During our Season of Thanksgiving, it’s not unusual for some of us to have days when, to put it simply, we just don’t feel thankful. It’s easy to have a day, week or even a month when nothing seems to go right. That’s been especially true during this time of pandemic.

But there are still reasons to be thankful. The following is a prayer that was offered at the session meeting of one of the previous congregations we served, by an elder known for being a bit of a “pessimist.” It has a lot in common with one of the “psalms of lament,” those psalms where the writer describes all the reasons that he/she is upset and questioning God, but in the end offers praise to God.

Dear Lord, thank you for this dreary, rainy, cold, lousy day and, to top it all off, thank You for letting us spend the whole night at a boring church meeting.

And thank you, Lord, that even when the weather is lousy, you are here refreshing the earth, providing water, growing food and nourishing the world.

Thank you, Lord, that even on our worst days, you are here, providing food and shelter and friends and family and this church to nourish and care for us.

Thank you, Lord, that we don’t really even know what a bad day is...most of us have never awakened cold and hungry without sufficient clothing or a warm place to stay...lonely and penniless with no place to turn.

Help us, Lord, to remember that you are with us always, to see the limitless blessings you have provided, to appreciate all that you have given us and to know that, with you, there really are no bad days.

Thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to do your work tonight as we start a new year in the life of our church. Help us to lead our congregation in such a way that we become a beacon of your love shining forth in the community.

And, Lord, helps us to remember that we do nothing on our own.

Amen.

May we all find ways to praise God and see the blessings all around us, no matter what we feel like at the moment.

Blessings to all, —Sue & Mitch

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
Thanksgiving Eve Service

Wednesday, November 25

Like many of our other special worship services this year, our GCPC Thanksgiving Eve service will have to take on a new face. There will be a service available online as usual via Facebook Live and Zoom. We would like to ask for your help for a portion of the service.

We’d like to have videos of individuals, couples, or families sharing what they are thankful for this year. If you need help with that, contact Pastor Mitch at mitch.trigger@gcpc.org.

If you don’t want to do a video, but would like to share what you’re thankful for, please send that information to Pastor Sue at sue.trigger@gcpc.org. We’d like to have those videos or information by Monday, November 16. Thank you for sharing and making this service special.

Together in Advent

We’re in this together. This was the theme of the 2020 Stewardship campaign that will take us right into the season of Advent which begins November 29. This year we will celebrate the coming of Christ as the family of God even as we continue to worship online. We will focus our attention on how we can give and share with one another this holiday season, despite the pandemic that is keeping us apart.

Each Sunday Revs. Sue and Mitch will be preaching on the themes: Be Present (Malachi 3:7), Send Peace (Micah 5:2-5a), Share Joy (Zephaniah 3:14-20), Wrap in Love (1John 4:7-12).

You are invited!

You are invited to attend our online Advent Fair on Sunday, November 29, at 11:15am. We have a team of leaders who will introduce each of the four themes of Advent with special activities you can do at home. We will create an advent chain, homemade Christmas cards, and more. This event is for everyone.

In order to participate, we need you to do two things:

1. Sign up online at: www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0a45a4a722a4fc1-together
   or, contact the church office. Be sure to let us know how many people will be participating so we can prepare your kit/s accordingly.

2. Pick up your advent kit/s at a drive through on Sunday, November 22, at 11:15am. We will be waiting for you under the portico.
The October 19, 2020, Session meeting was held via Zoom with Reverend Mitch Trigger serving as moderator. In addition to the ruling elders, Reverend Sue Trigger, deacon Meredith Watson and church staff members Rebecca Prater, Miles McDonald and Patrick Bell were in attendance. Mitch opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. and Susan Sutherland shared a devotion based on Psalm 28 before leading us in prayer.

**Consent agenda:** The minutes of the September 21 Session meeting were approved, as well as the results of an electronic vote taken earlier in October to approve the changes to staff benefits packages.

**Team minutes**

**Personnel team:** The Personnel team submitted two motions for Session approval – the first to approve the new job descriptions for staff members and the second to approve the new staff evaluation process. Both motions passed unanimously, and a motion was made and approved to add the new descriptions and process to the Operating Manual. The team also requested that expenses be turned in to Tara by the end of the relevant month so that financial reports can more accurately reflect the remaining amount in a team’s budget. Also, Patrick requested that people submitting requests for publicity in the newsletter, bulletin or mid-week announcements give him as much lead time as possible. Miles and Eric Lee (aka the technology gurus) asked if there were any additional issues to address regarding technology.

