

ST. GREGORY THE GREAT EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Our Many Ministries: Where would you like to serve?

2023

St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church
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** Please contact church office if you have any problems with the contact info listed.
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Acolytes

Being an acolyte is a vitally important, yet relatively simple and low commitment, way to take an active role in the life of our parish.

Acolytes assist the deacon in the preparation of Communion. They carry the cross into the service, calling everyone's attention to Christ and our time of worship. They light the candles and the torches, using them to shed light on the Gospel during the readings.

Along with the robes, the crosses, the torches, and the contemplative attitude, acolytes also carry with them one of the pillars of Episcopal belief- tradition. People of all ages, quite literally, walk in the same steps that thousands have done before in order to create a space fit for worship. Never been an acolyte before? We'd be glad to teach you. Contact the church office for more information.

Altar Guild

The altar guild is responsible for setting up the altar for all services, including funeral and weddings and taking everything down afterward. Two or three members are assigned to cover each month and, depending on how many guild members there are, may be scheduled to serve a few months each year. We currently have one volunteer who takes care of cleaning all the linens and sets up for the Wednesday service. We have one member who handles scheduling and one member who orders supplies such as candles (altar candles, sanctuary lights, advent wreath candles, hand-held candles for the Easter Vigil and late service on Christmas Eve, and the Paschal Candle), wine, wafers, dry cleaning of vestments and altar hangings, small linens, and miscellaneous items needed for special services). The co-chairs meet with the Priest from time to time to discuss specifics of set up. New members receive training from the co-chairs and are always assigned with someone who has much experience.

Serving on altar guild is not difficult, provides schedule flexibility and can be set up in about 30 minutes or so. Setting up the altar can be done at a time that fits your schedule. Some find the time spent setting up for a service to be a time of spiritual awareness and solitude – a time to be in God's house alone. This is especially true on a Saturday when you are setting up for Sunday service, or setting up for a funeral or wedding. Being on the altar guild is a way to get to know other volunteers as you work together in setting up for service. Before Easter and Christmas, we have a "polishing day" to polish the silver, brass, and wood to prepare for the holidays. We have a social gathering once in a while, especially when we have new members, and we have a few required meetings.

Band of Believers

The Band of Believers plays for the Children's Service Christmas Eve Pageant. We are a group of volunteer musicians from the congregation. We dust off our instruments once a year and celebrate the birth of Jesus. We're all ages and abilities. All that is required is a willing attitude. We begin practicing the first Sunday of Advent in the Children's Chapel at 9:30AM. If you want to play your instrument see Vicky or Mark Tavernier. They know where all the band sheet music is located.

Baptismal Banners

The Ministry for Baptismal Banners makes felt banners. The banners are displayed in church during the baptismal service and then given to the newly baptized to commemorate the anniversary of their baptism. Each banner is decorated with the name of a candidate, church symbols, and the date of the baptism. Members of our committee periodically gather to cut and hem felt banner fields, and cut and iron on felt letters, numbers, and symbols. We enjoy the shared fellowship of working together to create the banners.

The Blindspot

The Blindspot is the name given to our group for those in their 20s and 30s. Named by a few members who thought that this age group tends to fall in the Church's "blindspot." Ministries, resources, and simple opportunities to build community with people in our age group are plentiful from the nursery all the way through campus ministry- but tend to dry up after graduation until we have children of our own.

The Blindspot was formed to provide a ministry and community that speaks to and serves people in a chapter of life that can bring everything from grad school, to finding full time employment for the first time, to marriage, to having your first child, and much more.

Contact the church office about how to stay up to date on small group meetings, fellowship opportunities, and more.

Bread Making Ministry

Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you.

For many years, various members of St. Gregory the Great have baked the bread used during Holy Eucharist. Currently, Lane Norton and Brad Hankins share the baking responsibilities and find it a great joy. They are using a recipe Brad developed. If another baker or two would like to join in this satisfying ministry, they would be welcomed. Contact Brad Hankins, if you are interested.

Buildings and Grounds Committees

The areas of oversight for maintenance and repair of our buildings and physical property are varied and include solar panels, management of trash collection, utilities, appliances, equipment (e.g., sound systems, musical instruments, IT, copiers), accessibility, insurance, security, and safety. The areas of oversight for maintenance and repair of our church grounds include lawns and planted beds, parking lots, playground, our Memorial Garden, equipment, storage, accessibility, and safety. Please make your areas of expertise and/or interest known to the committee for occasional help in maintaining our beautiful facilities and grounds.

