



# THE MAINSTREAM

## SUNDAYS

WORSHIP IN PERSON  
9:30 & 11:00 AM

WORSHIP BY LIVESTREAM  
11:00 AM



VIPS Tree-Huggers

FOURTH QUARTER 2023



2023 PDA Fall Mission Trip



MBF Reception



*From the Heart of  
Rev. LeAnn Hodges*

## PRAXIS—ACTION & REFLECTION

Dear GPC Members and Friends,

As your Transitional Pastor, I am finding that my work with you is falling into a lovely flow of **praxis**, which is crucial for the type of discernment work that is at the heart of what we are striving to accomplish during my time with you.

**This fall we have begun the work of discernment well.**

In **September**, we created a narrative timeline of our history, telling stories of God's work here.

In **October**, our leaders met for a focused time of discernment, engaging in our Graced History as part of our work, and receiving the faith stories of our new officers.

Earlier this month (**November**), we participated in the CAT Scan (Church Assessment Tool), which is intended to give us insight into our congregation, as well as help us identify our priorities for ministry.

**This fall**, GPC leaders will begin reading *Sailboat Church: Helping Your Church Rethink Its Mission and Practices* by Joan S. Gray. (I would welcome others in the church to read this book along with us as well!)

**Looking ahead, we will continue this rhythm of praxis.**

**December** is Advent—a season of preparation and waiting for the incarnation. In this time, I invite us to be especially attentive to ways that God is showing up.

In worship on **January 7**, we will be invited to reaffirm our baptismal vows and will celebrate the ordination and installation of new officers.

On **January 27**, our leaders will receive our **CAT Scan** results.

On **February 11**, we will hold a town hall meeting, at which we will receive a summary of the CAT Scan report and confirm our next steps.

**Ash Wednesday** falls on **February 14** this year, and **Easter** is on **March 31**. In between the two dates, during Lent, you will be invited to participate in 40 days of prayer, which will flow from our reading *Sailboat Church* as we hold all that we have learned and seek God's guidance.

Following Easter, we will be intentional about our next steps, with the hope of forming a Pastoral Nominating Committee by **Pentecost, May 19**.

That same day, we will celebrate **GPC's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** as a church! (I hope that there will be cake!)

**Praxis.** Let us maintain this posture so that our work and our prayer might flow like the dance of the Holy Spirit, who holds us together and sustains us in all that we do.

—REV. LEANN HODGES  
TRANSITIONAL PASTOR

Note: When I was hired, the expectation was that I would be with you for 18 months, through the end of 2024, with the option for us to consider extending that time.

## WAYS TO CONNECT



[www.gpchurch.org](http://www.gpchurch.org)

301-948-9418

[office@gpchurch.org](mailto:office@gpchurch.org)

[@gpchurch\\_moco](https://www.instagram.com/gpchurch_moco)

# MANY BLESSINGS

I have to admit – winter is not my favorite season of the year. I’m a daughter of warmer climes and the north winds chill me to the bone. Lately, though, I have come to appreciate the gift of winter. Scientists tell us that winter is the season when plants put down roots. Trees lose their leaves, and the bare branches give the appearance of nothing happening. But below ground, the roots are growing deeper into the earth, storing up energy and nutrients to get ready for the burst of spring growth. This winter, I invite you to deepen your roots in God—“get back to basics,” as it were. We begin with the holy season of Advent, in which we express our longing for God to come into our world yet again. We take an ornament from the Giving Tree, and we add service to others as one of the ways we prepare for the coming of God. We celebrate the joy of Christmas, the Mystery of Holy Love incarnate in a human baby, with everything we’ve got—lights, music, gifts, worship, and gatherings with family friends. It takes all that we are to truly honor God’s great gift of Jesus. We thank God for the year that is ending, and we dedicate the new year to God—maybe making a resolution or two, or by renewing our baptismal vows at the January 7 worship service.

Before too long, the season of Lent will begin, and our congregation will focus on prayer for 40 days.

Advent, Christmas, New Year’s, and Lent—in this winter season, let’s put down some good spiritual roots and be ready for God’s new call for us in the spring!

—REV. MARY BETH LAWRENCE  
ASSOCIATE PASTOR



## COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING WORSHIP SERVICE

Tuesday, November 21, 7:00 PM  
Grace United Methodist Church  
119 N. Frederick Avenue, Gaithersburg

## Concerts Coming to GPC’s Sanctuary in December!

### Montgomery Philharmonic Concert

Sunday, December 10, at 6:30 PM

The second concert of their 2023–2024 season embraces two powerful giants of composition, Amy Beach and Emma Lou Diemer. The program includes *Symphony in E minor*, “Gaelic” *Symphony* (Beach) and *Santa Barbara Overture* (Diemer). Beach’s works contribute to an American–New England sound, while Diemer’s contribute to an American–West Coast sound. Admission is free but donations are gratefully accepted.

