



GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GRACE NOTES

March 2024
Vol 42, Nbr 3

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.

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Overland Park, KS 66210
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In-Person Worship and Online Worship every Sunday on Facebook and Zoom.
Visit gcpc.org for links!



Season of Lent

Lent commences amid the wilderness, with the Spirit guiding Jesus into a place of temptation and struggle. Throughout his forty days of fasting, resisting, and wandering, Jesus undergoes a transformative experience, shaping him for ministry. In a parallel fashion, during the Lenten wilderness, we are encouraged to embrace the untamed guidance of the Spirit.

While entering the wilderness may not be our choice, through our journey, we hope to rediscover our identity and connection to a higher purpose. The wilderness, though perilous, can become sacred, with no space too harsh or threatening for God's love. This Lent, we extend an invitation to join the journey.

A **Lenten Devotional Booklet** has been prepared with reflections written by members of our congregation. Download a PDF copy on our website.

Palm/Passion Sunday, March 24, 9:30am

Maundy Thursday Worship, March 28, 7:30pm

Good Friday Worship, March 29, 7:30pm

Easter Sunday Worship, March 31, 9:00am and 11:00am

(The flowering of the cross begins 15 minutes prior to the start of each worship service.)

GCPC Little Food Pantry Thank you!

Thank you for your donations in February for our little food pantry. With your help, we collected many items! We would like to extend a special thank you to our volunteers who regularly help stock the little food pantry. Andrew Cox checks our pantry each week on Wednesdays and Christy Soule checks our pantry each week on Sundays. We appreciate your efforts and investment in this ministry. We welcome any age level to come take part in restocking the pantry from our inventory on a regular or ad-hoc basis. If you could like to get involved with checking on the food pantry, please contact Christy Soule at christysoule@yahoo.com.

MUSIC NOTES

MUSIC IN WORSHIP

March 3rd – 3rd Sunday in Lent

Praise Team led – “Unstoppable God” by Elevation Worship; “Firm Foundation” by Nancy Gordon & Jamie Harvill. Spirit! Ringers ring “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” arr. Sandra Eithun

March 10th – 4th Sunday in Lent

Organ led. Chancel & Exaltation! Singers anthem “God So Loved the World” by John Stainer

March 17th – 5th Sunday in Lent

Organ led. Chancel & Exaltation! Singers anthem “The Narrow Way” by K. Lee Scott and Wind Ensemble plays “Irish Tune from County Derry” by Percy Aldridge Grainger

MUSIC DURING HOLY WEEK

PALM/PASSION SUNDAY, March 24th

Music Leadership by Praise Team
“Give Us Your Heart” by Melanie Tierce
plus several more

Joy! Singers (4s-1st graders) –
“Loud Hosanna” by Elizabeth Charles
& Celebration! Choir (2nd-6th graders) –
“Celebrate the King” by Cindy Berry

MAUNDY THURSDAY, March 28th – 7:30pm Worship

Music Leadership by Praise Team
“Holy Spirit” by Bryan & Katie Torwalt
plus several more, and
Jubilation! Ringers ring “Dreamscapes”
by Patricia Hurlbutt

GOOD FRIDAY, March 29th – 7:30pm Worship

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers
Chamber Instrumental Ensemble
& Bob Dover, baritone
present

REQUIEM
by Mark Hayes

EASTER SUNDAY, March 31st

**Please note: the flowering of the cross will begin 15 minutes prior to the start of each worship service.*

*9:00am Worship

Music Leadership by Praise Team
“Rise Up” by Cain &
“May the Peoples Praise You” by Keith & Kristyn Getty
plus several more

*11:00am Worship

Music Leadership by Chancel & Exaltation! Singers,
Chancel Brass, Timpani, Piano, & Organ
“The Day of Resurrection” arr. Shelton Ridge Love
“Crown Him!” arr. Dan Forrest
and
Music Leadership by Charter Ringers
“Joy and Grace” by Michael Helman

LOOKING AHEAD TO MUSIC IN WORSHIP

Sunday, April 7th

Music leadership by Grace Mountain
Christopher Callender, director

April 14th

MUSIC APPRECIATION SUNDAY

Music leadership by Chancel & Exaltation! Singers,
Praise Team, and Charter Ringers



MARK THE DATES

Sunday, April 21st – 3:00pm

EncoreKC Choir Concert

Pam Smith Kelly, artistic director
and **EncoreKC Brass**

Darryl Prater & Jim Kelly, directors
at Village on Antioch Presbyterian Church,
14895 Antioch Road, Overland Park, KS

Sunday, April 28th – 4:00pm

East Hill Singers Concert

East Hill Singers are a choir made up of
inmates from Lansing Correctional Facility plus
Community Singers.

