

To the Saints and Friends of Gregory Memorial:

THE VISIT: A CHRISTIAN FATHER'S DAY STORY

Charles was relaxing in his recliner, watching TV when his wife and son arrived home from church. Chucky came running up to him with a piece of paper in his hand and said, "Daddy! I did a special treat for you in Sunday School!" Charles moved only his eyes toward the paper. He spent about 1/20th of a second looking at it, then turned back to the TV. "Fine, son. Now go take your nap."

Chucky dropped his shoulders as if his world were deflating. He looked with dismay at his father, then at his mother who was standing in the doorway. Janice nodded to Chucky who slowly and sadly turned away and headed for the stairs, looking closely at his piece of paper as if trying to determine what was so unattractive about it.

After Chucky went upstairs, Janice said, "Charles, you could have at least complimented him on his drawing. He was giving it to you as a Father's Day present!" Charles responded, "Father's Day present from him, or from his Sunday School teacher? I don't think he wants to wish me well. I think he's just trying to get me to believe in your god, just like his teacher is doing, and you, too. It won't work!"

Janice came over to kneel by him. "Charles, they told us in Sunday School that at least we should keep the family in a close knit. Family activities is what will keep the world a healthy place, and give the children a direction in life." "So if you want the family to be close, why do you wander off to Church, when we could be together?" "Because at Church, we learn from Jesus. He teaches us how to live as people, and as a family." "Then have Jesus come here. Why try to find him at Church? Anybody ever report having seen him there?" "No . . ." "I rest my case."

Janice thought a moment, then said, "Even if he came here, you'd never recognize him! You need to prepare your heart to find him, and accept him." "Yeah? I thought he had a red beard and long robes." "That's not what it's about, and you know it!" "Then what's it about, Jan? I've asked plenty of times for him to come. I've prepared my heart hundreds of times. Did he come? Did he answer? No! How many times do I have to ask and prepare my heart? I'll be dead, by the time he gets around to helping me with my business, and my problems that happen to be plummeting downward into eternal blackness as we speak!"

There was silence for a moment before Charles continued, "Bring him here! Let him come! Let's ask him why he hasn't answered my prayers, and see what he says!" Janice arose and turned to leave. "I'll tell him you are ready for him to come." Charles wagged his head in a shrug as Janice went into the kitchen, then he resumed watching the TV.

Charles had evidently dozed off after things quieted down, because the next thing he remembered was the ring of the telephone. He looked at the TV and noticed it was off. The telephone rang again. He yelled at no one in particular, as he searched for the TV remote, "Someone get the phone!" The remote was nowhere to be found and the phone rang once more. He stood up in one exasperated swoop. "Where is everybody? And where's the remote?"

He found the telephone in its charging cradle. As he reached for the phone, he concluded that Jan had to be upstairs comforting Chucky. "Hello!" he said gruffly.

There was a slight pause on the other end, then a soft male voice said, "Charles?" "Speaking . . ." After another brief pause the voice said, "I understand you wish me to come to your home, today." Charles' mouth dropped a little. Then he said, "Who is this?" "I'm the one you told your wife you would invite into your home, today."

Charles half lowered the phone from his ear and looked around him. Then he looked out the window, as if looking for somebody. Then he said into the phone, "Is this a joke?" He approached the stairs and yelled, "Jan, what kind of games are you playing?" There was no response from the upstairs. Charles put the receiver back to his ear. "Listen, Mister, did Janice put you up to this?" "No; this is your idea. I'm only responding to your invitation. May I come over?"

Charles laughed with incredulity. "Okay; if you want a knuckle sandwich, I suggest you DO come on over, and I'll prepare you a good one!" The voice said, "A sandwich would be nice, but I don't like knuckles." Charles laughed again. "Okay... okay, then, I'll see what I can do! See you when you're ready!" He listened for a few seconds, until the line went dead.

Charles hung up the phone and went upstairs. Nobody was in Chucky's bedroom. He went into the main bedroom. Janice wasn't there, nor was she in the bathroom. Nobody seemed to be anywhere in the house, nor in the yard. Charles headed downstairs and entered the kitchen. He thought a moment, grinned sardonically, then went to the refrigerator, pulled out a loaf of bread, some ham and mayonnaise. After putting them on the table, he reached once more into the fridge and pulled out a bottle of jalapeños and a type of tabasco sauce that boasted of "hell-fire." He made two sandwiches. The first one was with only mayonnaise and ham, and the second one was loaded with peppers and the tabasco sauce. He put them on saucers, and set them on the table, putting a beer by each plate.

