



Gaithersburg
Presbyterian
Church

THE MAINSTREAM

Vol. 54, No. 1 | February 2022

GAITHERSBURG PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GAITHERSBURG, MARYLAND. A CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)



 RECENT SCENES AT GPC



LENT AND HOLY WEEK

Ash Wednesday
March 2

Palm Sunday
April 10

Maundy Thursday
April 14

Good Friday
April 15

Easter Sunday
April 17



LIVESTREAM WORSHIP

11:00 AM
EVERY SUNDAY



From the Heart of Pastor Mary Austin

LENT. MEH.

Dear GPC Members and Friends –

In a typical year, I relish the season of Lent. I appreciate stepping out of the usual routine and turning more intentionally to God. I value the reset button of Lent, and the time of deeper self-examination and reflection. The deeper liturgical colors, the more somber music, and the challenging scripture texts all set a different tone from the rest of the year.

But this year? Meh.

It feels as if we've been in Lent for two years already, with our lives stripped down to the essentials. Everything is already somber, as some of you have been sick and some of you have lost beloved people. We're already in mourning for the life we used to have.

Another season like this? Meh.

But there's a grace in embracing Lent because it turns us away from ourselves and toward the Jesus we follow toward the cross. Our curriculum takes us into the spiritual disciples for Lent—the familiar ones of prayer and fasting, and new challenges like silence and unplugging from our electronic world.

We've given up a lot already. Maybe your Lenten practice this year will be to add something? A class for Lent, an experience of beauty or art to brace your spirits, a short daily walk to talk with God . . . there are lots of choices. God would like to meet up with you again in a new way this Lent.

About that, we can get excited.

In anticipation,
Rev. Mary Austin
Pastor



www.gpchurch.org



Find Us on Facebook:
Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church



(301) 948-9418



[gpchurch_moco](https://www.instagram.com/gpchurch_moco)



MANY BLESSINGS *From the Heart of Pastor Mary Beth*

Fasting. Prayer. Almsgiving. These are the traditional disciplines of Lent.

Although some of us gained weight during the pandemic, it feels as if we have been in a prolonged two-year fast. We have been unable to worship, learn, work, shop, travel, and even mourn in the usual ways.

Remember, though, that fasting's intent is not to make us miserable, but rather to make more space for the other two disciplines—prayer and almsgiving. In other words, Lent is meant to bring us closer to God and to the people around us.

We fast from eating for a day, or give up certain foods, so that we can give more money to the poor. We refrain from screen time (ahem) in order to read our Bibles or other spiritual literature and to have time to pray. We institute a no-phones-at-the-table policy so that family mealtime can focus on meaningful conversation. When we have not been able to travel freely, we get to know our neighbors, especially those who are different from us. We plant a garden and get to know our Creator. Then, when the veggies or the flowers are ready, we brighten someone's day with homegrown goodness and God-painted color. We educate ourselves on a current issue (racism, climate change, or gun violence, for example) and learn what it means to follow Jesus today.

Yes, all of us have been in a prolonged fast for the last two years. I hope that you also have grown closer to God and to the people that God has put into your life. Lent is a rich season, whenever it comes, and I pray that your 40 days will make your life with Jesus come alive.

Many Blessings,
Rev. Mary Beth Lawrence
Associate Pastor

MUSIC NOTES

As we approach Lent two years into this pandemic (which itself has felt like a long Lent), we will be exploring the different Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and more. Lent is a season of preparation for Easter. It is reflective and allows us to prepare physically, mentally, and spiritually for the Resurrection. Lent serves not only as a preparation for the resurrection of our Lord, but also of ourselves, through the grace of Jesus Christ.

In our music ministry, we will continue preparing for the Resurrection. We will continue rebooting and rebuilding throughout the season and beyond. We've already taken steps during the pandemic, but it has sometimes felt like two steps forward and one step back. Beyond our virtual collaborations, the Canterbury Ringers, Chancel Choir, and a new small handbell ensemble have rung in worship. After a small break, for health and safety reasons, we are resuming rehearsals and sharing music in worship with these groups.

I hope that many, if not all, of our familiar music groups will return in the near future, and there may even be some new ones. The difficult part, at least for me, is to trust in God and know that it will happen according to God's time, not my own time or anyone else's.

In the meantime, we will continue to offer ourselves and our works to God, and God will continue to bless us and the fruits of our labors. Whether you are involved in the music ministry or would like to be, or whether you are singing to God in the Sanctuary or at home, I hope that you continue to find joy, hope, and meaning in worship and that God blesses you and your family this year.

Wade Meyers
Director of Music and Worship Arts



LENT 2022 AT GPC

The number 40 sets off our spiritual antennae because it appears so often in the Bible. When we hear the number 40, we sit up and pay attention because we know that something interesting and spiritually full is about to happen. Biblical examples include: 40 years in the desert for the newly freed slaves from Egypt, 40 days at Sinai for Moses, 40 days of flooding for Noah, 40 days in the wilderness for Jesus . . . and there are more.

Our 40 days of Lent are a spiritually full time for us as we prepare for Easter.

