



RECENT SCENES OF GPC



LIVESTREAM WORSHIP

10:30 AM
EVERY SUNDAY



MARCH 28 | 10:30 AM
PALM/PASSION SUNDAY
LIVESTREAM

APRIL 4 | 10:30 AM
EASTER SUNDAY
LIVESTREAM



From the Heart of Pastor Mary Austin

LOVE YOU!

Dear GPC Friends –

I hate Valentine's Day! I love Valentine's Day!

I hate the emphasis on happy, shiny couples, with the implication that this form of love is better than any other kind. I hate that some people feel as if there's something wrong with them if they don't have a partner.

I love having a day to celebrate relationships of all kinds—friendships, neighbors, family, and partners. I love that we get to stop and celebrate each other. I love that we take time to see how much love there is in our lives. In this issue, you'll find some members of the GPC community writing about different kinds of love. Soon we'll begin the season of Lent, and our theme this year is "Where Your Heart Is." Even before it was in Harry Potter, we heard Jesus say, "Where your treasure is, there your heart shall be also."

Like Valentine's Day, Lent invites us to stop and examine where our hearts are. As we prepare for the gifts of Easter, we pause, reflect, repent, change course, and get our hearts ready for a renewed relationship with God. You can use the Lent materials in any kind of small group, or on your own. You can create a group that meets online for Lent and then stops. Or maybe your current class will pause and use the Lent materials. Or get your cousins, book group members, or work colleagues together to use the material.

Love leads us always toward each other, and toward God. May you find renewed treasure in your faith in this Lent and Easter season.

With love,
Rev. Mary Austin
Pastor



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MANY BLESSINGS *From the Heart of Pastor Mary Beth*

My "star word" for this year is "Foundation," and I am having fun pondering that concept in various aspects of my life. The first thing I thought of when I received the word was a hymn, the first line of which sings, "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent word." I look forward to the ways the Holy Spirit will guide me this year by being attentive to the foundations in my life. (If you would like a "star word" to guide you this year, please contact

Mary Austin or me and, after praying, we randomly will select one for you.)

Another foundation of the Christian life is prayer, and right now our world and our nation are depending on people of faith interceding before the Lord. We all miss not being in worship in person to offer our prayers. But let me invite you to join the Prayer Network, the electronic version of the old prayer chain. All you need is an email address, and you can join, too. Go to the church website, www.gpchurch.org, and scroll down about halfway until you see the little icon for the Prayer Network. Click on that link and submit your name and email and soon you will be receiving prayers from your fellow church members. And you can ask your brothers and sisters in Christ to pray for you, too.

God be with you, my friends.

Many Blessings,
Rev. Mary Beth Lawrence
Associate Pastor

2021 LENT AND HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Shrove Tuesday – February 16

Our virtual Shrove Tuesday Talent Show will be at 7:00 p.m. Flip your pancakes and fry your sausage at home and join us for the world famous GPC talent show! There will be a Zoom link in the daily email and we can watch the show together and then have a brief time of fellowship afterwards.

Ash Wednesday – February 17

Our pre-recorded service will come to you, and you can watch it at any time of the day. Stop and enter into the spiritually rich season of Lent. You can also come by the church to pray and pick up ashes. You can apply the ashes yourself or have someone in your quarantine bubble do it.



Our Lent theme is "Where Your Heart Is." Join a small group or use the Lent materials for personal reflection. There are devotional materials for all ages, and we'll reflect on this theme in worship. On Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m., join us on Zoom for the Fifteen Minute Foundation service.

Palm/Passion Sunday – March 28

Our livestream worship will lead us into Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday – April 1

Communion will be served in the GPC parking lot in the early evening. Then, livestream worship will draw us toward the mystery of Jesus' suffering.

Good Friday – April 2

We'll share worship with several other churches as we wait with Jesus at the cross.



Easter Sunday – April 4

We will rejoice in the resurrection through livestream worship. Invite a friend! You may choose to donate a live Easter lily in honor or in memory of a loved one, or you may choose to donate a virtual plant dedicated to someone. For the latter, we will donate the money to One Great Hour of Sharing. The names of all donors and recipients will be listed in the bulletin.



QUIPS FROM EQUIPPING DISCIPLES

ADULT EDUCATION

Current Sunday Class Offerings – The Present Word, Christian Classics, The Bible as a Whole

Second Friday Book Club – Contact is Cindy Cenname.

Small Groups

- Sunday morning – Studying the Book of James. Contact is Steve Olin.
- Wednesday evening – Studying what God means by “comfort” (study began 1/20). Contact is Johanna Möller.
- Frederick – Will be using the Lenten devotional as their focus. Contact is Yaw Obeng.

Upcoming Offerings

- Beginning 2/18 – A Lenten devotional from Illustrated Ministry – one for families and another for general use
- Beginning 2/22 – A study of the prophets, based on *From Judgment to Hope* by Walter Brueggemann and led by Rev. Roy Howard

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Sunday Mornings

- 9:30 – Godly Play (Zoom)*
- 11:30 – Sunday School (Zoom)*
- 12:00 – Scripture & Reflection (Zoom)*

**The three Zoom links and Bible Study link are available by clicking on the titles, which are included in the Sunday worship service emails.*

Other Offerings

Week of 1/10: Children received a Scripture passage, affirmation, vocabulary word, and joke for January/February. Mailings to families will continue on a monthly basis.