**Youth team:** Session approved a new fundraiser in which the youth would wrap presents for the Red Bag project. It was approved.

**Clerk’s report:** We started the month with 397 members and added 7 new members when the confirmation class was confirmed. When Jack Weyforth passed away, that brought our total members to 403.

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

**Deacons’ report:** Meredith Watson reported that the deacons are finding it difficult to maintain contact with all of their covenant group members and were looking forward to the time when they can meet with people in person.

**Old business:** We received a request from the Scout troop to be able to start meeting in the building. Because of some issues in the past, it was decided that Mitch, Terry Kolich and Patrick would meet with the leaders to discuss their plans. Currently, our policy is that groups inside the building are limited to 10 people. SMASH has been having more kids lately so there was a motion to increase the limit to 15 people. The motion carried. Guidance from the denomination has said that any building use guidelines must be approved by Session. A motion was made to approve the guidelines that Patrick sends to groups who use our building. The Worship team submitted the draft of a flyer that will be used explaining guidelines when the church is reopened. The flyer was approved by Session. (See note below.) There were no distributions from the Discretionary Fund this month.

**Note:** Session continues to evaluate the issue of in-person services every month, recognizing that we have had ten church members report positive COVID tests since March and we have a lot of members in the high-risk category.

After sharing joys and concerns, the meeting adjourned at 8:32pm and Rev. Mitch Trigger closed with a prayer.

GCPC Tech Team Members, Nelson Townsend, Ray Ray Kowalczewski and Eric Lee working their magic overseeing our online worship service.
The Latest in GCPC’s Music Ministry

CHILDREN’S MUSIC
“Keep on Singing” (a virtual/digital music curriculum) is up and running to the delight of children and parents, alike at the end of Children’s Sunday school session each week.
Emily Hussey leads Joy! our PreS – 1st graders
Pam Kelly leads Celebration! our 2nd – 5th graders

The children will sing as part of online worship on
• Sunday, November 29, 10am, First Sunday of Advent
• Thursday, December 24, 5pm, Christmas Eve Service

YOUTH MUSIC and CONNECT
Youth Music and “Connect” is going great!
All Rehearsals on Sundays in Sanctuary
Ex! Ringers Sundays @ 4pm-4:30pm – Ex! Ringers (8th-12th graders) – Kathy Bures, director
Ex! Singers @ 4:35pm-5:05pm (8th-12th graders) – Rebecca Prater, director-Donna Heer, accompanist
Youth Connect - Outside or in Heartland Hall from 5:10-6:30pm (6th-12th graders) – Miles McDonald and Andi Bohjanen, youth intern – leaders
Youth Band is about to begin! (6th-12th gr.)
Christopher Callendar and Miles McDonald, directors
Youth and Parents: Please watch your texts and emails for more details from Christopher and Miles

The youth will sing/ring as part of online worship on
• Sunday, November 8, Ex! Ringers,10am Online
• Sunday, November 15, Exaltation!, 10am Online
• Sunday, December 6, Ex! Ringers, Exaltation!, and hopefully Youth Band, 10am Online
• Thursday, December 24, 5pm Christmas Eve Service
Ex! Ringers and Exaltation!

Chancel Singer Ensembles
Rebecca Prater, director
• We have 3 small ensembles from Chancel Choir
• You’ve already heard each of the ensembles share anthems in online worship

Individual Chancel Singer Ensembles will sing as part of online worship on
• Sunday, November 1, Chancel Singers I, 10am
• Sunday, November 8, Chancel Singers III, 10am
• Sunday, November 22, Chancel Singers II, 10am
• Sunday, December 20, Chancel Singers I, II, III, 10am
• Thurs., December 24, Chancel Singers I, II, III, 8pm

All of the children’s, youth, handbell, and Chancel Singer ensembles are pre-recorded and inserted into our live worship.

Weekly Online Worship:
Praise Team and Chancel Ensemble will continue with online leadership as they have been.

