



From Your Pastors

Dear GBPC Church Family and Friends,

We pray you are healthy and well! Our theme for Advent this year is “Home for Christmas.” This theme was actually chosen several months ago as the nation and our state began a months-long shutdown. As we were praying through the second half of 2020, we were living with the hope that this all “will be over soon” and life would resume normally by Christmas.

As often happens in this world, our impression of “Home for Christmas” was very different than the reality. Being home for Christmas does not mean a resuming of regular activities as we had hoped. It means that many of us still live our lives closely tied to our homes!

This close connection to our homes is how many lived in ancient times and especially surrounding the birth of Christ. During our Advent sermon series, we will explore the different persons and places in the Christmas story who made their homes in unusual places and in unusual times. Every year, the Christmas story reveals something new to our world about hope, love, peace, and joy. This year is no exception! We invite you to join with us for our Advent sermon series, for our Christmas celebrations

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GBPC Advent Calendar



Nov. 19 @ 7 pm: ZOOM Surviving the Holidays Grief Share

Nov. 28 @ 10 am: Advent Wreath Workshop

Nov. 27-Dec. 16: Jingle Jog Virtual 5K Run/Walk

Nov. 29: First Day of Advent,
Advent Sermon Series, "Home for Christmas"
Angel Tree
Sock & Mitten Tree (really a thermal underwear tree)

Dec. 4 @ 6 pm: Grand Illumination & Craft Market
High School Christmas Party

Dec. 5-Jan. 3 @ 6 pm: GBPC Christmas Light Display

Dec. 6: Second Advent Sunday

Dec. 13: Third Advent Sunday

Dec. 19 @ 6 pm: Middle School Christmas Party

Dec. 20: 4th Sunday of Advent:
Festival of Lessons & Carols, 9 am & 10:30 am

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Services @ 4 pm, 6 pm, 8pm

Dec. 27: Worship Online Only @ 8:15 am

GBPC's Grand Illumination!

Friday, December 4th @ 6 pm-8pm

Join us as we light up our church for Christmas! The Holt family is helping decorate our building for all to enjoy during Advent! Our Grand Illumination includes music, a Christmas Craft Market with many talented vendors, food, and more!

The lights will be on nightly through New Years!



What is Advent?

Today, the season of Advent lasts for four Sundays leading up to Christmas. At that time, the new Christian year begins with the twelve-day celebration of Christmastide, which lasts from Christmas Eve until Epiphany on January 6. Advent begins on Sunday that falls between November 27th and December 3rd each year) Advent 2020 begins on Sunday, November 29th and ends on Thursday, December 24.

Advent symbolizes the present situation of the church in these “last days” (Acts 2:17, Hebrews 1:2), as God’s people wait for the return of Christ in glory to consummate his eternal kingdom. The church is in a similar situation to Israel at the end of the Old Testament: in exile, waiting and hoping in prayerful expectation for the coming of the Messiah. Israel looked back to God’s past gracious actions on their behalf in leading them out of Egypt in the Exodus, and on this basis, they called for God once again to act for them. In the same way, the church, during Advent, looks back up on Christ’s coming in celebration while at the same time looking forward in eager anticipation to the coming of Christ’s kingdom when he returns for his people.

While it is difficult to keep in mind in the midst of holiday celebrations, shopping, lights and decorations, and joyful carols, Advent is intended to be a season of fasting, much like Lent, and there are a variety of ways that this time of mourning works itself out in the season. Reflection on the violence and evil in the world cause us to cry out to God to make things right—to put death’s dark shadows to flight. Our exile in the present makes us look forward to our future Exodus. And our own sinfulness and need for grace lead us to pray for the Holy Spirit to renew his work in conforming us into the image of Christ.

Excerpt from Christianity.com /christian-life/christmas/what-is-advent



Christmas Eve Services

4 pm Family Outdoor Service

Our program will include a Live Nativity Drama, music by our choirs for children and youth, a special message from our Pastors, and we will end the service with our traditional candle lighting. It will be a Christmas celebration to remember! We would like to express our gratitude to our Prayer Shawl Ministry for knitting hats and scarves to help keep our choristers warm and cozy as they sing!