Children's Ministries

The promises we make each time a person becomes a member of the church through baptism guide Children's Ministries at St. Gregory the Great. (See pp. 304-305 in the Book of Common Prayer for a refresher!) While the focus is on our youngest members, we recognize that we are one Body of Christ, all connected, and strive to strengthen our bonds through cross-generational programming. Our goal is for children to know God loves them, and wants them to love themselves and others.

Our Children's and Youth ministries is a big umbrella that includes:

- Our excellent Montessori-style nursery with its fully-trained, dedicated staff
- Weekly Sunday School using "Weaving God's Promises", a curriculum that helps children learn Bible stories, as well as age-appropriate comprehension of Episcopal theology, liturgy, and mission.
- Children's Chapel, where children fully engage in the Liturgy of the Word each week through scripture, song, prayer, and discussion
- Inreach and outreach projects

- Multiple cross-generational events for celebrations in every season, e.g.,
 - + Advent wreath-making workshop and lunch
 - + Advent calendars for all children and youth
 - + Christmas Eve pageant
 - + Epiphany observance
 - + Tactile Lenten meditation stations and take-home materials
 - + Easter flowering of the Cross
 - + Easter egg hunt with scripture-based treats
 - + Pentecost lessons with tactile activities
 - + Blessing of the Backpacks, backpack collection for those in need, and blessing tags for all
 - + St. Francis educational celebration
 - + Special events for All Saints Day
 - + Thanksgiving and Stewardship events
- Vacation Bible School for all ages (newborns to nineties!) for four evenings in the summer, including dinner, music, Bible storytelling, cooperative games, creative crafts, and Compline nightly
- Safeguarding God's Children training to equip all volunteers, leaders, and employees with knowledge to recognize and prevent childhood sexual abuse
- Opportunities for continuing educational experiences for those who work with children
- In conjunction with the Grounds Committee, provide safe, fun playgrounds
- Assisting the rector with preparation for Baptismal candidates.
- Using funds provided by the Men's Group, provide age-appropriate gift Bibles for those being baptized
- Provide pastoral care for parish children, families, and children's ministry leaders
- Serve the larger church on diocesan, regional, and national levels

Our nursery workers and the Director of Children's Ministries are staff members, but we have many opportunities available for volunteers!

Dream Group

St. Gregory's Dream Group is for beginners into dreamwork, but also for those who already know and experience this reality and need the support, encouragement and wisdom of the dream community. It is important for participants to already be doing their own inner work through reading about dreamwork and by keeping a regular dream journal. The group meets weekly on Wednesdays from 10AM-12PM, in the library in St. Gregory's Christian Education building. Call (706-338-3071) or email (nortonlane@bellsouth.net) Lane Norton for more information before you come to your first meeting.

EfM (Education for Ministry) Community

Education for Ministry (EfM) invites people into small, mentored communities that help us understand our lives and shape our actions as we deepen our Christian faith. We believe a gracious God calls us into relationship to serve the world. Through study, prayer, and theological reflection, EFM enables us to discover and exercise our gifts for the ministry where we live and work.

The five core practices of EfM are

- Living in Community
- Regular Prayer and Worship
- Theological Reflections
- Study of Christian Tradition
- Vocational Discernment

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee assists the Vestry by assessing the financial challenges and opportunities of the parish and providing research, advice, and recommendations to the Vestry regarding financial matters. Parishioners who have experience in church financial affairs, expertise in accounting, banking, business, insurance, law, and/or finance make up this Committee.

Flower Guild

The people on the Flower Guild use their gifts to make our sanctuary so beautiful every Sunday and on special occasions.

Gregorian Voices of Blessing

Gregorian Voices of Blessing is a group of volunteer singers who offer hymns of healing, solace, and comfort to those struggling with issues of living or dying. We sing to people in their homes or in hospices, hospitals, and nursing homes within and around the Athens area. This group provides its volunteers with the opportunity to participate in a meaningful ministry through music.

Labyrinth

Christians have participated in walking meditation since the 4th century. The Holy Trinity canvas labyrinth is modeled after the stone path embedded in the floor of Chartres Cathedral in France. Several times a year the Labyrinth Guild sponsors a walk in the Parish Hall. The tentative schedule of those walks are First Friday of Lent, All Soul's Day Remembrance Walk, First Friday of Advent. We are hoping to begin plans for constructing a permanent outdoor Labyrinth. Your input is invited.

Lay Readers

Lectors read the Old Testament, New Testament, and Prayers of the People for every church service. It is another important ministry that helps keep our worship schedule running smoothly.

