

Our sole purpose is to glorify God, proclaiming through word and deed the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. We trust God's Spirit to lead and nurture us in all our community and congregational endeavors. We desire that all who come through our doors find deeper faith, larger hope, and more complete love.

**Service For The Lord's Day
Christmas Eve
24 December 2017**

We Assemble to Worship

RINGING OF THE BELLS
BRINGING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST IN

** PRELUDE "A Trio of Traditional Carols" arr. Robert Frost

ANNOUNCEMENTS

** THE CONGREGATION GATHERS

Minister: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP "There's a Song in the Air"

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE- *Hope for Those Who Are Wounded*
Justin, Lucy, Silas, Thomas, and Cora Lockamy

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: (Sing the verse each time with the choir.)

HYMN 134 "Joy to the World" (fourth verse)

*He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.*

RESPONSIVE LITANY: Congregation Responses in Bold

Advent is a time to bind up the broken hearted.

Come, Lord, and make all things new.

For past wrongs that prevent us from moving forward:

Come, Lord, and make all things new.

For any bitterness that scratches our soul:

Come, Lord, and make all things new.

For relationships left in decay and neglect:

Come, Lord, and make all things new.

For any action that has wounded us or by which we have
wounded others:

**Grant that we might have the peace of Christ as we wait, the
love of Christ as we act, and the grace of Christ as we speak.**

Candle Lighting: This morning we light four candles. The **first candle** is the light of hope for those in times of waiting. The **second candle** is the light of hope for those who are wearied by the circumstances of life. The **third candle** is the light of hope for those eagerly watching for God's promised glory. The **fourth candle** is the light of hope for those who carry the wounds of life. Today we acknowledge our pain and the pain we have caused others. As the light shines, we turn to the Savior who came to rescue the lost, to help the hurting, and to bind up the broken. Listen to the Word of God from Romans 5:1-11.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

HYMN 134 "Joy to the World" (fourth verse)

Let us pray together: **Merciful God, Advent reminds us that you left heaven's majesty to walk among wounded people in a broken world. We thank you that your love knows no boundaries or limitations. No wound of this earth is greater than the wounds you came to heal. For all who suffer this day, light the way, O Lord, towards the promise of healing and wholeness made known in you. Amen.**

* HYMN 88 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" VENI EMMANUEL

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION GMPC Youth

Let us pray: **O God of grace and power, you call us to live in unexpected ways, performing unexpected tasks. We confess that we do not always welcome your surprises or greet with joy your unexpected calling. We prefer the familiar, the comfortable, and the usual. Forgive us, O God, and bring to birth in us a new openness to your unexpected presence and calling. Let us, with Mary, obediently give ourselves to your purpose. By your great love, power, and majesty, rule in our hearts as we live your Christmas message of love and grace. In the name of our Savior, Jesus. Amen.**

* Silent Confession

* KYRIE ELEISON

Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us; Lord, have mercy upon us.

* ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Christ has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.

People: And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment,

Leader: so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

* GLORIA PATRI (Hymnal) No. 581

We Proclaim the Word

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 7:10-17 OT 636

** HYMN 137 "He Came Down" (fourth verse)

*He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;
he came down that we may have joy; hallelujah forever more.*

CHILDREN'S MOMENT: "The Birth of a Baby" GMPC Youth

(No worship readiness. Children will remain in the sanctuary with their parents.)

ANTHEM "Canticle of the Turning" Cooney/Ferguson

SECOND LESSON: Luke 1:26-38 Message Version

Minister: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE "Joy to the World: Mary Did You Know?" Dr. Jerry Bron

* HYMN 129 "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" ES 1ST EIN ROS'

* AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: **I believe that Christmas is more than a time for parties and ornaments; it is a time for remembering Christ and the incarnation of God's love in human flesh. I believe there are gifts more important than the ones under the Christmas tree, such as the things we teach our children, the way we share ourselves with friends, and the industry with which we set about reshaping the world in our time. I believe that the finest carols are often sung by the poorest voices, from hearts made warm by the wonders of the season. I believe in the angels' message that we should not be afraid – that the child of Bethlehem is able to overcome all anxieties and insecurities. I believe in prayer and quietness as a way of appropriating Christmas – that if I wait in silence I will experience the presence of the one born in the manger, for he lives today as surely as he lived then. I believe in going away from Christmas as the wise men went – "another way." I want to be different when these days are past – more centered, more thoughtful, more caring. Amen.**

PASTORAL PRAYER

We Respond to God

OFFERTORY "Mary, Did You Know" Lowry/Greene

(Visitors, please fill out cards in pew rack and place in offering plate.)

* DOXOLOGY (Hymnal) No. 606

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

We Go Forth to Serve

* HYMN 122 "Silent Night, Holy Night" STILLE NACHT

* BENEDICTION AND CHORAL AMEN

"Sweet Little Jesus Boy" Robert MacGimsey

* TAKING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO THE WORLD

* POSTLUDE "Joy, Joy, Joy" arr. Fred Offutt

* Those who are able, please stand

** Seating of worshippers

We welcome our visitors today. If you wish more information about this congregation or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), please speak with the minister.