6 pm Contemporary Indoor Service

RSVP required. Walk In's will be seated in the Fellowship Hall

Join our Praise Team for a jubilant celebration of the Christ child! Christmas carols, scriptures, inspiring message and “Silent Night” sung by candlelight.

8 pm Traditional Indoor Service

RSVP required. Walk In's will be seated in the Fellowship Hall

Our Candlelight Communion service features the Chancel choir and Alleluia Ringers culminating in a celebration of Communion ending with the singing of “Silent Night” by candlelight.

Indoor seating is limited due to COVID-19. Reservations are required and will be available beginning Nov. 19th @ gbpres.org. The indoor services will be Live Streamed on YouTube, gbpres.org, Facebook.

(Grand Illumination on December 4th, Lessons and Carols on December 20th, Christmas Eve at 4,6,8 pm). As we look to the new year, please be in prayer for the church leadership as we prayerfully discern budget and plans for 2021. We are so thankful for your partnership with us in prayer, encouragement, and financial support. If you have not had a chance to send in your pledge card, there is still time! Feel free to send it in by mail, in person (M-F, 9-2 pm), electronically, or at the Sunday service.

We are so thankful for you all, you fill us with faith, hope, and love every day. May your home and our church home be filled with the presence and power of the God who makes His home within us.

Blessings,

Pastors Mike and Kelly Nieto

COVID-19 Update From Our Security Team

Dear Congregation,

We are so grateful to each of you who are attending church services and our programs while adhering to the safety precautions given to us by the Governor's office. Our team will be meeting again soon to look towards our 2021 calendar year with anticipation and hope for a more "open" church building depending on the COVID trends for our area. We know this time has not been easy for our ministries and congregants, however, we are grateful for your patience, encouragement, and prayer support as we diligently do our best to keep our church family safe.

Please review our phased plan in case you have any questions based on our current status. We also ask that you will continue to pray for our city, our state, and our nation to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic in the very near future.

Blessings to You and Your Family, The Safety and Security Team

Congratulations, Brenten!

We are excited to officially welcome Brenten Sims as the Director of Youth Ministry at GBPC. Brenten has been working with the youth since February 2020. We are overjoyed to see the many ways God has used Brenten to connect with our youth and to give them an opportunity to know Jesus and experience the power of worship and relationship.

We pray for an extra measure of God's anointing to fall upon Brenten, Sean Drew, and all those who work with our youth to draw them closer to God, to each other, and to our church family.



Summary of Phased Opening

	Phase One (March 15 th)	Phase Two (July 5 th)	Phase Three (September 13 th)	Phase Four (TBD)
Vulnerable Populations	Stay Home	Stay Safe in your cars	Recommended to Stay Home	Individual Discretion
Those with Symptoms of COVID-19	Stay Home	Stay Home	Stay Home	Stay Home
Worship Services	Online: Church staff focused on bringing high quality content through many platforms.	Drive-in service with many safety precautions in place, social distancing and masks required, safety precautions taken. Online services still offered.	Reduced seating, one or more services depending on demand with many safety precautions in place, social distancing and masks required. Online services still offered.	Normal capacity with safety precautions taken to limit the spread of germs (extra cleaning, hand sanitizer, etc.) Online services still offered.
Life Groups	Online meetings. Meetings in homes based on individual discretion.	Online meetings. Meetings in homes based on individual discretion.	Online meetings. Meetings in homes based on individual discretion.	Normal opportunities, with guidance on how to reduce the spread of germs.
Youth and Children's Ministry	Online format including weekly Bible verses, home study opportunities, zoom meetings, Amazing gRace VBS, and more	Online format, especially for younger children who cannot be expected to remain socially distant. Limited, safe opportunities for older children and youth	Limited, safe opportunities for children and youth.	Normal opportunities, with extra care taken to reduce the spread of germs.
Music Ministry	Continue to offer online opportunities to worship and sing.	Choir and praise team will explore ways to rehearse and participate in Sunday service safely and with social distancing.	Choir and praise team will explore ways to rehearse and participate in Sunday service safely and with social distancing.	Normal opportunities with extra care taken to reduce the spread of germs
Service and Mission	Group events cancelled. Food drives, mask ministry and other opportunities to serve while socially distanced encouraged. Focus on Second Mile Fund	Group events cancelled. Food drives, mask ministry and other opportunities to serve while socially distanced encouraged. Focus on Second Mile Fund	Group events cancelled. Food drives, mask ministry and other opportunities to serve while socially distanced encouraged. Focus on Second Mile Fund	Normal opportunities with extra care taken to reduce the spread of germs
Office Staff	Closed to the public. Staff encouraged to work from home when possible	Normal access, with extra care taken to reduce the spread of germs.	Normal access, with extra care taken to reduce the spread of germs	Normal access, with extra care taken to reduce the spread of germs
Restrooms	Closed	Closed	Limited	Normal
Metrics for Moving Between Phases	Pandemic reaches the US and Virginia	Guidelines based on Governor's and PCUSA recommendations and restrictions	Guidelines based on Governor's and PCUSA recommendations and restrictions	Implemented when effective therapeutics are widely known or an effective vaccine is widely distributed