You won't want to miss their songs and stories.
Many thanks to Mission Team for coordinating
this inspirational concert.

Sunday, May 5th – 6:00pm

Bell Fest XXXIV

This year's theme is ...

THE CLASSICS: FROM BEETHOVEN, TO FOLK, SACRED, & ROCK

As always, it will be a blast!

Friday, May 31st – 7:00pm

Rezound Handbell Ensemble Concert

Rezound Handbell Ensemble is an exceptionally
talented auditioned handbell ensemble in the
KC area. Our own Trey Bures, Lindsay Callender,
Jill Endaya-Allen, and Marshall Allen
are ringers in this outstanding ensemble.

"Thank You" Notes

*To Tom & Anne Stroud for donating
"Awake My Soul, Arise and Sing"
by Debra Scroggins in honor of their
50th Wedding Anniversary, April 28, 2024.*



Message from Rev. Karen

As we begin this journey together, let me start by saying thank you for allowing me to walk this road alongside you. The interim process is not short – as you may remember. In the weeks to come we will be asking questions about what is working and what is not. We will also take a look at who Grace Covenant is today, not who you were 10 years or 25 years ago. There is some information that can be used from visioning work over the past few years, however since the last mission study we had a global pandemic and the entire landscape of what it means to be church has shifted. We will work through this process in as timely a way as we can.

We are going to do some deep cleaning both in reality and metaphorically. I invite you to walk around the building and imagine you are a first time visitor, what do you notice? Are bulletin boards current? Is there information that is easily accessible? Are the signs clear? We will be engaging questions together.

So you know, my office hours will be Monday through Thursday, generally 8:30am-2:30pm when I go pick up my kids. There will be some days I am available later. I hope to get into a rhythm of joining committees every other month, but moderators, if you need me to be there let me know. God is already at work and there is a bright future ahead. Let us begin the journey that is before us!

Grace, Mercy, and Peace,
—Pastor Karen Wright

Trivia Night - April 12

Save the date for Trivia night on April 12 from 5:30-7pm. Care and Connection team will provide more details later. Stay tuned.

Clerk's Corner

I want to start with an apology and also a huge THANK YOU to Kathy Williams. We neglected to recognize her as a team moderator at the annual meeting. Kathy has been SO instrumental in bringing new members into our Congregation, and we appreciate her!

In other Session news, at the February meeting we had the opportunity to "examine" some of our newly ordained/installed Deacons and I think most of us learned something new about each of them.

Our Facility continues to be a hot topic. The fire detection system repairs continue and facilities team is considering options for replacing HVAC components that were damaged. We are working on updating our contract with Pioneer Preschool. Facilities team is looking at what space is and isn't being used as our Finance Administrator needs more file storage and we've had requests from our partners EncoreKC! and the Arabic Christian Fellowship to have some space to use.

The "F" teams are busy these days as Finance Team brought several updates to Session. Session passed a motion allowing interest that is earned on the money in our Endowment Fund in 2024 to be rolled over into our operating funds instead of being reinvested. This motion stands for one year only and is in accordance with the parameters established for our Endowment. Finance is looking to move funds into accounts that are more easily accessible than the current PILP funds and Session concurred with that decision. Finally, we have several reserve funds that were established in memory of different church members with no specific use recorded. Individual Session members have agreed to reach out to the families of those members to find out if the families have any preferences on how that money should be used.

Grace Covenant will turn 40 in the summer of 2025! Kristy Shaw is starting to work on planning our celebration. If you have thoughts or ideas or would just like to be part of a fun, celebratory group, reach out to Kristy to get involved!

Any Session member will be happy to answer any questions you have, but remember that our teams do most of the real work of the church!

— Melanie Townsend, Clerk of Session

Save Your Pennies — Noisy Offering on March 10!

On March 10, we'll collect a Noisy Offering for **Heart to Heart International**. The donations will be directed to an initiative distributing menstrual pads and hygiene kits to women and girls in Gaza. These kits are more than necessities — they help recipients to reclaim their health, hygiene and dignity. Check your couch cushions for loose change and be a part of this GCPC tradition!

East Hill Singers Concert at GCPC — April 28, 4pm

Save the afternoon of April 28 to attend this unique and uplifting concert!

The East Hill Singers choir consists of volunteer singers from the community and inmates from the minimum-security unit at Lansing Correctional Facility. There is little that is more unique than a prison choir performing outside of the walls. Supported by the men who volunteer their time to the choir, the inmate singers learn more than music; they function as a team with accountability to each other. Being welcomed as artists and given the opportunity to connect helps prepare them to return to community life.

