



**GRACE COVENANT**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JUNE 2020 | VOL 38 NBR 6

# GRACE NOTES



## Children's Education Teacher's Appreciation

Children's Team decorated the lawns of our teachers with an appreciation sign. Lawns decorated included: 2's and 3's Teachers: Lisa Cox, Jane Knoche, Megan Minaschek; Preschool - MaryAnn Weyforth, Caroline Becher, Jean Nelson; K-2nd - Melanie Townsend, Mikki Walker, Lauren Bond; and 3rd-5th - Matt McBride, Jenny Stromberg, Jerel Williams. Thank you for all you do for the children of Grace Covenant!

## Online Congregational Meeting Called for June 7

The Session has called an Online Congregational Meeting for **Sunday, June 7 following our online worship**. The purpose of the meeting is to elect elders, approve the pastor's Terms of Call, and a presentation on the process of re-opening the church. The meeting will be held on Zoom. A link will be shared.

The rapid changes that have come with the pandemic have had a great impact on our ministry. We are continually working on ideas designed to keep everyone connected.

Our Mid Week announcements offer important information about the life of the church. Email our church office to subscribe.



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**

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[gcpc.org](http://gcpc.org)

Online worship every Sunday on Facebook Live and Zoom. Visit [gcpc.org/online](http://gcpc.org/online) for links!



## Workshop of Wonders

### Virtual Vacation Bible School

### June 1-5, 9am

The workshop of wonders is under construction and we are ready for an exciting week of fun! Rivet the carpenter ant is on the way to Overland Park to join us as we imagine how ordinary things can become extraordinary with God's help. There will be music, stories, science and craft activities you can enjoy at home!



**Our mission emphasis this year is Sunflower House.** At Sunflower House children who have experienced physical and sexual abuse find support and assistance. We will provide a list of needed supplies to collect. Our daily offering will also go to Sunflower House. Put yours in a small bag or container and include it in your donation bag.

To register for this online experience, please go to our website at: <https://gcpc.org/vbs-zoom>

**SUPPLY PICK-UP** – We have a bag of VBS supplies for your family. Pick them up at our VBS Pick up on Saturday, May 30, from 3-4pm. Bring the kids and say hi to Rivet! Drive to the circle in our parking lot and you'll find us passing out bags under the portico at the worship entrance.

**VBS Sunday – June 7, 10am** We will have a **VBS Sunday worship** that will be a ton of fun with Rivet and songs from the week. For log in information, go to: <https://gcpc.org/online>

**Mission Parade – June 7, 11:30am** - Following worship we invite you to drive over to the church with your donation bag for Sunflower House. Together we will bring good news to children who are hurting. Drive to the circle in our parking lot and you'll find us collecting your bags under the portico at the worship entrance.

**Everyone can help at the Workshop of Wonders!** We may not need our excellent crew of volunteers for VBS this year, but that doesn't mean you can't help us make a difference.

If you would like to donate to Sunflower House, check out their wish list at: [sunflowerhouse.org/wishlist](https://sunflowerhouse.org/wishlist). Donations may be made directly to Sunflower House, or feel free to join our Mission Parade on June 7 at 11:30am in the church parking lot. We'd love to see you!



**Like us on Facebook** for information about VBS and daily updates June 1-5.  
Find us at: **VBS Under Construction, Grace Covenant Presbyterian, Overland Park, KS.**  
Post your pictures on our page or on Instagram at #GCPCVBS.



# Music Notes

## With immense gratitude to Southridge Presbyterian Church — Over 175 years of ministry in Roeland Park, KS

Many of you know Southridge Presbyterian Church. Some of you were members of their congregation at one time.

Our former member, Rev. Lloyd Haney, was their pastor for many years and then he was a faithful member of GCPC until his passing. Wilma, his wife, continues as a member at Grace Covenant. They both shared their voices in our Chancel Choir when they joined GCPC. I was privileged to be their director for a time.

Unfortunately, Southridge Presbyterian's membership has declined to the point where they must now close their doors. Don Wilson has been their interim pastor and has served and led them well through this difficult time. Don contacted me a few weeks ago because SPC was wanting to give their many musical resources and equipment to other churches who might be able to use them. SPC has a long and strong heritage of a great music ministry.

After Don's call, Kathy Bures and I went over to SPC and looked through their music ministry items to see what GCPC might be able to use. I must say, we have been blessed by their generosity and they have been thrilled to know their music ministry items will continue to live on in another congregation.

We want GCPC to know what we received and for SPC to know of our deep gratitude.

