In looking back…

It seems like years and not months since our previous season of Advent/Christmas began. We had some wonderful plans for the coming year and were excited about the future. At that time, none of us could have imagined the challenges that would face our world, our country, and our communities. Now, most of us would be thrilled just to have things get back to some semblance of what we described as “normal.” It seems especially appropriate at this time that the first Sunday of this new church year, the Season of Advent, has traditionally been associated with the theme of…hope.

One of our favorite movies, 1994’s *The Shawshank Redemption*, has a great sentence of dialogue about hope: “Remember…hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies.” Hope often is the “best of things,” for without hope, it can be hard to believe that the kingdom of God is possible. During this holiday season, the world seems like a strange paradox – wonderful moments of generosity and compassion can be overwhelmed by instances of violence and hatred. It can be hard to know what to believe in at times. But during Advent and Christmas, we remember that the world was not a much different place a couple of thousand years ago – the people of Israel lived with their hearts in the past, sure that their best years were behind them, that the world could not change. And then God sent his Son in the form of a small, helpless child who would grow to be at one with God, embodying the love and mercy of God in human form. His message was one of hope – that even in the most difficult of times, God would be with his creation and that in the end, all of the world would be at one with God.

That message of hope, of being able to trust in God’s love for all humanity, has been the core of our faith and one that we hope to share with all of you for many years to come.

Blessings to all, —Mitch & Sue Trigger

Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church celebrates God’s unbounded grace and all-inclusive love.

God gathers us in a welcoming community, with our curiosity and questions, to worship creatively, learn from God’s word, share our gifts, and deepen our faith.

With grateful hearts and a spirit of adventure, we go to serve Christ in the world, sharing kindness with everyone, and working for justice rooted in God’s love.

**REAL FAITH**

**REAL STORIES**

**REAL GRACE**

11100 College Boulevard
Overland Park, KS 66210
913-345-1256
office@gcpc.org
gcpc.org

Online worship every Sunday on Facebook Live and Zoom. Visit gcpc.org/online for links!
Together in Advent: Adult Sunday School

11:15am December 6 - 20 on Zoom

During Advent and Christmas we love to buy and wrap presents, send Christmas cards and share cookies. Those are wonderful things to do, but we may become so busy with those things that we forget that Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. In this Bible study we will see that in the holy child of Bethlehem, God is present among us with his gifts of peace, joy and love. Join us at 11:15am on Zoom (full link on website and in the announcements each Sunday):

Meeting ID: 883 1302 4210; Passcode: GCPC2020

There is a study guide for this class. To receive a copy, please contact Rev. Sue at sue.trigger@gcpc.org or the church office at patrick.bell@gcpc.org.

Gift Certificates that give back!

Consider giving an Alternative Gift Certificate! The sale of alternative gift certificates is moving online this year; the program runs through December 20. We have gift certificates ranging from $1 to $50, supporting causes from clean water in South Sudan, to stocking Rosehill Elementary with art supplies and medicines for the nurse’s office. Get your Black Friday shopping done early and in your PJs — look online at www.gcpc.org/Christmas to see everything being offered. You can pay online through the GCPC giving portal or send a check to the church office — you’ll get more instructions about how to pay once you submit your order. Send an e-mail to michala.walker@gmail.com with any questions!
The November 16, 2020, Session meeting was held via Zoom with Reverend Sue Trigger serving as moderator. In addition to the ruling elders, deacon Megan Lee was in attendance. Sue opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and Diane Schmit shared a devotion based on Matthew 5:9 about peacemaking before leading us in prayer.

Consent agenda: The minutes of the October 19 Session meeting were approved, as well as the results of an electronic vote taken to approve allowing the Boy Scouts to use the building again.

Team minutes:
Personnel team: The Personnel team submitted a motion to approve a 3% COLA for staff with the anticipated return of part-time staff to work of July 1 (50% of the year). The motion carried.