It wasn't long before a knock was heard at the front door. Charles went to the door and opened it.

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WORSHIP INFORMATION FOR JUNE, 2023

Sunday, 4 June, 2023

“Trinity Sunday” – Liturgical Color: White
 Guest Preacher: Guest Preacher: Rev. John Scholer

Sunday, 11 June 2023

“2nd Sunday after Pentecost” – Liturgical Color: Green
 Guest Preacher: Pastor Gibby Elder

Sunday, 18 June 2023 – “Father’s Day”

“3rd Sunday after Pentecost” – Liturgical Color: Green
 Guest Preacher: Rev. Marvin Daniel

Sunday, 25 June 2023 – “Sunday in the Park”

[Worship service & picnic lunch will be held in Pavilion at Clifford W. Scott Memorial Park]
 “4th Sunday after Pentecost” – Liturgical Color: Green
 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 here at Gregory Memorial is the regular practice of praying for each other and our community. Please let the church office know if any updates to this list are needed.

<p>Those affected by earthquakes and cholera in Turkey and Syria First-responders, world-wide Families, persons, entities impacted by weather-related disasters Families, persons, communities impacted by gun violence People & Sovereign Country of Ukraine; Russian citizens conscripted into war 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 (health issues) Eddie Frankenstein Etta Holc Jerry & Ruby Hasky (health issues)</p>	<p>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) 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) Paula McDaniel, Pam Elder's sister (health issue) John Kephart, Grace Cibula’s nephew (heart surgery on 1/12) Tara Foster (recovering at home: kidney stones) Billy Robertson (recovering from eye surgery) Shirley MacNeill (recovering at home, health issue) Grace Cibula (recovering at home; health issues) Family/friends of Ruth Figg (d. 5/19)</p>
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“My father used to say that it’s never too late to do anything you wanted to do. You never know what you can accomplish until you try.” ~ Michael Jordan

Continued from Page 1 – “The Visit”

There, standing on the porch was a man half-turned toward him, dressed in a suit and looking at the front yard. On hearing the door open, he turned and looked into Charles' eyes. Charles was a bit surprised to see that the man had a very humble look on his face. At the same time, there was apprehension, as if the man wondered if he would be accepted. His eyes bore a soberness that hinted of a history of great sadness, and of a great passage of time. The suit was very clean and well-tailored, but not showy, the tie conservative, and the shirt a plain white. He was frail in build, appearing to be in his thirties. He was clean-shaven with sandy hair that seemed to reflect faint sparkles of white in the sunlight. Smiling slightly, he said, "You have a nice yard, Charles. You take very good care of it." To Charles, that seemed to be the most sincere compliment he had ever received.

Charles stepped aside, not sure of what to do or say. He simply held the door open and allowed the man to enter his house---this man who apparently had claimed to be Jesus, the Son of God Almighty, creator of the world and everything therein, entered the home of Charles Simmons. Charles closed the door behind them and led the way into the living room. But his guest moved slowly, examining every intricate detail of the doorway's sidelights, running his hand over the carvings as if appreciating them from a carpenter's perspective. While he did this, Charles thought he saw something on the back of the man's hand. Looking closer, he saw what appeared to be an old wound there! *And there was also a similar wound on his other wrist as well!*

Charles sat down, his knees buckling, wondering if his eyes were playing tricks on him. As he thought about this, he decided that perhaps this man had put those there to add drama to what he and Janice were planning. As the man approached, Charles motioned him to the other chair in the living room. The two sat and looked at each other for a short while. Then the man spoke, "I believe you have some questions for me."

Charles narrowed his eyes and spoke in a challenging tone, "Yes! But where do I start? How about this: Why do you, if you are God, allow war and suffering?" The man ignored the question and instead said, "Father, for what we are about to eat, I ask a blessing and give thanks. May such food be abundant in this household. Amen."

Charles felt a twinge of guilt because of the last phrase, "*May such food be abundant . . .*" He briefly pictured himself forever eating food always cursed with tabasco sauce. The man picked up the spicy sandwich and took a bite. As Charles absently chewed his own bite, he eyed his guest. The man suddenly stopped chewing, looked into his sandwich and grinned. He swallowed, then looked up at Charles and said, "I think I see what you have set out to do." Then he grinned broadly and took another bite. He chewed with a closed mouth, nodded approvingly and swallowed. He said, "My compliments to the chef!" He took even another bite, showing no type of discomfort at all. He then lifted the bottle of beer, but only to show it to Charles. He said, "I promised I would drink no more of the fruit of the vine until I sat down with the elect in the mansions of the Father."