Lent is a time to look at our hearts, habits, and time, and see where we've gone off the path toward God. Giving up something for Lent helps us get rid of a block that distracts us from God. Or it creates space for God to pop in to a place where we usually distract ourselves with food, sports, shopping, a Diet Coke . . . the list is endless. Choosing to add something new for Lent awakens something in our spirits that needs to come alive. It could be a class, or a short meditation, or a daily walk to concentrate on God.

There are as many fruitful Lenten practices as there are people.

Pick something that works for you. Be sure to PICK SOMETHING. Anything that you and God agree on. The traditional three pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving/generosity. Your practice might be under one of those three umbrellas, or something unique to you.

Here are some ways that GPC will observe Lent:

- An **Ash Wednesday service** at GPC and on livestream, **Wednesday, March 2, at 7:00 p.m.** This year, for safety reasons, you can apply your own ashes.
- **Morning prayer** each Wednesday in Lent at 8:30 a.m., **starting Wednesday, March 2.** Led by Elder Kris Maldarelli, we'll meet on Zoom and you can join with your computer or by phone. Fifteen minutes of scripture and prayer to start your day. Watch for links in the weekly church emails.
- **Worship and classes for children and youth** will use the Spiritual Practices segment of our Follow Me curriculum. The practices are:
 - Fasting
 - Prayer
 - Listening to God
 - Embracing Simplicity
 - Unplugging
 - Trying Different Practices
- Want an **adult class on the spiritual practices?** Talk with Carolyn Hayes or email the church at info@gpchurch.org. We can have a special class for Lent. Or, you may want to use the class booklet for personal study.
- Watch for details about an **all-church Lent service project.**

The church staff, leadership, and I all pray that you have meaningful Lent, full of God's presence.

Pastor Mary Austin

QUIPS FROM EQUIPPING DISCIPLES

Moving Forward into 2022

I would like each and every one of you reading this article to give yourself a round of applause. We were given a crate of lemons right after the first of the year and without so much as blinking an eye we had gallons of lemonade. We pivoted simply, easily, and gracefully from in-person/hybrid to entirely hybrid in a few short hours. Thank you all for your flexibility and determination in the face of adversity.

Love, community, flexibility, and determination may well be the words that best describe GPC as we look ahead into 2022. We are determined to be a community filled with God's love and grace and to reflect that love and grace to people within the GPC family and in the larger community in whatever way presents itself to us or whatever way we create along the way.

I hope that everyone can find a way to learn something new this year to deepen and broaden your faith. If there is something that you'd like to study, tell me and we'll try to put it together for you.

Worship & Educational Opportunities for Children

On Sunday mornings, at the 9:30 and 11:00 services, children of all ages begin in the Sanctuary. On the first Sunday of the month, as well as any weekend that includes a school holiday, children stay for the entire service. On the other weekends, they are dismissed from the service prior to the sermon to attend Sunday School. For your child's safety, we request that the parent or guardian come to the classroom to pick up their child.

For older children who choose to remain in worship, we have an extensive Children's Bulletin. Children 4 years old and younger are welcome to enjoy the "Prayground," a small space in the Sanctuary with quiet toys where their parents can sit nearby.

Our Nursery is available from 9:20 a.m. to 12:10 p.m. for our youngest children.

Educational Opportunities for Adults

Sundays:

- The Present Word, current Follow Me curriculum, Zoom, 9:30 a.m.
- The Bible as a Whole, Hebrews, Zoom, 9:15 a.m.
- Christian Classics, the Apocrypha, hybrid, Room 202, 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday Small Group, current Follow Me curriculum, hybrid, Room 32/33, 8:20 a.m.

Other Small Groups:

- Monday, Bible Study – Psalms, Zoom, 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, current Follow Me curriculum, Zoom, 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, Bible Study – Genesis, Zoom, 7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday (bi-weekly), Frederick Group, current Follow Me curriculum, Zoom, 7:30 p.m. (contact: Yaw Obeng)

What I Did on My Sabbatical

I've just returned from my three-week sabbatical and am very grateful to GPC for allowing me to have this time. I had an extensive reading list that I was anxious to dive into, all on one aspect or another of discernment. Why discernment? Discernment has two quite different, though complementary, meanings: one—the ability to judge well—is completely secular; the other—far more spiritual—involves, as defined in the *Oxford Languages Dictionary*, "perception in the absence of judgment with a view to obtaining spiritual guidance and understanding." The world has been in a period of extraordinary reactivity for quite some time. During this time, we may or may not have judged well, but in either case we did it very quickly, with little or no time for spiritual discernment, and it has left us all physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausted.

So I wanted to step back and reflect on reflecting. I wanted to study how others practice discernment—not only to broaden my understanding for my own personal benefit but also to bring some of these ideas to GPC to help us discern new paths as we begin rebuilding our community post pandemic.

There are two books in particular that I am anxious to share with anyone who is interested. *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* by Edwin Friedman is not a new book (in fact, it was originally published in 1999), but it is amazingly timely. I will offer a book study on this later this spring. The other, *Listening for the Heartbeat of God* by Phillip Newell, is a discussion of the Celtic understanding of God and Christian Spirituality, and is balm for the soul. I will offer a book study on this as well sometime in 2022.

