



THE MAINSTREAM

SUNDAYS

WORSHIP IN PERSON
9:30 & 11:00 AM

WORSHIP BY LIVESTREAM
11:00 AM

THIRD QUARTER

2023



*From the Heart of
Rev. LeAnn Hodges*

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Dear GPC Members and Friends,

As I write my first submission to The Mainstream in July for an August publication, I am only a mere week and a half into my time with you. In this short time, I have met with three different committees of the church, led worship alongside of you, met with staff and leaders of GPC, moved into the office, and celebrated this new beginning with you through a reception of shared stories, food, and a heart-warming greeting from the CWF. It has been a lovely start!

As your half-time transitional pastor, I will lead worship twice a month and do GPC work mainly on Mondays and Tuesdays. (So if you need something from me, plan accordingly; I have another job the other half of the week.) The committee work that I will resource is that of the Vital Worship Ministry and Communications Committee, and I will be active with the Session. That doesn't leave a lot of time for much else, and it will take us all some adjustment to get used to this change,

That said, the heart of my work with you all is to help GPC gain a clear understanding of the current reality—

both inside the church and in our community—and from that point to discern God's call for such a time as this.

In my first month, I am getting to know the structure and flow of life at GPC, spending most of my time with the leadership. Starting in September, I will be helping us to tell the story of our shared history and identifying the places where we have collectively and individually experienced the grace of God, as well as where we have experienced the brokenness of this world. Then, later in the fall, we will move into the work of examining the gifts and challenges of our current situation as a congregation and in our communities. Once we have a shared understanding of where we have been and where we are now, we hope to be ready to start asking where we are going.

I am excited to be engaged in this work with you all. It will not be easy work; God's work rarely is. But Jesus reminds us that when we live the life of discipleship and carry the yoke of Christ, then even our burdens will be light. May it be so.

—REV. LEANN HODGES
TRANSITIONAL PASTOR

WAYS TO CONNECT

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MANY BLESSINGS

One of the things that I learned on my sabbatical to Assisi, Italy, was something about St. Francis’ love for creation. He famously preached to the birds as he was learning to proclaim the gospel, and to this day the birds soar around Assisi in great numbers and loudly raise their voices in praise to God. Towards the end of his life, Francis was in great pain, but he would sit for hours in the garden of St. Damiano Church, reveling in the goodness of God’s creation.

While he was at St. Damiano, Francis composed a hymn that we still sing today, “All Creatures of Our God and King” (#15 in our *Glory to God* hymnal). The song calls on all creatures to praise God. Feeling a unity with God’s creation, Francis calls them Brother Wind, Sister Moon, Mother Earth, etc. Even death gets a verse, because Francis believed that death could teach us much about the love of God. Finally, Francis calls on his brothers and sisters in Christian community (and, by extension, you and me) to come together to praise our Creator.

My sabbatical in Assisi awakened within me a deeper love for God the Creator and my role as a caretaker of what God has made. I am trying to declutter my home, my office, and my life and rid myself of unnecessary material things. I am trying to eat more organic fruits and vegetables, so that I don’t add poisonous chemicals to the water or to the earth. I am enjoying people more, for humanity, too, is a part of what God made in love. The fellowship of the saints, especially our weekly gathering for worship, is a witness to God our Creator. To quote St. Francis, “O sisters, brothers, take your part, and worship God with humble heart. Alleluia! Alleluia!”

—REV. MARY BETH LAWRENCE
ASSOCIATE PASTOR



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING To Be Held on Sunday, September 24

The Session has called a congregational meeting following the 11:00 worship service to elect new officers.



PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

MISSION TRIPS ARE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

In 17 years, we have learned so many things—how to “gut” a house and take it down to the studs, how to hang drywall, how to swing a hammer and use power tools; and how to be safe on the jobsite. We have learned that storms and disasters reveal not only damaged houses, but the deadly effects of lifelong poverty.

We have also learned how much fun it is when you work together to achieve a goal. When one person’s energy sags, he or she is energized by the encouragement from others on the team. When someone learns something new, everyone cheers them on. When we help one another, the work is lighter and the joy is greater.

Our next PDA mission learning trip will be **September 17–22** in New Bern, North Carolina. The cost is \$185. Contact Mary Beth Lawrence to register.

EQUIPPING DISCIPLES

I have always loved *Charlotte’s Web*—the book as well as the movie.