Livestream Ministry

The seeds of St. Gregory's livestream ministry were planted during the pandemic shutdown, when the church building was closed and we broadcast recorded services on St. Gregory's YouTube channel. Our online community was born then and has continued even as we returned to in-person worship. The weekly 10:30AM services, as well as Holy Week, Christmas Eve, and other special services, are now available live on the YouTube channel, where they are also archived for anyone to replay on demand, allowing Gregorians who are unable to attend in person to still take part in worship, and establishing a stronger presence for our church in the world at large. The online community participates in a moderated live chat during the services, keeping our connections strong and lively, with regular visitors online from Texas, Arizona, and as far away as the United Kingdom. Volunteers to help with the livestream are welcome; please contact Anthony Barkdoll to learn about training and the commitment required to operate the sound and video boards.

Music & Choir

The music at St. Gregory's features a rich tradition of choral music and congregational singing. We strive to continue this great tradition each week by helping congregants find deeper meaning and experience in worship through music. The volunteer choir is a community of souls who gather each Wednesday evening for our fellowship rehearsal and provide weekly choral anthems and singing support for our 10:30AM Sunday Eucharist service. The choir is also present on major feast days throughout the year as well as occasional concerts and special community events. All are welcome to come join the choir and be enriched by the sacred beauty of both music and community!

Outreach Committee

In keeping with St. Gregory's vision, the Outreach Committee prioritizes volunteer initiatives and fiscal disbursements to impact our wider Athens community by focusing on: food/housing insecurity, health, education and immigration. Some hands-on volunteer opportunities are listed below:

Athens Area Emergency Food Bank (AAEFB)/Little Red Wagon

The AAEFB serves Clarke County residents who have immediate food needs. St. Gregory supports the food bank with volunteers and with contributions of food which may be placed in the Little Red Wagon located in the narthex.

Backpacks and Binders for the Homeless

Several hundred homeless children in Athens-Clarke County begin the new school year without adequate supplies. Through this outreach ministry, parishioners donate backpacks, binders and other school supplies for students of Clarke County District Schools.

Barnett Shoals Clothes Closet

In the Fall, St. Gregory hosts a clothing drive to support our neighbor, Barnett Shoals Elementary School. A list of student clothing needs is provided by the school administration. Working from that list, parishioners contribute, gather and deliver replenishments to the school's Clothes Closet.

Covenant Presbyterian Food Pantry

This Eastside food distribution program is supported by St. Gregory. Each Thursday, volunteers unload food delivered by the Northeast Georgia Food Bank, prepare grocery bags and distribute the bags to our community families in a drive-up service located at Covenant Presbyterian Church. (Contact Jenifer Marquardt: jeniferjkm7@gmail.com or 706-546-4002)

Epiphany Drive

In January and February, St. Gregory partners with the Clarke County Migrant Education Program and other school/district Departments to meet student needs that are beyond typical School Board budgets' reach. Examples include drives for personal and household cleaning supplies and contributions to After-School Care for children in need. (Contact Gail Eilers: eilersgail@gmail.com or 706-705-1024)

Family Promise (formerly Interfaith Hospitality Network):

Family Promise is a coalition of Athens Area churches whose mission is helping homeless families in crisis situations achieve sustainable independence. As a part of this coalition, St. Gregory provides volunteer, on-site support three weeks each year. During the pandemic, we have provided socially-distanced services to these families. (Contact Annette Bates: bateskannette@gmail.com or 706-255-5839)

Parish Life Committee

The mission of Parish Life is to provide hospitality and encourage community within the parish by organizing and hosting a series of events throughout the year. Some of the events are annual, such as:

- Annual Meeting/Vestry's soup luncheon
- Maundy Thursday potluck dinner
- Festive Easter coffee hour
- Bishop's reception
- Pentecost picnic
- Feast of St. Francis potluck breakfast

The committee also hosts coffee hours after both the 8:00 and 10:30 Sunday services and provides receptions for special occasions, including baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Parish Life works with the rector to present appropriate events. We organize, decorate, set up, and clean up. Joining the Parish Life committee is a good way to join in the fellowship and meet your fellow Gregorians as we remain dedicated to promoting a memorable celebration of life!

Pastoral Care Committee

The mission of Pastoral Care is to provide a compassionate response to the spiritual needs of our parishioners. Contact Mother Nikki (rector@stgregoryathens.org), Kendall Kookogey (office@stgregoryathens.org), or Pastoral Care Chair Rhonda Packer (packer.rhonda@gmail.com) with names of those who would benefit from a phone call, email, text, visit or other Pastoral Care needs.

In support of the clergy, there are many lay opportunities for Gregorians to serve and care for one another. Contact the following Pastoral Care members if you or a parishioner you know might benefit from additional support.