Sermon Series for Advent



Over generations, the people of God awaited the Messiah to come so that Israel would be “home” to God’s people. We will look at the Christmas story through these different lenses of home: Christ’s birthplace, the Temple, the people of Israel, and all people around the world.

November 29th , “Coming Home: Bethlehem”, Ruth 1:16-22
December 6th “Coming Home: The Temple”, Haggai 2:6-9
December 13th, “Coming Home: Israel”, Matthew 1:18-23
December 20th “Coming Home: Gentiles”, Isaiah 49:5-7
December 24th, “Home for Christmas”, Luke 2:1-7



Advent Readers Needed

Advent candles shine brightly in the midst of darkness, symbolizing and reminding us that Jesus came as Light into our dark world. Each Sunday of Advent, we will light candles as we “wait upon the Lord.”

We are seeking families, life groups, friends, inter-

generational groups to be part of this GBPC tradition. Readers will be provided a scripture verse, and light the candle of the week. It’s easy and fun!

Get a group together and sign up! Reader needed for all 3 services

Christmas Eve.
November 29
December 6
December 13
December 20
Christmas Eve

ADVENT CANDLE READERS SIGNUPS ONLINE AT [GBPRES.ORG](http://gbpres.org)

Poinsettias

The Flower Guild is providing the opportunity for the congregation to participate in the decoration of the Sanctuary and Narthex for Christmas by purchasing poinsettias. \$10 per plant. Order deadline is Dec. 3th, gbpres.org.

Advent Wreath Workshop

Nov. 28 @ 10 am. The Advent Wreath is an important symbol of Advent and a constant reminder of the holy season. Celebrating with an Advent wreath during the weeks prior to Christmas is a great way for families to keep Christ at the center of

Christmas, and for parents to teach their

THE ADVENT WREATH, OR ADVENT CROWN, IS A CHRISTIAN TRADITION THAT SYMBOLIZES THE PASSAGE OF THE FOUR WEEKS OF ADVENT IN THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR.

children the true meaning of Christmas.

Make your own wreath with the symbols of Advent. A prayer guide will also be provided.

There will be a \$20 fee for supplies.

Sign up online @ gbpres.org

What is Your Favorite Carol?

We had such a fabulous response to our May Hymn Sing count down that we decided to find out what is your favorite CHRISTMAS CAROL!

On December 27, we will have one worship service and will do a countdown of your top Christmas Carols!

December 20, Festival of Lessons and Carols!

9 am & 10:30 am. The Christmas tradition continues! It will look a bit different, but you won't want to miss this beloved service as we retell the story of our Savior's birth through scripture and music. This year, we will include our Alleluia Ringers ringing our newly refurbished handbells, the Harmonious Flutes and a string quartet of members of the Virginia Symphony Orchestra.



Guests who RSVP will be seated in the sanctuary. Seating is limited due to COVID.

"Walk Ins" will be seated in the Fellowship Hall.

Visit gbpres.org to make your reservation.