The other books on my list included *Sacred Rhythms* by Ruth Haley Barton, *Mindfulness and Christian Spirituality* by Tim Stead, *Scripture and Discernment* by Luke Timothy Johnson, and parts of *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything* by James Martin, SJ. I recommend these books to any or all of you. They will probably become book studies at some point in the future.

Carolyn Hayes

Director of Children and Young Families

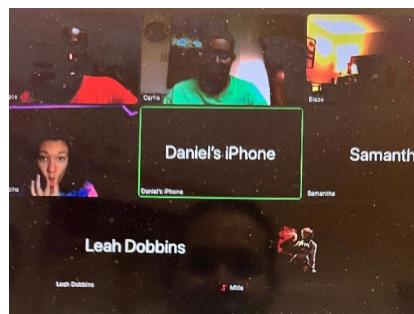


YOUTH AND COLLEGE MINISTRY

Our youth ended 2021 with a Christmas party, reindeer games, and a tour of some Christmas lights. It was a special night filled with smiles, laughter, and a sense of normalcy. We're grateful for new youth joining us and for former youth returning to youth group—these have been some of the joys we experienced over the past few months. Like most of us, the youth prefer to meet in person, but because we had to go back to meeting virtually, we started 2022 with several online gatherings! Ever since the fall, one thing has become clearer and clearer: We're at our best when we're in community with one another, either in person or online.

—Carrie Larsen

Director of Youth and Young Adults



SPRING HAPPENINGS FOR YOUTH & COLLEGE STUDENTS

Youth Ministry

Snow Tubing in March (weather permitting),
Paint Night, and May Flowers Service Project

College Ministry

Online Gathering, Tuesday nights at 8:00 p.m.
Contact Carrie for the Zoom link.

(Details in Youth/College Ministry monthly emails.)

A Note from Carrie: First and foremost, thank you, GPC family, for your many prayers for my healing from COVID pneumonia. I appreciated the cards, soup deliveries, phone calls, and prayers very much. They really brought a smile to my face and so much comfort too.

Additionally, thank you in advance for the blessing of allowing me to take a sabbatical for my work of service here, now going on six years. This summer I will be tending to my soul and my faith and hitting the recharge button. Thank you for allowing me this time; I'm grateful that I continue to be blessed by this community.

SAVE THE DATES May 13-15, 2022

*Churchwide Retreat
Manidokian Retreat Center
Knoxville, MD*

RETREAT FOCUS: *Everybody, Always: Becoming Love in a World Full of Setbacks and Difficult People* (based on the book and video with the same name by Bob Goff)

LODGES: 8 rooms, each with two twin beds, room for air mattresses, and en suite bath – see Carolyn for details

COVENANT HOUSE: 7 rooms that sleep two, 2 rooms that sleep three, community bath – see Carolyn for details

CABINS: 1 large room that sleeps eight in bunk beds, bath house nearby – see Carolyn for details

Prices include Saturday breakfast – Sunday lunch (prices are slightly lower for youth and children).



Spaces still available!

Contact
Carolyn Hayes
(chayes@gpchurch.org)



WELCOME, NEW CHURCH OFFICERS!

The following Elders and Deacons were elected in 2021 to serve
and were ordained on January 23, 2022.

ELDERS



PATRICK J. KEZIAH

I grew up in North Carolina, mainly in Charlotte and Greensboro. I've been a Christian my whole life, joining the Methodist Church when I was 13 years old. I married Barbara Thorne in 1976 and we moved to Colorado in 1977 to

attend graduate school. We stayed in Colorado and raised our children in Lafayette. We were active in the Lafayette United Methodist Church.

After retiring, we moved to Montgomery County in 2019 to support our son and his family while he is working on his Master's degrees at Wesley Seminary and American University.

I have tried to work for peace and justice my whole life, so was thrilled to find GPC with all its diversity and work for justice and service to the poor. As I got to know the people at GPC and learn about the Presbyterian Church, I decided to join GPC in the fall of 2019. I'm honored and flattered to be invited to serve as an Elder and look forward to serving GPC.

I was born, dedicated, and baptized in a Presbyterian church, where my dad was an Elder. My mom was in the Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) movement and is still a member.

I became a GPC member in 2015 after searching for Presbyterian churches near me. Pastor Ted Wright was very welcoming and eager to get to know me. He invited me to his house for dinner and that's how I knew that GPC was where I belonged.

I currently hold a Master's degree in Cybersecurity from the University of Maryland University College (UMUC), now UMGC. I work in Information Security and Compliance supporting the federal government.

I'm married to Valerie Sih and we're blessed with two children, Heaven and Haiden. Although we recently moved to Hagerstown, distance is not a barrier to our worshipping and serving God.

With our diverse community in GPC, it will be my utmost and Godly honor to serve as an Elder in a church that opened its arms to me when I was in need of one.



EMMANUEL YANG MBAÏTI

I grew up in Douala, Cameroon, and later moved to Yaoundé with my eldest sister to attend high school and the university. After earning a BS in Corporate Law from the University of Yaoundé 2, SOA, I moved back

to Douala and worked in a financial institution until moving to the US.