After he put down the bottle, he swallowed again, reached over and held out his hand to Charles' sandwich, as if asking to borrow it. It still had the one bite out of it, and Charles was acting as if in a daze. He turned his sandwich over to the man, wondering if he was now going to receive the wrath of God with the same power used to create both heaven and earth.

With fingers bearing exquisitely clean and perfect fingernails, the man opened the sandwich, grabbed the pepper shaker nearby and readied it for sprinkling onto Charles' sandwich. Then he looked at Charles with a grin and said, "I challenge you to a sport: It is to see which of us will endure the most pepper. Are you ready?"

The only thing Charles could do now was utter a brief laugh. This exchange---right from the knock at his front door to the control over the pepper, together with the apparent forgiving nature of his guest, caused Charles to relax. The man's friendly challenge, as opposed to a severe punishment, disarmed him completely, and a small fire of friendship for this guest was kindled in his heart and gave spiritual witness to his soul that flooded in as if a gate were lifted. Suddenly, Charles felt immense love, great warmth, and untold happiness, while simultaneously receiving insight into the things this man told him during their living room conversation. He also received insight into the importance of family relationships. All he could do at this point was cry and show his gratitude. As he looked up to Jesus, he saw no one there. Instead, what he saw was the TV screen, and it was tuned to the same channel as before.

Looking around, he found he was still sitting in his recliner, now with tears on his cheeks. He rushed into the kitchen, where he saw on the table a bottle of tabasco sauce and a jar of pickled peppers. He bounded up the steps to his son's bedroom and knocked on the door. There was a pause, then the door slowly creaked open, and he saw his son standing there with a worried expression... the look reminded him of the man who had visited him in his dream.

Charles gave his son a hug and said, "I'm ready to see the gift you made for me." Chucky's eyes lit up, and he rushed to get the letter from his nightstand. Turning to his father, he said proudly, "It's a picture of you and me and Mom in our yard, and it says 'Happy Daddy's Day!'" "Daddy!" But Charles saw another person standing in the sketch, and he asked, "And who is THIS?"

Chucky said, "That's Jesus. And see...I put him in a suit." "Why a suit, Son?" "Because sometimes when you wear a suit, you look like Jesus." With a shaky voice, Charles said, "Can I hang this in my room?" Chucky laughed, nodding. Charles then said, "Why don't we go downstairs and play a game together?"

As they descended the steps, Chucky said with effusive gratitude, "**You're the best Dad in the world!**"

Source: [www.Letterpile.com/Creative writing/The Visit: A Christian Father's Day Story](http://www.Letterpile.com/Creative%20writing/The%20Visit%20A%20Christian%20Father's%20Day%20Story), Samuel E. Richardson, author. To share an article in THE HERALD, please send it to the church email: office@gregorymemorial.org or bring to church office.

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 our next Holy Communion on **Sunday, June 4**. We are continuing with the practice of passing the communion elements among the pews.

HOLY COMMUNION SCHEDULE FOR 2023

February 5, 2023	June 4, 2023	October 1, 2023
April 2, 2023	August 6, 2023	December 3, 2023

ANNOUNCERS FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

June 4 - Sandy Hunter
 June 11 - Donald Hunter
 June 18 - Larry Johnson
 June 25 - Rose Scott

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank-You, Kevin Foster! On December 31, 2022, Kevin Foster officially retired from his post as Church Treasurer here at Gregory Memorial. Kevin began his tenure as Treasurer on February 16, 2010. (If you are counting, that adds up to 13 years and 10 months, but let's just call it 14 years.) Most of us don't realize what goes into this very important job. It's not just simply writing a check to pay the bills. It includes calculating payroll taxes, withholdings, and tax filings; audit recordkeeping; preparation of budgets and report for Session; attendance at finance meetings---just to name a few of the tasks! As you can see, the Treasurer's job is not one that just anyone can do. Over the years, it has evolved into a complicated and time-consuming task, with Kevin spending many thankless evenings at the church making sure that everything was done correctly.

You may be wondering, "What are we going to do now since Kevin retired?" Susan Shockley has graciously accepted the challenge and began her service as our new Treasurer January 1, 2023. Kevin and Susan spent many hours getting everything in order for a smooth transition. Thank you, Susan, for stepping up when the church really needed you!!