### **We received several items for our handbell ministry:**

- 2 octaves of like-new Malmark Handbells. Malmark is the brand we have, and we already have many ideas of how we will use these additional handbells in our music ministry.
- covered table pads
- mallets, music folders, and gloves

### **We also received these items for our general music and choral music ministry:**

- 2 black music stands; 2 vertical filing cabinets for filing music
- Nine choir robes that look just like ours. We are always needing more short robes, so several of the robes are shorter ones.
- and 2 laundry baskets full of 4-part, 3-part, and 2-part choral music

**As I said, we have been blessed by Southridge Presbyterian's generosity!** Please join me in praying for SPC's faith community as they seek to discern their next steps.

With immense gratitude, Rebecca Prater

# Thank You!

*A HUGE Thank You . . . ,*

*"There are not enough words to adequately express our gratitude for all the love, support and prayers given to our family during the past eight months. When our daughter Rhonda Green was diagnosed with breast cancer in August, we were aware what an upward battle was ahead of us. That was a scary time in our lives with so many unknowns, but with God's grace we were given the strength to take one day at a time as Rhonda battled her cancer. It certainly was a time full of ups and downs in what we call life! We feel blessed that she is now finished with all her treatments, and we can celebrate that she is 'cancer free'! Our heartfelt thanks to all of you at Grace Covenant for your love and deep concern. Our hearts feel full as our faith family has shown their love with so many acts of kindness and thoughtfulness. God bless each of you."*

*—Rosemary and Richard Gibson*

*"I want to thank my church family for the cards, and kind messages of support, comfort and care upon the passing of my sister-in-law Angela. It was very meaningful to my brother and I. Thank you also for your kindness in continually asking about my Mom who is under lockdown at her nursing home. You understand—because many of you are in the same situation—how difficult it is to be separated physically from an elderly parent. Thank you for always asking about her, and remembering her in your prayers."*

*—Kim Krueger*

# A Letter from Christi and Jeff Boyd, serving in Africa

January 2020

Dear friends and family,

Once rescued, survivors of human trafficking are often reluctant to talk about their experiences. This is usually because they are afraid of being blamed by family and community for the exploitation and abuse, they've suffered at the hands of bosses and employment agencies. Juliette (not her real name), however, is speaking out. She is concerned about other women who may fall victim to profiteers. When I met her several years ago, she even agreed for me to record her personal story, trusting that I would share it with sensitivity.



Juliette decided to escape Madagascar's financial crisis after a military coup in 2009. She approached a recruitment agency that offered her employment in Kuwait. Yet the hard work, lack of free time and imposed religious observances took a toll on her health and eventually landed her in a hospital. Juliette realized it would be better for her to return to her home, but she faced many obstacles: "The agency didn't allow me to return to Madagascar. The agency wanted me to stay and work. Then the people at the agency beat me and forced me back to work." Complicating Juliette's situation was the fact that her passport had been confiscated upon her arrival at Kuwait's airport, and Madagascar has no diplomatic representation in Kuwait to advocate on her behalf. Eventually, she escaped and ran to the French Embassy, where staff helped her find temporary shelter.

Juliette is one of 235 trafficked Malagasy women rescued from working against their will in Lebanon or Kuwait over the past decade with the help of the Rev. Helivao Poget. Pastor Helivao is director of the Ministry for Marginalized People (SAFFIFAA) of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM). SAFFIFAA began in 2009 under the auspices of FJKM's Chaplaincy Program to address the hardship of vulnerable groups as a result of the political predicament. When an FJKM member phoned her, alarmed about a close relative who was trapped in a similar employment scheme in Kuwait, Helivao traveled to Kuwait to evaluate the situation. She found scores of Malagasy women in similar situations, including Juliette, and eventually helped secure their return to Madagascar.

Pastor Haja and the Rev. Helivao Poget at a domestic violence and human trafficking awareness-building activity with the FJKM congregation of Tsararano in Madagascar.

Once these women were back home in Madagascar, Helivao started pondering how to counter the migration phenomenon in Madagascar that ultimately leads to trafficking abroad. She concluded that a dangerous concoction of domestic violence, local customs and severe poverty particularly renders young women from rural communities vulnerable: "In our assessment of the situation of trafficking survivors who return home, most of the women leaving are already survivors of domestic violence. They say: 'We already are victims of assault and battery within our own families. We are already prepared to be beaten. Even if we are going to be beaten ... it would be by someone else that we don't know, but maybe we'd have a good salary.'"

This is how Helivao shifted her focus to address human trafficking in Madagascar and elsewhere towards prevention, which begins with addressing domestic violence and raising awareness of the risks of being trafficked into a situation of forced labor or worse. Thanks to a 2019 Presbyterian Women Thank Offering grant for SAFFIFAA, Helivao launched a human trafficking prevention campaign called Mamonjy, which means "save" in the Malagasy language.