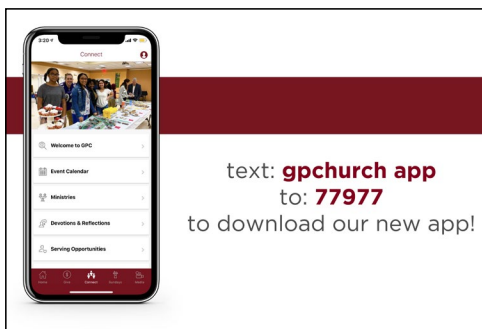
Week of 2/14: The Lenten devotional for families was sent out.

Summer: Plans are being made for Vacation Bible School. June and July sessions will be virtual; the August session may take place at satellite campuses, with around 10 kids at each campus, based on national, state, and municipal guidance.

Carolyn Hayes

Director of Children and Young Families

DOWNLOAD OUR NEW APP



GPC's new mobile app features Online Giving, Worship and Sunday School Videos, Weekly Bulletins, Devotions, Serving Opportunities, Ways to Connect, the Mainstream, and an Event Calendar so that you can save reminders right to your phone. Users can choose the notifications they want to receive.

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

For additional step-by-step directions to download the app, visit the YouTube page. Have questions? Contact GPC's Communications Manager, Jenna Obermiller Bruni, through the church office.

YOUTH MINISTRY

A Note from the Director

Greetings, students, parents, and volunteers! WOW do I miss you! As you read this, we are entering into the Lenten season and headed to Easter, with deep prayers of being back together again. Below you will see our teaching series for middle school and high school students, our college activities, and ways to love and serve our community during this Lenten season. I'm praying that you and your family are healthy and recognizing many of God's blessings during this Covid time.

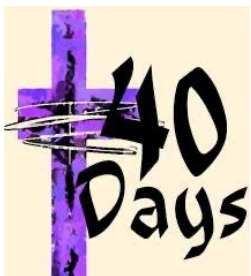
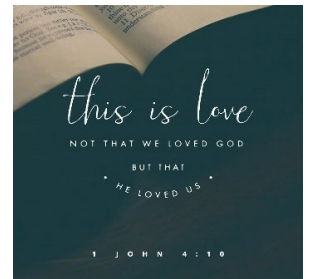
—Carrie Larsen

Director of Youth and Young Adults

Middle School & High School Students

We continue to **meet over Zoom on Sunday and Wednesday nights at 6:30**, alternating nights of fellowship and study. Our teaching series topics for the next three months are as follows: February: First Love, March: 40 Days in the Wilderness, April: From the Wilderness to Tree Exploration. For the Zoom link, contact Carrie.

We know that February is marked as the month of "love." Our **FIRST LOVE** series is based on 1 John. The Bible teaches us to love first: "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19 NIV). Loving is one of the hardest things we are asked to do, and it is not the most natural way to handle these situations. When we first love, we choose to allow Christ to use us to impact the world and demonstrate how Christ first loved us. In this series, we will talk through what it means to first love. How should Christians respond to different situations with love first? 1 John will help us discover some of the truths that can motivate and remind us that we are to first love.



Between Ash Wednesday and Palm Sunday there are **40 DAYS**—the same number of days that the Israelites scouted in the promised land, the same number of years that the Israelites wandered in the desert, and the same number of days that Jesus spent in the wilderness/desert after His baptism. For six weeks we will be looking at some "wilderness" experiences from scripture and comparing them to some of our own so that the next time we feel "lost in a desert" we will be able to draw encouragement and strength from the scriptures in this study. At the end of each study we'll look at what was "given up" (sometimes for the good and sometimes unnecessary) because of the wilderness experience.

In April, we go from walking through the wilderness to exploring the trees that are around us. Throughout the Bible, God has used trees as a metaphor to describe who He is and what He does. After Easter, we will be exploring how God describes both Himself and us as a tree, how we've been grafted into Christ, and how God prunes us so that we can bear fruit for the Kingdom. Join us as we **TALK TREES!**



College Students

College students are invited to join our weekly connection, where we tackle conversations about faith, life, and current culture. Currently we are **meeting over Zoom on Tuesday nights at 8:00**. For the Zoom link, contact Carrie.

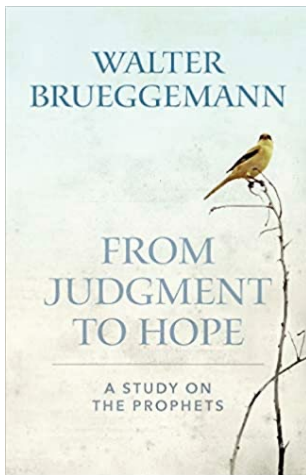
Ways to Love and Serve Our Community

- **Stay in Touch:** Reach out (call or send a card) to some of GPC's seniors and just say hello and let them know that you're thinking of them.
- **Give Five, Wave Five:** Show some love by buying someone's lunch or the Starbucks drink for the person behind you in line. Start waving hello to your neighbors – make their day!



