St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church



50TH ANNIVERSARY

SEPTEMBER 12, 2021
10:30 AM
PREMIERED ON YOUTUBE

VISION STATEMENT FOR ST. GREGORY THE GREAT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The vision of St. Gregory the Great is to be a program-sized, culturally integrated parish, proclaiming and loving like Jesus with varied worship, music, and outdoor spaces.

THE HOLY VIRTUAL EUCHARIST

The 16th Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 19

THE WORD OF GOD

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION *

What happens when you are spiritually prepared and desire to receive communion, but can't? Such a case is referenced by a paragraph in the 1979 Prayer Book:

If a person desires to receive the Sacrament, but, by reason of extreme sickness or physical disability, is unable to eat and drink the Bread and Wine, the Celebrant is to assure that person that all the benefits of Communion are received, even though the Sacrament is not received with the mouth.

A nation-wide shut down due to a pandemic fits, I'm sure we'll agree, with the words "by any other impediment" listed in the first Prayer Book. Our Lord will not cut us off from his grace. If we truly desire him, he will come to us, even if we cannot receive the Sacraments he has instituted so that we may receive his grace. This is not a new idea. St Thomas Aquinas, writing nearly 800 years ago, said:

before receiving a sacrament, the reality of the sacrament can be had through the very desire of receiving the sacrament. Accordingly, before actual reception of this sacrament, a man can obtain salvation through the desire of receiving it, just as he can before Baptism through the desire of Baptism, as stated above (Summa, III.73.iii)

Desiring to receive the spiritual grace of the Most Holy Eucharist (and being prevented from receiving it sacramentally) is known as Spiritual Communion. It is so very important to note that this gift is given to us when we cannot, for very good reason, be present at mass.

When you are watching a live-stream or recording of our liturgies, any of the following prayers may be said at the moment of communion when you would normally leave your pew and make your journey to the altar:

In Union, dear Lord, with the faithful at every altar of Your Church where Your blessed Body and Blood are being offered to the Father, I desire to offer You praise and thanksgiving. I believe that You are present in the Holy Sacrament. And since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, I ask You to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to You, and embrace You with all the affections of my soul. Let me never be separated from You. Let me live and die in Your love. Amen.

OR

Faithful God, in the wonder of your wisdom and love, you fed your people in the wilderness with the bread of angels, and you sent Jesus to be the bread of life. Though I cannot physically consume these gifts of bread and wine, I thank you that I have received the sacrament of Christ's presence, the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of Christ's passion. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may I embody your desire, and be renewed for your service, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen. (from Enriching Our Worship 2)

OR

"My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire you with all my heart. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already in my heart and unite myself to you completely. Please do not let me ever by separated from you." (by St. Alphonsus Liguori)

*Except where otherwise indicated, the whole of this article (with only very little amendment) is taken from the website of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where it was posted on April 5, 2020. No author was specified.

OUR PARISH

ABOUT SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT

St. Gregory the Great (Pope Gregory I) lived from 540 to 606. His feast day was March 12 up until 1969. His feast day is now September 3. Gregory came from a wealthy Roman family and devoted his fortune to founding monasteries. At the age of 35 he became a monk and then, reluctantly, abbot and deacon of Rome.

In 590, against his wishes, Gregory was elected Pope. As Pope, he enforced papal supremacy and established the temporal power of the papacy. He was resonsible for sending missionaries to Englad and for instituting the celibacy of clergy. The patron saint of musicians, he contributed to the development of the musical form known as the Gregorian Chant. The dove, representing the Holy Spirit, symbolizes the divine inspiration of his writings and often appears with him in works of art.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ST. GREGORY'S

The idea of founding a mission church was first expressed in 1971 by the rector of Emmanuel, Athens. Within a short while, five couples met to talk the idea over. With encouragement from Bishop Randolph R. Claiborne, the first service was held on October 24, 1971, in a meeting room of the Athens Federal Savings and Loan. Three weeks later the small group of worshippers moved to Barnett Shoals Elementary School. A vestry was elected in December, and on January 27, 1972, the Annual Council of the Diocese of Atlanta accepted St. Gregory the Great as a mission church. In 1978 the congregatio moved from the school to our present location. The original "church" was designed as a multipurpose building. It now houses the parish hall, offices, and nursery.

