

Greystone Baptist Church

Winter-Spring 2021

A Glimpse of Hope

It is hard to believe it has been nearly one year since our lives were interrupted by the Coronavirus pandemic. Like the Israelites crossing the Red Sea on dry ground as they fled Egypt, we had no idea how long we would wander in our new digital surroundings. Maybe six weeks, we thought as we made plans that would carry us through the initial phases of quarantine, social distancing, and isolation. Like the Israelites though, our journey through the Covid wilderness has

*“Like the Israelites
crossing the Red Sea
on dry ground as they
fled Egypt...”*

extended longer than we anticipated and it has ushered in a prolonged season of grief. Through the stories of scripture we witness the transformation of the people as they move from captivity to freedom, from struggle to promise. This transformation came with trials, with frustration, with anger, and with loss. In these last twelve months we have said goodbye to our in-person worship services, our hymnals, our

fellowship meals, and meetings in Books on the Corner. We have been deprived of hugs, handshakes, and casual yet meaningful conversations in the hallways that through God's own mystery sustain us for days and weeks to follow. We have said goodbyes and hellos as our staff team has changed. There have been endings and there have been beginnings. Through it all, we have found ways to worship, serve our neighbors, and grow together as followers of Jesus.

As vaccine distribution continues, North Carolina's hospitalizations and daily percent positives seem to be trending in a very positive direction. These are two major markers that the COVID Think Tank, the deacons, and staff have been looking at to guide our decisions about when and how to resume in-person worship services and gatherings. Our plan right now is to offer one in-person worship service, outdoors, on Easter Sunday, April 4. That service will begin at 10:00 a.m. and will be live streamed to our YouTube channel. If you are comfortable joining us in person, you can bring a chair or blanket to sit on the lawn in the picnic area near the Fellowship Hall or from the parking lot tuned into our FM station 90.3.

It is our hope that after Easter, we can resume a regular rhythm of in-person worship services along with our weekly online service. Because our staff and volunteer

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capacities are limited, we expect some changes to the online service in order to accommodate the addition of the in-person worship offerings. We are excited about these next steps and look forward to how the Spirit of God is at work within, around, and among us in this season of new life. We thank you for your grace and patience with us as we once again, enter into uncharted territory.

If you have any questions or comments as we begin to re-imagine and re-construct our in-person gatherings, please call or email the church office or reach out to one of our deacons.

With hope for all that is to come,
Pastor Chrissy

Music at Greystone

Throughout the pandemic as we've adjusted to worshipping remotely, our music ministry programs have had to adapt as well. Our choirs and musicians have continued to keep song alive and well at Greystone, and we are thankful for all of their contributions, including 10 virtual choir pieces since last October and many other offerings from our musicians leading in worship.



We have carried on Greystone's commitment to including diverse music in worship from many different traditions and cultures, including music some might describe as "secular." I've also written several new songs for our community, and you can read my blog posts on our church website to learn more about these original songs as well as my theological reasoning for including music in worship that is not usually thought to be religious in nature. Also be on the lookout for musical "teasers" that point toward themes for the following Sunday's worship, which are occasionally shared on our Facebook page and YouTube channel during the week.

I would love to hear from you about the role music plays in your life and faith! A brief survey will be offered in the coming months to ask about your musical backgrounds and preferences. If you have creative ideas for worship and/or if you would like to participate in the choirs or any part of our music ministry programs, please email me at christian.mcivor@greystonechurch.org.

- Christian McIvor



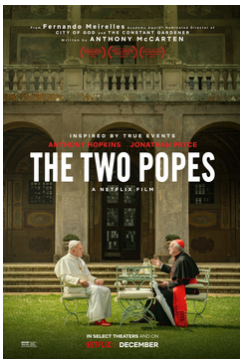
Our Children Journey through Lent

Our children and their families are journeying through Lent together with their Lent at Home kits provided by the Preschool & Children's Committee. We started off our journey together with pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and finger labyrinth devotion on

Ash Wednesday. Our theme this year is *Reflections on the Heart*. Each week, families read scripture and have conversations about their true treasures. Families are also sent an email and a video with a message from me and a song from Christian. You can check out these videos on our YouTube channel or find them in your Sunday email if you want to see what our children are learning.

We are also filling our Lenten Treasure Vessels as we journey through Lent together. Each family has chosen a vessel to place on their kitchen table and each week during Lent, we add a new item to it. So far, we have added a small heart with a black cross to remind us of Ash Wednesday; a treasure chest to remind us that our true treasures like love and family can't fit in a treasure box; and a question mark to remind us of young Jesus' curiosity and yearning to learn more about God and scripture. Children also received some craft supplies so that they can craft their way through Lent with me as we practice self-care together.

- April Alston



Reel Spirituality: *Two Popes*

Join Pastor Chrissy for a three-part discussion on the 2019 film, *Two Popes*. On Wednesday evenings, April 21, 28, and May 5, beginning at 6:30 p.m., we will watch segments of the film together and discuss its themes and how they relate to our church in this historical moment. If you'd like to preview the film in advance, it is currently streaming on Netflix. To express interest in this event, please contact the church office or fill out [this google form](#).

"What'll I Miss?"

It may be too soon for this, but I'm going to be honest – there are some things about this "new normal" that I'm going to miss when we go back to the "normal normal". For one thing, if I were the only person on the road, a trip from my garage to the preschool parking lot would take 30 minutes. Back in the good ol' days, my morning commute took anywhere from 50 minutes to an hour. My COVID commute?? 32 minutes! I'm going to miss the leisurely pace of my new morning routine. And Zoom meetings? I know those of you working from home can't wait to be off the computer and back in person for church services and committee meetings. But back in February, when the Preschool Committee met at 6:30 p.m. and it was DARK and 27 degrees outside, I logged onto Zoom from the warmth and comfort of my home. I'm going to miss that!