### Gaithersburg Chorus Winter Concert

Friday, December 15, at 7:30 PM

“A Sound of Hope” is this year’s winter concert theme. Prepare to be uplifted by *Hold Fast to Dreams*, with text by Langston Hughes; *United in Purpose*, with lyrics by Maya Angelou; and *El Cielo Canta Alegría!* (*Heaven is Singing for Joy!*). Also be ready to sing along with some traditional and not-so-traditional holiday favorites! Admission is free but donations to the City of Gaithersburg are always gratefully accepted.

## HOLIDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

2023

### CHRISTMAS EVE, SUNDAY, 12/24

11:00 AM – Worship service  
4:00 PM – Family candlelight worship service  
6:00 PM – Lessons and Carols candlelight service

In-person worship at all three services  
Livestreaming at 11:00 AM and 6:00 PM services

### CHRISTMAS DAY, MONDAY, 12/25

Pre-recorded service – available for viewing anytime.  
No in-person worship or livestreaming.

### NEW YEAR’S EVE, SUNDAY, 12/31

11:00 AM – Worship service (in person/livestreamed)

2024

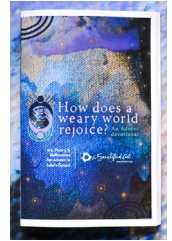
### BAPTISM RENEWAL, SUNDAY, 1/7

9:30 & 11:00 AM – Regular worship services  
resume, with two in-person services at 9:30 &  
11:00 AM and livestreaming at 11:00 AM.  
Ordination/Installation of Church Officers.



# EQUIPPING DISCIPLES

week or so. There is an unreality to thinking, to imagining, so far ahead, because if we have learned nothing else, we have learned that things change, often quickly, and not in ways that we could possibly anticipate. All that we have been through, particularly in the last several years, makes our Advent study—**How does a weary world rejoice?** [sic]—even more appropriate. I suspect that you, too, are weary, perhaps even weary and wary, of what the future may bring. I encourage you, during this time of reflection, to take the time to do just that—to reflect on the enormity of God's gift to us and what it means, and to spend some time simply rejoicing.



## Educational Opportunities for Adults

### Sunday Mornings

- 8:15 – Sunday Small Group, **How to Be an Antiracist** – Ibram X. Kendi, hybrid, Room 32/33
- 9:30 – The Present Word, current issue of The Present Word, hybrid, Room 206
- 9:30 – The Bible as a Whole, Revelation, hybrid, Room 205
- 9:30 – Christian Classics, Acts, hybrid, Room 20
- 9:30 – Creation Care, **One Green Thing**, hybrid, Room 30/31

### Wednesday Evenings

- 7:30 – Bible Study, Joshua, Zoom
- 7:30 – Frederick Small Group, **Follow Me**, Zoom

## Worship and Educational Opportunities for Children

Sunday mornings at 9:30 and 11:00, children of all ages begin in the Sanctuary with their families. On the first Sunday of the month, children stay in worship for the entire service. The other Sundays, elementary-age children are normally excused for Sunday School following the Children's Message. For your child's safety, we request that a parent or guardian come to the classroom to pick up their child.

For children 5 years old and older who wish to remain in the service, we provide a Children's Bulletin that reflects the scripture reading of the day. Children 4 years old and younger are welcome to enjoy the Prayground, a small space in the Sanctuary with quiet toys where they can play, with their parents sitting nearby. Our Nursery is available for our youngest children from 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

### Sunday Morning Educational Offerings

- Preschool – Grade 1, Godly Play, Room 14
- Grades 2–5, Sunday School – foundational Old Testament stories, Room 11

### Wednesday Evening Musical Offerings

- Grades K–5, 5:30–6:00, Choir, Choral Room
- Grades K–5, 6:00–6:30, Handbells and Chimes, Handbell Haven and Fellowship Hall



—CAROLYN HAYES  
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG FAMILIES



## GPC HOSTS WGTS 91.9 RADIO EVENT

On Tuesday, October 17, the WGTS 91.9 “Promo Boys” spent the day in GPC's north parking lot. Our pastors and event volunteers welcomed guests from around the area who love attending this Christian radio station's “Sticker Stop Destination of Hope” events. Many attendees brought canned and boxed food items to donate—including one man who drove from Haymarket, Virginia, to contribute 89 boxes of cereal—to help stock our Little Free Pantry. WGTS brought games, prizes, and a variety of giveaways, including bumper stickers, magnets, and tote bags. We handed out GPC's new “Embrace Hope” bookmarks; prayer squares; music shakers for kids; brochures about GPC, GPP&K, scouting, and Creation Care; as well as cider, homemade muffins, and popcorn.

Thank you to everyone from GPC who attended the event during the day, and also to those from GPC who volunteered their time and talents to make this a fun and successful community outreach for our church!