“How very special are we to have on our family tree Mother Earth and Father Time. He turns the seasons around as she changes her gown . . . How very special are we for just one moment to be part of life’s eternal rhyme . . .”, Charlotte sings to Wilbur.

Fall is one of the changes that most of us look forward to—cooler, crisper weather, a much softer quality of light, a time of transition from the abundance of summer to the rest and quiet of winter. Within the transition that is going on all around us, we have a sense of change and personal expectation that we, too, are going to grow.

This fall, GPC feels like the epicenter of change, like the inflection point. Let’s take a page out of the book entitled *The Way of the Peaceful Warrior* by Dan Millman and focus all of our energy not on fighting the old but on building the new. And . . . maybe take an adult ed class to help frame that change.



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 most often 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 who wish to remain in the service, we provide an extensive 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 children 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.

Educational Opportunities for Adults

Adult Ed Sunday Mornings

- Steve Olin’s 8:15 Small Group, hybrid
- Christian Classics, 9:30, hybrid
- The Bible as a Whole, 9:30, hybrid
- The Present Word, 9:30, hybrid
- One Green Thing, 9:30, Room 30/31

Weekday Evenings

- Monday Evening Bible Study, 7:00, hybrid
- Wednesday Evening Bible Study, 7:00, hybrid
- Frederick Small Group, 7:00, hybrid

—CAROLYN HAYES
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG FAMILIES



From Genesis to Revelation!

Forget Y2K. One of the critical events of the year 2000 was the launch of the current **Bible as a Whole** class, determined to make it through the entire Bible, verse by verse. Aside from a creative way to deal with all of Psalms, an intrepid group of sojourners have made it from Genesis to Revelation in just shy of 23 years. “Revelation or Bust” on a miniature Conestoga wagon is an apt motto and symbol, as the group, under the sometimes loose direction of Sue Farrand and Stuart Hayes, finds its way to the final chapter and verse of Revelation. Wish us luck!

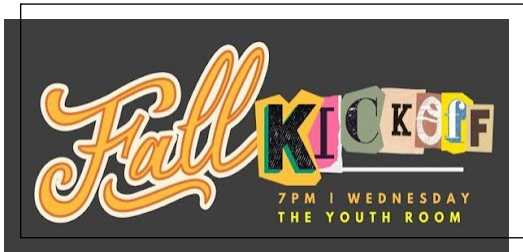
—SUE FARRAND

YOUTH & COLLEGE FALL HAPPENINGS



Each year our student/college ministry cycles through three words that keep us grounded and give us direction for the year. Those three words are **identity**, **transformation**, and **rooted**. Going along with the theme for the church in identifying who we are as a congregation, our youth and college students are also traveling along those lines. Our theme for this year is **IDENTITY**. We all want to know who we are—what we're good at, what we're not so good at, what makes us unique, and why we matter. Unfortunately, we spend a lot of time (especially as teenagers) creating identities based on all the wrong things. In September we will kick off our small group conversations all around getting to know our identity and purpose.

Youth & college students will discover, but never fully understand, who they were created to be apart from the God who created them. He's a God who **knows us**, who **gives us a place to belong**, who **helps us understand ourselves**, and who **helps us become** everything He has created us to be.



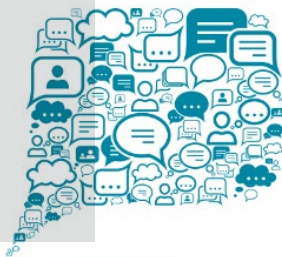
Youth Wednesday Night Kickoff – September 7 at 7:00

Youth Sunday Morning Kickoff – September 10 at 11:00
We'll start our year with a breakfast—pancakes!

College Small Groups are forming. If you are interested in getting together, please contact Carrie Larsen so that a poll can be taken regarding date/time/location.

Parent & Student Texting Group

The best way to keep informed about our youth & college happenings at GPC is to join our Parent & Student texting group. Please contact Carrie Larsen to be added to the list. Weekly texts about calendar updates are sent to keep you informed about the what/when/where of upcoming happenings..



Camp 2023 Highlights

This past summer our students attended MIX Middle School Camp and MOVE High School Camp. Being a Christian is so much more than just going to church and trying hard to be good. Being a Christian means that Jesus is totally in charge of our lives. The Bible even says that we die, and Jesus lives in us! What does that mean for a student? It means that their thoughts, habits, belongings, wildest dreams—everything about them—is no longer what they live for. Instead, they have Jesus living in them. When we live for ourselves, we get prideful, angry, scared, bored, and even just plain mean. But when Jesus lives through us, we are filled with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control. At camp we learned what it means to die to Christ but nevertheless have Him alive in us. Two students dedicated their lives to Christ for the first time and three students rededicated their lives to Christ. God was in the MIX and MOVED hearts this summer.

