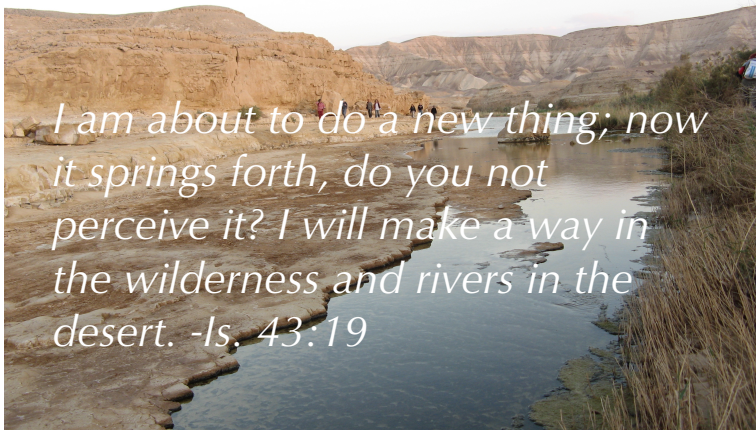




Greystone Baptist Church

Spring-Summer 2021



Someone35, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

This is the verse printed at the top of an article I wrote for our church newsletter in January of 2020. Looking back, it's funny to think about what the "new things" were going to be. You know what they say... *If you want to hear God laugh, just tell God your plans.*" Fifteen months ago our "new things" would be search committees and a yearlong kindness campaign. Now, those seem like small programmatic adjustments and comfortable adaptations to what always was.

Like the Hebrew people in their seasons of wilderness, we have been humbled in so many ways that we are (perhaps) finally able to catch a glimpse of what God might be doing to renew God's church. On May 12, 2021 many of us gathered online to hear a presentation about "Church Renewal Post COVID." In that

presentation, we began to see some new opportunities for meaning and ministry. But as the saying goes...

"Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end."

During the months of April and May, we began offering in-person worship services outdoors on the first Sundays each month and in our sanctuary the other Sundays. Those services were held at 10:00 a.m. We have continued to offer our pre-recorded, online worship service which is posted to our church website and YouTube channel each Sunday at 8:30 a.m.

When we began offering the in-person services, we committed to a spirit of openness and we promised that we would listen and learn from your feedback. Here's what we've learned during this 2-month period of time:

1. We love being together for worship. Even with the protocols that remain in place for COVID-19, there is nothing that replaces the feeling of worshipping God in community with one another.
2. Having the opportunity to worship before Sunday school allows musicians, readers, deacons, ushers, sound & light team members, and other worship leaders an opportunity to fully participate in Sunday school, without having to leave 20 or 30 minutes early.
3. The 10:00 a.m time for worship has posed significant challenges for Sunday school classes. Many SS leaders and class members have requested slight changes to that time.
4. While we all love the pre-recorded worship service, we do not have the capacity to continue to record and edit that service, along with holding the in-person service each week. It has quickly become too much for our lay leaders and staff who are recording each week on Thursday and Friday nights, then editing on Saturdays in order to post on Sundays.

(Cont'd on page 5)

Music at Greystone

Throughout Lent and now into this Easter season, our music ministry programs have continued to safely and creatively keep our shared song alive and well. Our combined choirs continue to regularly offer “virtual choir” videos for worship and we are grateful for those individual musicians who are still routinely coming together to provide culturally and stylistically diverse music for online worship. Tim Hendrix offered a profoundly worshipful set of piano performances and written reflections for Holy Week, and these can be found on our [church blog](#).

Our outdoor, in-person Easter service was a joyful day for our musicians, as our Handbell Choir and many of our musicians had the opportunity to lead music in worship with a congregation for the first time in over a year! We are thankful for the beautiful flowering cross that members of our Worship Ministry Committee prepared and assembled during our Easter service.



In resuming in-person worship services, we are easing back into our musical offerings indoors. Throughout the pandemic, we have experienced zero transmission of COVID-19 through our musical activities and I am hopeful that our decisions moving forward will help continue that trend. While all of our musicians at in-person services are fully vaccinated and appropriately distanced, we will continue to monitor national and state health guidelines in discerning how to safely allow more in-person singing and wind instrument playing. The CBFNC Music Advisory Team, on which I serve, will also be an important resource.

I would love to hear from you about the role music plays in your life and faith! 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 feel free to [be in touch](#)!