LENTEN BOOK STUDY

Mondays, February 22 – March 29, 7:00 p.m.



What wine pairs well with this meal? The assumption is that some wines match up well with some meals to bring all the delightful tastes to their fullness. So it is with the study of scripture. Some books/letters seem to pair well to bring forth insight into God's living Word. It also allows for experimenting with various pairings to evoke new tastes, new understanding, and new insights.

A study of the prophets seems an excellent pairing with the Book of James. We will listen for how one speaks to the other, enhancing our understanding of both and encouraging our faithful practice in the world.

Beginning on the first Monday in Lent, we will study the prophets, using *From Judgment to Hope* by esteemed biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann. As with new wine and meal pairings, I encourage you to join us in the adventure of learning, discovering new insights, and gaining courage for faithful discipleship in the way of Jesus.

From Judgment to Hope is available online from your favorite bookseller.
Zoom information can be found in GPC's Daily Devotions emails.

—Rev. Roy Howard

MUSIC NOTES

This Lent and Easter season we approach the anniversary of our pandemic lockdown. It stands out to me, in part, because I got news of the lockdown on my birthday. It was not exactly a gift I was hoping for!

Throughout 2020, we made adjustments and tried new things in ministry and worship. We explored what is now possible and necessary due to the virus. This led many people to operate outside of their comfort zone, myself included. We have all learned new skills and prepared for a brighter future—a future that encompasses both in-person worship and virtual worship. This will further the reach of GPC and our ministries, allowing us to connect in new ways with people locally and abroad.

Congregational singing has always been a top priority for me. How can we musically engage people at home and encourage them to sing their worship? The solution we found is to record singing and display the text on the screen—a solution that has caused the preparation and lead time to dramatically increase compared to live music in worship. This alone has been a learning experience—for me and also for the volunteers who have shared their singing! We have been fortunate to have a number of people step out of what is comfortable and explore the new approach of recording for worship. It has been a real pleasure to work with you all and try new things as we seek to engage each other in singing to the glory of God.

Moving into this Lenten season of preparation, we are looking to continue building on the foundation we built last year—more digital collaborations and singing, sending out practice and click tracks for volunteers to learn parts and record, and increasing our music and video production skills to enhance our music in worship. We have some exciting and diverse plans for Lent and Easter this year, and I'd like to warmly invite you to share your voice and instrumental music. If you are interested in singing in a virtual choir, or would like to share a video of yourself singing a solo or playing an instrument, please do not hesitate to contact me. We would love to have you share in worship!

Wade Meyers

Director of Music and Worship Arts

THE LOVE OF THOUSANDS

"Walking, I can almost hear the redwoods beating. And the oceans are above me here, rolling clouds, heavy and dark. It is winter and there is smoke from the fires. . . Suddenly all my ancestors are behind me. 'Be still,' they say. 'Watch and listen. You are the result of the love of thousands.'"

—Linda Hogan, Chickasaw Nation
Dwellings: A Spiritual History of the Living World

Thanks to the decades of research by my parents and grandparents, my family can trace our history back to the 1700s in Germany, Ireland, and England. Farmers, teachers, and tailors, they settled in the Colonies and later in the expansion to the American West.



One of my foremothers, Ellen Brown Hickox Stewart, was an itinerant preacher, an ardent abolitionist, and a suffragette. In her autobiography, she wrote of the contentious time she lived in, before the Civil War and into the Reconstruction, with the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the rising of the Klan.

She could have become a crusader for dogma and truth. Instead, her heart longed to be closer to Christ, to live in a way that showed the love of God. She questioned how best to live out her faith. What would draw others to see the Love of God as she had? Her heart was tender and compassionate, broken by her struggles with pride and selfishness.

I read her words and ponder how I am measuring up to her example these days. With the turmoil we live in now, how well do I respond with love instead of (ahem) "passionate disagreement" to people of a different political persuasion? Can I set aside my insistence that I am convinced I'm right? Can I be humbler in my opinions? Do I truly know God's way, God's leading for our country? (Even as I write these words, I catch myself thinking, "Of course I'm right . . .")

As I look at the breadth and depth of cultures around me, my heart is humbled. I am a woman of privilege and education, who has not unduly suffered, been a refugee from political violence, or lost my job because of my race, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion. Can I truly "know" unless I am listening to the wisdom of those who have gone before me? Can I open my heart to the Spirit's teaching and leading?

As I meditated on this recently, I held a worn quilt in my hands, made by another foremother. It was torn, but I could still see how the individual piecing and stitches held most of it together. The quilt ripped because it was accidentally dropped and became caught in machinery. I had to rip the quilt to rescue it. I kept this torn quilt because of the reminder that sometimes, due to inattention, we as a society rip apart the fabric of something that is beautiful and caring and good. We forget to listen for "the love of thousands"—the generations of familial love that remind us we are each reflections of *Imago Dei*, the Image of God.



Lord, remind me . . . again and again . . . of the Love of Christ poured out for me and for Your Church. Remind me of the faithful witnesses who carry us even now in times of stress and division. Where we are frayed, bind us together. Amen.

—Rev. Deb Vaughn

TOUGH LOVE

February = Valentine's Day = Romance. Love is expressed as red roses, boxes of chocolates, candlelit dinners. But it isn't like that for everyone. And it certainly wasn't like that for Jesus.