More event pictures may be seen on our GPC social media platforms.

—CARRIE LARSEN
DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS



GPP&K STARTS A NEW YEAR



We're back! **Monday, September 11**, will be our first real day of school for the 2023–2024 school year and things will look a little different. The GPP&K board and the GPP&K staff are and have been working hard to rework parts of our program to meet the changing needs of the families in our community and to strengthen the ties between GPC and GPP&K.

One of the changes will be that I am stepping into the role of Acting Director, effective August 1. A huge thank you to departing director Cynthia Dobbins for all the energy and expertise she lovingly shared with our school. We are also actively pursuing a child care license so that we will be able to appeal to a broader range of people in our community. Children may still attend from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. as they have done in the past, but we plan to open a before and after care program to meet the needs of families in which both parents work full time as well as those who have more flexible schedules. Think of the current school model as a child and the before and after care as a hug.

We hope to be able to employ some of the skills of members of our congregation as educational enhancements. Perhaps some of our retired scientists could occasionally teach a science lesson; some of our retired teachers could assist in the classrooms; librarians could help curate a really top-rate lending library for both the children and the parents; and some of our current teachers could help parents help their kids get ready for “big” school.

We are an amazing community, with incredible members who have a vast array of skills, abilities, and interests. Let's put these resources to use creatively for the good of the children and the glory of God.

ENROLLMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

We are so proud of the excellent programs that GPP&K provides—and it offers Open Enrollment throughout the year! Please let neighbors, newcomers, family, and friends who are shopping for an excellent preschool or private kindergarten know that they can still enroll for the 2023–2024 school year. We hope that even more children can benefit from the nurturing GPP&K experience! School and registration information may be found at www.gppk.com.



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



UPDATE FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

Upon recommendation from Human Resources, the Session voted to approve creating two part-time music positions that will allow the church to focus on certain areas. The Organist/Choirmaster will play most Sundays and will lead the Chancel Choir and another choir, as well as accompany other music groups. The Handbell Director will conduct the Canterbury Ringers and the new Youth Bell Choir, which was formed earlier this year.

The committee is just beginning its search (our first meeting was June 29). Job descriptions have been listed on three websites: AGO (American Guild of Organists), PAM (Presbyterian Association of Musicians), and Catholic University – Department of Music. If anyone has contacts at Howard University and/or Morgan State University, please let us know. We will review the resumes that we receive and schedule in-person interviews/auditions as we go forward. We may also seek out an interim Music Director for the fall of 2023.

Committee members include Ted Farrand – Chancel Choir, Tom Chen – Children’s Choirs, Fred Mosher – Canterbury Ringers, Schola Muluh – CWF, and Jennifer Scavullo – Youth Choir. Please pray with us as we begin our work to find the people who can best lead us.

—TED FARRAND
CHAIR

MONTGOMERY PHILHARMONIC CONCERT NEWS

For its 17th season, the orchestra explores how great music embraces society through inclusion, expression, equality, and enthusiastic acceptance, while surrounding our community with thoughtfulness and love. Their first concert, on **Sunday, October 15, at 6:30 p.m.** in our Sanctuary, will feature *Symphony in C major* (George Bizet), *Overture in C* (Fanny Hensel–Mendelssohn), and *Sinfonia in C major* (Marianna Martines). There is no charge to attend the concert, but donations are always gratefully accepted.

Future concert dates are scheduled for **December 10, 2023** and **March 16, April 14, and June 9, 2024** (names of composers and their works will be provided later).

The orchestra held another successful 6-week **Youth Leadership and Chamber Music Festival** in June and July, with students learning various works by Handel, Mozart, Casterdé, and Vivaldi. If your child plays an instrument, this is an excellent (and free!) opportunity for them to improve their skills. Registration details for next summer will be available on the orchestra’s website next spring.



Special Music

GPC thanks the **Mizo Presbyterian Church Men's Choir** for again sharing their gifts with us in worship on August 13.



CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP

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

This newly formed group is for members and friends who care for loved ones with mental illness and addictions. Questions? Contact Cathy Lyon (*call the church office*).



MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP

FIRST SATURDAY | 8:00 AM | LINDSAY HALL

As in previous years, the group enjoyed meeting for breakfast at Café Sophie in the Gaithersburg Airpark during the summer months. We will resume meeting in Lindsay Hall in the fall. On **September 2**, Eddie Schantz will speak to us about ways to save electricity/energy in our homes. On **October 7**, David Mecklenburg and Carol Anderson will share photos and stories about their recent Arctic Expedition adventure and on **November 4**, Suzie Ward will discuss current issues facing the City of Gaithersburg. 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

After enjoying outings to the Cidery in Germantown in June; a guided tour of the B'nai Israel Library in Rockville in July; and a visit in August to St. Paul's Community Church in Poolesville (a historic black church built by formerly enslaved individuals and families), followed by lunch hosted by the Ridgway family, we return to our regular monthly meetings at the church.

The program for **September 7** is “Personal Wellness: Choose Your Preferred Path.” We will learn more about three unique fitness programs: *Fitness and Wellness Activities* by Amy Schlossenberg, Medical Exercise Specialist; *Yoga* by GPC’s own Sandy Menzies, Yoga Instructor; and *Tai Chi* by Tammy Hilton, Tai Chi Instructor. “Off the Beaten Path in Montgomery County” is the topic of the **October 5** program, to be presented by Ralph Buglass of the Montgomery County Historical Society. After our interests are piqued by Mr. Buglass’ topic, we look forward to a group visit to one of these “hidden secrets.” In Fred Mosher’s **November 2** presentation, “Handbellspedia,” we will have an opportunity to learn all about the different handbells, as well as the various techniques used to play them. The 2023 VIPS year activities will conclude on **December 7** with our traditional Christmas Party. Questions? Contact Nancy Sanders (*call the church office*).



CRAFT GROUP

FIRST SUNDAY | 12:15 PM | LINDSAY HALL

The group has resumed meeting in person and continues knitting and crocheting to support the requests for prayer shawls, knitted hats, 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. 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 **September 10, October 1, and November 5**. Questions? Contact Barbara Clark (*call the church office*).



2ND FRIDAY BOOK CLUB

SECOND FRIDAY | 7:30 PM | ZOOM

The group has finished reading the book by Governor Wes Moore and is planning to meet online on **September 8** to discuss their future options. In addition to choosing a new book, they are interested in getting involved with the Matthew 25 initiative. Other fall meetings are scheduled for **October 13** and **November 10**. For more information or to confirm the meeting start time, contact Cindy Cennane (*call the church office*).



CUB SCOUTS

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

Cub Scout Pack 64 has had a busy summer. In **June**, 17 scouts attended Day Camp. **July** activities included a Frederick Keys baseball game and Sugarloaf Mountain hike. **August** plans include the annual kickball game on August 22 at 6:30 p.m. and a cookout on August 27 at 4:00 p.m. at the Mill Creek Towne swimming pool. Fall activities will be announced at a later date. 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*).



NEWS and Views

FROM CAMEROON

Did you know that the international flags displayed in our north tower represent more than 30 different GPC member nationalities? Maybe not the whole world, but we've got a good portion of the world in our hands here at GPC, and we are a more vibrant church because of it!

Starting with this issue, we are excited to feature a new column that will be written by our internationally born GPC members to share some of their home-country "News" (cultures and traditions), along with some "Views" (photos of the author and the featured country).

Please enjoy this first article about the Central African country of Cameroon by Peter Fofuh.

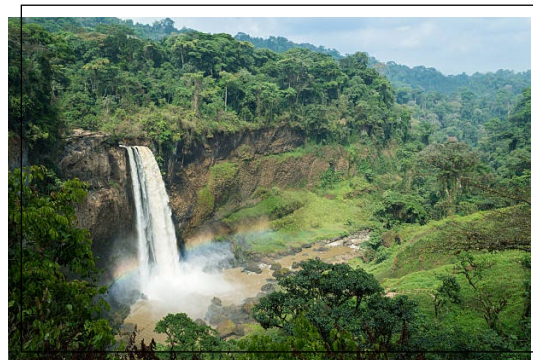
The Diversity of God's Worship: The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon

From its inception, Christianity has been a cross-cultural and diverse religion with no single dominant expression. The universality of God is summed in the verses "Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods." (Psalms 96:3-4) To this effect, God will find passionate admirers within different people of the world.