JOSEPH T. NANA

Born in Cameroon, I was baptized, confirmed, and raised in the elementary school. I was active in the Young Presbyterians (YP) youth group, became a member of the Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF), and

presently belong to the Christian Men Fellowship (CMF)—all of which stem from the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon.

I worked as a banker with the Cameroon bank before relocating to West Palm Beach, Florida, and later to Washington, DC. After earning a Master of Business and Public Administration (MBPA) degree in Finance in 1985, I returned to Cameroon in 1986, where I briefly worked in the ministry of Public Service. I also taught a course in business organization at Government Technical High in Bamenda, Cameroon.

I was blessed to marry Mary in 1987. We have three children—Karl, Phil, and Ninna—and currently reside in Gaithersburg. I worked for the Prince George's County Government for several years and have retired from the Finance Division of the Prince George's County Police Department.

Thanks to the Almighty Father I am blessed as a resting Elder, and by His grace I'm willing to serve the Lord and GPC congregation with joy.



LAURIE WALLACE-LANHAM

I was born Laurie Jess Wallace and grew up in a large family. When I married Kerry, I added his surname to mine and became part of his family.

My father took us to his church in Philadelphia, The Wissinoming Presbyterian Church. We went to Sunday School, church services, evening youth fellowship, youth retreats, and summer camp in the Poconos. I sang in the choir, and we sang carols to shut-ins at Christmastime and cooked church spaghetti dinners.

As a youth, I was surrounded by people who tried to teach their faith by living it in the church family. I think, though, that the times spent at church camp in the woods with my Bible and daily devotions helped me feel the spirit of God. In those moments, I felt His quiet voice showing me how to gently love my neighbor as myself and to love all of His creation.

I retired from teaching after 39 years, the last 25 of which were in Kindergarten in Montgomery County.

My husband, daughter, son, and I joined GPC about 30 years ago. We all attended Sunday School, church services, and Vacation Bible School until I became too ill to continue attending. After getting my illness under control, I rejoined GPC, and then the whole world became ill.

At this difficult time, with everyone struggling, we need God's love and care more than ever. I hope and pray that I can live my life and exhibit my faith in a way that will extend love, care, and concern to the church and those I come in contact with—that I can be one of God's lamps on a hill, sending warmth and light into the dark world.



ANNETTE WARD

Born in Western Pennsylvania to Catholic and Presbyterian parents, I was raised Catholic but chose the United Presbyterian Church (now PCUSA) in my late teens. I was looking for a closer relationship with God and found that in my mother's church.

I graduated from Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, with a B.S. in math, and currently work for Leidos building air traffic control systems for the FAA.

I'm married to Steven J. Ward and we have three children: Evan (Maureen), Amanda (Devin), and Carvel. We're enjoying our three grandchildren, ages 1, 2½, and 4½ years, very much—they keep us busy!

Steve and I joined GPC when we moved here from Endicott, New York, in 1993. In the time since, I've taught Sunday School, rung with a handbell choir, participated in our women's ministry, supported our RTMC teams, been a member of Session, and chaired two pastor nominating committees. I look forward to serving again and hope to help keep us a strong and viable part of God's work in our lives and our community.

DEACONS



BOB GUNDERSON

My parents immigrated to Brooklyn, New York, from Norway and I have fond memories of trips to Norway to visit family members. My family later moved to Long Island, where I was confirmed in Gloria Day Lutheran Church in

Huntington and sang in their youth choir.

Because of my interest in flight, inspired by my trips to Norway, I earned a B.S. in Aeronautical Engineering and was commissioned as an Air Force Officer. I met Shirley, a teacher, in Great Falls, Montana, while stationed at Malmstrom AFB. We married and transferred to March AFB, California, where I completed an M.S. in Systems Management from the University of Southern California. I transferred to Maryland from Wright Patterson AFB in Dayton, Ohio.

Following my Air Force career, I worked for the National Weather Service in Silver Spring, traveling to many NWS sites before retiring in 2018.

My family and I found our church home here and joined GPC in 1992. I taught 5th Grade Sunday School for many years and later returned to my musical interests, singing with the Praise Team and Chancel Choir. I was trained as a Stephen Minister and served as an Elder for three years.

Our children, Mike and Tina, grew up at GPC and both live in the local area. Tina was married 5 years ago and has two beautiful daughters, Brooklyn (5) and Vivian (3).

We're thankful for the blessing of family and friends and for the support that we've had from GPC through the years. I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve GPC and look forward to giving back to God's work in the GPC community in my role as a Deacon. I will be honored to serve the needs of our GPC family.



KATE LEBOLD

I grew up in West Chester, Pennsylvania, where my parents, younger sister, and I attended First Presbyterian Church. I learned to be very involved in the life of the church from my parents' example:

I was a regular in the youth group and youth handbell choirs, and even learned to knit from a group of elderly church members!

I earned my B.Sc. in Chemistry from Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, in 2014, and played handbells at the on-campus chapel for four years. I earned my Ph.D. in Chemistry at Penn State University, State College, Pennsylvania. While there, I was involved in the young adult group and served as a high school youth leader at State College Presbyterian Church. I've also been fortunate to nurture my love of travel through mission trips to New Brunswick, New Jersey; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Trio, Belize; Baltimore, Maryland; and Kiserian, Kenya, over the years. I'm always happy to talk about travel, knitting, handbells, or Penn State football to anyone with ears!