Everyone, make sure to say "Thank-you" to Kevin. He has been a good and faithful servant to Gregory Memorial these many years. I don't know what we would have done without him!! Also, take a moment to let Susan know she is appreciated as well and will have our support. *God has been good beyond belief to send us these special people!*

Sing-spiration: "Feel the Spirit Through Music", organized by the Faith Committee, was held at 7 p.m. on May 17. We were blessed with wonderful musical talent and a great crowd. Our own Sandra Perkins and Gail Rollings opened the night with a beautiful organ and piano duet, followed by our very talented choir that got everyone in the mood with "I Feel the Spirit." Brandon Church's "Small but Mighty Choir" (Karen Rickman and Simmie Temple) performed "He Touched Me" and "Open My Eyes."

The highlight of the evening was a rousing medley of popular hymns performed by Mr. Tim Britt, a Master of the

piano. (Many of you may know Mr. Britt as a honey vendor at our Farmer's Market. He is also pianist of Oaklawn Baptist Church in Chester.) The congregation rounded out the evening with a great selection of "oldies" and requested favorites accompanied by Mr. Britt on the piano. *Be it known: If we had opened the windows, all of Prince George would have heard us!*

Our thanks to Evelyn Foster for referring Mr. Britt to us. The evening ended with all partaking of a selection of delicious refreshments in the Fellowship Hall, provided by our talented Gregory bakers, under the coordination of Lisa Brown. Many thanks to our Gregory bakers and to Lisa! It was a wonderful and enjoyable evening for all!

The Prince George Baccalaureate Program – June 10 will be held at Union Branch Baptist Church to celebrate the graduating high school seniors and encourage them in their growth toward spiritual maturity. During the service, each senior will receive a bible. Prince George County is one of the few remaining localities that still has a Baccalaureate service for the graduating high school senior class.

Funding for the Baccalaureate service is supported by donations received from local churches. During our "Feel the Spirit Through Music" program, we collected a special offering to benefit this year's Baccalaureate Program. We are glad to report that Gregory Memorial will be sending \$405 to support the Baccalaureate Committee's efforts. Thanks to all who contributed. *"Feel the Spirit Through Music" was a great success indeed!*

"Sunday in the Park" – June 25. No Sunday School. Worship service (Guest Preacher: Rev. Renita Page) will be held at 11 a.m. in the Pavilion at Clifford W. Scott Memorial Park, 6690 Courthouse Road in Prince George. Picnic lunch will follow the service. Church will provide fried chicken and beverages (iced tea & bottled water); congregation is asked to bring covered dish sides and desserts. Casual attire; please dress comfortably for weather.

JUNE, 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>No June Session Meeting</p> <p>6/25: "Sunday in the Park" <i>Covered Dish Meal: Church provides fried chicken & iced tea; congregation to bring sides & desserts</i></p>				<p>1 6a Clean Church</p>	2	3
<p>4 Trinity Sunday 9:30a Sunday School</p> <p>11a Worship Service</p> <p>Guest preacher: Rev. John Scholer</p>	5	<p>6 6p GSA Tr. 5000 (Fellowship Hall Reception Area, Kitchen, Meeting/ Dining Rm.)</p>	7	<p>8 6a Clean Church</p> <p>7p Faith Cmte</p>	9	10
<p>11 9:30a Sunday School</p> <p>11a Worship Service</p> <p>Guest preacher: Pastor Gibby Elder</p>	12	<p>13 1p Circle (meets only if studies are not completed)</p> <p>7p Finance Cmte</p>	<p>14 6p BSA Tr900 Honor Court, Order of Arrow (Sanctuary; Fellowship Hall Reception Area, Kitchen, Meeting/ Dining Rm)</p>	<p>15 6a Clean Church</p> <p>2p News articles due</p>	16	17
<p>18 Father's Day</p> <p>9:30a Sunday School</p> <p>11a Worship Service</p> <p>Guest preacher: Rev. Marvin Daniel</p>	19 Juneteenth	<p>20 6p GSA Tr. 5000 (Fellowship Hall Reception Area, Kitchen, Meeting/ Dining Rm.)</p>	21	<p>22</p> <p>6a Clean Church</p> <p>2p Newsletter out</p>	23	<p>24 Worship Cmte Meets at church to prepare for "Sunday in the Park"</p> <p>Time: TBA</p>
<p>25 "Sunday In The Park" <i>Scott Memorial Park 6690 Courthouse Rd., Prince George, VA 23875</i></p> <p>11a Worship Service > 5C Meal Offering</p> <p>Guest preacher: Rev. Renita Page</p> <p>12p <i>Covered Dish Picnic Lunch</i></p>	26	27	28	<p>29</p> <p>6a Clean Church</p>	<p>30 2p Cmte reports due</p>	