As a missiology professor on the FJKM theological faculty, Helivao engages her former students in the Mamonjy campaign and works with the FJKM's regional synod committees to organize awareness-building activities for local congregations in 10 zones, which she has identified as the most vulnerable areas across the island nation. I had the privilege of

accompanying Helivao when she launched the Campaign in the rural town of Bevilany, in North-Central Madagascar. Our host was Pastor Rojovola (Rojo), who leads there a cluster of FJKM churches together with her husband, Pastor Haja. I knew Pastor Rojo from my last visit to Madagascar, when she did her three-month Missiology field study alongside Pastor Tsoa, a graduate of an earlier cohort of missiology students.

Seeing Rojo confidently taking the lead in the campaign activities filled me with deep gratitude for Helivao's unique and effective way of involving students in SAFFIFAA's ministries and contextualizing academic course work by placing individual students in isolated, vulnerable communities across Madagascar as part of the Missiology class. Every year the immersion experience nurtures a new cohort of pastors who are better tuned into the day-to-day struggles of underserved communities. In turn, the field studies help inform mission and ministries at the denominational level. This is how, over the last several years, domestic violence, migration and trafficking in Persons have become prioritized as a concern of the FJKM and for which I have been invited to come alongside.

Since my visit coincided with a series of intensive training days for her Missiology students followed by a commissioning service for their field study, Helivao had asked me to help prepare a full day workshop for the students to engage in the topic of domestic violence. She particularly wanted me to incorporate various resources that I'd shared earlier with her from partners elsewhere in Africa. This is how, through use of videos I had recorded, students heard Pastor Christine from Congo explain how she organized a women's rights campaign to address harmful cultural practices against women. The students then followed a presentation based on the tools that Christine had used about different forms of domestic violence – physical, emotional, economic and psychological – and the cultural, religious, political and legal influences that condition them. To allow the students to engage with the topic at a deeper level, they were invited to partake in a participatory planning workshop for them to identify obstacles that keep the Church from moving towards a hypothetical vision of a Malagasy society where members in FJKM congregations and their communities are actively engaged in the eradication of domestic violence in all its dimensions from their families and society at large.

Working first in small groups and then in plenary sessions, the students named and categorized root causes, such as perceptions, attitudes, practices, and structures that need to be overcome. The time was too short to complete the process, but the exercise brought out a few clear directions: survivors and witnesses of domestic violence are not speaking out about their experiences for fear of repercussions from both the perpetrators and the community; by taking a position that domestic violence is a couple's private matter, the Church makes itself an accomplice through its silence and indifference; and for lack of civic education, communities remain ignorant about basic human rights, particularly in isolated areas.

Meanwhile, in a first round of awareness-building activities during FJKM Synod meetings, Youth conferences, and congregational gatherings, the Mamonjy campaign has expanded to all ten districts that Helivao had identified, reaching thousands of people across Madagascar. Campaign tools vary from banners with anti-trafficking slogans based on Scripture, to posters to prompt conversations about the various forms of domestic violence, and crayons for the youngest generations to draw pictures of things for sale in the marketplace. The message for them is, "You are a beautiful creation of God. God loves you, and you are not for sale!"

Coming alongside our global partners to help them share insights and resources among themselves, and to build bridges between them and our churches in the U.S., gives me deep joy. I am grateful for all who provide support through prayer, words of encouragement and financial contributions, with special thanks to all Presbyterian women across the U.S. who have helped launch the Mamonjy Human Trafficking Prevention Campaign through their Thank Offering!

## ***Christi and Jeff***

Mission co-workers based in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Serving as facilitator for women and children's interests (Christi) and regional liaison for Central Africa (Jeff)

- Contact: Christi Boyd ([christi.boyd@pcusa.org](mailto:christi.boyd@pcusa.org))
- Contact: Jeff Boyd ([jeff.boyd@pcusa.org](mailto:jeff.boyd@pcusa.org))
- Learn more about Christi and Jeff Boyd here:  
<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/jeff-and-christi-boyd/>



# Youth Ministry

## GCPC Youth Ministry in the days of social isolation

### What to expect this summer:

While our youth are increasingly adept at meeting virtually, it is difficult to not see each other fact-to-face. We have decided to host one, or possibly several, social distancing events at church around a fire pit. We will follow the guidance of Session and our community leaders regarding the necessary safety precautions. We are also looking into other ways to safely connect and reach out to our neighbors in love.