After finishing grad school in 2019, I began a postdoctoral fellowship at the National Institutes of Health, where I build computer models of the interactions between proteins and DNA. When looking for a church (with my extended family in tow, no less!), I found GPC and was drafted into the handbell choir shortly thereafter. I formally joined the church during the pandemic and am blessed to have such a diverse and caring church to call my home during my postdoc. I look forward to caring for the church's body as a Deacon and walking with the Lord while living in community with all of you!



LISA WHITEHEAD

Raised in Charlottesville, Virginia, and Ruxton, Maryland, I married my husband, Paul, in 1983 after we both graduated from the University of Virginia. Our adventures led from New Jersey to Colorado to Texas to California, raising three engaging, compassionate sons along the way. Because our oldest son lives in Washington, DC, we retired to Gaithersburg and joined welcoming, inclusive GPC in 2020.

Baptized in the Episcopal Church, I first joined a Presbyterian Church in Colorado in 1995; we have continued to join Presbyterian churches everywhere we've lived. The people, the polity, and 1983's A Brief Statement of Faith continue to delight me! I've had the honor and pleasure of serving in many ways at our home churches, including two terms as Elder in Texas. Many of my dear friends once shared Bible study and/or mission work with me. I'm trained as a Stephen Minister.

I am an avid reader and gardener, currently learning about native plants in Maryland. A Master Naturalist in Colorado, I began training as a volunteer naturalist at Seneca Creek State Park last fall. An enthusiastic traveler, I have explored parts of all 50 states and multiple countries abroad.

I'm honored and delighted to be called to serve as a Deacon at GPC.

Candidate bios for the Class of 2024 first appeared in our weekly emails in October 2021. A few of them contain minor updates and some were edited slightly for length.

HELP SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS!



The Communications committee is proposing a "Spread the Good News" project for this spring and hopes that you'll want to take part. We'd like to be able to have signs posted leading up to Easter, and signs could still be added throughout the spring, summer, and early fall.

We've all seen yard signs for political candidates, real estate sales, farmers markets, and Black Lives Matter. This type of corrugated plastic sign on a wire "H-style" stand could be created with an uplifting spiritual message, such as "God is Love," "Peace Be With You," "Pray More, Worry Less," or "Keep the Faith." It would include the GPC logo and our web address for our online services. Popular sizes are 18"x24" and 12"x18".

To share in the joy of spreading the good news, you would commit to placing a sign on your personal property so that it could be seen by those walking in your neighborhood. We'll focus on the walkable areas of Gaithersburg and nearby surrounding neighborhoods where our members and regular attendees live. The signs are intended to provide a positive visual and inspirational presence for GPC in a variety of communities.

If you like the idea, would you be willing to help finance it? To be able to choose your own pre-approved short spiritual message, a single sign with stand would cost around \$13. If we order signs in bulk with the same message, the cost goes down to between \$4 and \$6 per sign. Depending upon the number of people interested, the Communications committee would like to share the cost of these signs with participants.

Please indicate your desire to participate in this project by [clicking here](#).





VERY IMPORTANT PRESBYTERIAN SENIORS {VIPS}

The VIPS' traditional Christmas celebration and party in Lindsay Hall on December 2 was enjoyed by all. Although the January meeting was canceled because the church was closed, the group gathered on February 16 for fellowship and a short morning program entitled "*See Christ in Every Person*." The Porch Angel ministry's monthly outreach has been ongoing. Future activities will be announced through VIPS direct communications and in GPC's weekly emails. Questions? Contact Nancy Sanders (*call the church office*).



MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP

The group met on December 4 and heard Wade Meyers, Director of Music and Worship Arts, whose presentation was entitled "*O Come, All Ye Faithful: Community and Fellowship through Song*." Unfortunately, the January and February meetings were canceled because the church was closed. At the **March 5** meeting (**Saturday at 8:00 a.m.** in **Lindsay Hall**), Mike Pratt will show and discuss some of his photographs in a "*Popcorn Slide Show*." As always, females are welcome to join the group for Christian fellowship and a light continental breakfast. Questions? Contact Ted Farrand (*call the church office*).



CRAFT GROUP

The group is not meeting in person or via Zoom at this time, but its members have continued to make prayer shawls and prayer squares for Holy Cross Germantown Hospital. The chaplain there recently sent us a note of appreciation for our donations. Volunteers are still needed to help sew dignity bibs from donated men's and women's shirts. Questions? Contact Barbara Clark (*call the church office*).



THE GOOD GRIEF GROUP

GPC's bereavement support group is scheduled to meet on **Saturday, March 26, at 10:00 a.m.** in Room 202 off Lindsay Hall. If you do not receive emails from this group and would like to be added to its distribution list, contact John Slavcoff (*call the church office*).