Jesus expressed love for those it is tough to love. It is tough to love an outcast, a prostitute, a tax collector, or a prisoner. Yet, those are the very people that Jesus touched with His love, and His love transformed them.

Several years ago, I visited prisons. A federal penitentiary is filled with people it is tough to love. It starts with the guards. I was filled with dread before my first visit. I questioned the wisdom of going. I thought of a thousand other things I could do with my time. I felt nauseous. I read the two pages of instructions controlling the visit. My multiple phone calls to make an appointment for the visit went unanswered. I reread the instructions prior to choosing my outfit to guarantee compliance with the dress code. I was never really ready but I went anyway.

The guard on duty barred me from entering the building. He told me my blouse was not in compliance with the dress code. I was baffled, given the care I had taken with my selection. Another woman waiting in line behind me said, "He did that to me too the first time I visited. By the time I got to town and back with a different top, I missed my appointment." The third woman in line was also denied access to the building because of her blouse. Three of us did a quick huddle, one man loaned us his shirt, we switched some clothes around to "comply," and all three of us were admitted to the building. A fourth visitor who witnessed this charade remarked, "This isn't rehabilitation. This is humiliation." And we were the *visitors*.

I had to control a giggle because the guard who disapproved of our appearances was missing some teeth and had tattoos up and down both arms, dirty hair, and a wrinkled uniform.

After entering a crowded holding area, the gate in front of us opened and we walked through a caged walkway to another holding area, more screening, and another concrete holding area with backless wooden benches. An angry teenage mother, toddler in tow, sat next to me. I asked her for permission to play with her restless child while we waited. The toddler and I strolled up and down the concrete path between benches until we were told to line up for entry to the visiting area.

The mother's visit with her boyfriend was short-lived. Her restless son wriggled off her lap, and she and her child were immediately escorted out of the area for this major infraction of the rules. It was heart-wrenching to watch her boyfriend collapse in grief. I was not allowed to make eye contact or say anything to the young man because that would have been another infraction of the rules.

Despite all of the hassles, visitors return to visit the prisoners. What drives this behavior, if not love? For me, seeing these visits repeated over and over again was a visible sign of God's love.

*For I was hungry and you gave me food
I was thirsty and you gave me drink
I was a stranger and you welcomed me
I was naked and you clothed me
I was sick and you visited me
I was in prison and you visited me
(Matthew 25: 35–36)*

*Truly, I say to you, as you did it
to one of the least of these
my brethren, you did it to me.
(Matthew 25:40)*

God's love is visible. I see it in prison visits. God loves the tough. God loves the imperfect. Thanks be to God.

—Carol Vandrey Curtis

ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

You've probably watched more movies and TV this year than ever before. I certainly have! One recurring theme I've noticed is people climbing the ladder of success and finding (or not finding) what makes them truly happy. The latest in this genre is "Yesterday," about a young man with musical gifts and his road to finding greatness. (If you like Beatles music, you'll enjoy watching "Yesterday.") And how about the Mandalorian who finds love in a small yoda he calls "Kid"?

We all have a list of people we consider great—those who have had a significant impact on the world. People like Picasso, Mother Teresa, Hemingway, Gandhi, Napoleon, Marco Polo, and, of course, Jesus, and many more. However, as I think about greatness, I realize that I personally know many great people, because **accomplishments don't always mean greatness**. So I'm sharing some great people who have made such a difference in my world.

Some of these great people I've known for decades, some for only a short time. One friend has walked with me every step of the way since my husband died; she does the simple, yet great, things for me like recommend books, webinars, trips, or a good wine. Another friend listens when I'm happy or sad and is always just a text or phone call away. Another friend sends me flowers for Christmas, something my husband used to do. Another checks in on me just to say hello and ask how I'm doing. Another, a friend of my daughter's, sends me post cards to let me know that I'm being remembered. Another, a pastor neighbor, invites me to his Bible study. And I could not possibly forget Sunshine, my faithful dog for 15+ years. She's always happy to see me and asks very little for her devotion. I strive to be the person she thinks I am! I could go on and on.

So, I'm suggesting that you identify some great people in your life, starting right now as we begin a new year. Who are the great people who make a difference for you? Maybe you remember a teacher who inspired you, gave you confidence. Or perhaps a good boss who saw your potential and paved the way for your success. Grandparents are a wonderful source of greatness. Did you have one who was your best buddy?

How about you? What gifts do you share that mean greatness to someone else? Maybe you aren't Picasso, but something you draw or paint could mean a lot to someone who loves you. Maybe you aren't a Pulitzer prize winner, but a story or poem that you write to someone could truly make them feel visible or give them insight or just be for fun. You don't have to be Andrea Bocelli. Call someone and sing "Happy Birthday" to them on their special day or just something silly to make them laugh. And how about scraping snow off a neighbor's car or sidewalk, or offering to pick up groceries for them?

Greatness comes in all shapes and sizes. Share it.

"... I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!" (Matthew 25:40)

—Connie Mays

LENTEN MISSION PROJECT: FEEDING THE 5,000 — COVID-STYLE!