One of the countries where God's Word finds great admirers is Cameroon and one of the leading institutions promoting the work of God is the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC). The groundwork for the PCC was laid by the Basel Missionaries, who arrived at the coast of Cameroon in 1886. In addition to evangelizing, the Basel Mission opened schools, medical institutions, and theological colleges. Their work was interrupted by World Wars I and II, when the predominately white missionaries had to leave the country. In their absence, evangelization work was mostly by carried out by native pastors, catechists, and teachers. By 1957, both the Basel Mission and the indigenous people thought that the time was ripe for the latter to take over the work of God. Consequently, the PCC was born in November 1957. Today it is the largest Protestant denomination in English-speaking West Africa. Like most African churches, the PCC is a vibrant church community with distinct characteristics of worship.

Celebration. A major characteristic of the PCC is celebration. PCC faithfuls celebrate who God is, what God has done, and what God will do for his people. They celebrate with joy and hope for a better future in the Risen Christ. In this light, singing and dancing are an integral part of most PCC church services. In most cases, music is second fiddle only to preaching. For worshipers, a good sermon combined with music is needed to create the minimum conditions for a fulfilling and elevating worship service. It is not uncommon to see some churches with entire parts of the service dedicated to singing and dancing.

Thanksgiving. In the PCC, thanksgiving is celebrated to acknowledge the triumphs of God's grace in the life of the church. It is to glorify God as an act of worship through devotion, sacrifice, praise, and offering. The PCC has a thanksgiving season in which the church devotes itself to raising donations for various programs. During this season, some churches organize the congregation into various groups; these groups are required to raise certain targeted sums for these projects. Projects



might include building a new school, health center, or church. In some churches, especially in poor communities, rather than monetary offerings, Christians are allowed to bring produce from their harvest or craft to be auctioned in church, and the money raised from these auctions is channeled to the project funds. The harvest season is an important season in the life of the PCC, as it is the main source of funding for most of the community outreach programs. It is also a time of celebration and feasting within the church.

Evangelization. One of the core functions of the PCC in Cameroon is to train its leaders and members in evangelism. The PCC also has slots on many local radio stations, where the good news is proclaimed and church activities made known to the general public. Additionally, evangelization work for the PCC is animated by groups such as the Christian Men Fellowship (CMF), the Christian Women Fellowship (CWF), and the Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF). These groups play a major role in evangelization and bringing God's work to communities outside the church. Events such as group rallies are held in different communities and the work of the church is made known through such activities and competitions as Bible studies, singing, and sketches.

Community Outreach. Continuing the work of the Basel Mission, the PCC has a very extensive community outreach program. The PCC is renowned for having some of the best schools, medical institutions, and theological centers in the country. Schools such as CPC Bali and PSS Mankon have become household names and have produced some of the best professionals in the country. Health Institutions such as the Acha-Tugi Eye Center are famous in Cameroon and Africa.

One can conclude, then, that God's love knows no boundaries, as Christianity allows for the authentication of diverse local cultures and practices. It allows people from cultures across the globe to share a religious identity of brotherhood while, at the same time, being able to express God's love in various diverse ways.

—PETER FOFUH



Peter and his wife, Joelle (who is a GPC elder), began attending GPC in 2013. They have three sons: David, Daryl, and William. The youngest of seven siblings, Peter has many relatives in Cameroon and returns to visit them at least once a year. He is a business enthusiast and has several business endeavors in Cameroon and the United States.

Peter is a member of the GPC Communications Committee and the Christian Men Fellowship (CMF) and is also the Mainstream's new "International Desk Editor" for this column. If you would like to contribute an article about your home country, please contact him at office@gpchurch.org.



WHAT WE DID THIS SUMMER



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



JULY 2 POTLUCK DINNER



WELCOME RECEPTION FOR PASTOR HODGES



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



YOUTH AT BONFIRE AND FIELD GAMES NIGHT



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

BUILDING CONNECTIONS AT GPC!

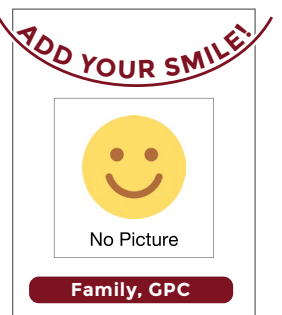
One of the three priorities for 2023 set by our Session members is “Providing Ways for People to Connect.” Some of those ways offer occasions to do so, such as an international luncheon, a July pre-fireworks potluck dinner, and periodic meetups for ice cream. But we’ve had some other (zero calorie) ideas for connection building!