Youth team: The Youth team asked Session to approve a maximum of 25 people to attend the progressive dinner on December 13, unless prohibited by Johnson County in response to increasing COVID rates. It was approved.

Clerk’s report: We started the month with 404 members and the passing of Carl Blomgren brought us to 403 members.

Co-Pastors’ report: There were no questions with the co-pastors’ report.

Deacons’ report: Megan Lee reported that the deacons are continuing to check on their group members to ensure they are getting the care they need.

Old business: There were no distributions from the discretionary fund this month.

New business: The Nominating team is making progress recruiting deacon candidates. There will be a congregational meeting on December 13, 2020, after the worship service to elect deacons. As was done in May to elect the elders, this meeting will be held via Zoom.

After sharing joys and concerns, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m. and Rev. Sue Trigger closed with a prayer.
Music Notes!

Music During Advent and Christmas

Just a reminder on ensembles in online worship: Praise Team and Chancel Ensemble sing LIVE in worship. All other ensembles pre-record their songs and are inserted into the worship service.

First Sunday of Advent – November 29
Joy Singers (4s – 1st graders), Emily Hussey, director and Celebration Singers (2nd – 5th graders), Pam Kelly, director, shared their song in worship.

Praise Team – Donna Goeckler, director and Carrie DeVries, accompanist, led overall worship music.

Second Sunday of Advent – December 6
Exaltation! and Jubilation! Ringers (8th graders + adults), Kathy Bures, director; and Exaltation! Singers (8th grade + young adults), Linda Bruns, accompanist; and Chancel Ensemble, Rebecca Prater, director, Linda Dover, accompanist, will lead overall worship music.

Third Sunday of Advent – December 13
“Songs of the Season” presented by Praise Team – Donna Goeckler, director and vocals, Carrie DeVries, accompanist and vocals, Michelle Gailiee-Frye, Jami Howe, and Gina McBride, vocals; Melanie Townsend, keyboard and Daniel Cole, percussion, will lead overall worship music and share additional music.

Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 20
“Songs of the Season” presented by Chancel Singers I – Psallite by Michael Praetorius; Chancel Singers II – What Child Is This? arr. Molly Ijames; Chancel Singers III – Angels We Have Heard on High arr. Benjamin Harlan; and Chancel Ensemble – will lead overall worship music and share The Gift by Craig Courtney; Rebecca Prater, director, and Linda Dover, organist and accompanist.

Thursday, December 24th

5PM Family’s Christmas Eve Service
Music Shared by Joy Singers (4s – 1st graders) - Emily Hussey, director; Celebration Singers (2nd – 5th graders) - Pam Kelly, director; and Exaltation! Singers (8th grade + young adults), Donna Heer, accompanist

8PM Christmas Eve Service

Ensemble members: Liz Chandler, Karen Kesler, Sue Trigger, David Sutherland, Mitch Trigger, and Bob Dover, Rebecca Prater, director, Linda Dover, organist and accompanist.

First Sunday After Christmas
December 27th
Congregational Carol Singing, Linda Dover, accompanist; with Mitch, Sue, Charlie Trigger and Kate Trigger Duffert (aka “The Von Trigger family!”)

Tech Crew
Many thanks to the folks who faithfully and skillfully take care of our technical needs each week:
- Kim Krueger, graphics, PowerPoint, Facebook chat monitor, etc., etc.
- Patrick Bell, bulletins, online notices for worship, etc., etc.
- Eric Lee, Ray Kowalczewski, Nelson Townsend, and Master of all things technical, Miles McDonald
- Also thank you to those who video record our ensembles for use in worship: Joel Kesler, Andi Bohjanen, and Miles McDonald

As we enter the Seasons of Advent and Christmas
“be present, send peace, share joy, and wrap it all in love”
—Rebecca Prater
Virtual Sunday School

With the Season of Advent, our focus in Sunday school will take us to the stories about the birth of Jesus. We will learn about Mary’s amazing response to bearing the Son of God. “Yes!” she says. Then the world will turn because nothing is impossible with God. The magi visit the baby, bringing gifts to God’s greatest gift to us. As the new year begins, we will hear the one story of Jesus growing up; as a young boy, already seeking, or knowing, his place in God’s house.