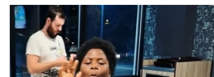




# YOUTH & COLLEGE HAPPENINGS

## A NOTE FROM CARRIE

Fall has proven to be a great start to our year of Youth & College Ministry! Our teaching series has given us insight into how we are distinct and are each given gifts and talents to serve God and His people. We had a huge Fry Fest, as three churches gathered together to rate and test fries from local fast food places, and we kicked off our monthly serve MOCO events by helping make blankets for Interfaith Works (IWWC). The youth also learned that IWWC provides a wide variety of services to people in our community. Although winter will be here soon, we have lots planned! Enjoy our pictures from some fall activities and check out our awesome upcoming events.



Our **annual Christmas Party** will be held on Friday, December 15. The event is open to all youth. Please dress festively and bring a dinner dish to share as well as a wrapped gift for our gift exchange. For details about time and location, contact Carrie. This information will also be sent out on our Parent & Youth Text alerts.

Mark your calendars now for our **Community Youth Night, Dodgeball Tournament . . . Christmas Edition**, to be held at Sky Zone on **December 6, at 7:00 p.m.** Pick your team—Angels, Elves, Christmas Tree, or Grinch—and come dressed to represent your team!



The **Youth Winter Retreat** will be held the weekend of **February 9–11, 2024**. We will stay at Camp Eder, a GPC favorite! We will also make time to enjoy some snow tubing. A maximum of 20 people can attend, so get your registrations in early! Looking forward to this event!

Our annual **College Christmas Party** will be on **December 17**, following the 11:00 worship service. For additional details about this event, contact Carrie.



—CARRIE LARSEN  
DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS





*School is off to a great start this fall!*



The 3's spent the first part of the year focusing on themselves as individuals, themselves in their own families, and themselves with their friends in school. Here are a few of their self-portraits. Some are remarkably accurate!



Kindergarteners have been very busy with phonics, numbers and numeration, science, and art. They began with Van Gogh paintings.

The 4's have been working with letters, numbers, and all things autumnal. Here are some paintings of their interpretations of fall colors:



On Sunday, October 2, some of the teachers and board members and I had fun representing GPP&K at the **King Farm Fall Festival** and making some new friends!

On Tuesday, October 17, brochures about GPP&K and various giveaways were available to those who stopped by the day-long **WGTS 91.9 Radio event** held in GPC's north parking lot.



**REMEMBER THAT CHILDREN MAY STILL BE NEWLY ENROLLED FOR THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR!**

—CAROLYN HAYES  
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES AND  
ACTING DIRECTOR OF GPP&K



# MUSIC NOTES *Welcome, Sandra Ragusa!*



Sandra Ragusa has been hired as GPC's new Handbell Director. She previously served as interim director of the Canterbury Ringers from late fall 2019 through March 2020, when GPC closed due to Covid and the regional handbell festival was cancelled). The choir is delighted to ring under her skillful leadership once again, and the congregation is enjoying her energetic directing as well. In addition to ringing regularly in worship, the choir will be rehearsing for Festival 2024 in Ocean City.

Sandra comes from an extensive background as both a conductor and a flutist. She has conducted symphonies around the world and has several projects planned for the 2023–2024 season, while continuing as Music Director of the Montgomery Philharmonic and DCflutes.

Sandra is committed to educating our next generation of musicians through social change and currently teaches elementary school orchestral strings for Fairfax County Public Schools. Previously, she enjoyed working in the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's OrchKids program, where she was the woodwinds chair and conducted the OrchKids Orchestra. She has also conducted honor orchestras and served on music juries.

A native of Los Angeles, Sandra studied flute at the University of Southern California and holds a Master of Music degree from Carnegie Mellon University. She has served on the faculties of California State Polytechnic University, University of Southern California, Carnegie Mellon University, and Pasadena City College.

Welcome (back), Sandra!

—BARBARA OLDROYD  
VITAL WORSHIP MINISTRY

## MONTGOMERY PHILHARMONIC CONCERTS AT GPC

We can continue to enjoy Sandra's expert musicianship as she conducts orchestra concerts in December 2023 and in March, April, and June 2024. Now in its 17th season, the orchestra explores ways that great music embraces society through inclusion, expression, equality, and enthusiastic acceptance, while surrounding our community with love and thoughtfulness.

### Music Search Committee Update

Very few resumes have been received for the organist/choirmaster position, so the committee has been contacting all posting organizations again. If anyone has contacts in the music department of an area university, please email Search Committee Chair Ted Farrand at [office@gpchurch.org](mailto:office@gpchurch.org).



## GPC WOMEN'S PRAYER TIME

MEETING DATES AND TIMES VARY

This small, yet loyal, group typically meets for about an hour and fifteen minutes, focusing on praying and sharing. Getting to know what is on the hearts of other women and finding out how ways to support one another as we journey through this life is a blessing. Please consider stopping in and sharing what is in your heart. Check GPC emails and Sunday bulletins for meeting dates and times. Questions? Contact Sandy Menzies or Mary Nana (*call the church office*).



## CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP

SECOND SATURDAY | 10:00 AM – NOON | ROOM 30/31

This group is for GPC members and friends who are caring for loved ones with mental illness and addictions. Upcoming meetings will be held on **December 9, January 13, and February 10**. Questions? Contact Cathy Lyon (*call the church office*).





## MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP

FIRST SATURDAY | 8:00 AM | LINDSAY HALL

At the **December 2** meeting, Ted Farrand will share the stories behind some Christmas hymns, and there will be singing! Speakers and topics for the **January 6** and **February 3** meetings are still being confirmed. Information will be shared in the weekly emails and Sunday bulletin announcements as it becomes available. All men and women are welcome to join us for Christian fellowship, prayer, a light continental breakfast, and a short program. Questions? Contact Ted Farrand (*call the church office*).



## VERY IMPORTANT PRESBYTERIAN SENIORS {VIPS}

FIRST THURSDAY | 11:30 AM | LINDSAY HALL

In November we selected the Christmas Outreach Projects that we will support. We have traditionally delivered Advent Baskets to approximately 35 Seniors whose social activities have become more limited. The bags have been filled with a variety of treats, some useful personal items, as well as a few Christmas surprises. We are also adopting one family from Summit Hall ES and two families from GPC, in addition to making a generous financial contribution to the Prison Ministry.

On **December 7**, our Christmas party will include a holiday meal; Christmas-themed music; games; and, of course, the reading of the Christmas Story.

We'll start the New Year with our **January 4** meeting and a New Year's Brunch. Dr. Robin Huebner will speak to us about her research at NIH in developing vaccines.

VIPS welcomes all Seniors who are 50 and over to join in the fellowship and service! For more information, please contact Nancy Sanders (*call the church office*).



## CRAFT GROUP

FIRST SUNDAY | 12:15 PM | LINDSAY HALL

The group continues knitting and crocheting to support requests for prayer shawls, knitted hats (including hats for local elementary school kids), scarves, mittens, and prayer squares by local service organizations, such as Holy Cross Hospital, The Equity Center, and JSSA (Jewish Social Services Agency). You can help too – just let Barbara know! Any pattern is fine, and yarn and patterns are available, if you need them. Prayer squares are 4"x4" and should have a prayer card attached. Donations must be washed and placed in a plastic bag. Arrangements for pick-up can be made, if needed. The next three meetings will be on **December 3**, **January 7**, and **February 4**. Questions? Contact Barbara Clark (*call the church office*).



## 2ND FRIDAY BOOK CLUB

SECOND FRIDAY | 7:30 PM | ZOOM

The group is discussing the first few chapters of their new book—**Cousins**—by Betty Kilby Baldwin and Phoebe Kilby. They are also trying to decide whether or not to change the night that they meet. Please check the church website or contact Cindy Cenname (*call the church office*) to confirm the group's upcoming meeting dates.



## CUB SCOUTS

TUESDAYS | 7:00–8:00 PM | LINDSAY HALL

Cub Scout Pack 64 had a rainy campout in **September**, some fun fall hikes, and a Halloween fun night. They also sold popcorn to raise money for the pack. In **November**, they will collect food for the local Scouting for Food effort. In **December**, they will again lay wreaths at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Frederick. The annual Pinewood Derby will take place at the end of **January**. In **February**, the scouts will be busy on Scout Sunday, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, and their Blue and Gold Banquet. Many are working on achievements to earn ranks. Our pack is open to boys and girls entering Kindergarten through rising 5th Graders. If your child is interested in participating, contact Barbara Clark (*call the church office*).







# GPC SPANS the GLOBE

## NEWS AND VIEWS FROM GHANA

GPC benefits from and takes pride in the international diversity of its members. This is the second in our series of articles written by our internationally born members to share some of their home-country “News” (cultures and traditions), along with some “Views” (photos of the author and the featured country). We hope that this new continuing feature of the Mainstream will help us build even stronger understanding and connections.

In this article, Charles Duncan provides a brief overview of the historical development of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG), which grew out of the Basel (Switzerland) missionary work (1828–1918). He hopes to share information about the PCG in post-independence Ghana in a future issue of the Mainstream.



### Some Religious Statistics for Ghana

According to the Ghana Statistical Services, 71.2% of the population of Ghana is Christian, 17.6% is Muslim, 5.2% adhere to indigenous or animistic religious beliefs, 0.8% belong to other religious groups, and 5.2% have no religious beliefs or affiliation. The Presbyterian Church is one of the main Christian denominations in Ghana. There are two Presbyterian Churches in Ghana: the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (the focus of this article), and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (attended predominantly by the Ewe tribe in Ghana, because of their disparate historical roots).

### First and Second Basel Missions

The first group of Basel Missionaries arrived on December 18, 1828 at what was then called the Gold Coast, now present-day Ghana, at the request of the Danish Colonial office. This mission was unsuccessful; all four missionaries died from malaria, yellow fever, or other coastal/swampy conditions within three years of their arrival.

