

GREGORIAN CHANT

St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church | Athens, GA

Happy New Year (Again!)

Yeah, I know that we in the church already had our New Year back at the beginning of Advent, but that doesn't mean we have to ignore our culture's New Year! Episcopalians can always party with the best of 'em! So party on! Remember we are in the world, we are just not of it, as Jesus tells us in John, ch. 17. But what does that mean, really. It means we are temporary citizens here, but our permanent place is in God's kingdom, God's commonwealth, which is being brought to the world as we are being Christ's hands and feet. It means the world's advice, customs, and pressures don't have the last word in our lives. Only God's love has that. So eat all the black eyed peas and corn bread you want, but don't feel obligated to make resolution after resolution after resolution...God changes us as we follow Jesus. Yes, ring in the New Year at midnight, but don't feel pressed to buy out the self-help section at the local bookstore. Instead, read *Flunking Sainthood: A Year of Breaking the Sabbath, Forgetting to Pray, and Still Loving My Neighbor* by Jana Riess and let grace lead you home. Go ahead and stay out so late, your new year begins at noon, but instead of hopping on the self-improvement bandwagon with the rest of the world, hop on the discipleship bandwagon with Jesus, and pray Compline at night, once a week in your Book of Common Prayer. St. Paul said it so well (I like the Message Bible version):

Those who think they can do it on their own end up obsessed with measuring their own moral muscle... Those who ***trust God's action in them find that God's Spirit is in them—living and breathing God!*** Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to, turning to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life. Romans 8:5-6

You hear that? A spacious, free life! We can't ask for a better new year than that!

*Peace and Joy,
Mo. Nikki+*

Installation of Our New Rector!

Please mark your calendar to attend the Installation of the Rev. Nikki Mathis as Rector of St. Gregory the Great. The Right Rev. Rob Wright will officiate during this service and will join us in welcoming Nikki to our congregation.

We will celebrate Nikki's new ministry with a reception in the Parish Hall directly after the service.

There will be lots more details about this service. So pay attention to the Friday newsletters and your service bulletins for more information.

Meantime, mark your calendar and join us in this joyous celebration on January 27!



Feast of the Epiphany Celebration

The King's cake stuffed with three hidden treasures! The crowning of three "kings!" A cupful of wassail! Joyous singing! Welcome all to the Feast of the Epiphany 2019!

Hosted by Parish Life, this fun-filled celebration with be held following the 10:30AM service on Sunday, January 6. Refreshments of the King's cake and fresh fruit will be served. The three lucky people who find a trinket in their cake slice will be crowned 'King for the day' and worthy gifts will be bestowed. And, of course, there will be the traditional drinking ow wassail – along with coffee and juice for the children. Hopefully, we'll end with the traditional singing of the "Twelve Days of Christmas" led with such merriment by Jonathan Klein.

Please plan on joining us in Parish Hall for this joyous, family celebration. It is the first festive event of the new year!

6PM Eucharist

Beginning Sunday, January 13, we will be rekindling the 6PM Eucharist on Sundays! Stay tuned for more news ...

Contribution Envelopes

2019 contribution envelopes are available on the dresser in the Parish Hall entrance way. We have not ordered many because history has shown very few St. Gregorians use them. If you wish to use these this year, please write your name next to the # of box that you take. Please note people last year already have boxes spoken for. Leave those boxes for them. If you had a box of envelopes last year and do not want/need them this year, please cross off your name so we know that box is available.

Altar Flowers for 2019

The 2019 flower dedication sign-up sheet is up in the Christian Education building. If you wish to dedicate flowers this year, please sign your name next to the date, and fill out one of the yellow-orange sheets hanging next to it and leave in Kendall's office. Suggested donation is \$35/ dedication.

10:30AM Coffee Hour

The new coffee hour sign up sheet for January, February and March is posted in the Parish Hall next to the bulletin board.

Please consider hosting coffee hour. It is a much easier process with the use of disposal cups and plates. This is a rewarding ministry that needs the help of our parishioners to make it welcoming to all.

*Blessings and Merry Christmas to all,
Barbara Crowley*

Annual Parish Meeting | January 13

Vestry Elections & Lunch

Join us for a celebration of the mission and ministries of St. Gregory's Episcopal Church, elections of new vestry members, and lunch on Sunday, January 13 after the 10:30AM service. The meeting will also include reports from the vestry and a presentation of the 2019 budget. A variety of soups and sides will be provided by the vestry and parish life. Corn bread, crackers and cookies will top off the menu. Nursery and childcare will be provided for the duration of the meeting.