**New members are received by 1) Re-Affirmation of Faith;
2) Transfer of Membership; and 3) by Profession of Faith and Baptism.**

Special thanks to Rhett Howard, Melissa Fulton, Larisa Capparuccia, Gabriel Capparuccia, and Dorthy Sue Faison for sharing their musical gifts with us today.

*THE CHRISTMAS WREATHS AND GREENERY ARE GIVEN TO THE
GLORY OF GOD BY THE SEASONAL FLOWER COMMITTEE*

December Ushers are: Whit Tart, Wesley Cowand, IV, Wes Cowand,
Tim Howard, Stan Mertz, Scott Prestage, Paul Viser

CONGREGATIONAL CONCERNS: **REMEMBER IN PRAYER...**

HOSPITAL/ASSISTED LIVING

Doc Fields – Southwood; Rm. 109
Frances Hubbard - GlenAire
Margaret Faircloth – Mary Gran; Rm. 701
Tink Purcell – The Cardinal at North Hills

AT HOME

Martha Dunn
Margaret Register
Betty Heaton
Ted Lockerman

OTHERS:

Betty Hairr – (Mother of Vickie Pope)
Juaweese Franklin – (Mother of Melissa Nimmo)
Joe Butler – (Brother-in-law of Penny Horne)
Christine Stacey – (Mother of Lara Capparuccia)
Joe Kozel – (Father of Kristi Williford)
David Askins – (Former GMPC member)

December/January: (Wednesdays: Handbells 6:00 p.m./ Choir at 7:30 p.m.); (Cherub Choir: PreK-1st Grade, 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 4-4:30); (Children & Youth Choir/Handbells: 2nd-8th Grade, Wednesdays, 5-5:45)

24 - 5:30 p.m. - Christmas Eve Communion Worship Service
25 - - Merry Christmas
27 - - NO PresbyMusic, PresbyCrew, Adult Choir/Handbells
31 - 11:00 a.m. - Worship (*Sunday School weekly 9:45 a.m.)
01 - - Happy New Year
03 - 5:30 p.m. - Handbells practice @ St. Paul's Episcopal Church (Note time change)
6:30 p.m. - First Wednesday Fellowship & Covered Dish in honor of Dr. Bron
04 - 10:00 a.m. - La Leche League of Sampson County
06 - 7:00 p.m. - Epiphany Service @ St. Paul's Episcopal Church
07 - 11:00 a.m. - Worship (*Sunday School weekly 9:45 a.m.) Presentation of Budget
5:00 p.m. - Youth Group

OTHER CONCERNS / LOOKING AHEAD . . .

Copies of **These Days**, January - March, are available in the narthex & outside the office.

Video from the Sunday, December 10, 2017 Christmas Joy Program has been uploaded to YouTube, and posted under News and Events on the GMPC webpage.

December 24th – **Christmas Eve Worship Service at 5:30 p.m.**, Communion by Intinction will be served.

There will be **NO PresbyMusic on December 27th.**

There will be **NO PresbyCrew, Adult Choir or Adult Handbells on December 27th.**

There will be **NO Youth Group on December 24th or 31st.**

The Church Office will be closed December 25th through January 2nd.

For emergencies please contact Clerk of Session, Carl Barr or Interim Pastor, Rev. Jerry Bron.

We will honor Dr. Jerry Bron at our next First Wednesday Fellowship and Covered Dish Meal, scheduled for January 3rd, at 6:30 p.m. We encourage everyone to come out and join us as we show our appreciation to our Interim Pastor and Linda, his wife. January hosts: K - 5th Sunday School Class, Friends in Faith Groups 1 & 2, & Dale Purcell.

NEW: La Leche League of Sampson County. Breastfeeding? Or pregnant and planning ahead? Join us the 1st Thursday of every month, in the GMPC Nursery, at 10:00 a.m., beginning January 4, 2018. The La Leche League of Sampson County, led by Lucy Lockamy, will offer valuable breastfeeding support and information. Pregnant women, mothers, and babies welcome!

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 110 W. Main St., Clinton, invites you to their Epiphany service being held on Saturday, January 6th at 7:00 p.m. Join us, as we gather, to celebrate this Christian holiday.

Presbyterian Women Circle meetings in January. *Bible Leader: Myrtle Petty

Circle #1 will meet on the 8th at 3:00 p.m. at Mary Gran. Host: Margaret Faircloth & Anne Price

Circle #2 will meet on the 8th at 7:00 p.m. in the Memorial Room.

Circle #3 will meet on the 9th at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Central Missional Community Steering Team News: The winter gathering will be held January 27, 2018, 9:00 a.m. at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church. Included in the worship service are a message by Olanda Carr and honoring the Faithful Saints selected by each Session. Neal Sinclair is GMPC's honoree. The worship service will be followed by a business meeting, lunch and then breakout sessions sharing insights and ideas on "A Response of Our Gratitude."

*Anyone wishing to stay for lunch (\$10.00) must register by calling the church office.

A PODCAST (audio file, mp3 format) of Sunday Sermons Is Available on the GMPC Website. To listen to posted sermons visit: <http://gravesmemorial.org/sermons.shtml>.