Instead of collecting 5,000 food items, this year our goal is to raise \$5,000 to help our neighbors with their basic needs – food, diapers, rent, and utility assistance. Make checks payable to GPC, with Feeding the 5,000 in the memo line. Or, you can give through the mobile app. Our gifts, which Pastor Mary Beth thinks will exceed \$10,000, will benefit Manna Food Bank, the UpCounty Consolidation Hub, and Gaithersburg HELP. Check the app for weekly progress toward our goal!

LEFSE, LAUGHS, AND LUTEFISK

One fall evening a few years ago, a group of us were chatting at GPC's FourthNight dinner. I overheard Bob Gunderson and Alice Alexander mention that they had not yet ordered their lefse for the holidays. The discussion piqued my interest, so I asked, "Why don't you make your own? I do." "You do? Can you show us how?" they asked.

What is lefse anyway? Lefse is a traditional Norwegian "bread," usually wafer-thin, flat, and round. The version most Norwegian descendants are familiar with is made from potatoes, shortening or butter, and flour. If you live in the Upper Midwest, you can find lefse in the supermarket before Christmas, right along with the lutefisk (which is quite another story), but in Maryland you must order your lefse well before Christmas or bake it yourself.

Lefse was probably first used as a form of eating utensil and a way to use up extra mashed potatoes. My grandmother told me the story of how her mother didn't want the family to waste food or go hungry, so she used the leftover mashed potatoes to make lefse the next morning. The wood stove was used as the griddle.



Potatoes are mashed with butter or shortening and allowed to cool. Then flour is added to absorb the extra moisture and stirred until the potato mixture becomes a workable dough, which is rolled out into round sheets about 15" across, something like a large pizza. If done correctly, you can almost see through the dough. The lefse rounds are then baked on an ungreased lefse griddle and turned when there are a few brown spots on them. When nicely browned, the lefse becomes a soft pliable bread, similar to a tortilla but made from potatoes. The lefse round is then cut into eight triangular pieces (like cutting up a pizza), spread with butter and sugar, or cinnamon sugar, and rolled up. It's a delicious dessert or snack.

Over the years, lefse became a dessert treat typically served during the holidays. That tradition turned into the lefse-making party. Soon we were enjoying an annual Lefse Party between Thanksgiving and Christmas, with about twelve of us joining in. Most of us had Upper Midwestern/Scandinavian roots from the Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota areas. My maternal great-grandparents were from Norway and my parents were born and raised in Minnesota.

Because we all have Midwestern/Scandinavian roots, our get-togethers turned into potlucks featuring Midwestern favorites—tater tot hot dish, pickled herring, rosettes, Swedish meatballs, and more. As they say, "A good time was had by all." So we decided to make it a yearly event (except for this year because of Covid). As the event has grown, we've invited more people to join us, including others from GPC, extended families, and friends from outside the church.

It's amazing what we can learn about different cultures, customs, and foods at a simple get-together. The fellowship has helped me learn more about my heritage and I have been reminded of long-forgotten things from my childhood—the food, clothes, sayings, and more.

One of the things I enjoy doing during this time is sitting back and listening to everything that is going on: the laughter, the stories, and the introduction of a different culture to someone new. The feeling I get is like the warm feeling one gets when the weather is awful outside and you are cuddled up with family in front of a warm fire—a very familiar image if you've ever lived in Cold Country!

Oh, yeah! What is lutefisk? It is air-dried whitefish, normally cod, pickled in lye. It is gelatinous in texture after being rehydrated for days prior to eating. The rehydration process leaches out the lye but leaves an aftertaste. It is an acquired taste. Uffdah! Best served with lots and lots of melted butter!

I hope to see you at a future Lefse Party and enjoy your friendship and fellowship. You do not have to be of Scandinavian or Midwestern heritage.

—David Mecklenburg

WELCOME, NEW CHURCH OFFICERS!

At the Congregational Meeting held Sunday, August 16, 2020, the following Elders, Deacons, and Trustee were elected to serve, starting in January 2021.

ELDERS



DAVID ALLSOPP

Although I spent most of my childhood growing up on the east coast of Florida, because my father was in the Navy we moved a lot, including to New Jersey, Brazil, Virginia, and Florida. I graduated from the Naval Academy in 1977, served 8 years on submarines, and then worked at the Nuclear

Regulatory Commission.

Ginny and I were married in Newport News, Virginia, in 1984 and have four children: David (32), Matthew (28), Robert (25), and Elizabeth (20). We joined GPC in 1992, shortly after moving to the area. We were attracted by the quality of worship, the focus on youth, and the preschool, which our children attended.

I enjoy exercise, especially swimming, which is where I met Ginny. We started a community summer swim team to promote the development of children's water safety skills and help bring our community together.

Being a Christian has always been important aspect of my life. I grew up in the Presbyterian Church, where I was baptized, confirmed, attended youth group, and sang in the choir. I'm honored to be asked to serve as an elder for GPC.



CAROL VANDREY CURTIS

My faith journey began in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where I was born and baptized at the Smithfield church. My parents were active church members, and Sunday School and Vacation Bible School were part of growing up. We moved from Pittsburgh to

Detroit to Valparaiso, Indiana, for my father's engineering career with the steel industry, and church was always part of our lives.