Let’s make it easier for all of us to connect, by getting to know one another better by name and by face. We know how vitally important it is to be a caring, engaged, and welcoming church, to better sustain and grow our GPC community.

Ways That You Can Do Your Part To Build Connections at GPC:

1. Wear a Name Tag to Worship Services! Several members have requested that we renew the practice of wearing name tags, especially because we’ve welcomed new Transitional Pastor LeAnn Hodges. If you already have a name tag, GPC-issued or otherwise, please wear it! If you don’t already have a name tag and would like one, please sign the “I’d Like a GPC Name Tag” list on the Welcome Desk in the Gathering Place/Narthex. If there is enough interest and participation, we will continue researching how best to provide a storage area, so that name tags can be easily picked up and left at GPC each Sunday.

2. Add Your Smile! 😊 We hope that you already know that GPC has a Member Directory in the “Member Portal” section of the GPC website. Sadly 😞, as of the beginning of August, there were only 26 photographs for the 422 families listed in it. Help us put faces to those names by posting your family photo. The general login password to reach the directory is **610sfrederickave**. (For guidance on posting your photo, visit gpcchurch.org/member-portal. How-to video included!) We’ll also be scheduling in-person, photo-posting help sessions after some of our worship services.



We hope to see your smile in our GPC online directory very soon, and a name tag below your smiling face when you worship at church!

— LUCILLE BAUR
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR

CREATION CARE COMMITTEE TO LEAD NEW 8–WEEK CLASS THIS FALL



The class will begin meeting on **Sunday, September 17, at 9:30 a.m.** in Room 30/31 and will use Part 2 of **One Green Thing: Discover Your Hidden Power to Help Save the Planet** by Heather White. Because the younger generation will be greatly affected by our care of God’s creation today, young adults are also more than welcome to attend and share their ideas. Although the topic of creation care is huge, participants will be encouraged to make one positive change in their behavior (the foods we eat; the things we buy; the ways we reduce, reuse, or recycle; etc.). Participants will find it helpful to read Part 1 of the book before the class begins. Questions? Contact Larry Masselink, facilitator.

Learn More about Medical Missions in October

Your weekly contributions to the operating fund help support a dozen local benevolences as well as 8 global missionaries/mission organizations. For more than 40 years, GPC has supported the Medical Benevolence Foundation (MBF).

On **Sunday, October 22**, representatives from MBF will be at GPC to say, “Thank you.” They will host a light luncheon after the 11:00 worship service and tell us more about what God is doing around the world with Christ-centered healthcare.



BECOMING A MATTHEW 25 CHURCH

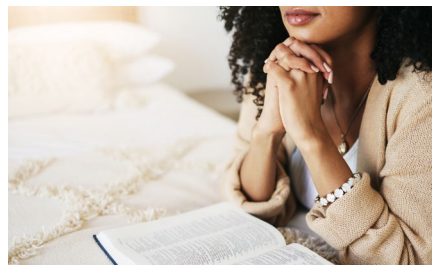


An exciting new development to share with you! GPC is now a PC(USA) Matthew 25 Congregation participating in their nationwide movement to Dismantle Structural Racism. For several years many of us at GPC have studied the history and challenges of racism and wanted to become more involved—to make more of a difference.

The Matthew 25 invitation gives us that opportunity. It focuses on Matthew 25:31–46, the parable of the sheep and goats in which Jesus makes clear that what we do matters to God and how we treat others is important to God. When we welcome others, we welcome Christ; when we bring together people who are divided, we are doing God's reconciling work.

We have formed a committee that has been meeting regularly. In the coming months you will see more about what it means to be a Matthew 25 congregation and our plans for how we go about the long journey to dismantle structural racism. Stay tuned for more details about how GPC can participate in healing the racial divisions and sewing the seeds of racial justice.

— DONNA DANNELS
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE



SECOND SATURDAY WOMEN'S PRAYER TIME

SECOND SATURDAY | 2:00–4:00 PM | ROOM 202

This newly formed group, led by Mary Nana and Sandy Menzies, began meeting in July. All women are invited to join them for prayer and sharing, as women support one another and prayerfully discern the future of women's ministry at GPC.

They will pray on a scripture verse and reflect on how that verse speaks to our lives at this time. The meetings will be fluid in structure; its leaders want the group to be inclusive and meet the needs of women at GPC. They hope that the women who participate will be challenged to grow in their faith, and that all lives will be touched.