- Christian McIvor



Greystone's Spirit of Justice

Our Spirit of Justice Team has enjoyed the process of discerning how to best connect with *all* of our congregation and also the various communities to which we belong. Marcia Ostendorff has been writing impactful “Creation Care Considerations” for our weekly emails, which offer many opportunities to take action and are now regularly being shared on our [church blog](#). The team looks forward to continuing to grow our understanding of the many justice issues facing our world today. As we grow and learn, we want to share what we are learning with you, the

congregation. In order to do this, we will continue to offer blog posts about Creation Care, as well as Racial Justice (two areas many at Greystone are already familiar with and engaged in). Additionally, we know that most churches and our denominational networks are seeking greater understanding related to sexuality, gender identity, and family systems. In our effort to learn and grow as disciples of Christ in this world, we will be exploring these topics and sharing what we learn with you. As appropriate, we hope to partner with the Adult Christian Education Committee to offer learning opportunities to the whole congregation. These are critically important conversations for our congregation to have, so we will continue to provide updates at Leadership Council Meetings and Church Conferences. Thank you for your prayers and engagement with us as we grow and learn together.

- Christian McIvor

Weekday Preschool 'Big Finish'



On Wednesday, May 5 members of the Preschool Committee, ministers and church staff joined our preschool staff to celebrate our preschool parents with a drive-thru parent appreciation event. Our preschool parents have been diligent this year in keeping their children home when any family member was exposed to covid, and any time their little ones were not feeling well. While covid worked around the edges of our preschool family, it didn't enter our buildings. I am grateful for their faithfulness in helping to keep us all safe.

"At times it seemed to be more of an obstacle course than a race!"

Each year in early May, my former Preschool Director used to give what we all called her "Big Finish" speech. She would read 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith," and then encourage us to not let up on our hard work just because we could see the finish line. This year, the race has felt especially long. At times it seemed to be more of an obstacle course than a race! But with the end quickly approaching, I recognize that we were never alone on the course. I am thankful to the Preschool Committee and the Greystone staff for their encouragement and help throughout this year. And I am grateful to each one of you who whispered a prayer for the safety of this ministry. Thank you for your prayers as we cross the finish line!

- Pam Phillips

It's Great to be Together Again!

On April 18 our youth gathered in person for the first time since November and shared a meal for the first time since March 2020. It was great to be together again. As we gathered, the youth made creations out of 'junk' as a reminder that God can take situations and circumstances that we find worthy of nothing more than being tossed in a dumpster, and turn them into something beautiful, useful or meaningful.



"...we have some truly creative teenagers..."

When our life feels like junk, trust that God will help us through it. By the way, we have some truly creative teenagers who have an amazing ability to take life in stride and keep going in the face of adversity.

Since that evening, we have gathered a few more times to have discussion & fellowship and we enjoyed a movie night together on our new inflatable movie screen. In a few weeks we will embark on our first retreat since last March as we go camping together at Falls Lake. (If you have camping gear, particularly a dutch oven that we could borrow we would appreciate it.) In June, we are looking forward to attending Passport Youth in Greensboro and testing our skills on the TreeRunner ropes course at the Jewish Community Center.

- April Alston

Greystone's Memorial Garden

If you haven't previously explored our Memorial Garden or have not visited it in a while, take some time to stroll the welcoming, winding sidewalk up the gentle slope near the Sawmill Road portion of our campus toward the linear labyrinth and the columbarium. Linger for awhile in this place of peace and beauty which calls us to reflect upon God's gift of the good earth and invites us to walk and talk with God.

Since its dedication on September 20, 2009, the garden, which surrounds the columbarium building, patio (labyrinth), and bell tower, serves to remind us of the gardens in which Jesus retreated to pray. Its flora changes with the seasons. Notice the encore azaleas, which bloom in both spring and fall, hydrangeas, the Easter lilies (which will bloom briefly in May), and various other flowering plants and trees. About 25 azaleas, which were donated a few years ago by WRAL, were planted to add to those which were planted previously. Easter lilies, used during our Easter worship services, have also been added at different times, as were hydrangeas in April of this year. A couple of lovely potted plantings, recently installed, grace the columbarium entrance.



Along with the help of landscaping crews and volunteers over the years, we have sought to maintain this area as a welcoming place of rest for those who enter the columbarium to honor loved ones who have passed, or to anyone who seeks a quiet time of meditation. The litany from the Dedication of the Memorial Garden in 2009 proclaims, "With faithfulness to God, and as disciples of Jesus Christ, we come to this place to seek comfort, consolation, and care for our souls and the souls of those whom we love."

So come on by – anytime. Enjoy this special retreat of rest. You might also catch the chiming of the hour from the bell tower's carillon or an old hymn which may play at various times throughout the day. Sense God's presence and eternal assurances.

- Steve Rose

New "Welcome House" Project Under Development

The Missions Committee and the Spirit of Justice Ad Hoc Team are pleased to announce that as part of our encourager church relationship with Marc and Kim Wyatt, Greystone Baptist Church is developing and endorsing a new Welcome House project. This new concept is an outgrowth of the existing Welcome Houses which specifically meet a need for refugee families. The new Welcome House project is flexible to include not only refugee families, but any families who are experiencing a housing crisis.