My walk with God began when my father died in an automobile crash when I was a college freshman. In the midst of the overwhelming grief, I felt a peace that passeth all understanding. I returned to school at American University in DC, changed majors, and transferred to Indiana University to be closer to my grieving mother.

I married my high school sweetheart, Don, moved to his home in Madison, Wisconsin, and completed my B.S. in nursing from the University of Wisconsin. A career as a critical nurse educator, wife, mother of two, and college student earning a Master of Science degree from the University of Maryland occupied my time. Don and I built a "retirement" home on the Eastern Shore in 2002 and, after 27 years in Montgomery County, moved to rural Maryland.

Country church life is simple. Everyone pitches in. With 50 regular attendees, God led me to be the lay leader the year we had no pastor. I conducted the service and a visiting minister gave the sermon and the sacraments. I served on the Church Council and the Pastor Parish Relations and Nominations Committees, and was the Treasurer, a VBS leader, and a Bible study leader.

After my husband died, I remained on the Eastern Shore until God brought me together with Tom Curtis. I joined GPC, and we were married here in November 2018. GPC feels like home. God is very present in the church. I see Him in the Sanctuary and online services. I see Him as all the active groups meet in the church building or stay connected virtually. Community outreach is ongoing. His Spirit is everywhere. I look forward to continuing my walk with Him through service to GPC.



DONNA DANNELS

A native Washingtonian, I was born in DC but mostly grew up in Laurel. My husband, Ed Markley, and I joined GPC when we married and moved to Derwood in 1987, and we've been members now for 33 years. I'm a lifelong

Presbyterian. Growing up in the church was a big part of my family's life. One of my early memories is being in the children's choir. My singing praises to God continues today in GPC with our Chancel Choir and Praise Band. I've served GPC in several capacities. For a few years, Ed and I found working with our youth program as advisors very rewarding. I have served on several committees, including the Pastor Nominating Committee for Mary Beth. I'm one of many people who count and track the Sunday worship service offerings. After retiring from the Federal Government, I joined other GPC volunteers to help prepare breakfast at the SOME kitchen and dining room in downtown DC.

I believe that the influence of growing up Presbyterian had a great deal to do with choosing a career with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help people who suffered immense losses due to natural disasters. Decades of disasters showed me that those who have little to begin with lose everything through no fault of their own. With the coronavirus, those who are least prepared and can least afford a catastrophe are most affected. My desire to help those who are marginalized, and not adequately seen or heard, continues. I hope that during my time on the Session we can find meaningful ways for GPC to have a greater impact in areas of social justice and institutionalized racism in our community and country.

Throughout life, God places before us challenges to work through and obstacles to overcome so that we may become wiser through experience, develop new skills and coping mechanisms, learn to trust Him, and grow in our faith. As an elder, I look forward to the opportunity to work with others and apply all of this as we continue living through and past the pandemic and find our new "normal" at GPC.



GRACE ATANGA FUH

I was born into a Christian family in Bamenda, a city in the English-speaking region of Cameroon. As a young girl, I was very active in various church activities—I participated actively in Sunday School, was a Leader of the Young Presbyterians (YPs), and sang in the congregational choir of the Ntamulung Presbyterian Church. In 1993, I joined the Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) Movement in the Bonamoussadi Presbyterian Church in Douala. In 1995, I was voted Presbytery Secretary of the CWF Movement in the East Mungo Presbytery. In 2003, I was appointed

to be a Pioneer Provincial Secretary in the office of the East Mungo Women's Department.

I moved to the U.S. in February 2004 and worshiped at Silver Spring Presbyterian Church until 2009, when I moved to GPC, influenced by my uncle, Titus Fomuso, and Joseph Kum. I found a home at GPC, which was very welcoming, and immediately became a member.

In 2015, I was elected national secretary for the PCUSA CWF Movement. I am also a PW Co-Racial/Equity Communicator on the National Capital Presbytery Coordinating Team and a member of the Racial Ethic Dialogue Team.

I'm a registered nurse, working with persons with disabilities in the District of Columbia. I have two daughters and three grandchildren. I love singing and participate actively in the lay worship ministry here at GPC. I'm very thankful to God for this opportunity to serve Him even more as an elder. To God be the glory!



ANDY IMBODEN

A lifelong Presbyterian, I grew up the eldest sibling in a large family in Upstate New York. The church has always been a rock for me in times of uncertainty or turmoil, and never ceases to be a source of inspiration. I was first ordained and installed as an elder at my childhood church in 1994. A

highlight of this time period was serving communion to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church when it was held in Syracuse in 1997.

I moved to Gaithersburg in 2001, and GPC has been my church home ever since. I transferred my membership here in 2006 and have been contributing my time and talents to young family activities. My wife, Stacey, and I have been married since 2003 and have two young children, Alex (12) and Lauren (10), who were baptized at GPC and have been raised well in our church community.

I am trained as an engineer and scientist, with degrees from Penn State and Clemson Universities, and have worked both domestically and internationally. Most of my career has been spent with the federal government, where I have served more than 10 years as a supervisor as well as working directly for two separate chairmen of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

I'm honored and humbled to be nominated to serve as an elder for GPC, particularly during this important time.