2ND FRIDAY BOOK CLUB

This group is still meeting via Zoom. They are currently reading Chapter 9 of *How to Be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi. Their next meeting will be on **Friday, March 11, at 7:30 p.m.** You are welcome to participate anytime, even if you have not read the book. For more information, contact Cindy Cenname (*call the church office*).



CUB SCOUTS

Cub Scout Pack 64 placed wreaths on Veterans' graves in Frederick in December and participated in the worship service on Scout Sunday, February 20. The pack welcomes all boys and girls in elementary school. Questions about future meetings and activities? Contact Barbara Clark (*call the church office*).



KIND WORKS

GPC, in partnership with KindWorks, is continuing to help provide KindCasseroles for the Hillside Senior Apartments in Gaithersburg and KindSoups for various community agencies. In addition, the KindKitchens and KindWelcomeDinners projects provide groceries and welcome dinners for newly arrived immigrant families. Volunteers can be reimbursed for food purchases upon request. Questions? Visit www.DoKindWorks.org or contact Denise Schleckser (*call the church office*).



EASTER IN OTHER CULTURES

Since our GPC members and friends come from over thirty countries, we asked a few of them how they traditionally celebrate Easter. Here are some of the ways that Easter is celebrated around the world.

Easter Celebrations in Brazil



Brazil is a melting pot of many cultures and ancestries. Curiously, they host the largest number of people with full or partial Italian and Japanese ancestries. With regard to those of German descent, Brazil is in second place worldwide, behind the US.

My family roots originated near Frankfurt, Germany, before my ancestors moved to Brazil at the end of the 19th century. Through marriages after arriving in Brazil, our family tree added members from Vienna, Austria, as well. My surname, Ferreira, might be a bit misleading to some, since the majority of my extended family have such surnames as Lang, Funcke, Steigleder, Voigt, Treu, etc.

With this background, you might realize that religious festivities in Brazil are celebrated in many ways, mostly according to one's family ancestry—in my case, German!



Our Easter preparations started with my mother boiling dozens of eggs and then breaking just the tip of the shell to remove the contents while trying to keep the shell intact. The eggshells were then washed, hand painted individually, filled with caramelized nuts, and hidden around the house. On Easter Sunday, the children would wake up early and start hunting for these and other treats or gifts that had been hidden throughout the house as well. At breakfast time, the whole family would sit together and play "crack the egg"—a game that consists of hitting boiled eggs against another person at the table, until the victor emerged with the final uncracked egg.

After breakfast, dressed in our best clothes, we would drive to church and attend the Easter service and Sunday School. Back home, we had lunch together. It was a family-fun-packed day, which I remember fondly.

—*Claudio Ferreira*

Easter in Vatican City



The Pope commemorates the Way of the Cross on Good Friday. Starting at the Colosseum, people in the procession hold candles and make their way up to Palatine Hill, stopping 14 times along the way to represent the 15 Stations of the Cross. Mass is celebrated on the evening of Holy Saturday, and on Easter Sunday, visitors fill St. Peter's Square to await the Pope's blessing known as "*Urbi et Orbi*" ("To the City and to the World") from the church balcony.



Easter Celebrations in Ghana



Easter is a revered and solemn period for my family in Ghana. It is a time of celebration when most people travel to their hometowns—a time to reunite with extended family whom we probably see only around that time of year.

The Easter activities usually started on Palm Sunday, when, after early morning devotion, we got ready to welcome Jesus by joining others to march to church with our palm branches. Attending church was mandatory in our house, since my father was the officiating pastor and normally preached that day. Everyone wore their best clothes and joined the procession welcoming Jesus to church and the town—singing, dancing, and waving our palm branches in celebration.

Good Friday and Easter Monday are national holidays in Ghana. Good Friday was a solemn day; we worshiped God and reminded ourselves of the true meaning of Easter—the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the significance of that day to Christians. In church we listened to the sermon on the meaning of Easter. My siblings and their families were required to attend, since my father usually preached on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Easter Saturday was a time for entertainment, with lots of comedians and singers coming to town and staging various concerts. We made it a point to attend at least one concert with family and friends and usually had a good time together.

On Easter Sunday morning, we had a sunrise devotion at home, and later attended the church service. After church, we gathered for a festive lunch with family and friends. The evening was a time for reflection and relaxation with our immediate family.

On Easter Monday, everyone headed back to work, satisfied and grateful for time well spent with our family.

—*Kofi Kumi*

Easter in Israel



In Jerusalem, Christians celebrate Good Friday by walking the same path that Jesus did on the day he was nailed to the cross. Remembering his pain, some participants carry a cross with them. On Easter Sunday, many pilgrims attend a church service at Garden Tomb, the area where it is believed that Jesus was buried.



COMMITTEES THAT HELP GPC MOVE FORWARD

In 2022, each Mainstream issue will highlight the work of some of our Session committees and ministries. It's an opportunity to get to know how they are, in the words of the WRC-TV 4 News team slogan, "Working for You!"

Even as GPC's doors have had to periodically close to lessen the danger of COVID-19 transmission, GPC remains active and is moving forward. Our pastors and church staff, elders, deacons, board of trustees, and committees are all going above and beyond to adapt to necessary changes and keep creatively building our church community.

This issue highlights the Communications and Nominating committees.