The second group of missionaries, led by Andreas Riis, arrived in 1832. Riis and his team settled inland, away from the coast, in the more temperate town of Akropong in 1835 to escape malaria and yellow fever, to avoid the negative impressions from the locals about Europeans, and to introduce the gospel to those who had not yet had contact with Europeans. In 1840, Riis returned to Europe, with a request from the local Chief to bring back missionaries that looked like the local population. So, Riis returned to the Gold Coast in 1843 with another set of missionaries, including a team of 25 West Indian Moravians on a renewed evangelical mission. Deciding to include Black missionaries on the team was a stroke of genius; it opened up the local population to the gospel and the ministry grew by leaps and bounds. This mission continued touring and evangelizing until January 1918, when the Swiss/German missionaries were expelled from the British colony of the Gold Coast because of World War I and replaced by the Scottish Mission. The Scots led a movement that drafted and trained indigenous leaders to work alongside Scottish missionaries and into the church's local and national leadership roles.

### Missions by the West Indians

The group of West Indian Moravians who arrived in the Gold Coast in 1843 was led by John Rochester, a Black missionary from the Fairfield Moravian Church (Jamaica); most of the early Basel missionaries were of either Reformed Moravian or Lutheran backgrounds. Rochester felt very strongly about God's calling to minister the gospel where his father and





grandparents had been forcibly taken to a foreign land. As he told the congregation before leaving with his family and fellow missionaries, “My dear brethren and sisters, I am going to leave you to go to Africa. I go with my life in my hands. If I live, I live unto the Lord; if I die, I die unto the Lord. I call to mind that our Savior came down from Heaven and left all his glory out of love for us, to do us good and to save our souls. The love of Christ constraineth me to go to Africa.” Even as his family and other relatives tried tirelessly to discourage him from going, he channeled their good will into a prayer request for their impending mission to Africa and asked his “brethren and sisters to pray for Africa and for us when we go there: to pray that the Lord may help us and bless us. We do not trust in ourselves; therefore, we are not afraid to go to Africa, since He will guard us and help us.” That’s how committed Rochester was to evangelizing to his “proper country,” even facing “Africa,” an unknown land with an uncertain future. His God had done so much for him that no one could persuade him not to go.

The industrious West Indian missionaries built the first brick and stone houses in the area, introduced improved farming techniques to the locals, and dug water wells. A water well named “Jamaica” that was built by John Rochester and local workers by 1860 is still in use in Aburi. They also started schools in Akropong and Osu. One of the Jamaican missionaries, Alexander Worthy Clerk, who was a trained teacher and clergyman, settled in Osu-Accra and was instrumental in modernizing formal education in the Gold Coast (Ghana).



Akropong Salem 1843



Akropong 2023



Osu Chapel 1845



Osu Chapel 2023

#### Church Expansion by Both Missions

|                |         |         |      |
|----------------|---------|---------|------|
| Akropong       | 1835/43 | Anum    | 1864 |
| Christiansborg | 1828/45 | Ada     | 1867 |
| Aburi          | 1847    | Abetifi | 1876 |
| Abokobi        | 1854    | Begoro  | 1876 |
| Odumase-Krobo  | 1856/59 | Kumase  | 1896 |
| Gyadam/Kyebe   | 1861    |         |      |

#### First Synod

As part of structuring the church towards self-governance, the Scottish and the West Indian missions, along with the trained indigenous ministers and Presbyters, held the first Synod on August 14, 1918 at the Akropong church. For the first time, two second-generation West Indians were elected Moderator and Clerk of the Synod. The 28 ministers and 24 Presbyters also agreed on the structure of the church: the local Presbytery/Session, the Presbytery, and the Synod.

#### Church Naming Process and Adoption of the Presbyterian Polity and Ethos

Before the name The Presbyterian Church of Gold Coast was agreed upon in 1926, three other names were proposed: Twi-Ga Church, Native Evangelical Church, and Mpanyimfo Asore (Church of Elders). In addition, the Presbyterian Polity (Scottish Polity, tracing back several centuries to Basel, the Christian center) and Ethos were adopted at the 1926 Synod at Abetifi. Later, following Ghana’s independence, the name was changed to The Presbyterian Church of Ghana.



—CHARLES DUNCAN

*Charles Duncan grew up in Tema, Ghana, one of four siblings. When he was 19 years old, he left Ghana to attend college in the United States, graduating from New York Institute of Technology/Old Westbury with a B.S. in Life Science Biology and from The Johns Hopkins University/Baltimore with an M.S. in Biotechnology. Several of his relatives live in Maryland and New Jersey.*

*Charles began attending GPC in 2014 and has been very active in the church. He is an usher; has been a frequent lay reader; participated in GPC’s recent PDA Mission Trips to New Bern, North Carolina; and mentors GPC’s youth. Having been blessed with many mentors himself over the years is one reason that he enjoys providing youth mentorship.*



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE AN ARTICLE ABOUT YOUR HOME COUNTRY,  
CONTACT PETER FOFUH AT [OFFICE@GPCHURCH.ORG](mailto:OFFICE@GPCHURCH.ORG).