Praise Team
Donna Goeckler, director and Carrie DeVries, accompanist and vocals
• Praise Team will share additional music on Sunday, December 13, 10am Online Worship

Chancel Ensemble
Rebecca Prater, director and Linda Dover, organist and accompanist
• Chancel Ensemble will share additional music on Sunday, December 20, 10am Online Worship

“Mask-maker, mask-maker, make me a mask!” (A la “Matchmaker” from Fiddler on the Roof)
And boy, we did! Singers from Chancel Choir and Exaltation! needed “Masks for Singers” made for additional safety while singing.
Thank you to the following people who were our seamstresses for this project: Laurie Callender, Cheryl Johnson, Chelly King, Beth Lillian, and Connie Richards.

Additional thanks to Sue Trigger, our “Queen of Mask Making!” She found the pattern and cut out all the pieces, recruited and coordinated our seamstresses and made quite a few masks, herself. “Thank you all!”
Presbyterian Women’s Thank Offering

Presbyterian Women’s Thank Offering, received in November of each year, gives women a tangible way to express their gratitude for the special blessings in their lives. At least 40% of the offering funds health ministries with the remainder used for new, creative areas of mission.

Donations can be made through the GCPC giving portal by selecting “Presbyterian Women” from the “Fund” drop-down menu. A list of the current recipients can be found at www.presbyterianwomen.org/what_we_do/support-mission/thank-offering/

Grandparents Together

We know that these are difficult times for families. Grandparents are helping their children and grandchildren in so many ways. We are interested in starting a grandparents support group to share ideas and offer a listening ear. If you would like to participate in this group, or help lead it, please contact Rev. Sue at sue.trigger@gcpc.org.

“Taste of Guatemala”

Taste of Guatemala: Virtual Chocolate Tasting and Celebration; Thursday, November 19, 7:30 - 9pm (EST)

CEDEPCA invites you to an evening filled with sweet bites, celebration and camaraderie. Registration is $52 per household. This includes: four hand-crafted Guatemalan/Nicaraguan chocolate bars from Triangle Roasters and Diego's Chocolates - delivered right to your front door, an interactive tasting with chocolate sommelier Estelle Tracy of 37 Chocolates, a short virtual journey to Guatemala with CEDEPCA staff, and a $20 tax-deductible donation. Payment information will be provided in your registration confirmation. Makes a great “date night” or “family fun night.”

CEDEPCA is an international educational nonprofit that works to transform lives by offering education, accompaniment and safe reflection spaces to women and men of diverse Christian traditions and communities. Reserve your place HERE: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtceuprDMtE95SshuHL9SPuVKb3hHm2NJE6
Virtual Sunday School

Online Sunday school classes are going great! On our church website, you will find new pages on the Christian Education page for children, youth and adults. On the Sunday school pages you will find information and links about our classes.

Here’s what’s happening:

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](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.

Joy! and Celebration! – 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 Joy! our 4 yrs – 1st grade choir and Celebration! our 2nd – 5th grade choir will enjoy singing and learning about music and faith.

November SMASH

November 25, 4-6pm (K-5th grades)

Let us make bread together! The Season of Thanksgiving is the perfect time to gather and talk about the fellowship and gathering that happens around bread. We’ll be making Amish bread kits to share, dough ornaments, playing games and more.

Please RSVP to help us safely prepare for supplies and social distance. RSVP to Christy at: christysoule@yahoo.com.

Adult Classes:

Adults will find information about our educational opportunities on the church website at [https://gcpc.org/education/adults/](https://gcpc.org/education/adults/). The links for joining online.

We are excited to offer the following classes:

Christianity and American Politics

November 1, 8, 15, 22 at 11:15am
Study with Dave Pack and Rev. Sue Trigger (Zoom class)
Zoom link in the mid-week announcements, on our website and in the bulletin.

Join us at 11:15am on Sunday mornings through November 22, for this class facilitated by Dave Pack and Rev. Sue Trigger. We will begin by looking at some PCUSA resources on talking about politics in a church setting.

The two Sundays around the November 3 national election will seek open-ended sharing about what’s happened politically that week and how it was perceived relative to individuals’ faith.