### Montreat

As of now the Montreat Youth Conference is still on our summer calendar. Montreat has altered their June conferences to an online format but GCPC is scheduled to attend in July. We are waiting and watching to see how the pandemic will affect this event and the recommendations about how we can be responsible for each other's safety as a church family. With 12 students and 3 adults registered this is one of the biggest groups we have ever planned to take to Montreat and we hope they will be able to experience the event first-hand.

### Confirmation

Our Confirmation class has decided to postpone their reception into membership which usually takes place on Pentecost Sunday, May 31 this year. The class of seven has been examined and approved for membership by the session but would like to publicly profess their faith and interest in membership during a live worship service as opposed to online. It is likely that we will be showering them with chocolate kisses in early to mid-August. We also hope to experience our capstone retreat at Heartland Camp sometime over the summer.

### Mission and Music:

Our Youth Team and M&M Planners have decided that we will not be traveling to Milwaukee in June for our planned Mission and Music Trip. And based on the state of the world these days it seems unlikely that we will be able to postpone that trip. We are looking into local service opportunities this summer and that may be more important now than ever. We will also be inviting our current seniors to come with us on M&M next summer.



## WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER GCPC's 2021 "Stewart"-ship Drive

Your Generosity Team slid under the deadline to meet in person just before Johnson County's "stay-home" orders were issued relative to COVID-19. But being at home can be a gift, providing the time to reflect on what it means to be generous and good "Stewarts" of GCPC's resources.

We were primed for our work by Pastor Mitch, who shared from the book, *Holy Currencies* – a holistic model for stewardship and congregational vitality. We'll be sharing with you the insights we gain, as well as keeping you informed on our schedule and plans for the 2021 "Stewart"-ship Campaign

The Generosity Team has seen a lot of enthusiasm – we're excited to have nine volunteers working together on GCPC's behalf: **David Sutherland, Moderator; Ryan Hussey, Scribe; Maggie Blankers, Bill Brown, Terry Kolich; Sylvia Littlejohn, Patty Smithson, Cal Sweeten and Pastor Mitch Trigger.**

In our first meeting, Pastor Mitch gave us a taste of the six blessings discussed in *Holy Currencies* – time and place, gracious leadership, relationship, truth, wellness, and money. These will inform our plans to help GCPC celebrate God's generosity and learn to model the blessings of giving in our own lives.

### One More Thing:

Our building is closed, but GCPC is as active as ever, with Online Worship Services and activities such as Zoom meetings and get-togethers, as well as activities for kids and teens. Our "Stewart"-ship drive begins in September, but please remember your gifts and offerings are needed throughout the year. *We're all in this together!*

**It's easy to give right from home.** Just click on the [Grace Covenant Online Giving Portal](#)

# Clerk's Corner

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the May 18, 2020, Session meeting was held via the internet. Reverend Sue Trigger served as moderator and, in addition to the elders, Reverend Mitch Trigger, Deacon Meredith Watson, Youth Minister Miles McDonald, the confirmation students and their mentor Jake Schmidt were present. Sue opened the meeting with a prayer at 7:05 p.m. and Marcia Turner shared a devotion and prayer.

**Examine confirmands:** Everyone present introduced themselves and shared what they liked about GCPC. Following questions to the confirmands from the elders, a motion was made to receive them into membership. The motion passed. The confirmands have chosen to wait to be confirmed until we can gather in person, so their confirmation date has been tentatively set for August 18. Confirmation students are Connor Chaffin, Andrew Cox, Max Passett, Hank Peck, Nadine Peck, Jaylee Soule, and Lauren Smith.

**Consent agenda:** The minutes of the April stated Session meeting were approved.

**Team minutes:** The money from the CARES loan has been received. With that and the decreased expenses because the building is closed, the church will probably break even on the budget despite the decreased income from offerings. The Facilities Reserve fund is almost at its maximum so we should be able to handle any facilities expenses this year.

**Clerk's report:** There were no changes to membership, so we still have 399 members.

**Co-Pastors' report:** We reviewed the co-pastors' report and there were no questions.

**Deacons' report:** Meredith Watson reported the deacons are continuing to reach out to their covenant groups.

**Old business:** None

**New business:** The church provided \$1500 to a woman whose business had been affected by the pandemic. We have a full slate of elder candidates: Jim Byrd, Terri Monrad, Andrew Frye, Ric Cummings, Mike Mattix, Sophie Shaw and Jenna Soule. There will be a virtual congregational meeting following the worship service on June 7 to elect the elders. Paper or emailed ballots will also be accepted. At the same meeting, the co-pastors' terms of call will be voted on. Because they hadn't changed, we didn't vote on them in January, but Presbytery requires them to be approved by the congregation every year. At the same meeting, Session will be asking the congregation to provide information that will help guide plans to reopen the building. Once the congregation can meet in-person again, we will hold a congregational meeting to affirm the voting at the virtual meeting. Session is going to have a called meeting next week to review recommendations about steps to take before opening the building so we can provide information to the teams to discuss at their next meetings. There was a request to approve a wedding in June but, since the building is closed, it was denied. AA and some GCPC groups have requested permission to meet in the church parking lot. As long as it is less than 10 people and they understand that the church is not open, it was approved.