AKIKO C. TAKETANI

I was born in Tokyo, Japan, the third of four siblings. I received my education and earned a Food and Nutrition Certificate and Diploma as post-secondary education in Japan. In 1992, I went to Canada to study English as a second language. Later I studied International Management and received a Bachelor of Management. I met my husband, Kwang Choi, while I studied in Canada. We married and moved to Dallas, Texas. We have two sons; Eugene (15) was born in Dallas, and Johan (12) was born in Washington, DC,

two years after we moved from Dallas to Rockville. We joined GPC in 2009.

Although I was born into a Buddhist family in Japan, my mother sent my siblings and me to Sunday School at a small community church near our home. I learned about Jesus, sang children's praise songs, and heard New Testament parables. When I started first grade, my feet gradually moved away from the church, but God always remembered me and prepared a way back to Him for me. While we lived in Canada, Kwang invited me to his church. A church was once again in my life! God's love slowly opened my heart, and I was baptized in Dallas in January 2002.

DEACONS



JOCELYNE AMEWU

I was born in Togo to a Presbyterian family, and we moved to the United States in January 2010. My husband, Kofi Baka, and I have three children: Peniel (13), Alphonso-Bright (10), and Richard (5). I was very happy when my elder brother, Joseph Amewu, introduced me to GPC. It

is a church where I feel comfortable and know that I can grow my faith in Christ.

school librarian at Louise Archer Elementary School in Vienna, Virginia.

After Stephen and I divorced in 1975, I began searching for a church home. I started attending services and singles' groups at various churches and eventually met Roger Gregory at the Unitarian Church in Rockville. We became members of GPC in 1978 and were married in 1980. Our daughter, Bonnie, was born in 1983.

Roger and I taught Sunday school, helped in the nursery, actively supported the youth ministry, served as pulpit assistants, and enjoyed many family events. We always sat in the first row at the 8:00 worship service—Roger on the end, with Bonnie between us. Roger went to be with the Lord in September 2013 and is memorialized in the GPC Columbarium.

After five years as a family day care provider during Bonnie's early years, I returned to elementary education as a school library media specialist for MCPS and then retired in 2017.

This call to serve as a deacon is, in a way, the completion of a circle. As a member of the first Stephen Ministry class in 1984, I found the experience to be a wonderful and fulfilling way to serve the church at that time.

Another circle in my life that was a reconnection occurred in March 2018, when I discovered that Stephen had also been widowed and was now living in Derwood, 12 miles from my home in Germantown. After 43 years of no communication whatsoever, we became a couple again—older, wiser, and feeling very blessed—until his passing in November 2020.

DONNA GREGORY



I grew up in Des Plaines, Illinois, the oldest of four children. My journey as a Christian began with attending Sunday School at the Des Plaines Bible Church with my best friend as well as occasionally the Methodist Church with my family. I loved Vacation Bible School in the summer, the youth

groups as a teenager, and the communities of faith and fellowship.

I graduated from the University of Illinois in 1969 with a degree in elementary education, specializing in library science. I met my first husband, Stephen Goldman, there and we moved to Rockville for his post-doctoral work at NIH. I spent the next 13 years as the



MARILYN MORRISON

I was born and raised near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Our family lived in France for four years and we attended the American Church in Paris.

Returning to the U.S., I attended the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, where I studied home economics. Finding a Protestant church near campus was difficult, so I went to Catholic mass with my roommate. I moved home my junior year and worked full time for Bell Telephone while earning a night school degree in accounting from Villanova University.

Stuart and I were married at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania, having met through the single young adult group there. A year later, he took a job in Washington, DC, so we moved to Gaithersburg. Almost 40 years ago, I walked into GPC. I'd hesitated coming because the building was so modern, but I've barely moved from the original seat I took the first day!

For 20 years, I taught in GPP&K and did their bookkeeping. I also served on their board twice. We raised our three children—Emily, Rebecca, and Stuart—in the church. I've taught VBS and children's Sunday School for many years. Currently I'm a teller and an office aide, and I also lead our Community Schools Outreach program.

Upon Stuart's retirement in 2005, we moved to Lithuania, where we attended the International Lutheran Church of Vilnius. Only a small number of people attended English language services there. I once led the services while the pastor was traveling. While reading the scripture from the podium, I did not have a chance to be nervous. My voice projected well with no amplification and the acoustics of the cold stone church fascinated me.

Caring for others in need has been a calling for me—at orphanages in Lithuania and elementary schools in Gaithersburg, and with members of GPC. I look forward to serving as a deacon.

TRUSTEE



JERRY BROWN

I'm from Harlan in southeast Kentucky, where my father was a coal miner and my mother worked part-time as a housekeeper. My brother was 2 years younger than I. My late wife, Maxine, and her siblings grew up in the same place, and her parents' livelihoods were the same as those of my

parents. We attended the same school and the same Baptist Church, and both went to Kentucky State College (now University). She was a year ahead of me and became a schoolteacher.

After graduation, I went to Tuskegee Institute in Alabama for a one-year internship in college business management. Upon completion, I was employed at my alma mater as their Budget Manager. Back in Kentucky, Maxine and I became more friendly, but the Draft Board wanted me, too, so I joined the U.S. Air Force. After basic training, I went to Arizona for 3 years. Maxine and I were married in 1963, right before the end of my enlistment.