If you cannot attend the in-person sessions, please consider praying about the Women's Ministry at GPC and reflecting on the following questions:

- Where are you feeling lost, ill prepared, or in need of support?
- When have you felt fully supported by God? By the Church? By women in community?
- What are you missing from not being in community with other Christian women?

If you feel so inclined, please share your responses with Mary Nana or Sandy Menzies.



Save the Date!

On Labor Day Monday, September 4, GPC members will join the Montgomery County interfaith community in this yearly tradition. Come run or walk with us! Questions? Contact Sandy Menzies (call the church office).



SOME Thanks You!

Thank you to all who helped prepare for making bagged lunches for SOME and to those who helped with their assembly in Lindsay Hall after worship on June 11 and August 13.

An Update from the GERMANTOWN GLOBAL CONNECTION



It's been a while since you've heard from me, but now that the Mainstream is back up and running, let me fill you in on the last few years of the Germantown Global Connection, your mission to the "religious nones" in Upper Montgomery County—those estranged from the institutional church.

Three significant developments top the list:

1. When Covid hit, Ms. Grace Rivera-Oven, now a member of the MCPS Board of Education, and her team discovered that 23 families in the trailer park in Germantown had contracted Covid and could not get out to buy groceries. They delivered food to the families' homes. Soon enough, they found out that other families had health issues that prevented them from leaving their homes. Their distribution efforts expanded. It wasn't long before all the food insecure families came to Grace and her team, desperate for help with their groceries. Thus, the **Upcounty Food Distribution Hub** was born. But with expansion, more and more volunteers were needed to pick up food and deliver it to homes. That's where GGC came in; for almost a full year, from July 2020 to June 2021, we delivered groceries to 40–50 families each week. The Hub relied heavily on us and thus GGC was recognized by the County at the end of the year as one of the key partners for pandemic relief. Having discovered that food insecurity had been a huge problem long before Covid, the Upcounty Hub continues to deliver food to some 1,200 families a week



2. In 2018, Sheppard-Pratt, the largest mental health & social services provider in the region, received a grant from the state to create a hub of social services in Germantown to facilitate greater networking and coordination among the various upcounty agencies. I was recruited, along with some other Presbyterian clergy in the area, to help find a suitable location. When they landed on the site—the fourth floor of 12850 Middlebrook Road in Germantown—they were short funds for the lease, so the other clergy and I went to our National Capital Presbytery (NCP) soliciting a donation of \$100,000 toward the purchase of the unit. Lo and behold, exhibiting visionary leadership in investing in the community, your Presbytery approved the funds! In exchange for these upfront funds, **Sheppard-Pratt offered the Presbytery an office of its own within the suite for the duration of the 15-year lease.** The GGC, along with two other ministries of NCP—Creekside Church, a New Worshiping Community in Clarksburg, and Earthenhands, a ministry based at the Dayspring Retreat Center—now have offices at this location. Although it is a blessing to have nice office space centrally located in downtown Germantown, the real benefit is all the connections that we are making with other social service providers, lending us access to great volunteer opportunities for our people. Come by and visit! I'm usually in the office on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings.



3. After serving with the Upcounty Hub, we began discerning what our own unique project for serving the community might be. We interviewed community leaders, asked lots of questions, and prayed hard. We felt called to address the frightening literacy crisis among early elementary children, already a problem before Covid but exacerbated with the closure of schools for so long. In collaboration with Watkins Mill Elementary School, the Montgomery Village Foundation, Nourish Now, and other agencies, we opened an **after-school literacy tutoring program**, recruiting our own people and volunteers from the MC Volunteer Center, which offers one-on-one, in-person tutoring twice a week to 2nd graders who read well below grade level and need to catch up before 3rd grade, when the curriculum expects them to be able to read. Our pilot year was an enormous success: 39 trained tutors, 40 students, 15 high school student helpers, and 757 tutor hours clocked from October to May! Kids are learning to read! And community residents are discovering a way to give back. The benefits are innumerable. We're looking forward to starting our second year this October!



Once again, thank you for your support. Without GPC, none of this would have taken place. Your financial contributions, your prayers, and your moral support are indispensable. I hope to be able to communicate updates on our successes through the Mainstream more regularly.