Buddy Ministry

The Buddy Ministry fosters connections among St. Gregory's senior adults. Participation criteria include: (1) volunteer to be partnered with a buddy and (2) work with your assigned buddy to schedule a weekly "check in" phone conversation in which you both participate. Just as Jesus sent the disciples out two by two, parishioners are paired so they can encourage and lift one another. Phone calls are not time intensive and can be made in the comfort of one's home. Buddy Ministry participants will benefit from increased socialization, reduced isolation, and increased comfort in knowing someone is looking out for you and that you are looking out for them. Contacts: Marilyn Walsh (grammyto13@gmail.com) and Diane Barret (barret160@charter.net)

Card Ministry

The Card Ministry serves the St. Gregory community by sending cards for birthdays, bereavement, and illness. Children under the age of 18 and adults who are 70 and older receive birthday cards. Parishioners who are ill or lost a loved one are sent cards of sympathy and support. This is an excellent ministry for anyone who would like to be connected to others in the parish and work from home. Another way to be involved is by contributing artwork for cards. All cards that are used have been designed by St. Gregory artists. Contact Jenifer Borg (jeniferaborg@aol.com)

DME Library

Durable medical equipment (DME) is equipment that helps individuals complete their daily activities. It includes a variety of items, such as walkers and wheelchairs. Contact Missy Hamlin (melmariehamlin@gmail.com)

Let's Chat

Let's Chat is an online Zoom opportunity for women of the parish to discuss a variety of topics. The days and time vary, and not everyone can join every time, but everyone is welcome to join whenever they can. Contact: Stacie Court (stacie.court@gmail.com)

Meal Train

A meal train is a system where Gregorians come together to schedule, prepare, and deliver meals for St. Gregory parishioners who needs a little extra help. Meal trains can last for a week or two, or longer if the recipient needs more sustained assistance. Contact: Ruth Elizabeth Conine (StGregoryMealTrain@gmail.com)

Men's Group

The Men's Group is an opportunity for men of the parish to discuss a variety of topics. The group meets at 9AM each Saturday alternating between St. Gregory's and the Somerville residence. Contact: Peter Rice (rice@boppie.com)

Quarterly Brown Bag Series

The Quarterly Brown Bag Series promotes dialogue and information sharing among parishioners on topics that are of interest to them. Sessions may include presentations led by speakers who provide expert advice or a facilitator-led discussion on a particular topic.

Contacts: Rhonda Packer (packer.rhonda@gmail.com) and Stacie Court (stacie.court@gmail.com)

Threads of Prayer

The mission of Threads of Prayer is to knit and crochet in a congenial and prayerful community tangible expressions of the church's love for those in need of healing and comfort. We have made chemo caps, shawls, lap or larger blankets, scarves, and hats for children and babies. After each item is completed, we pray over the item, asking that God bring healing and comfort to those who will receive it. These items are given to a community member or someone one of our members knows who needs comfort, maybe after the loss of a loved one, a diagnosis of cancer or other serious illness or someone who is not able to come to services. We meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 1PM virtually or at St. Gregory's. New members are always welcome, including anyone who would like to learn to knit or crochet. For those who cannot make it but who would like to contribute something to the effort, we welcome any items you would like to make or any excess yarn you want to donate. Contact: Annette Bates (bateskannette@gmail.com)

Transportation

Transportation assistance is provided to Gregorians who need rides to church and necessary doctor's appointments. Contacts: Alice Mohor (alicemohor@windstream.net), Tammy Bowman (tamaralbowman@me.com), or Bruce Bowman (bbgwinnett@gmail.com)

Short Story Group

The St. Gregory Short Story Group began many years ago with a group of people who were committed to reading and sharing ideas and appreciated the richness of the short story. We choose an anthology of short stories and work our way through them. Our discussions are always lively although not necessarily theological.

We meet on the first Friday of each month at 7pm. We met in the homes of members, sharing dessert and wine, until the pandemic hit and then we went on Zoom. Hopefully we will be back to meeting in homes very soon. Our discussion leader is currently Barbara Goodwin and we take turns providing dessert and wine. This is a great group of friendly, funny and talkative people and we welcome anyone who would like to join us.

Contact Lois Alworth at LoisAnne1012@gmail.com or wilo5@charter.net for more information or to get on the mailing list. Or you can contact the St. Gregory office at office@stgregoryathens.org.

Spiritual Formation

This ministry plans the adult education programs offered throughout the year at St. Gregory's, including:

Sunday Morning Bible Discussion Group meets from 9:15 - 10:15 in the Parish Hall. During 2022 the group is discussing the Book of Luke, moving at the pace that works for the group. After the Book of Luke is completed, there will be an interval for a few special interest topics and then in 2023 a biblically based Discussion Group based on Care of the Earth.