Altar Guild

THANK YOU to our new 2019 altar guild members (Rose Ann, David and LeeAnne)! We still need 2 more volunteers. Each person typically serves 3 months. New members receive training from the co-chairs and are assigned to serve with someone who has experience. Contact Barbara Dean (706-354-4269; bdean70020@gmail.com) or Julia Marlowe (706-206-3533; juliamarlowe46@gmail.com) if you would like more information or if you are interested in serving on the altar guild.

Visitor Parking Signs

St. Gregory's is a welcoming church. One way to welcome our visitors is to have a parking place for them. To that end, we will be placing two visitor parking signs near the handicap signs in the main parking lot. Please do not park in those two spaces (unless you happen to be a visitor!).

Movie Night Resumes!



The 2019 season of the Spiritual Life Film Series will resume on Friday, January 25, at 6:30PM in the chapel. The *film du mois* will be *Wild Strawberries* (Swedish, 1957), directed by Ingmar Bergman.

The action of the story takes place during one day, during which professor Isak Borg, a retired doctor and medical researcher admired by strangers and detested by those who know him well, travels from his home in Stockholm to Lund for the purpose of receiving an honorary degree. His road trip turns into a trip down memory lane as he struggles to come to terms with himself and others. The movie is unrated, but it would probably be PG.

Admission, food, and drinks will be free. Please call the parish office by Wednesday, January 23, if you need childcare.
— Ken Taylor

Parish Library

Our parish is blessed to have such a fine library. We should be aware of this, thank God, and use the library fully.

The author of the month is St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), the Bishop of Hippo Regius (in northern Africa), a theologian, and a foundational figure of both Western Christianity and civilization. His understanding of sin as disordered love is timeless, as is his grasp of the great human need for God. In an age of sound bytes and slogans that fit on bumper stickers with room to spare, the textured and verbose theology of St. Augustine challenges increasingly short attention spans, as it should. Spiritual oceans are superior to spiritual tide pools.
Kenneth Taylor

Thank you!

Thank you to all the children and their helpers who brought the Gospel story of the birth of Jesus to life during the annual Christmas Eve pageant. Accompanied by the Band of Believers, this is a joyous way to celebrate Christmas!

Community Christmas

Thank you for your generous support of Community Christmas of Oglethorpe County, Inc. All of the children assigned to our church, plus quite a few more, each received lovingly chosen gifts of warm clothing and shoes, and fun items to make Christmas merry. In addition, our church provided significant support for the energy assistance and emergency relief that is also given to families in need in Oglethorpe County. A full report will be issued soon.

Wednesday Transitions/Meditation Group

Wednesdays at 4PM in the library

The meditation group meets in the church's library, to share our stories, coping strategies, meditation and prayer to work through many of life's transitions. Practicing advanced meditation techniques, we embrace a mindfulness practice that enhances a deep inner peace, growth and change.

EPIPHANY KITS

Stop for a moment and consider what your life would be like if you had no products to use to keep your home, your clothes or yourself clean and no resources with which to acquire such products. Such consideration is bound to result in a true epiphany regarding what a difference basic detergent, soap, sponges and toothbrushes make in our everyday lives. This year, St. Gregory's is working with the Clarke County Schools' Migrant Education Program to gather those items too many families are going without.

Beginning January 7, 2019, and continuing through February 6, 2019, you can donate an Epiphany Kit containing those items you realize are critical to daily hygiene. You can choose to design and donate:

- A Household Cleaning Bucket containing, for example, Lysol wipes, paper towels, sponges, dish detergent, Comet, spray cleaners; OR
- A Bath Kit including, for example, hand/bar soap, comb, toothpaste, toothbrushes, wash cloths, a towel; OR
- A Laundry Basket/Bag packed with, for example, easily portable laundry detergent, fabric softener, stain remover, rolls of quarters.

You decide what to include in your Epiphany Kit. Just bring it, any day between January 7-February 6, to St. Gregory's Parish Hall. Tables will be set up to receive your donations, and our own Elizabeth Dubberly, Clarke County's Migrant Specialist, will pick them up each week and distribute them to the families she serves.

Perhaps the greatest epiphany associated with these kits will be the realization by our migrant community that someone cares, is thinking of them and is glad they're here. Your support and generosity are appreciated.

Day of Reflection: Centering Prayer

Do you seek the still small voice of God? Do you seek a more intimate relationship with God? Come and find a way to deepen your relationship with God.