Check out our Sunday school offerings for children. We’ve added a Facebook page for our 2nd–5th grade class. Look for more information below.

Children’s Classes:

2’s and 3’s Preschool Class – Lisa Cox has created a wonderful Facebook Page featuring the weekly Sunday school class. The lesson includes the colorful Bible story page and Lisa’s wonderful voice leading the class. You will find the page at GCPC Preschool Sunday School Stories. https://www.facebook.com/groups/GCPCstories

4 yrs – 1st Grade - We are blessed to have Awakening to Worship at GCPC. ATW is an introduction to worship that offers a creative telling of a Bible story as the children learn about the practice of worship. We are continuing to offer the ATW experience online and this will be the Sunday school class for the 4 year old – 1st grade children. These lessons will be pre-recorded and available for viewing at your convenience. The weekly links will be uploaded to the website’s Christian Education /Sunday School Page.

2nd – 5th Grades – This class will meet each week from 9am – 9:45am on Zoom. We will enjoy learning Bible stories, singing with the Celebration choir, and learning about the mission work of our Mission Team. In order to participate, parents will need to register with Rev. Sue at sue.trigger@gcpc.org. Sue will send you the log in information, including the password, when she receives your email. Please include your child’s name, year in school, and any special needs we need to be aware of for an online class.

Celebration!

You can find Sunday school information and the Celebration choir videos on our new Facebook Page. https://www.facebook.com/GCPC25grades. Content will be updated weekly with information about the coming lessons.

Celebration Singers — In addition to our Sunday school classes, we are blessed to have music time available online too! Links to our music time will be available on the Sunday school page. Each week our 4 yrs – 1st grade and 2nd – 5th grades will enjoy singing and learning about music and faith.

There will be no Sunday school classes on December 27. Join us for worship at 10am online.

December SMASH

December 20, 4-6pm (K-5th grades)

Let us make bread together! December SMASH! Join us for a birthday party for Jesus! Come and enjoy games and activities that will remind us that Jesus is why we celebrate Christmas. Please RSVP to help us safely prepare for supplies and social distance. RSVP to Christy at: christysoule@yahoo.com.
Connect
Recently we have had a steady group of students meeting weekly to participate in several activities to serve our community. At the beginning of the month, we had a blast holding a wrapping party for Red Bag items we as a church came together to provide for local foster children. We then played a wild human sized version of Clue which was fun to dress up as random characters and figure out the age-old questions of who, where, and with what.

Homeless Night
We finished out the month with our annual homeless night event. We made some changes to make the event seem more realistic this year with the addition of moving our camp from the church, to a park down the road. We also walked to Panera to ask for leftover scraps from the day for dinner. This event really brought home how homelessness can happen to anyone for any reason, and put ourselves in the shoes of those who have been affected by homelessness and COVID-19. We had more students than we expected during these times but were able to stay masked and distanced. We are thankful for the impact that was made on so many lives.

College
Looking forward, we welcome home our college students! We know many are back for an extended time, and we would love to invite you all to reconnect safely while you are here. Keep your eyes open for more information on those events. We are also looking to have both youth and college-age students come together for a social-distanced version of our progressive dinner and gift exchange.

Progressive Firepit Dinner and Gift Exchange December 13
In a normal year we load up our youth in cars to “progress” from house to house for appetizers, main course, and dessert, followed by a white elephant gift exchange. This year, however, since traveling together is not recommended, we will be progressing to various firepits outside the church. College-age students are encouraged to join us, and we will divide into three groups to keep our size down.
Thank you!