It is designed to identify available housing (unused parsonages, rental properties owned by church members, etc.) that can be made available at affordable, less than market rates. Beyond housing, the encourager churches that adopt this new Welcome House model will designate a sponsor who will work with each family, helping them to move into more permanent housing. The third component of this new iteration of Welcome House is that each family supported by this program will have a hospitality group that will pray for them and walk alongside them while the family is living in their Welcome House property.

- Bill Baxley

In response to this feedback...

The staff and deacons, recommend the following changes, beginning Sunday, June 13.

1. In-person worship will be held at 9:30 a.m. each Sunday morning. First Sundays will continue to be outdoors (weather permitting) and subsequent Sundays will be indoors, in our Sanctuary. We will continue to wear masks and practice social distancing.
2. In lieu of the pre-recorded service, the 9:30 service will be live-streamed each week. It will be available on our YouTube channel and our church website live (beginning at 9:30 a.m). A recording of the live-stream will be available on YouTube and our church website for those who are unable to tune in live.
3. Adult Sunday school classes are invited to begin returning to campus for their weekly meetings. With the 9:30 worship time, we anticipate most classes will begin at 10:30 or 10:45 a.m. We also believe that many classes will continue to meet virtually. Some may consider a hybrid model, with some members joining in person from the church campus and others joining online. Classes considering in person or hybrid meetings should contact Annette at the church office at office@greystonechurch.org for scheduling and space reservation.
4. Through the summer months of June, July, and August, there will be no weekly Sunday school for children and youth. They will continue meeting virtually and for special, planned, fellowship gatherings as communicated in emails from Pastor April Alston.
5. While we do not know what the future will hold, it is our hope, our prayer, and our (tentative) plan to return to a full schedule with faith formation, fellowship, mission, and worship opportunities for people of all ages in early September.

In addition to these changes...

Here are some other important things to note:

1. The ministerial staff will continue teleworking throughout the summer and plan to return to a more traditional schedule of in-office working hours mid to late August.
2. Ministerial staff members **are** available for in-person appointments. These need to be scheduled in advance with each minister.
3. Steve, our Property Manager, continues to work daily, on campus. Because his job requires him to move throughout the campus, he is not always available to answer the door.
4. Annette, our Administrative Assistant will be working in the office two days per week (typically Mondays and Wednesdays) and teleworking on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If you need to come by the church office, please feel free to schedule a time with Annette by emailing her at office@greystonechurch.org. Appointments are available between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on the days she is there.
5. The office will be closed (as always) on Fridays.
6. Even though our office hours are still adjusted for reasons associated with the pandemic, we would love to see you! Please do not hesitate to reach out and make an appointment with any of our staff!

Looking back and also looking ahead, it is hard to believe all the ways we are being renewed and re-made. Who would have imagined these “new things” that are springing forth? I know that change is always hard, and the changes outlined above will be no different. It is my belief, my hope, and my prayer that as we continue to listen and learn from one another during this season of transformation, we will grow in faith and grow in relationship. God is indeed making us new.

And even though we may not have been ready for all of this “new”... there is a good measure of grace tied up in it. For that we say,

Thanks be to God.

- Chrissy Tatum Williamson

Financial Update

As of March 31, 2021

2021 Budgeted Receipts to date: \$186,866.34
2021 Operating receipts to date: \$162,820.03
2021 Operating expenses to date: \$181,561.77
Net receipts < expenses - \$(18,741.74)

Contact Us

Main Office

Hours: 8:30-4:30 PM (M-Th)

Phone: (919) 847-1333

Website: www.greystonechurch.org

Minister On-Call

Phone: (919) 817-8975

Pastoral Staff

Chrissy Tatum Williamson, Senior Minister

chrissy.williamson@greystonechurch.org

April Alston, Associate Minister of Children/Preschool

april.alston@greystonechurch.org

Christian McIvor, Minister of Worship, Music and the Arts

christian.mcivor@greystonechurch.org

Office Staff

Steve Rose, Property Manager

properties@greystonechurch.org

Annette Variano, Administrative Assistant

office@greystonechurch.org

Jaimie Canavan, Financial Secretary

finance@greystonechurch.org

Weekday Preschool

Pam Phillips, Director

weekdaypreschool@greystonechurch.org

Like Us:

On Facebook

Click on the "Like" symbol.



Listen to Us:

On our podcast "The Living Stone"



1. Download the podcast app on your smart phone or tablet. Search for "The Living Stone"
2. Click on the logo,  then click on "subscribe".
3. Once subscribed, you will be notified when new episodes are posted.

Watch Us: On our [YouTube](#) channel.

Find out more about Us: On our [website](#)