The Communications Committee

Communications might be described as a linchpin that helps hold our church together while helping it grow both internally and externally. The committee's stated purpose is: "The Communications committee provides oversight of branding and marketing of GPC, as well as promoting and implementing all forms of communication internal to the GPC congregation and external to our local community. Oversight includes ensuring consistency, coordination, and support to ministries and committees, as necessary. The Communications committee is not exclusively responsible for implementation."

The committee was formed by pastor request in the early 2000's. Over the years, committee members have been responsible for such projects as our GPC website, including regular informational updates; our first social media presence; creating churchwide emails; redesigning the Mainstream; branding GPC with a unique logo and brick red and gray colors; cohesion in the look and quality of our brochures; publicizing GPC through a variety of types of advertising; creating exterior/interior signage and outdoor banners; setting up open and free Wi-Fi capability inside GPC; creating the online prayer group; and hiring a communications manager.

Along with our regularly continuing responsibilities, this year's project proposals include implementing changes reflecting the results of the 2021 Communications Survey, improving church communication methods during a crisis, creating a GPC Services Directory, publicizing GPC through "Spread the Good News" outdoor signs, partnering with a GPC Little Free Library project, and liaising/collaborating with other committees to support their communication needs.

The Communications committee is chaired by Lucille Baur. Its members include Pastor Mary Austin (staff liaison), Jenna Obermiller Bruni (Communications Manager), Barbara Oldroyd, Paul Whitehead, and Francie Whitlock. Their contact information may be obtained from the church office. The committee currently meets

by Zoom the first Monday of the month from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Anyone is welcome to attend a meeting, and we would love to have additional committed members.

—Lucille Baur

The Nominating Committee

*"Here I am Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night..."*

The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to identify those whom God is calling to leadership roles at GPC. We need your suggestions for one trustee, three deacons, and six elders, so please share your recommendations for wise leaders to help guide our church. A standard term of office is three years.

Elders are a team that discerns God's will for our church. They pray for God's guidance as they work in Session and on at least one committee. Elders attend the monthly Session meetings and take turns chairing committees.

Deacons care for specific, assigned persons and/or organize and support caregiving efforts. The Board of Deacons supports the one-on-one caring ministries, such as the Caring Card Table, prayer groups, and Stephen Ministry.

Trustees are the legal officers of the church. The Board of Trustees meets only when matters arise involving legal affairs, mortgages, property sales, etc.

Carol Vandrey Curtis is the chair of the 2022 Nominating committee. Its members include Pastor Mary Austin (staff liaison), Ginny Allsopp, Malvin Duncan, Elisa McClelland, and Scholastica Muluh. Their contact information can be obtained from the church office. The Nominating committee meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Currently their meetings are being held on Zoom.

—Carol V. Curtis



UP-TO-DATE EMERGENCY CONTACT INFO NEEDED!

When a GPC-related emergency occurs, our leaders need to be able to quickly and accurately contact you. This was a lesson reinforced this past New Year's Day, after the session voted to enact an emergency closure of our church building to help stem transmission of the highly contagious Omicron variant.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to emergency communications, but if GPC has your correct home address, email address, and home and cell phone numbers, that can go a long way toward your receiving important information quickly and efficiently.

GPC is currently evaluating a variety of ways to contact our members and friends. One option is to use text messages such as the type used for local and national emergency alerts. To do this, we need your updated cell phone number.

Texts would not replace our current emails. They would, however, be a good addition, working particularly well for those who aren't closely tied to social media.

GPC already maintains an online directory of personal contact information, but it is up to each one of us to make sure that our profile stays up to date by logging on and making any changes when necessary.

To refresh your memory about accessing your information the first time, please follow the steps below.

- On the home page of the GPC website, scroll down and click on **Online Directory**.
- The first time that you visit the directory you will have to **Register**.
(Subsequent visits to the directory require only your password to log in.)
- Enter your email address and you will receive a link via return email.
- Click on the link and create a **password** (6 characters minimum; letters & numbers).
- The **Portal** will appear. Other tabs are **Profiles**, **Giving History**, and **Involvement in GPC**.

If you have questions or need additional support, please email our [Communications Manager](#).

LIST YOUR SKILLS IN OUR NEW SERVICES DIRECTORY!

Have you ever wished that you could find people you knew to provide such services as childcare, counseling, medical, dental, nursing, home contractor/handyman, yard maintenance/landscaping, snow shoveling, plumbing, electrical, roofing, financial, legal, real estate, dog walking/pet sitting, and tutoring? Many churches have a short directory of their members offering such services.

This year, the Communications committee is offering to coordinate and create a GPC Services Directory that will provide a new resource for our members/regular attendees. The various services will be provided exclusively by adult and youth members of GPC, as well as regular attendees. Services will be listed in alphabetical order, with individuals' names and contact information supplied directly below each of the services offered. The directory will not contain advertisements. The directory will be available to GPC members and regular attendees at no charge upon request by calling the church office.



To be included in this directory, contact [Francie Whitlock](#) or [Paul Whitehead](#) (*call the church office*). Submit your name, phone number, e-mail address, and type of service you're offering, with "GPC Services Directory submission" in the e-mail subject line. Youth are requested to provide their age as well. The deadline for submissions is Friday, March 11.