Contemplative Outreach of Atlanta will present an Introduction to Centering Prayer Workshop at Ignatius House Retreat Center, 6700 Riverside Drive, Sandy Springs, Georgia 30028 on Sunday, January 13, 2019, from 9:00 AM -4:00 PM. The registration fee is \$35 that includes breakfast and lunch. You may register online under Calendar/Days of Reflection at <https://ignatiushouse.org>. The series will introduce participants to the four simple steps of Centering Prayer and provide opportunities to practice the discipline in daily life. For more information, contact Maggie Winfrey at coatlantageorgia@gmail.com.

Saturday, March 9, 2019

The Commission for Christian Faith Formation is pleased to offer a seminar with Lisa Brown at the Cathedral of St. Philip! Finding God in the Digital Space: Moving from an Informational to a Relational Understanding of Digital Ministry + Digital Storytelling for Evangelism & Discipleship.

How can we meet people where they are and help them meet God in the digital space? Join us as we explore and contextualize these questions from a faith-based perspective.

As the Director of Digital Ministry for Membership Vision, Lisa Brown helps people find God in the digital space. She works with churches and faith-based organizations across the country to map their ministries onto a digital landscape. Contact Catherine Drewry, if you'd like to register.



CHRISTIANFORMATION

Adult Sunday School

Adult Confirmation Class (Office #1) Resumes Sunday, January 13.

Parenting Spirituality (Nikki's office)

Ongoing - resumes January 13

Building community through listening and sharing parenting experiences with one another, we share strategies and encouragement while working towards less reactive and more intentional parenting.

Lectionary (Library): Resumes January 6. Bible study is an essential element of a parish. No matter how much one has studied the Bible, one can always learn much more about it. Mother Nikki does a fine job of preaching based on the Revised Common Lectionary. She makes wonderful points we all need to hear, but sermons and group studies are different genres. One is fine by itself, but the two, taken together, are better. The lectionary class meets in the library at 9:15am — *Kenneth Taylor*

Youth

Youth Sunday School is starting up a new, exciting course. Mother Nikki has recommended "Animate" It has several units. We will work on "Practices" this semester. Units include Prayer, Food, Worship, Sacraments, Money, Service and Community. Each session is unique, with videos from experts, and personal journals. So come when you can, you don't have to start at the beginning. The confirmands can join us when their course is done. First class will start at 9:15, on Jan. 6, Epiphany! Any questions, talk to Maggie Reinberger, 706-338-1471.

Children's Sunday School

Kids! Sunday school will not meet on Dec. 30 but Children's Church will meet as usual. On January 6th, the movie The Very First Noel will be shown in the Chapel during Sunday School, from 9:15- 10:15 a.m. Narrated by Andy Griffith, this animated show tells the story of the wise men's journey to see the newborn king. Anyone, any age, who enjoys a good movie is welcome to come, too! Popcorn will be served, and we'll also take a little time to examine some actual frankincense, myrrh, and gold, and talk about the significance of those gifts.

Rhythms of Grace

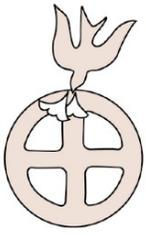


Your help is needed to get the word out about our Rhythms of Grace monthly service to those who might find it fits their worship needs. We have been hosting Rhythms of Grace, a family worship service where all forms of physical and vocal responses are embraced, since early in 2015. Rhythms of Grace is an adaptive church service for those for whom conventional worship may be difficult or uncomfortable, including those sensitive to loud music or crowds,

those on the Autism Spectrum, people with Alzheimer's, ADHD, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and wiggly children who just want to move! This service features scripture and storytelling that includes spoken and visual cues, therapeutic play for the response, and a simplified prayer for Holy Communion. Gathering and dismissal rituals help with transitioning. The Reverend Gordon Bienvenue, a retired Methodist minister, officiates at this inter-denominational service for the whole family that meets on 2nd Sundays at 3PM.

Happy Birthday!

January 1	Barbara Johnson Elijah Gabriel
January 2	Scott Thornton
January 3	Bill Alworth Katie Tavernier
January 4	Melissa Hamlin Christina Dondero
January 5	Sybil Lott
January 6	Emma Jones
January 9	Candace Almond
January 10	Anthony Barkdoll Melinda Jones Thomas Peck
January 11	Martha Beach
January 15	Florence Hix Logan Bono
January 18	Paul Welch Carl Jones
January 20	Alice Hunt Belita Gordon
January 22	David Stooksbury
January 25	Mayah Blackman
January 27	Sheila Kelley
January 28	Karen Kassinger Carolyn Howell Joe Napoli
January 31	McGowan Drewry



St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church
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>>Return Service Requested<<
706-546-7553