The Weyforth family thanks our faith community for all your prayer support, meals, cards, and calls. Your love surrounded us during this difficult time. Thank you.

Thanks to all of you who sent Knute and I sympathy cards after the death of my father. We are truly touched by your thoughtful and kind words during this difficult time. —Jan Rosche’

We received a coffee mug of candy and treats from the GCPC youth group. What a nice surprise and pleasant uplift during a very difficult time for Kathy and I. It means more than you can know, to know that you are in the thoughts and prayers of your church family. The congregational members who have continued to send the cards letters and meals has been so appreciated. Please make sure and tell our youth and members how much we have appreciated these blessings they share with us. In a time when there seems to be so much selfishness and division in our world it is good to be comforted when everything around us seems to be challenging our faith. May God bless all of you for your random acts of kindness. It may not change the world immediately, but it changes our each and every time it occurs. —Rob & Kathy Jonas

Congregational Meeting December 13

A Congregational Meeting will be held December 13 following worship for the purpose of electing Deacons.
Inclusive. Family Oriented. Welcoming.

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Twitter: @GraceCovPres
Instagram: @gcpc_overlandpark

Worship Schedule
10am Online Worship until otherwise announced.
Visit gcpc.org/online for links

CELEBRATING GOD’S ALL ENCOMPASSING LOVE!

CHURCH STAFF
Co Pastors
- Office hours: Monday-Thursday
Mitch Trigger, mitch.trigger@gcpc.org ........ ext. 18
Sue Trigger, sue.trigger@gcpc.org .................. ext. 15

Director of Music Ministries
- Office hours: Monday-Wednesday, Friday
Rebecca Prater, rebecca.prater@gcpc.org .. ext. 13

Church Administrator
- Office hours: Monday-Friday
Patrick Bell, patrick.bell@gcpc.org ........... ext. 10

Director of Youth Ministries
- Office hours: Monday-Thursday
Miles McDonald, miles.mcdonald@gcpc.org , ext. 17

Finance Administrator.......................... Tara Hyder
Mon. 8-4; Tues./Weds. 8-12;/Thurs./Fri. by Appt.

Organist ................................................ Linda Dover
Contemporary Music Coord.…..Donna Goeckler
Contemporary Music Accomp.…….. Carrie DeVries
Contemporary Music Drummer……..Daniel Cole
Technical Director for Worship.. Miles McDonald
Child Care Coordinator...............Carolyn Chaffin
Wedding Coordinator ......................Lara Schesser
Funeral Coordinator .......................Mary Sue Thomas

ELDERS
Jim Byrd
Ric Cummings
Andrew Frye
Tim Hayden
Cheryl Johnson
Terry Kolich
Lynn Long
Mike Mattix
David Minaschek
Terri Monrad
Diane Schmit
Sophie Shaw
Jenna Soule
Susan Sutherland
Marcia Turner

MINISTRY UNITS
Congregational Nurture Unit Moderators
Connections and Care..........................Lisa Feyh
Worship and Music.............................Melanie Townsend, Katie Hearn

Education Ministry Unit Moderators
Adult .................................................Maggie Blankers
Children .......................................Erin Frye, Angela Krug
Youth..............................................Kaki Conti

Reach Out Ministry Unit Moderators
Kairos........................................Rick Randolph
Mission ........................................Mikki Walker
Welcoming ....................................Vacant

Supportive Ministry Unit Moderators
Facility .........................................Marc Feyh
Generosity ....................................David Sutherland
Finance........................................Vacant

SUPPORT STAFF
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Diane Schmit
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Prayer Chain .....................................Cheryl Johnson
Website Administrators .. Kim Krueger/Patrick Bell

Worship Schedule
10am Online Worship until otherwise announced.
Visit gcpc.org/online for links

Upcoming Newsletter Article Deadlines
January 2021 issue - Deadline, December 15
February 2021 issue - Deadline, January 19