After sharing some joys and concerns, Sue thanked the retiring elders for their service. The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 p.m. and Rev. Sue closed the meeting with prayer.





# A Sunday School Slow Down

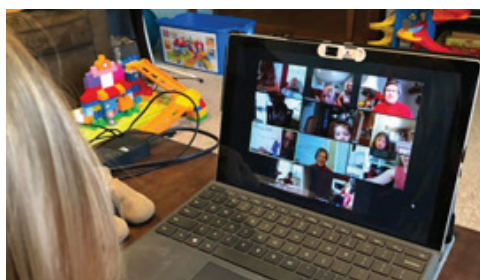
As GCPC continues to maneuver through the challenges brought by the coronavirus, we are making a number of changes. The Children's Team is going to slow down the roll out of the Workshop Rotation Sunday school program.

**Beginning September 15**, we will continue using the Growing in Grace and Gratitude curriculum with our pre-school and elementary classes. The program will remain as it was in 2019-20. This will help us limit contact among church members and will require fewer volunteers at a time when many will continue to shelter in place.

We will continue to work on building the Workshop Rotation program and expect to roll it out in spring 2021. Watch for further details.

## Sunday School Zoom Meet-Up

Sunday school teachers and students gathered for a Zoom Meet Up on May 17. Stewart joined Pastor Sue to introduce the story of Pentecost and then the children were able to go to break out groups with their teachers. It was a morning of fun for all.



## Worship Schedule

10am Online Worship  
until otherwise announced.  
Visit [gcpc.org/online](https://gcpc.org/online) for links

## Upcoming Newsletter Article Deadlines

July Issue - Deadline, June 21  
August Issue - Deadline, July 16



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Instagram: @gcpc\_overlandpark



## CHURCH STAFF

**Co Pastors** - Office hours: Monday-Thursday

Mitch Trigger, [mitch.trigger@gcpc.org](mailto:mitch.trigger@gcpc.org) .....ext.18

Sue Trigger, [sue.trigger@gcpc.org](mailto:sue.trigger@gcpc.org) .....ext.15

**Director of Music Ministries**

- Office hours: Monday-Wednesday, Friday

Rebecca Prater, [rebecca.prater@gcpc.org](mailto:rebecca.prater@gcpc.org) .. ext. 13

**Church Administrator**

- Office hours: Monday-Friday

Patrick Bell, [patrick.bell@gcpc.org](mailto:patrick.bell@gcpc.org) ..... ext. 10

**Director of Youth Ministries**

- Office hours: Monday-Thursday

Miles McDonald, [miles.mcdonald@gcpc.org](mailto: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.**.... Denice Trawicki

**Contemporary Music Drummer**..... Daniel Cole

**Technical Director for Worship**.. Miles McDonald

**Child Care Coordinator**..... Carolyn Chaffin

**Kid's Day Out Director** ..... Kathy Connor

**Wedding Coordinator** ..... Lara Schesser

**Funeral Coordinator** ..... Mary Sue Thomas

## ELDERS:

Harold Frye, Tim Hayden, Cheryl Johnson, Terry Kolich, Lynn Long, Kat Mason, David Minaschek, Julie Passett, Diane Schmit, Aaron Soule, Dave Stalling, Josh Sutherland, Susan Sutherland, Nelson Townsend, Marcia Turner

## SUPPORT STAFF

Deacon Moderator ..... Kathy Williams

Operating Committee..... Tim Hayden,

Cheryl Johnson, Julie Passett, Diane Schmit

Nelson Townsend

Newsletter Editor ..... Kim Krueger

Prayer Chain ..... Cheryl Johnson

Website Administrators .. Kim Krueger/Patrick Bell

## 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..... Jody Mason

Reach Out Ministry Unit Moderators

Kairos ..... Rick Randolph

Mission ..... Mikki Walker

Welcoming and Marketing ..... Rosemary Gibson,

Kim Krueger

Supportive Ministry Unit Moderators

Facility ..... Marc Feyh

Generosity and Finance..... Matt McBride

Personnel ..... Kevin Mason