# AT GPC WE ARE ADDING NAMES TO FACES AND FACES TO NAMES!

**Names to Faces:** Do you have a GPC name tag to wear at church each Sunday? We are very grateful that so many of you are now making it a part of your church routine. This was an initiative that was requested by several GPC members. It certainly helps our new Pastor LeAnn Hodges, but getting to know one another by name is a great benefit to us all! If you haven't gotten a name tag yet, just print your name clearly on the request form at the Welcome Desk. You'll pick up your completed name tag there as well. (Some name tags have not yet been claimed.) If you have trouble remembering to bring your name tag to church, you can leave it in a storage basket in the Gathering Space.



**Faces to Names:** That is our “Add Your Smile” initiative and means making sure that your photo is in GPC’s Member Directory in the “Member Portal” section of the GPC website. How wonderful it will be when we are greeted by smiling faces above most of the names! We’ve been taking photos in Lindsay Hall after services during October and November and posting them for you. But you can do it yourself by following the directions and checking out the video on the Member Portal page of the website at [www.gpchurch.org/member-portal](http://www.gpchurch.org/member-portal).

—LUCILLE BAUR  
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR

## Swap the TRASH for GLASS – and Save Tomorrow!

“Why are we using real dishes in the kitchen instead of paper and plastic? Isn’t it easier to just buy disposables?”

The answer is simple. We use reusable dishware instead of paper plates and plastic cutlery for several reasons. First and foremost, it significantly reduces waste generation. Single-use items like paper plates and plastic cutlery contribute to landfills and take a long time to decompose, if ever. Every year, more than 2 billion pounds of paper plates and cups are generated, nearly half of which enters landfills.

By using reusable dishware, we reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills. Reusable dishware also helps combat the global plastic pollution crisis by reducing the demand for disposable plastics that often end up in oceans and harm marine life. In the next 15 years, the amount of plastic in the ocean is expected to double. By 2050, there could be more plastic in the ocean than fish!

Choosing reusable dishware is economically advantageous. GPC has already invested in dishware and cutlery, so that math is simple. Constantly buying disposable items adds up, especially for larger gatherings or frequent use. Using our real dishes eliminates the need for repeated purchases, which saves us money. In fact, the production of single-use items involves greater consumption of natural resources like water and energy than what we require to clean and sanitize our own dishware.

In summary, using reusable dishware reduces waste, reduces plastic pollution, and conserves resources. It also offers long-term cost savings compared to continually buying disposable items. By using our real dishes and flatware, we contribute to a cleaner environment and a more sustainable future.

—CREATION CARE COMMITTEE



# RACIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

Our GPC Matthew 25 team, now named the Racial Justice Ministry, is joining our other official committees (Congregational Care, Vital Worship, Community Engagement, Equipping Disciples, etc.).

As Pastor LeAnn helps GPC continue our journey of envisioning who we will be going forward, we in the MT 25 Racial Justice Ministry ask that you include in your prayers and considerations our call as Christians to actively work towards God's vision of a beloved community that includes diversity and racial justice.

A section is being established in the church library so that books which help us understand structural racism and learn how we can be anti-racist are available to be checked out. If you have a book to donate, please leave it in the library on the shelf labelled "RACIAL JUSTICE BOOK DONATIONS." If you would like to purchase a book, there is a list of suggested books on that same shelf (or you may contact the church office at [office@gpchurch.org](mailto:office@gpchurch.org) for the list). Once catalogued, you will be able to check out books that you want to read. In the future, the GPC website will have a Racial Justice section that includes links to many resources electronically as well as the list of books in our library.

If you would like to learn more about the MT 25 Racial Justice Ministry, please talk with one of the members: Alice Alexander, Aaron Caruso, Donna Dannels, Serge Kamba, Patrick Keziah, Yaw Obeng, Mary Spencer, Carole Tukes, and Suzie Ward.

—DONNA DANNELS

Be sure to watch GPC's weekly emails in December and January for events and service opportunities related to **MLK Day** (Monday, January 15, 2024).  
On **January 14**, we will assemble **bag lunches for SOME** in Lindsay Hall.

## THE GIVING TREE

Watch the tree go up on Sunday, November 19, and take an ornament home to provide a much-needed gift for a less fortunate neighbor. This year, the Community Engagement Ministry has identified five worthy organizations to receive our Christmas gifts. More information will be available soon in weekly emails and bulletin announcements.

**1. Ukraine War Relief** – Supplies such as men's long-sleeved T-shirts and underwear, pain medications (Tylenol and Advil), and antiseptic wound cream/gel are needed, or you may write a check to GPC (with "Ukraine Relief" in the memo line). We will take these donations to St. Andrews Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Silver Spring for shipment to Ukraine.

**2. Habitat for Humanity of Metro Maryland** – This non-profit organization supports Montgomery and Prince George's County residents with affordable homeownership opportunities. Write a check to GPC (with "Habitat for Humanity" in the memo line).

