

The Chant

St. Gregory's Anglican Church



Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World by Knowing, Loving and Serving God.



WHAT DOES GOD DEMAND?

Some months, and if I'm being honest, most months I have to be creative in coming up with something to submit for my monthly article in this newsletter.

Occasionally I draw inspiration from something I've recently read or we have an event in the life of the parish or the wider Church on which I can offer commentary. Other times I write about whatever the upcoming season is bringing. But I'm just not feeling particularly inclined to do any of that this month. I wrote an article about Advent last December, the things going on at St. Gregory's have received ample attention, and the most noteworthy event in the life of the Anglican Church is scandal, with the Archbishop of Canterbury offering his resignation. But thankfully (pun intended), I've just prepared my notes for my Thanksgiving homily and it sparked a little bit of reflection, at least enough to provide a paragraph or two for the Chant.

In my homily, which some of you by the time of publishing will have already heard, I talked about how God demands our thanks. Not in a forceful way, like a parent demanding their kid clean their room, but in a more passive way. I explained it like how the performance of a masterpiece demands applause – not because the performers are insisting upon it but because the performance itself deserves it. So, it got me thinking, what other things does God, by virtue of who He is, demand from us. And this can be a delicate thing, because in many ways the church has downplayed the language of obligation and this is conceptually very similar. People don't like being told what they have to do, so to say something is an obligation or is demanded of us can be off-putting. But when it comes to God, there are some absolute expectations from us that we would do well to acknowledge and uphold.

So, the first thing that God demands from us is our worship. And this one is utterly unique because He is the only one worthy of it. Nothing else in our lives is deserving of our worship. Honor, reverence, respect, admiration... sure, but nothing else deserves our worship. And this worship should be an integral part of our lives. It should inform and influence everything else we do.

And because of this, God demands our obedience. But this one is a bit more complex than by virtue of God being God. While that remains true, logic dictates this one as well. It only makes sense for us to be fully obedient to God because God objectively knows what is best for us. Plenty of people demand things of us that may not be the best for us. A boss may demand that we put in hours that lead to the neglect of our families. A loved one may demand some material thing that we simply cannot afford. This happens because people put their own self-interest before others. God on the other hand has nothing but our best interest at heart for one extremely important reason - He loves us infinitely.

And this brings me to the last thing that God demands, our love. Because he is perfect, he loves us perfectly and that kind of love deserves reciprocation. Despite the fact that we cannot love God back to the same degree that he loves us, we can still love him to the best of our ability.

What is ironic is that while God by virtue of his being, demands everything from us, God in his character demands nothing from us. God only desires our love, obedience, and worship. The beauty of free will is that it is our choice to render them to him or not, regardless of whether or not they are deserved. Take some time this Advent season to think of the ways that you are responding to these demands and how that response is forming your Christian walk.

Fr. Alan Horton+

WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON THIS SATURDAY

Daughters of the Holy Cross will host their annual Christmas Party on Saturday, December 7th at 11:00 am in Wilson Hall. All women of the church are invited to attend. Lunch will be provided. Please bring a new stuffed bear (no religious or other emblems, please). Leave the tag attached. These will be donated to Cooks Childrens Hospital. Also, we will have a Christmas sock exchange. Bring a pair of Christmas socks filled with little items for this fun exchange! Hope to see you there!



As 2024 Ends. . . .

As we look back on 2024, we are delighted to report that our income as of October exceeded projections which included both pledged and non-pledged income, demonstrating the generosity and commitment of our congregation.

This surplus provided a solid foundation for our ministry, outreach programs and has allowed us to meet our expenses.

We also successfully completed two projects that were on our wish list: moving the altar and replacing the back parking lot.

Looking ahead to 2025, we have planned a 4.5% increase to the budget to enhance our existing initiatives while preparing for future opportunities and challenges.

We ask you to keep this in mind when prayerfully considering your pledge for 2025.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all members of our congregation for their unwavering support and contributions.

Your generosity has made a difference!

In Christ,

Beth Marshall, Sr. Warden

SAVE THE DATES DECEMBER

- 05~ 9:30 am Genealogy Meeting
- 07~ 8:00 am Men's Group @ Rosa's
11:00 am Ladies Christmas Lunch
- 08~ Angel Tree Gifts are due
Pledges for 2025 due
- 10~ 9:30 am Women's Bible Study
- 14~ Wreath's Across America
- 15~ 5:00 pm Lesson's & Carols
(followed by Cookie Exchange and Hot Chocolate)
- 17~ 9:30 am Women's Bible Study
- 19~ 9:00 am Dominoes & Donuts
- 21~ 8:00 am Men's Group @ Rosa's
11:00 am OSL Group
- 22~ Canned Food Drive
Decorate the church
- 24~ 5:00 pm Christmas Pageant
Christmas Eve Service
- 25~ 10:00 am Christmas Day Service



PARKING LOT COMPLETED

I'm thrilled to announce the completion of our new parking lot! The parking lot was made possible through the continued generous giving of our St Gregory's family.

This long-awaited upgrade offers a significant improvement in safety. The most notable feature is the curbless design — a thoughtful decision that removes traditional curbs and allows for smoother transitions especially for those with walkers, wheelchairs, or strollers.

I would like to thank Bill Griffin for all the work he put into this project. He worked very closely with Pate-Jones Paving Company who went above and beyond to meet our needs.

In the next couple of weeks, we will be replacing the bulbs in the parking lots to improve the lighting.