Most of the early Gregorians were newcomers to Athens. The small group included couples in their 30s and 40s with young children. The first members were enthusiastic, idealistic, and progressive. They held ideals and dreams that are still alive at St. Gregory's today. Gregorians welcome all people into our church family — wherever they may be in their journey of faith. We believe that children fully belong in church, and we encourage parents to include children in the worship services. In our worship, fellowship, service, and study, we are relaxed and informal. We embrace diverse liturgical expressions. We are committed to oureach and handson service, the giving of one's time and talent as well as one's money for Christ's sake.

MILESTONE DATES IN ST. GREGORY'S HISTORY

| October 24, 1971 | First Service |
|-------------------|--|
| December 1971 | First vestry elected |
| January 27, 1972 | St. Gregory's accepted as a mission church |
| October 1, 1978 | First worship service in first church building |
| November 19, 1989 | Dedication of the first parish hall (now the Christian Education Building) |
| August 11, 1992 | Dedication of the Chapel of Saint Claire & Saint Francis (outdoor chapel) |
| November 30, 1997 | Dedication of the Memorial Garden |
| June 3, 2001 | Groundbreaking for new church |
| July 20, 2002 | Dedication of new church |

ST. GREGORY'S CLERGY HISTORY

| The Rev. Kenneth (Ken) Kinnett | 1973-80 |
|---|--------------|
| The Rev. Arthur (Nick) Johnson | 1981-85 |
| The Rev. Eugene (Gene) Britton | 1986-95 |
| The Rev. G. Porter Taylor | 1996-2004 |
| The Rev. Gloria D. Bowden, Assistant Rector | 2001-02 |
| The Rev. P.J. Woodall, Interim | 2004-06 |
| The Rev. Beth Long | 2006-2016 |
| The Rev. Laura Bryant, Interim | 2016-2018 |
| The Rev. Thelma (Nikki) Mathis | 2018-present |

The Beginning of Saint Gregory Episcopal Church

by Peter Rice, First Senior Warden and Gregorian Chant Editor

On Sunday, April 18, 1971, the week after Easter, the Reverend Raby Edwards of Emmanuel Church mentioned in his sermon that he felt called to start a mission parish in our county. That spark lit a fire in a number of us. A group of five families met that afternoon at the home of Lee and Linda Schramm to discuss how we would, with God's help, go about doing just that – start a church!

Raby told us to start having conversations with members of Emmanuel to see if there was an interest, and he arranged for us to go to the Diocesan office to see what we should do next. There were a lot of things to consider, rules to learn and questions to answer, but we were on fire and by October 19 we announced in the first newsletter that our first worship service would take place in the basement of Athens Federal Savings and Loan, downtown Athens, on October 24, 1971. We had our **first covered dish meal and 50** people attended evening prayer.

One week later, we did it again, with dinner and a nursery. The Venerable John Lee Womack, archdeacon of the Diocese of Atlanta, representative of the Diocesan Mission Committee, attended to instruct us on the requirements and procedures for forming a mission. **60** people attended. Whoopee!

The next Sunday we had a covered dish supper, a nursery and Sunday School.

Two Sundays later, November 29, we met in Barnett Shoals School, across the street from our current location. Our mission committee had a secretary and five subcommittees! The "Name" committee was devoted to choosing a name for the church and the "Property" committee to finding a place to purchase. We also had our first new member, George H. (Trey) Watson, born the previous Monday morning at 5:30 (22 inches, 9 pounds 12 ounces). After that service, we gathered to sign a petition for the Bishop, requesting recognition of our status as an Organized Mission of the Diocese of Atlanta. 36 people signed the petition.

We were rapidly becoming a larger community of followers of Christ. We worked hard to bring His blessing to the many people we were attracting. In the December 27 newsletter we reported

"We had over 70 people at our Christmas Eve service, including many visitors. The intermediate Sunday School read a prayer they had written and we sang with gusto. The school is still reverberating the joyous sound of Christmas Carols. We were particularly happy to have Emmanuel's rector and curate, Father Raby Edwards, and Father Ken Henry and Mrs. Womack, with us."