**3. Medical Benevolence Foundation** – This international organization is dedicated to equipping and fortifying the medical ministries of local churches in underserved regions worldwide. Write a check to GPC (with "Medical Benevolence Fund" in the memo line).

**4. Summit Hall Elementary School** – In conjunction with the Linkages for Learning program, specific items requested by families will be listed on the Giving Tree ornaments.



**5. Little Free Pantry and Little Free Library** – These are part of GPC's own ministry to our local community. Shelf-stable food items, such as peanut butter, tuna, nutritional shakes, etc., as well as books (both adult and children's selections) are welcome. A complete list of requested items is available on page 13 of this Mainstream and on flyers around the church.

All donations (including checks) should be received at GPC by **Sunday, December 17**. We are grateful for your generosity to our neighbors in need! For more information, contact Rev. Mary Beth Lawrence or Cindy Zammit (call the church office).







*INTERFAITH WORKS  
WOMEN'S CENTER  
(IWWC)  
at Crabbs Branch*

**WEEK OF MEALS  
DECEMBER 24–30, 2023**

*Deliver breakfast items  
and pantry staples*

*Provide dinner*

**THERE ARE SEVERAL  
EASY WAYS FOR  
VOLUNTEERS TO HELP!**

**Purchase breakfast food  
and other supplies and  
drop them off at either  
GPC or the shelter at  
16911 Crabbs Branch Way  
in Derwood.**

*Delivery Date:  
Saturday, 12/23*

**OR**

**Prepare or order  
dinner for 38 residents.  
Drop dinner off,  
or stay to serve it  
(up to five volunteers  
may serve each night).**

*Delivery Dates:  
12/24–30*

**To sign up and for more information, go to:  
[www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0f48a8a87-iwwc](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0f48a8a87-iwwc)**



## Reflections from a faithful IWWC volunteer . . .

meals to residents is more than preparing food and then handing a plate to each person. From several years of volunteering, I learned that it is meaningful to eat, talk, and interact with them. Every year my family and friends meet at a shelter, and together we joyfully serve food to residents one night during the Christmas holidays. Sometimes we chat with them. And then, after serving the residents, we enjoy a humble leftover Christmas dinner there. Although it seems simple and quiet, sharing such peace at Christmastime is a gift from God.

— AKIKO TAKETANI

## THE LITTLE FREE PANTRY THANKS YOU! —————

To all who contribute to the Little Free Pantry, thank you! You are making a difference in the lives of our neighbors here in Gaithersburg. Your support is very much appreciated. The pantry continues to see high demand and with reductions in SNAP benefits for some, hunger is a real presence in the Gaithersburg area. With your generous support, however, the Little Free Pantry can continue to provide emergency food aid to those in need. Please consider adding food items for the Little Free Pantry to your weekly shopping lists. A bag of rice or beans or a can of fruit, when combined with the contributions from others in the church, have a big impact. Food items needed for the Little Free Pantry include the following:

- Fruit
- Rice
- Soup
- Dried Beans
- Ramen Noodles
- Oatmeal, Instant or small container
- Vegetable Oil (small bottle)
- Pasta
- Tomato Sauce
- Canned fish and meat, such as Tuna, Chicken, or Spam

Donations can be placed directly in the pantry or in the wooden bin in the Gathering Space (Narthex). If you would prefer to make a monetary donation, you can donate via check or online (*please designate Little Free Pantry as the fund*).

Our pantry clients also appreciate toiletries, which are hard to get when one is homeless or money is tight. Toothbrushes and travel size toothpaste, soap, shampoo, conditioner, and lotion are welcome. Unused items that are left over from summer travel, closet cleaning, or your last dental visit would be greatly appreciated. **New item: Individually wrapped utensils from eateries are also helpful.**

## Donations and Fun for Summit Hall ES

The students at Summit Hall Elementary School (SHES) are on our mind as the holidays draw near. Many families need assistance to be able to give gifts and clothing to their kids at Christmastime. Each year GPC provides help to the parents in the form of specific items that they have requested. Please look for ornaments on the Giving Tree that describe some of the clothing and toys requested by the parents. We hope to fulfill the needs of two families. Your purchases may be wrapped (or not) and placed under the Giving Tree. Please attach a note telling the elves what is in the package.

Families need various toiletries (unwrapped) as well. A list of what is needed will be available soon.

A group of us from GPC will attend the SHES Holiday Party and deliver the gifts. We also provide a craft project for the kids to work on during the party. Last year we made snowmen on card stock, using doilies for their bodies! If you have any clever ideas, please let me know. We also give out secondhand children's books, so please bring to church any that you would like to pass along!

Thank you for remembering families that may not be able to provide much joy to their kids at Christmastime!

—MARILYN MORRISON

## HELP DECORATE THE SANCTUARY FOR CHRISTMAS!



Half-page order forms for Poinsettias will soon be available in the Sunday bulletins and in various locations around the church. The cost is **\$13 per plant** and the last day to place an order is **Sunday, December 10**.