Thank you again to everyone for your continued support as we move forward together in faith and fellowship.

Angie Griffin, Jr. Warden



Parking Lot before replacement





RECENTLY AT ROSA'S CAFÉ: The St. Gregory's Mens Group (left to right) James McDuff, Bert Sloan, Fr. Alan Horton, Trice Edwards, Robert Bloomfield, Rick Black, Bill Griffin, John Hamaker, Tim Cannon, Fritz Barowsky. Phil Hawkins is not in the photo because he took the photo. A great group of men serving our Lord and the community!!



The St Gregory Choir would like to thank the congregation for letting us provide yet another year of hymns and processions for our services. We thoroughly enjoy our contribution to our services and hope you appreciate it as well.

In 2024 as we end the church calendar year, we have been blessed with parishioners contribution to the choir. The most recent member to the choir has been Robert Durden. His voice has once again strengthened the tenors in the choir. We continue to try and recruit for our sopranos and altos. We truly enjoy any and all participation.

So as we wind down our church calendar and prepare for the new Christian year, I would like to thank all who have participated in the choir. We have Fritz Barowsky, Tim Canon, Phil Hawkins, Phil Brantley, Barbara Edwards, Mack and Sharon Holcomb, Anna Sparkman, and our newest member Robert Durden.

If you have an interest, please reach out to any of our members. We welcome all.

Blessings to all,

Fritz Barowsky, St Gregory's Choir

JOIN US FOR WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

The 3rd annual Wreaths Across America Celebration Day will be **December 14** beginning with the Opening Ceremony at 11:00 a.m. at the entrance to Arlington Cemetery, which is adjacent to Parkdale Cemetery at 701 S. Mary Street.

We will once again be placing wreaths on the graves of Veterans who are buried in Block 9A of Parkdale Cemetery. We have 98 veterans in this block. It

normally only takes about an hour to place the wreaths. There is a sign-up sheet on the back credenza of the church for those who wish to help us.

After we lay the wreaths, we will come back to the church where our kitchen elves will have a light lunch of soups, sandwiches, and desserts for us. If you prefer not to help with the wreaths, helping prepare the lunch is a perfect way to be involved in this project. Cindy Bloomfield will be organizing the lunch, so contact Cindy or

Barbara Edwards for more information.

Placing wreaths on the Veterans' graves is a simple way to honor those who have served in the military and to thank them for the sacrifices they made for all of us. It means a lot to the families to see a wreath placed near the headstones of their Veterans.

Thank you for your support and your help!

Barbara & Trice Edwards



- 05~ DeeDee Dolloff
- 06~ Meredith Hightower
- 20~ Barbara Edwards
- 22~ John Hamaker
- 22~ Jim Wilbern

NEWS FROM ST. CLARA'S GUILD

-Barbara Edwards

St. Clara's Guild will meet on December 6 for our annual Christmas party, which will be a potluck brunch, so bring your favorite dish to share. The brunch will begin at 10:00 am.

For those of you who want to come a bit early to work on the dignity bibs, I will be at Wilson Hall at 9:00 am.



We donated 60 preemie caps to Mansfield Methodist NICU. Thanks to Shirley Watts and Sandy Townend for their incredible work on these caps. These caps are extremely important to the babies who have to spend time in the NICU.

St. Gregory's Genealogy Research Group

The Genealogy Group's next meeting will be Thursday, December 5, 9:30 a.m. in Wilson Hall.

Phil Hawkins will be doing a session for us on "Walking through GedMatch". GedMatch has made many changes to their website. They have a major update coming in the very near future. We will have lunch and fellowship at the Mexican Inn following the meeting. Please come join us!!

Happy Hunting!! Gayle Bradburn

Join Us in Service and Fellowship

Altar Guild

This group maintains the altar for Sunday service, Baptisms, funerals and other special services.

St. Gregory's Choir

The choir is for men and women who like to sing and offer praise to God with their voices.

Daughters of the Holy Cross

This group of women take a lifetime vow of prayer, service, study and evangelism.

Evangelism and Outreach

Planning activities and events, this team shows the love of Jesus in our Mansfield community.

Flower Guild

Learn the art and skill of flower arrangement with fresh flowers for our sanctuary.

Healing Ministry

A group of prayer teams to pray on those seeking healing as directed by Jesus.

Men's Study Group

The men of the church meet on the 1st & 3rd Saturdays for a time of study, service and fellowship.

Women's Study Group

The women of the church meet on Tuesday mornings, enjoying book studies and fellowship.

St. Clara's Guild

This group sews quilts for the sick or to welcome new members at baptism. They also knit caps for newborns in local hospitals and complete other hand done projects for the community.

St. Gregory's Genealogy Group

Explore your family history and heritage with our group. Or learn how to research your family's roots using the knowledge shared by our members.

St. Gregory's Nursery Helpers

This group provides care in our nursery for children under 3 years of age while services are taking place in the sanctuary.

St. Martha's Guild

By providing meals for parishioners and their families during times of illness, bereavement, or even the birth of a child, this group shares God's love.

St. Francis Pet Therapy (Pet Partners)

Through Pet Partners, owners and pets are trained to visit residents of nursing homes and schools, offering God's love through time with a gentle pet. Those without pets may also serve.

St. Gregory's Worship Teams

Our team of Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEM), Lectors, Crucifers and Oblationers (Ushers) make of this group. Special training is provided for those wishing to serve on this team.



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