The last two Sundays will focus on topics such as health care, poverty, climate change, racism, campaign finance reform and open-ended sharing about these topics relative to individuals’ faith. How do we make American politics more Christian?
TRUNK OR TREAT
Connect and the Fall Youth Schedule
Since beginning our semester, we have done some neat things. We have sent out care packages for our college Freshman and Sophomores, teamed up for a photo scavenger hunt, learned about how our spiritual gifts can work in the real world, and have gone Christmas shopping for our two Red Bag kids. When it works to meet outside, that is what we do, and when the weather does not cooperate, we move into Heartland Hall, following appropriate safety requirements, of course.

Christian Education
Sunday Morning Classes continue for middle and high school students. We slid the time back a little to give students a little more travel time after online worship. Students now meet in-person on Sundays at 11:30 and wrap up around 12:15. Classes are held outdoors at church with the possibility of moving into Heartland Hall if it's cold. Any students who want to participate via Zoom can do so by contacting Miles a day or more ahead.

Red Bag Gift-Wrapping Fundraiser
We are looking forward to a wrapping party for Red Bag on November 1, 1–3pm. When members drop off their Red Bag gifts to the church that day they can be wrapped or unwrapped. If they are not yet wrapped our students will wrap them in exchange for a free-will offering that will go to the Red Bag organization.

Homeless Night 2020
There are many things that we would like to do with our youth group this fall but can't because of our need to keep our students safe from potentially contracting or spreading the COVID virus. But there is no reason that we can't experience sleeping outside in a cardboard box. Those masks might feel good on our faces when the weather is cold! Our homeless night event on November 20–21. As usual, we are planning some new twists to make the evening a thought provoking and meaningful experience.
IHN Update & Host Coordinator Needed

Our support of the Johnson County Interfaith Hospitality Network has remained flexible during the COVID pandemic.

In May, guests were housed at Asbury United Methodist Church and Primary Coordinators Dave and Karen Pack to the meals that were delivered at their home to our guests. Stricter Pandemic procedures were put in place by IHN, including no van service being provided.

Our GCPC Session opened the lower level for our August rotation and we were able to serve two guests. Then other congregations had difficulty with opening their churches and New Haven Seventh Day Adventist Church agreed to keep guests at their church through the end of 2020. This has eliminated the need for set-up and teardown. Guests are also responsible for their own bed laundry and taking out their trash. Meals are plated and placed at their door. Since our program has added guest transportation requirements, and with school in session, the increase in county COVID case positives, the number of potential clients has lessened. **Your dedication and support have been uplifting.**

All things transition and so do positions in GCPC’s IHN Team. **Another big round of Thanks and Recognition goes to Dave and Karen Pack for their years of service as Primary Coordinator.** Jane Knoche is now primary Coordinator. Mike and Jennifer Battaglioli are relocating to Florida and Mike is no longer able to coordinate our evening and overnight hosts signups. **We are looking for a person to manage the sign-up genius once every three months.** If interested, please contact Jane Knoche.

Each year IHN provides a Thanksgiving and Christmas support to our IHN graduates. Last year we transitioned from food baskets (too heavy for volunteers to deliver or to take out to graduates’ cars) to gift cards. The gift cards will allow our families to choose the food they would like to have for their Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner.

**To all who would like to share gift cards with our graduated guests IHN suggests $25.00 increments of Target and Walmart cards.** Cheryl and Vicki Dercher will divide up what is received prior to Thanksgiving, while holding back a significant amount for Christmas. Ideally, many gift cards will still be received post-Thanksgiving. You can drop them off at the Family Center or contact Jane Knoche to pick them up.
Inclusive. Family Oriented. Welcoming.
11100 College Boulevard
Overland Park, KS 66210
Phone: 913-345-1256
Fax: 913-345-1198
gcpc.org

Follow us on Social Media!
Facebook: facebook.com/GraceCovenantPresbyterian
Twitter: @GraceCovPres
Instagram: @gcpc_overlandpark

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

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

SUPPORT STAFF

Deacon Moderator .................................Vacant
Operating Committee.......................... Tim Hayden,
Cheryl Johnson, Susan Sutherland, Mike Mattix,
Diane Schmit
Newsletter Editor/Marketing.............. 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 .....................................................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
Personnel ........................................... Kevin Mason

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

Upcoming Newsletter Article Deadlines
December Issue - Deadline, November 20
January 2021 issue - Deadline, December 15