IMPORTANT NOTE: There will not be any individual vetting of qualifications of those listed, nor does inclusion in the directory imply endorsement by GPC, its staff, or other church leaders.



CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY

We mourn the loss of members
and friends who have died.

Jean Hoffman
in Gaithersburg, MD
December 1, 2021

Carol McNeil
in Gaithersburg, MD
December 2, 2021

We extend our sympathy to the
members of our congregation
who have lost loved ones.

Andy Gosnell
(GPC's Facilities Manager)
(his mother, Josephine Martin,
in Hanover, PA)
November 22, 2021

Malvin Duncan
(his sister, Sequoia Miller,
in Marshalltown, IA)
December 26, 2021

Grace Atanga Fuh
(her father, in Cameroon)
January 21, 2022



HAPPY 65TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY!

Jim & Kay Fenton
January 4, 1957

HAPPY 56TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY!

Phil & Evi Melberg
February 19, 1966



WELCOME TO THE WORLD!

Congratulations to:

Cathy Fantacci,
the proud grandma,
and
Mike & Tina F. Merriman,
the proud parents of

ANDREW JOHN MERRIMAN

born on November 5, 2021
(Cathy is GPP&K's Administrative Assistant
and Tina is a GPP&K teacher.)

Kim Friedman & Brandon Walker,
the proud parents of

KAYDEN WALKER

born on November 26, 2021

Eugenia & Richard Akouffo,
the proud parents of

WILLIAM GABRIEL KOFI AKOUFFO

born on December 24, 2021



CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE

Thanks to Community Engagement Ministry and GPC's generosity, we were able to contribute the following online through the Giving Tree:

- **\$5,000+** in gift cards to the families of Summit Hall Elementary School for food/other necessities
- **\$1,000** to Upper Montgomery Assistance Network to prevent evictions and utility cut-offs
- **\$1,000** to Interfaith Works Women's Shelter
- **\$1,000** to The Outreach Foundation to assist children from Lebanon and Syria
- **\$200+** in loose change to Gaithersburg HELP to feed local families
- **143 coats** for Summit Hall students

Additional gifts were given directly to the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless to sponsor a family at Christmas.



EASTER FLOWERS



Remember or honor a loved one by ordering a plant for the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday. The cost is **\$12 per plant.**

Flower orders may be placed online at gpchurch.org/easter before **Sunday, April 10.** Order forms will be in the Gathering Place as well.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

**Emily Dastrup, Kimberly Friedman,
and Brandon Walker**

DIRECTORY CHANGES

*Addresses and phone numbers
are available through the church office.*

**Emily & Samuel Dastrup
Joy McIntyre
Mary Spencer
Brandon Walker & Kimberly Friedman**

DOWNLOAD OUR APP!

GPC's mobile app features:

- Online Giving
- Weekly Bulletins
- Devotions
- Serving Opportunities
- Ways to Connect
- Worship & Sunday School Videos
- The Mainstream
- Event Calendar



Text "gpchurch app" to 77977 or visit the homepage of the website and click the "Download Our App" button.

Questions? Contact GPC's Communications Manager at jobermiller@gpchurch.org.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY REPORT

December 2021

	2021 YTD	% OF BUDGET
INCOME		
Envelope Pledged	\$806,684	106%
Envelope Unpledged	\$241,210	161%
Loose Offering	\$15,867	44%
GPP&K Rent	\$0	0%
Other Income	\$3,445	138%
Room Rent	\$0	0%
Interest & Dividends	\$50	25%
FourthNight	\$0	0%
Manse Rental	\$0	0%
Carryover	\$0	0%

Total \$1,067,257 ... 105%

EXPENSE

NCP Membership	\$28,077	100%
Human Resources	\$549,096	99%
Buildings & Grounds	\$197,846	99%
Office Operations	\$36,884	105%
Communications	\$36,985	92%
Stewardship	\$3,885	56%
Comm Engagement	\$94,849	94%
Eq Disciples	\$18,475	81%
Vital Worship	\$16,879	85%
Congregational Life	\$935	12%
Session	\$1,445	0%

Total \$985,35897%

NET \$81,899

To request a complete financial summary, email accountingmanager@gpchurch.org.

GPC MEDIA POLICY

Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church (GPC) uses print and digital media of church life in communications materials to share the ministry of GPC with our congregation and community at large. GPC reserves the right to use any media taken at any activity sponsored by GPC, without the express written consent of those individuals included within the media. GPC may use any such media in publications, social media, and any website.



THE MAINSTREAM

Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church
610 South Frederick Avenue
Gaithersburg, MD 20877-1297

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT U.S.
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Suburban Maryland
PERMIT NO. 10005



HONORING BLACK HISTORY MONTH



OUR VISION AND MISSION

GPC is called by God to be: A global, caring community of faith, centered in Jesus Christ, training people to share His life everywhere we go.

Our top three priorities are:

- To worship the Lord with heart, soul, mind and strength
- To engage our neighbors in central Montgomery County
- To equip each generation for Christian discipleship