Please attend and support this unique event! Learn more about the Prison in the Arts program at <https://www.artsinprison.org/>

Thank you Church Family

Thank you to the Grace Covenant family for all the prayers, cards, and sympathy, following the passing of my husband's mother the end of January. Darrel and I greatly appreciated the support and concern throughout her final weeks. GCPC is truly a place of compassion and caring.

—Patrick Bell and Darrel Helling

Give Up Plastic Bags During Lent! (and win a prize!)

TAKE THE CHALLENGE! Many plastic bags are used for a matter of minutes and then sit in a landfill for hundreds of years. They contribute to climate change and plastic pollution, and can harm wildlife. So join the challenge and stop using plastic bags!

Here's how to participate:

1. Between February 14 and March 28, take a selfie every time you use a reusable bag (or just a photo of your reusable bag, if you don't want to be in the picture).
2. Upload it to <https://gcpc.org/reusablebag>.
3. Whoever has the most photos uploaded by midnight on March 28 will win a prize! The winner will be announced in worship on April 7.

The Rules:

- You can take one photo per place where you normally would receive a single use bag. So if you buy groceries and use 6 reusable bags to take them all home, you can take one photo of all 6 bags to upload.
- Photos from one household should all be submitted by the same person (to make it easier to count submissions and determine the winner).
- You can only submit photos from people who live with you. So unless your children/grandchildren/other relatives live with you, you can't submit their photos under your name.
- You don't have to upload photos on the day they are taken - you could upload all your photos at 11:59pm on March 28 if you'd like.



If you need a reusable bag, see Mikki Walker - she has extras to give away. And ask Mikki if you have any questions - Michala.walker@gmail.com.

Upcoming Good Faith Network Events

GCPC joined the Good Faith Network (GFN) about a year ago. About thirty-five of our members have are also GFN members. Our team leaders at GCPC are Dave Pack, Tim Hayden, Mikki Walker, and Joy and Don Wilson.



GFN has made significant progress in working with Johnson County government on issues of:

- Mental Health, with a new twelve-bed facility for those with mental health crisis events opening in Olathe this summer.
- Homelessness, with progress toward opening the former LaQuinta Inn as a homeless shelter.
- Affordable Housing, with clear progress toward establishing an affordable housing trust fund.

We want to bring several future events to your attention:

On Sunday April 14, GFN will hold the Solutions Briefing - an update for GFN members on progress made and the next steps on-going research on the three issues has suggested.

On Tuesday May 7, at 6 pm at Resurrection Methodist Church, the Nehemiah Action meeting will take place, where the entire Johnson County network, hopefully several thousand people, talks to county leaders and conveys desired future actions on the three issues.

On Sunday March 24, we are asking GFN members (and any others who are interested) to join us during the Sunday school time after worship to look forward to April 14, and May 7. We would like to encourage a large GCPC attendance at the May 7, Nehemiah Action. Let Dave, Mikki, Tim, Don or Joy know if you have questions.

Children's Team



Easter Egg Hunt

Hop on over to our Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 23, at 10am.

We'll begin our event with some fun and games inside Heartland Hall and conclude with an egg hunt (outdoors if weather allows). Children of all ages are welcome. Invite your friends too!

The event is in need of some candy donations and volunteers. Use our SignUpGenius to let us know if we can count on your volunteer help: <https://bit.ly/GCPCEggHunt>



SERVICE - MUSIC - ARTS - SPORTS - HANG-OUT

Once a month, SMASH happens!

This popular program is an activity for kindergarten through 5/6th graders combining sports, music, arts, service, and "hangout" time and offers a time for children to be nurtured in faith by building relationships with a variety of adults of all ages.

In February, our SMASH kiddos met to talk about Mary's impact as a young child and how she had faith to believe the most unbelievable things!

Join us again on March 24th from 4-6pm.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper Thank you!

A special thank you to our GCPC family for making our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper a success! We want to give a shout out to Ric Cummings for helping to organize this event with us. Whether your job was to help set-up, flip pancakes, clean-up or just eat pancakes, you better believe we appreciate you.

Communion Workshop Thank you!

Our 2nd grade children and parent(s) participated in a Communion Workshop on Sunday, February 25. Thank you to our leaders Don Wilson and Christy Soule for helping our children explore the topic of communion. We look forward to sharing their first communion on Sunday, March 3. They have created a special stole to wear for the occasion. Be sure to ask them what the different symbols represent.

Camp Firelight Vacation Bible School

Who's dreaming of warm weather and counting the days until summer? At the end of this month, we'll be less than 99 days until our Camp Firelight Vacation Bible School. We hope you'll save the dates: June 3-7, 9am-12pm.