To order your plant(s), complete this form or the half-page form and place it and your check in the offering plate on Sunday. You may also mail either form and your check to GPC. Make checks payable to "GPC," with "poinsettia(s)" written in the memo line. Plants may also be ordered via our website.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# of Plants: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle One: IN HONOR IN MEMORY IN CELEBRATION

of

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## DIRECTORY CHANGES

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


 Address change

Phone number change 

Asenath Asang & Martin Foy 

Luba Fomenko  

Barbara Heissner 

Kathryn Lebold 

Eric Manu 



## WELCOME TO THE WORLD!

*Congratulations to*

Jenna Obermiller Bruni  
(GPC Communications Director)  
and her husband, Vince Bruni,  
the proud parents of  
**ELSEY VALENTINA BRUNI**  
born on October 10, 2023

## CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY



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

### Ward Whitlock

(husband of Francie, and stepfather of  
James [Sandy], Ryan, and Lee Menzies),  
in Silver Spring, MD  
October 17, 2023

### Robert Johnson

in Derwood, MD  
September 26, 2023

### Kenneth Vaughn

(husband of Rev. Deborah Vaughn)  
in Rockville, MD  
September 29, 2023

### Atsu Ocloo

frequent GPC attendee,  
(his mother)  
in Lomé, Togo  
September 17, 2023





# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

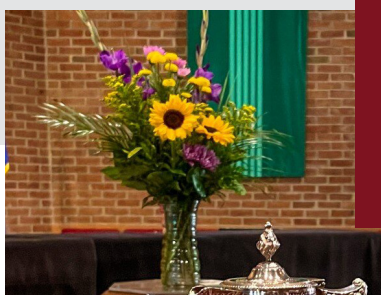
40 YEARS

Ted and Sue Farrand  
October 15, 1973

## SANCTUARY FLOWER ORDERS

### WANT TO DONATE FLOWERS *for a Sunday worship service?*

You can give flowers in honor or memory of someone or to celebrate a special occasion. The cost is \$45, and you may take the flowers home after the 11:00 service. Scan the QR code below to access both flower forms or visit [gpchurch.org/flower-form](http://gpchurch.org/flower-form) to place your order.



## THE MAINSTREAM

### Submission Deadlines for Articles and Distribution of Newsletters

The Mainstream is published quarterly. It is sent electronically and hard copies are mailed in February, May, August, and November.

**Submissions should be  
sent to [jobermiller@gpchurch.org](mailto:jobermiller@gpchurch.org)  
and [bmoldroyd@earthlink.net](mailto:bmoldroyd@earthlink.net)  
by January 15, April 15,  
July 15, and October 15.**

Questions? Contact the church office.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY REPORT

September 2023

% OF  
2023 YTD BUDGET

### INCOME

|                              |           |      |
|------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Envelope Pledged.....        | \$540,505 | 72%  |
| Envelope Unpledged .....     | \$184,893 | 92%  |
| Loose Offering .....         | \$11,079  | 123% |
| Other Income .....           | \$2,919   | 146% |
| Room Rent.....               | \$100     | 0%   |
| Interest & Dividends .....   | \$8,352   | 167% |
| Manse Rental .....           | \$10,080  | 0%   |
| Mizo Church – Offering ..... | \$5,000   | 200% |
| Carryover .....              | \$0       | 0%   |

Total.....\$762,928 .....79%

### EXPENSE

|                           |           |      |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|
| NCP Membership .....      | \$20,784  | 75%  |
| Human Resources.....      | \$437,535 | 65%  |
| Buildings & Grounds.....  | \$160,552 | 72%  |
| Office Operations.....    | \$28,947  | 92%  |
| Communications.....       | \$4,884   | 92%  |
| Stewardship .....         | \$1,785   | 32%  |
| Comm Engagement .....     | \$76,918  | 78%  |
| Eq Disciples.....         | \$13,693  | 59%  |
| Vital Worship .....       | \$13,832  | 113% |
| Congregational Life ..... | \$544     | 16%  |
| Other.....                | \$5,010   | 0%   |
| Session .....             | \$75      | 2%   |

Total.....\$609,953 .....69%

NET .....\$(1,631)

To request a complete financial summary,  
email [accountingmanager@gpchurch.org](mailto: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**



*HAVE A HAPPY THANKSGIVING!*



## *FIND IT FAST!*

- **Community Thanksgiving Worship Service** (p. 2)
- **Holiday Worship Services** (p. 2)
- Music Updates (p. 6)
- Spanning the Globe – Ghana (*feature article*) (pp. 8-9)
- GPC's Name Tags and Member Directory Photos (p. 10)
- Swap the TRASH for GLASS – and Save Tomorrow! (p. 10)
- Racial Justice Ministry (*new name!*) (p. 11)
- Giving Tree (p. 11)
- Christmas Meals for IWWC Shelter Residents (p. 12)
- Little Free Pantry (includes list of food/toiletries) (p. 13)
- Donations and Fun for Summit Hall ES (p. 13)
- Christmas Poinsettia Orders (p. 14)