reese Etheridge, Wayne Powers' uncle (health issue)
Dana Etheridge, Wayne Powers' cousin (health issue)
Randy Warthan (health issue)

Traci Wells, Glenda Mayhew's friend (health issue)
Larry Brown of Chesterfield, Larry Johnson's friend (health issue)
Billy Hudson, friend of Dianna Lykins Flaherty, Mary Lykins' daughter
Renee' Renier, Diana Flaherty's long-time friend (health issue)
Emily Henry, Mary Holc's sister (health issue)
Charlie Perkins (health issue)
Chris Ashby, Wayne Powers' granddaughter Brittney's husband (health issues)
Barbara Taliaferro (recovering from double pneumonia)
Ruth Figg (Petersburg Home for Ladies)
Paula McDaniel, Pam Elder's sister (health issue)
John Kephart, Grace Cibula's nephew (heart surg., 1/12)
Tara Foster (home, recovering from kidney stone surgery)
Billy Robertson (recovering, eye surgery)
Shirley MacNeill (hospitalized, Tricities Hospital, fmr. JRMC)
Family/friends of Mrs. Inez Paul, Mary Holc's mother (d. 3/4)
Congratulations to New Parents: Morgan & Josh Ingram on birth of baby daughter, Rigsby (3/17)

CELEBRATING HOLY COMMUNION

Our 2023 schedule for Holy Communion provides that we celebrate Holy Communion on the first Sunday in even-numbered months.

We will celebrate Holy Communion on **Sunday, April 2 ("Palm Sunday")**. We are continuing with the practice of passing the communion elements among the pews.

HOLY COMMUNION SCHEDULE FOR 2023

February 5, 2023
April 2, 2023

June 4, 2023
August 6, 2023

October 1, 2023
December 3, 2023



Easter Humor

ALL I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LIFE I LEARNED FROM THE EASTER BUNNY:

Don't put all of your eggs in one basket.
Walk softly and carry a big carrot.
Everyone needs a friend who is all ears.
There's no such thing as too much candy.
All work and no play can make you a basket case.
A cute little tail attracts a lot of attention.
Everyone is entitled to a bad hare day.
Let happy thoughts multiply like rabbits.
Some body parts should be floppy.
Keep your paws off other people's jellybeans.
The grass is always greener in someone else's basket.
An Easter bonnet can tame even the wildest hare.
The best things in life are still sweet and gooey!
To show your true colors, you have to come out of your shell.

AND THIS ONE IS JUST WRONG!

Three fools died and were standing at the pearly gates of heaven. St. Peter told them that they could enter the gates by answering one simple question correctly. He asked the first fool, "What is Easter?"

The fool replied, "Oh, that's easy! It's the holiday in November when everyone gets together, eats turkey, and are thankful..."

"Wrong!" replied St. Peter, and proceeded to ask the second fool the same question, "What is Easter?"

The second one replied, "Easter is the holiday in December when we put up a nice tree, exchange presents, and celebrate the birth of Jesus."

St. Peter looked at the second fool, shaking his head in disgust, told her she was wrong, and then peered over his glasses at the third fool and asked, "What is Easter?"

The third fool smiled confidently and looked St. Peter in the eyes, "I know what Easter is."

"Oh?" said St. Peter, incredulously.

The third fool eyes lit up as he happily replied, "Easter is the Christian holiday that coincides with the Jewish celebration of Passover. Jesus and his disciples were eating at the last supper and Jesus was later deceived and turned over to the Romans by one of his disciples. The Romans took him to be crucified and he was stabbed in the side, made to wear a crown of thorns, and was hung on a cross with nails through his hands. He was buried in a nearby cave which was sealed off by a large boulder."

St. Peter smiled broadly with delight, thinking that finally, the message had been understood.

Then the fool continued, "Every year the boulder is moved aside so that Jesus can come out...and, if he sees his shadow, there will be six more weeks of winter."



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Movie Night for Gregory Memorial's showing of Sight and Sound Theater's "Ruth" on Wednesday, March 1, was well attended by 22 persons. Beginning at 6 p.m., the group enjoyed a delicious supper consisting of two kinds of chili and a vegetable-beef soup, with corn bread, dinner rolls, and a generous sampling of desserts. Hosted by the Faith Committee and the Congregational Care Committee, the dinner was followed at 6:30 p.m. with the movie. We look forward to our next movie event. *[Faith Cmte]*

Churches Helping Churches Oakland Baptist Church is in the planning stages of opening a Preschool this coming fall. Word of this got to us here at Gregory, so we contacted Oakland and asked if they would want any of our preschool materials that were not being used.