We are forming our VBS Planning Committee and recruiting volunteers for station rotations and group leaders. Please contact a member of the Children's Team if you would like to take part in VBS this year. You're gonna love it!

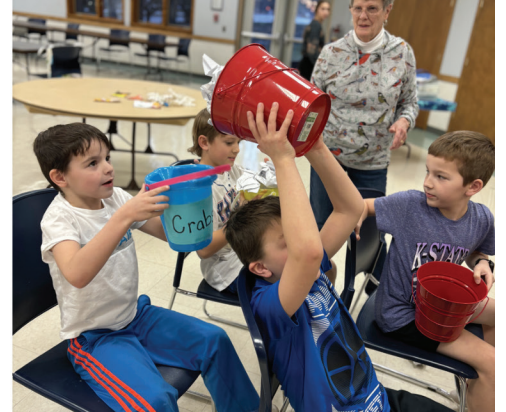


Children's Events at a glance

- March 3 Music & Sunday School
- March 10 ATW, Music & Sunday School
- March 17 ATW and Music Hour for Sunday School
- March 23 Easter Egg Hunt
- March 24 ATW, Music & Sunday School and Smash
- March 31 Easter Sunday — No ATW or Sunday School

If you are new to Children's Ministries at GCPC, welcome!

We are glad you are here. To get an overview of our children's ministry program, please see our January 2024 newsletter or visit our web page: <https://gcpc.org/children-youth/children/>



Our March Donation Partner is UPLIFT

Three evenings a week four UPLIFT trucks disperse into the Kansas City Metropolitan area in order to distribute warm meals and basic survival needs to the homeless in the Kansas City area. UPLIFT is a fully volunteer organization. Grace Covenant participates in UPLIFT every fourth Saturday. In January GCPC members provided hot meals for 60-90 people and donated an amazing 535 pairs of gloves. Your generosity and kindness is overwhelming!

In the Spring, HIGH NEED items include new underwear for men and women so that is our designated March donation request. The links below (scan the QR codes with your smart phone camera and select the link) show Amazon items suggested by the UPLIFT organization. Of course, if you have another place you prefer shopping, please go right ahead. These links will give you a good feel for what is needed. We can't have Amazon orders delivered to the church. They need to be delivered either to my home address (*Kevin Johnson, 12840 Century Street, Overland Park, KS 66213*) or to your home. If they are delivered to your home please place them in the weekday entrance labeled "UPLIFT".

Once a month, an email goes out to GCPC members who are on our UPLIFT distribution list identifying recipe items needed for the hot meal and the current HIGH NEED items. If you would like to be included in the distribution list,

you can scan the 1st QR code and fill out the form or you can contact Kevin Johnson (*the GCPC UPLIFT coordinator*) at krpj01@gmail.com.



Follow us on Social Media!

Facebook: facebook.com/GraceCovenantPresbyterian

Instagram: @gcpc_overlandpark

Inclusive. Family Oriented. Welcoming.

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Contemporary Music Coord. Carrie DeVries
Contemporary Music Drummer.....Jill Endaya
Child Care Coordinator.....Carolyn Chaffin
Wedding Coordinator.....Kristy Shaw
Funeral CoordinatorMary Sue Thomas

ELDERS

Joy Circo	Jaylee Soule
Barbara Douglas	Tom Stroud
Katie Hearn	Melanie Townsend, Session clerk
Jane Knoche	Bill Turner
Angela Krug	Michala Walker
Lara Schesser	Mary Ann Weyforth
Jake Schmidt	
Kristy Shaw	

SUPPORT STAFF

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Operating Committee..... Angela Krug,
Lara Schesser, Katie Hearn, Tom Stroud
Newsletter Editor/Marketing..... Kim Krueger
Prayer ChainCheryl Johnson
Website AdministratorsKim Krueger,
Patrick Bell, Christy Soule

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Congregational Nurture Unit Moderators
Care and Connections....Mary Ann Weyforth
Worship and Music..... Kathy Bures,
Katie Hearn
Education Ministry Unit Moderators
AdultTom Stroud
Children Angela Krug
Youth..... Lara Schesser
Reach Out Ministry Unit Moderators
Kairos Rick Randolph
MissionMikki Walker
Welcoming Kathy Williams
Supportive Ministry Unit Moderators
Facility Liz Chandler
Generosity Vacant
Finance..... Beth Lillian
Personnel Kevin Mason

Worship Schedule

9:30am Worship
In-Person, Facebook & Zoom
Visit gcpc.org/online for links

Upcoming Newsletter Article Deadlines

April 2024 issue - Deadline, March 19
May 2024 issue - Deadline, April 19