Special programs, organized topically, are offered on Wednesday evenings during Advent (3 weeks) and Lent (5 weeks) and will include a simple meal provided for and shared by participants.

Sacred Ground is a sensitive, prayerful and challenging 10 week program of learning and group conversations created by The Episcopal Church to promote transformative dialogue circles on race and racism. Readings and films are provided online for registered participants to review weekly before meeting together to process and discuss as a group. Groups have met via Zoom in 2021 and will begin in person in 2022.

Hebrew Class (off site)

Hebrew Reading, as its name indicates, meets every other Tuesday for the purpose of reading Biblical Hebrew. The focus is on reading a Hebrew passage aloud and then translating said passage into modern English. Since we started this group, we have read through Genesis, Exodus, many Psalms, and other passages. This group is meant to provide an opportunity for persons who have studied Elementary Hebrew to hone their skills through direct encounter with the Hebrew Bible. The group is led by Dr. Joel H. Hunt, retired professor of Hebrew and Cognate Languages.

Lectionary Class

The Lectionary Class led by Les House meets Sunday morning at 9:15 in the Library in the Education Building to discuss the assigned readings, exploring their meanings and pondering connections between and among scriptural readings.

Parish Library

Currently, Richard Cooper is serving as the parish librarian. Additions to the library come from donations of books and purchases (mostly from area thrift stores that support local charitable organizations). Please check with Richard before donating books.

Spiritual Life Movie Series

Currently, Wade McGlamery is selecting quality films and screens them on the 3rd Friday of each month. Popcorn and drinks are provided.

Stewardship Committee

We acknowledge that all things come from God and encourage all of our church to respond in gratitude for all that we have been given. We respond to the needs of our church and our people by highlighting our many church ministries and by conducting an annual Pledge Drive. We work to encourage all the people of our church to use their time, talents and treasure for the good of the God and God's church. Our many church ministries provide a multitude of opportunities to serve and be nourished by our service to ourselves and to others. We believe the best way to meet and know each other is to be involved and work together in a common purpose.

Ushers

Ushers are friendly and gracious members of St. Gregory's who help parishioners feel at home during services. Ushers hand out bulletins, count attendance, guide the congregation to communion during the 10:30 Sunday services, and on other special occasions, and help with seating at large gatherings. Ushers are accessible to members of the congregation throughout the service, and perform other minor tasks during services. Ushering is easy and meaningful. New ushers are always welcome!

Welcoming Committee

The mission of our ministry is to make everyone feel welcome to our church. We greet visitors, newcomers, and members to our 10:30 Sunday worship service every week. We encourage everyone to join our church mailing list and wear a name tag when attending worship. We send a handwritten welcome note to every visitor that completes a visitor's card. We organize a newcomers' reception once or twice a year. We staff a booth to welcome visitors to our church at the Athens' Annual Pride Parade celebrations. We encourage all our church members to greet and introduce themselves to visitors, newcomers, and other church members.

Worship Committee

"The perfect church service would be the one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God." -- C.S. Lewis.

The Worship Committee's mission is to provide meaningful worship experiences for our members and visitors. We meet on a regular basis to discuss and plan worship services. Our goal is to provide an atmosphere where all may worship as part of a community of mutual love and respect. The committee helps to coordinate all parts of our worship life including: *Acolytes * Altar Guild * Bread Ministry * Choir & Music * Flower Guild * Lay Eucharistic Ministers * Lay Readers * Ushers (See previous pages for these separate ministries.)

Youth Ministries

Our Youth program serves all students from the 6th to 12th grades.

- A **Sunday school class** is taught in the youth room, located upstairs in the Parish Hall building, every week starting at 9:15am. Students will learn about Biblical interpretation, how to implement various spiritual practices in their day to day lives, and more.

- **Outside of Sunday school**, our youth members have opportunities for fellowship such as trips to the movies, game nights, lock ins, and field trips! Giving youth the chance to build relationships with their peers will create memories that they will cherish for the rest of their lives and help them to build a firm foundation of community as lifelong church members.
- St Gregory's also takes our youth on **pilgrimages**, both domestic and abroad. Meeting and learning from people who live and believe in countless ways creates extraordinary experiences that students won't get anywhere else.
- **The Diocese of Atlanta** sponsors many events annually. Some are held at Camp Mikell, in Toccoa, while others take place at various locations in and around Atlanta. Summer camps, day trips, worship events, conferences, and leadership workshops allow students to meet and grow with youth members from across the state!

Please contact the Youth Minister or the church office for more information.