And we felt led by God to establish a tradition of helping. From that same newsletter:

"Our efforts to bring Christmas to a family less fortunate than us were overwhelmingly successful. Linda Schramm collected a tree and ornaments, beds, clothing, toys and food, which turned out to be more than enough. Their gratitude shone clearly in their eyes and we were happy to see their joy. With the remainder of this Christmas offering, we were able to assist St. Margaret's (a chapter of the Churchwomen of Emmanuel) with their efforts to help another family."

And here we are 50 years later, blessed to see what God has done through us, still building a community dedicated mussion, outreach, and sharing the love of Christ with all.

Opening Hymn 518

Christ is made the sure foundation

WESTMINSTER ABBEY



OPENING ACCLAMATION

Celebrant: Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

People: And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

COLLECT FOR PURITY BCP 355

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.



THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty and merciful God, you raised up Gregory of Rome to be a servant of the servants of God, and inspired him to send missionaries to preach the Gospel to the English people: Preserve in your church the catholic and apostolic faith they taught, that your people, being fruitful in every good work, may receive the crown of glory that never fades away; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE FIRST READING 1 Chronicles 25:1a, 6-8

David and the officers of the army also set apart for the service the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who were to prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals. The list of those who did the work and of their duties was: They were all under the direction of their father for the music in the house of the Lord with cymbals, harps, and lyres for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under the order of the king. They and their kindred, who were trained in singing to the Lord, all of whom were skilful, numbered two hundred and eighty-eight. And they cast lots for their duties, small and great, teacher and pupil alike.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 57:6-11

6 Exalt yourself above the heavens, O God, * and your glory over all the earth.

- 7 My heart is firmly fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; * I will sing and make melody.
- 8 Wake up, my spirit; awake, lute and harp; * I myself will waken the dawn.
- 9 I will confess you among the peoples, O Lord; * I will sing praise to you among the nations.
- 10 For your loving-kindness is greater than the heavens, * and your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.
- 11 Exalt yourself above the heavens, O God, * and your glory over all the earth.

THE SECOND READING Ephesians 1:11-19

In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

Thanks be to God.



THE GOSPEL Mark 10:42-45

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Savior, Jesus Christ, according to Mark.

People: Glory to you, O Christ.

Jesus called his disciples and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

The people are seated at the invitation of the preacher.

THE SERMON: The Rev. Nikki Mathis

THE NICENE CREED BCP 358

(said by all)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE, Form III

BCP 387

Father, we pray for your holy catholic Church;

That we all may be one.

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

That your Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for all bishops, especially Michael, Rob, Paul, and Don, (...) and all priests and deacons, especially Nikki & Christina;

That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world; we pray for our President, Joseph, our Governor, Brian, and our Mayor, Kelly.

That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

That our works may find favor in your sight.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;

That they may be delivered from their distress.

Give to the departed eternal rest;

Let light perpetual shine upon them.

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy:

May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others. ...

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

BCP 360

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Celebrant and People: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Celebrant: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen**.

THE PEACE

Celebrant: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: And also with you.

Offertory Anthem

Draw the Circle Wide

arr. Mark Miller

Draw the circle, draw the circle wide.

No one stands alone, we'll stand side by side.

Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still.

Let this be our song: no one stands alone.

Standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING, EUCHARISTIC PRAYER A

BCP 361

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

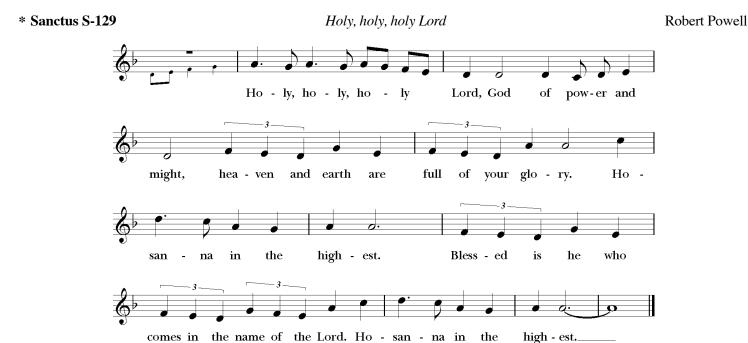
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because you are greatly glorified in the assembly of your saints. All your creatures praise you, and your faithful servants bless you, confessing before the rulers of this world the great Name of your only Son.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:



Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Celebrant and People: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen**.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say

THE LORD'S PRAYER BCP 364

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

* Fraction Anthem S-164

Jesus, Lamb of God

Franz Schubert



THE COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER

Enriching Our Worship 2

Faithful God, in the wonder of your wisdom and love, you fed your people in the wilderness with the bread of angels, and you sent Jesus to be the bread of life. Though I cannot physically consume these gifts of bread and wine, I thank you that I have received the sacrament of Christ's presence, the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of Christ's passion. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may I embody your desire, and be renewed for your service, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

THE BLESSING

Closing Hymn 537

Christ for the world we sing!

Moscow



THE DISMISSAL

Deacon: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People: Thanks be to God.

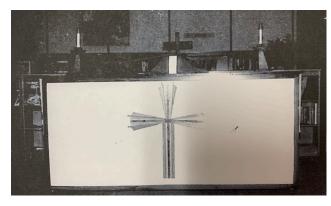
Fellowship Music

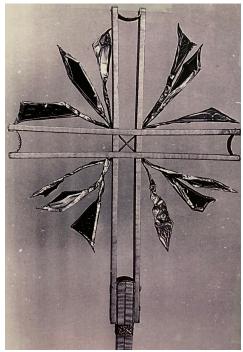
Celebration Fanfare

Charles Callahan

Josh Klein, trumpet | Michael Brewer, trombone















Prayers of the People

In our Parish we pray for Sam Preston, Bruno Jara de la Cruz, Luis Hernandez, Anna Thornton, Bill Alworth, Jennifer Harding, Tess Varner, Paul Varner, James Morris, Tom Hiers, Steve Bailey, Paul Tolar, Joel Hunt, Mia Camoston, Rainsly Vogt, Jane Bowen, Marge Massey, Sheryl King, Doug Welch, Pat Irby, Pat Titus, Stephanie Gamble, Rose Ann Pace, Glen Jedlicka, Stephen Morris, George Watson, Conoly Hester, Deborah Freeman, Gayle Duncan, Jimmy Simons, Gene Watson, Bill Walker, Shelby Welch, Roger Swagler, Stanley Armour, Jack Beach, Bill Beagle, Sally Stuckey, Diane Holcomb, Stephen Corn, Ken Packer, Mary Ellen, Lynn, Joshua, Pete, Sophia, Samantha, Jennifer, and Buddy.

In thanksgiving for those celebrating their birthdays this week: Allison Lewis, Emma Laing, Rebecca Welch, Leigh Hodges, Mattee Barkdoll, Tom Sturgis, Elmer Clark, Jim Green, Andrew Majsztrik, David Lockman, Laura Ferguson, and Grayson Krause.

The people listed here are prayed for by name at each Sunday service. To request prayer for yourself or someone else, please call the office (706-546-7553). If at the beginning of the next month the person needs to remain on the list, please call and give the office an update.

Clergy and Staff

The Rev. Nikki Mathis Rector rector@stgregoryathens.org | 706-546-7553 x2

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Mark Hein Buildings/Grounds *markehein@gmail.com* | 706-549-3239

Allena Armour Sexton allenaarmour57@yahoo.com | 706-614-3704

Nursery Attendants: Missy Hamlin, Megan Reuter, Allison Weaver

Vestry Members: Jane Hudson, Sr. Warden; Kelly Black, Jr. Warden; Julie Worley; LeeAnne Krause; John Bray; Anna Hiers; Blaine Everson; Eddie Bennett; Caley Ross; Chrissy Moffett, Clerk; Les House, Treasurer

Vestry Person of the Day/Week: Eddie Bennett ilason@charter.net