Stewardship & Finance Ministry

Summary:


AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2020

	OCT 2020 ACTUAL	OCT 2020 BUDGET	VARIANCE
GENERAL OPERATING FUND INCOME:	<u>\$ 888,912</u>	<u>\$1,065,975</u>	<u>\$ (177,063)</u>
Admin Expenses	\$ 733,375	\$ 853,778	\$ (120,403)
Ministry Expenses	\$ 50,370	\$ 125,674	\$ (75,304)
Service & Mission	<u>\$ 92,119</u>	<u>\$ 166,311</u>	<u>\$ (74,192)</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES:	<u>\$ 875,864</u>	<u>\$1,145,763</u>	<u>\$ (269,899)</u>
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	<u>\$ 13,048</u>	<u>\$ (79,788)</u>	<u>\$ 92,836</u>

**The financial figures presented above do not include the non-budgeted special offerings, like Second Mile donations, Building Fund, etc.*

Pledges: We moved Stewardship Sunday up one month to October this year to help with budgeting and forecasting for 2021. We have not received as many pledge cards as we had hoped by this time. Please consider pledging today. You can pledge online now at gbpres.org. From the Home page, click on the Menu (=), then click on "Giving to GBPC" under "Worship", then "Click Here to Submit Stewardship Commitment Card Electronically". We thank you for your pledge for 2021.

Second Mile Fund: The Church has a Second Mile fund, which the pastors use at their discretion, for those who have run in to hard times and can't make ends meet. This fund has been used frequently over the past several months due to the COVID pandemic and the inability for many to meet their obligations. Please prayerfully consider making a donation to this fund. To donate, please make your check payable to Great Bridge Presbyterian Church and put "Second Mile Fund" in the memo section of your check, or you can make an online donation through gbpres.org. This donation is 100% tax deductible as long as you don't put a specific person's name in the memo section.

 **REMINDER:** If you have not yet pledged for 2021, please do! Session will be working on next year's budget based on pledges we receive now. Pledge online (gbpres.org) or stop by the church office, Monday – Friday, 9 am– 2 pm.

Grief Share: Surviving the Holidays

Nov. 19 @ 7 pm, Help and hope as you navigate the Christmas season

Wondering how you will survive the weeks surrounding Thanksgiving and Christmas? Are you dreading these holidays, knowing that everything has changed and that happy memories from past years can't be recreated? Our Surviving the Holidays seminar is especially for people who are grieving a loved one's death. You'll learn:

- How to deal with the many emotions you'll face during the holidays
- What to do about traditions and other coming changes
- Helpful tips for surviving social events
- How to discover hope for your future

THIS IS A ZOOM SEMINAR
CONTACT LAURA BOWSER,
LAURAB@GBPRES.ORG,
FOR THE ZOOM LOGIN INFO.



The Covid19 pandemic has exacerbated the food insecurity many families in our community face. Please help with the Thanksgiving Food Baskets that GBPC will be donating to families of many students in our area schools. Grocery bags with an attached list of needed food items will be distributed and available for pick up. Please bring the bag containing your purchased food items back to the church no later than November 22nd.

In addition, donations of frozen turkeys are needed. Drop off by November 18th. Your turkey and food items will be presented in a basket to a family in need. Please contact Judy Steinmetz at judys@gbpres.org for more information.

Jingle Jog!

Our annual Jingle Jog 5K run/ 1 mile walk is a "GO" virtually. Get your steps in between Nov. 27th. and Dec. 16th. Registration will be posted soon! Proceeds support GBPC's Vida Joven Nicaragua mission.



CAST Meals

Volunteers needed for the week of Dec. 23rd-Dec. 30th to prepare, pack, and/or deliver meals to the homeless being housed by the City of Chesapeake during the pandemic.

Interested? Contact, Judy, judys@gbpres.org.

Giving Trees

During the month of December there will be an **Angel Tree** set up in the Narthex with the names and wish lists of children from our community. Please take a tag, wrap the gifts and attach the tag to the outside of the gift. All gifts need to be returned by December 13th.



The Sock & Mitten Tree this year is helping keep our homeless warm this winter. Instead of socks and mittens, thermal under clothing is needed. Place your donations on the tree during the Advent season. Donations will be distributed by Chesapeake Area Shelter Team ministry members. Thank

you for helping our community during COVID19 pandemic.