Saying they were thrilled is an understatement. Several members of Oakland Baptist Church have come on three different occasions and have filled SUVs and trucks with all types of things in our preschool inventory that will help them get started in their ministry. We have donated lesson plans, books, art supplies, graduation gowns, tricycles, wagons, and all kinds of toys. Isn't it wonderful that our preschool items will now be put to such good use? Helping one another is such a marvelous feeling!

Are You Enjoying Our Church Sign? Our church sign is being put to good use. Hope you have noticed that every week the sermon title and minister for the week is being announced. Also, there is usually a catchy thought-provoking phrase displayed as well. You might wonder who is doing all of this. Well, all of this great work is being done by Sandy Hunter.

Putting the information on the sign is not as simple as you think. Doing this job every week is quite an undertaking, so be sure to say thank you to Sandy.

[Faith Cmte]

Join Us For Easter Sunrise Service On April 9! We will hold our Easter Sunrise Service beginning at 7 a.m. in front of the church (weather-permitting) as the sun rises. Service will be led by Gregory's laity and followed by a breakfast in the Fellowship Hall. Sunday School is at 9:30 a.m. and Easter worship service begins at 11 a.m. *[Worship Cmte]*

Maundy Thursday Service: Gregory's congregation is invited to attend Maundy Thursday service at Rosewood Presbyterian Church (5500 Oaklawn Boulevard), Rev. Charles Philips, officiant. The service starts at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 6. *[Worship Cmte]*

Stated Session Meeting – at 12 p.m. (est.) after worship service on Sunday, April 16.

Scholarship application deadline for Fall Semester: May 31. Deadline for submitting applications for the Christine Belsches Memorial Scholarship Fund is May 31. Applications may be submitted to Susan Shockley or Santy Hunter, or mailed (Gregory Memorial PC, P. O. Box 182, Prince George, VA 23875) or brought to the Church Office. *[Scholarship Cmte]*

The **Closet Cleaning Party** held by the Faith Committee on March 21 was a great success! We had 11 cheerful volunteers who eagerly cleaned seven (*That's right: 7*) closets in the upstairs classrooms. Afterwards, participants were treated to a delicious lunch of hotdogs, beans, macaroni salad and for dessert: chocolate cake! Any serviceable items were donated to Goodwill.

The adage still holds true: Many hands make light work!

[Faith Cmte]

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

John 3:16-17

APRIL, 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1p Worship Cmte					1
2 Palm Sunday <i>Begin Holy Week</i> 9:30a Sunday School 11a Worship Service & Holy Communion Guest preacher: Dr. James Taneti	3	4 6p GSA Tr 5000 (Fellowship Hall Reception Area, Kitchen, Meeting /Dining Rm) 6p Congregational Care Cmte	5	6 Maundy Thursday 6a Clean Church 7p Maundy Thurs. worship service at Rosewood Presbyterian Church at 5500 Oaklawn Blvd., Pr. George	7 Good Friday	8 Holy Saturday Great Vigil of Easter 
9 Easter 7a Sunrise service, followed by Breakfast in Fellowship Hall 9:30a Sunday School 11a Worship Service ➤ One Great Hour of Sharing Offering Guest preacher: Rev. Marvin Daniel	10 6p Crater Dist. Karakona Ch 19 Order of Arrow (Fellowship Hall, Reception Area, Kitchen, Meeting Dining Rm)	11 1p Circle (Location: TBA) 7p Finance Cmte	12	13 6a Clean Church 2p News articles due 7p Faith Cmte	14 Reserved: Event set-up	15 Reserved: Special event
16 9:30a Sunday School 11a Worship Service Guest preacher: Rev. Charles Philips 12p Session Meeting Moderator: Rev. Philips	17	18 6p GSA Tr 5000 (Fellowship Hall Reception Area, Kitchen, Meeting /Dining Rm)	19	20 6a Clean Church 2p Newsletter out 7p Finance Cmte	22	22
23 9:30a Sunday School 11a Worship Service ➤ 5C Meal Offering Guest preacher: Rev. Marvin Daniel	24	25	26	27 6a Clean Church	29	29
30 9:30a Sunday School 11a Worship Service ➤ Local Emergency Aid Offering Guest preacher: Rev. Renita Page 2p Cmte. reports due						

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

STAMP

THE HERALD NEWSLETTER – APRIL, 2023



COME AND JOIN US!
Sunday School 9:30 A.M.
Worship 11:00 A.M.

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