But what I think I'll miss the most when normal returns is how we welcome our preschoolers into the building this year. Before covid, morning drop off felt like organized chaos! Half of our staff were helping children out of cars and down halls. Parents were walking children in. Multiple families were in and out of multiple entrances. Children were running in the halls, some were crying. SO many things happening at once! COVID stopped us in our tracks. Our new protocols require that all our parents stay outside the building and every child come in through carpool. Each morning, I go out and do a health screening of each child while they sit in their cars. Aside from the cold morning temperatures, it has become my favorite time of the preschool day. I love that I get to speak with every child and every parent every morning. I've met family pets, visiting grandparents, older siblings. I see what some of the children are having for



breakfast (and it explains A LOT), get a preview of their "show & tell" and get the early warning on which children will require an extra dose of patience on a given day. I've had parents share prayer concerns in the carpool line and also had children explain why they're grumpy ("mom didn't wash my underpants with the bananas on them, so I'm wearing plain blue ones." 'heavy sigh'). I've always seen them every day, but as a whole group. This year has allowed me the time to see and speak to each child and each parent individually every day. What a gift! I'll miss that one-on-one time when it's gone.

Don't get me wrong, I'm looking forward to more than I'll miss! I'm excited to invite parents back in to volunteer, excited to offer an actual hug and excited to smile at a child with my whole face, not just my eyes. Most of all, I look forward to gathering all our littles for one large chapel service each week, to hear "This is the Day" sung in that loud screaming way children have of singing. That first chapel service will put a great big smile on my unmasked face, and it can't come soon enough.

But maybe we could keep those committee meetings during the winter on Zoom??

- Pam Phillips



Eagle Scout Project Benefits Church & Community

Thank you and congratulations to Ben Grant. Ben recently completed his Eagle Scout project and we are so excited to share it with you. Ben wanted to do a project that would benefit both his church and his community. Donation bins for clothing under the Fellowship Hall portico was a great way to accomplish his goal. The bins are beautiful and complement the architecture of the church perfectly. Ben worked with the properties committee to finalize the concept and design then led his fellow troop members to build the bins. The bins were recently installed and ready to be filled. Thank you Ben your hard work. We appreciate you and we know that our community does too! We look forward to honoring you at your Eagle Scout ceremony.



Greystone Youth Are a Gift

Is a hotdog a sandwich? Is cereal just a cold version of soup? If tomatoes are fruit does that make ketchup a smoothie? Does something have to be true to contain truth? Does God still smite people? Does everything really happen for a reason? Who is King Ehud and how did he become God's answer to Israel's misgivings and subsequent trials with Moab? These are just a few of the questions that we have been wrestling with during our Sunday Night Youth gatherings. Wednesday nights are full of games that challenge our creativity and wit. The games are a fun escape from and otherwise heavy world. These nights with our youth have truly been a lifeline for me. On a bad day, game night or a discussion with our youth can turn my mood around. Our youth are truly a gift to me, our church and this world. I look forward to being back together with them in person soon and look forward even more to sharing them with you when we can all meet together again.

- April Alston



Columbarium Bell Tower -- Did You Know?

Starting this month, and for each of the next few months, I'd like to share with you one or more of the many features about the wonderful columbarium we have at Greystone. Dedicated on September 20, 2009, the building structure and surrounding garden serve many purposes in the life of our church.

This month I'd like for us to focus on the bell tower, the top of which rises more than 60 feet above the entrance to the columbarium, drawing our eyes upward toward the heavens and beyond this earth. Its three suspended bronze bells remind us of the Trinity. At the top of the tower, the three main support masts draw together in a way that reminds us of folded hands in prayer.

Even during this pandemic, we welcome you to stop by the church to walk about and enjoy this special, beautiful outdoor space on our campus. Take a few minutes, or linger for longer. If you'd like to learn more about the columbarium, please contact me at: snaeser919@gmail.com

- Scott Naeser



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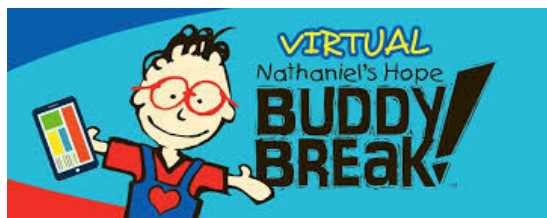
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- food
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One of the things that I have missed the most during Covid has to be Buddy Break. The second Saturday of the month is a favorite in my house not just for me, but also for my daughter who loves volunteering with Buddy Break. It's a Saturday that we both look forward to and we love hanging out with our Buddy Break friends. We know that it's the favorite Saturday of the month for our VIPs and their families too. On Saturday, February 13 we all got to experience some "Second Saturday" magic. Buddy Break

hosted a virtual Valentine's party with special guests from UNC-CH Moments of Magic portraying some of the kids' favorite Disney and Star Wars characters. Our VIPs showed off their crafts and cookies from the packages our volunteers delivered. Everyone, including our magical guest and adults participated in a scavenger hunt and got to show off their pets, favorite stuffed animals, blankets and artwork. The meeting may have been virtual but the smiles, joy and laughter were definitely real. Thank you all for continuing to support this important ministry!

- April Alston

Financial Update

2020 budgeted receipts - \$798,750
2020 Operating Receipts - \$733,413
2020 Operating Expenses - \$715,432
Net Receipts > Expenses - \$17,981

2021 Budgeted Receipts to date: \$62,289
2021 Operating receipts to date: \$45,901
2021 Operating expenses to date: \$72,140
Net receipts < expenses - \$26,239

Contact Us

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