In 1964, the USAF employed me as a civilian personnel specialist in Los Angeles and Sunnyvale, California. Our son, Aaron, was born in Los Angeles. NASA employed me in 1975, which required us to move to Langley

Research Center in Hampton, Virginia. There I led the development of a Minority Recruitment Program for Scientists and Engineers in NASA.

In 1976, we moved to NASA headquarters in Washington and our Gaithersburg townhouse. I was involuntarily involved with Cub Scouts, which led to Boy Scouts and Troop 207 at GPC, and Youth Group, where our son wanted to be. In 1980, Maxine and I became GPC members and I became a Scoutmaster. Shortly afterwards, I became a GPC bus driver. I served an elder for 3 years and was Property Chair. Later, I completed the term of an elder who had relocated, serving 18 months. I've also served on two Pastor Nominating Committees. Maxine and I went on most of the PDA mission trips, beginning with New Orleans (for Katrina). I have volunteered for SOME for about 25 years, helping serve breakfast in downtown DC.

This will be my third term as Trustee, and it is a blessing that God led my family here to serve Him, the church, and the community.

Candidate bios for the Class of 2023 first appeared in three Daily Devotions emails in August 2020.

A few bios have minor updates and, due to space limitations in this issue, some have been edited slightly for length.



HAPPY 65TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY!

Frantz and Lois Wilson

December 24, 1955



WELCOME TO THE WORLD!

Congratulations to:

Terry and Pam Carlson,
the proud grandparents,
and

Dan and Carolyn Ramsden,
the proud parents

of

ZACHARY JAMES RAMSDEN

born on November 23, 2020



CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY



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

Hubert Morsink

(husband of Mary Beth Morsink)
in Gaithersburg, MD
November 15, 2020

Edoh Amewu

*(husband of Angele Nyakpor,
and father of Joseph Amewu
and Jocelyne Amewu)*
in Lome, Togo
December 17, 2020

Pat Tomlinson

in Rockville, MD
December 20, 2020

Tom McIlrath

(husband of Valerie McIlrath)
in Gaithersburg, MD
December 20, 2020

Mike Fumai

(husband of Lisa Fumai)
in Gaithersburg, MD
December 27, 2020

William Dyer

(husband of Judy Dyer)
in Silver Spring, MD
January 12, 2021

Mary Beth Morsink

(widow of Hubert Morsink)
in Gaithersburg, MD
January 23, 2021

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

Dottie Slavcoff

*(her sister, Mary Bressler,
in Dillsburg, PA)*
December 9, 2020

Pam Carlson

*(her father, Grady Smith,
former GPC member,
in Greensboro, GA)*
December 28, 2020

Anita Sung

*(her father, Dr. Shen Sung,
in Gaithersburg, MD)*
January 2, 2021

Kay Penn

*(her son, Russell Penn,
in Arcanum, OH)*
January 15, 2021

Barbara Oldroyd

*(her uncle, John Moser,
in Grove City, PA)*
January 23, 2021

Curt Coughlin

*(his mother,
Jane Soucek Coughlin,
in Gaithersburg, MD)*
January 28, 2021



EASTER FLOWERS



Please take this opportunity to remember or honor a loved one by ordering a plant to be placed in the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday. The cost is \$10 per plant.

Flower orders can be placed online at gpchurch.org/easter before Sunday, March 28.

DIRECTORY CHANGES

Addresses and phone numbers are available through the church office.

Gary & Kathleen Aller
Tom & Carol Curtis
Gary & Gayle Luckenbaugh
Susan Ngundam

ARE YOU SOCIAL?



facebook.com/GaithersburgPresbyterianChurch

instagram.com/gpchurch_moco

youtube.com/GPChurch_Moco

Be sure to "like" our Facebook page,
 "follow" our Instagram account,
 and "subscribe" to our YouTube channel!

FINANCIAL SUMMARY REPORT

December 2020

| | 2020 YTD | % OF BUDGET |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| INCOME | | |
| Envelope Pledged | \$741,189 | 92% |
| Envelope Unpledged | \$169,817 | 113% |
| Loose Offering | \$44,501 | 97% |
| GPP&K Rent | \$10,840 | 56% |
| Other Income | \$7,353 | 294% |
| Room Rent | \$910 | 364% |
| Interest & Dividends | \$127 | 64% |
| FourthNight | \$1,564 | 23% |
| Manse Rental | \$0 | 0% |
| Carryover | \$0 | 0% |

Total \$976,30191%

EXPENSE

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|
| NCP Membership | \$28,867 | 100% |
| Human Resources | \$539,951 | 88% |
| Buildings & Grounds | \$195,299 | 84% |
| Office Operations | \$26,824 | 67% |
| Communications | \$3,581 | 72% |
| Stewardship | \$3,122 | 55% |
| Comm Engagement | \$91,570 | 91% |
| Eq Disciples | \$10,564 | 42% |
| Vital Worship | \$6,810 | 69% |
| Congregational Life | \$2,087 | 28% |
| Session | \$81 | 0% |

Total \$908,75785%

NET \$67,544

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

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LENT AND HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE (p. 2)



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