"You don't have to leave your neighborhood
to live in a better one." —Majora Carter

—NORM GORDON
CHIEF CATALYST
GERMANTOWN GLOBAL CONNECTION
GERMANTOWNGC.ORG

DIRECTORY CHANGES

Addresses and phone numbers are available through the church office.

Address change | Phone number change

Marilyn Agard	Thierry Kpehor & Daniela Amewuame-Kpehor	Yaw Ntim
Kingsley Anpoma	Edwin Che Mfombong	Janis Rex
Gael Avougnra	Stuart & Marilyn Morrison	Ray & Selma Ridgway
Aaron & Lisa Caruso	Mteuka & Florence Munthali	Pacome Tchatchoua Tchatchoua
Susan Fonti	Susan Ngundam	Serge & Debonnaire Tchouambou
Barbara Heissner	Charles Njoukwe	Edwige Tebou
Jack & Suzy Helenek		

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

50 YEARS
Larry & Mary Masselink
June 9, 1973

51 YEARS
Paul & Susie Linz
June 17, 1972

WELCOME TO THE WORLD!

Congratulations to

Mark and Laura Wilson,
the proud grandparents,
and
David and Clara Wilson,
the proud parents of
GWENDOLYN JULIE
DURHAM-WILSON
born on May 23, 2023

Fletcher & Carole Tukes,
the proud great-grandparents,
and
Katrina & Chris Walker,
the proud parents, and
Benji, the proud big brother, of
JAMESON HAYDEN WALKER
born on May 26, 2023

Mary Lou Dungan,
the proud great-grandparent of
LAYLA ELYSE DANGAY
born on June 21, 2023

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY

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

Charles Andrew Simko
(former GPC member and father of
Elliot, Rachel, and Dominique),
in Tupelo, MS
June 12, 2023

Bernice Ella Felix
in Rockville, MD
June 18, 2023

Elizabeth Bruce
in Derwood, MD
August 11, 2023

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

Sandy Newcomb and family
(her mother and children [Heather Dobbins,
Jamie (& Tommy) Baker, Chris (& Cynthia)
Dobbins] and their families)
her father, James Henry Newcomb,
in Wilson, NC
June 7, 2023

Yaw Obeng
his mother,
Mary Anyei Frempong,
in Accra, Ghana
June 4, 2023

Olivia Stevens and family
her husband,
Charles "Chuck" Stevens
in Gaithersburg, MD
May 28, 2023



Remember The LITTLE FREE PANTRY!

Ongoing special needs include both white and brown rice and pop-top cans of meat and fruit.

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 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 and bmoldroyd@earthlink.net by January 15, April 15, July 15, and October 15.

Questions? Contact the church office.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY REPORT

July 2023

		% OF
	2023 YTD	BUDGET
INCOME		
Envelope Pledged.....	\$419,975	56%
Envelope Unpledged	\$147,753	74%
Loose Offering	\$8,814	98%
Other Income	\$2,772	139%
Room Rent.....	\$100	0%
Interest & Dividends	\$6,271	125%
Manse Rental.....	\$5,600	0%
Mizo Church – Offering	\$5,000	200%
Carryover	\$0	0%
Total.....	\$596,285	62%
EXPENSE		
NCP Membership	\$13,856	50%
Human Resources.....	\$357,718	53%
Buildings & Grounds.....	\$123,011	55%
Office Operations	\$22,123	71%
Communications.....	\$3,722	70%
Stewardship	\$1,499	27%
Comm Engagement	\$61,748	63%
Eq Disciples.....	\$10,751	47%
Vital Worship	\$9,821	81%
Congregational Life	\$613	18%
Other.....	\$5,016	0%
Session	\$75	2%
Total.....	\$609,953	55%
NET	\$(13,668)	

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

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BACK TO SCHOOL AND BACK TO CHURCH!



FIND IT FAST!

- Congregational Meeting – September 24 (p. 2)
- Mission Trip to North Carolina – September 17–22 (p. 2)
- GPP&K – Leadership and Enrollment News (p. 5)
- Music Director Search Committee Update (p. 6)
- Montgomery Philharmonic Concerts (p. 6)
- Caregivers Support Group (**New!**) (p. 6)
- News and Views – From Cameroon (**New!**) (pp. 8–9)
- Building Connections at GPC (p. 11)
- Creation Care Committee Class (**New!**) (p. 11)
- Becoming a Matthew 25 Church (p. 12)
- Second Saturday Women's Prayer Time (**New!**) (p. 12)
- Germantown Global Connection (p. 13)