



Celebrating 40 Years on June 22, 2025!

Join us as we reflect upon God's faithfulness throughout our church's journey.

GRACE NOTES

March 2025
Vol 43, Nbr 3

God draws us together into a welcoming community, embracing our curiosity and questions, to worship with creativity, learn from God's word, share our gifts, and grow in faith.

With gratitude and a spirit of adventure, we are sent to serve Christ in the world—spreading kindness to all and striving for justice grounded in God's boundless love.

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

In addition to in-person worship, our service is also streamed online on our website, Facebook and YouTube channel.

Journey of Resistance: Overcoming Temptation in Luke

Lent is a season of reflection, repentance, and renewal. It is a time to journey with Christ toward the cross, examining our hearts and drawing closer to God. This year our Lenten theme, "*Journey of Resistance: Overcoming Temptation in Luke*," invites us to consider the struggles we all face—temptations that seek to pull us away from God's purpose for our lives.

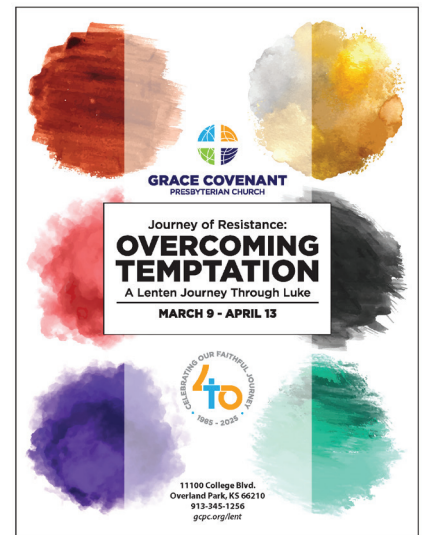
In the Gospel of Luke, we see Jesus confronted with temptation in the wilderness. Rather than giving in, He resists, turning instead to the truth of God's word. His example challenges us to consider: What temptations do we face in our daily lives? How do we continually turn away from what pulls us from God and return to Him?

Lent calls us to a posture of repentance—not just turning away from sin, but turning toward a life more fully aligned with Christ. As we resist the temptations of anger, greed, fear, power, or complacency, we also embrace something deeper: the grace, love, and transformation God offers. What might we need to surrender to follow Christ more faithfully?

A devotional booklet has been created to be a companion for your Lenten journey. Each reflection offers an opportunity to pause, pray, and realign our hearts with God's. May these words encourage you to walk the path of faithfulness, trusting in God's strength to sustain us.

As we embark on this "*Journey of Resistance*," may we find ourselves not only turning away from temptation but turning ever closer to the heart of God.

Contributors: Harold Frye, Stephen Wing, Sarah Evans, Nelson Townsend, Eileen Thomson, Nancy Kalesz, Dave Pack, Karen Wright, Kevin Johnson, and Kim Krueger



Download the
Lenten Devotional Booklet
at gcpc.org/lent

If you are not currently receiving
Midweek Announcements from
the church and would like to
receive the Lenten Devotions,
email the office at
office@gcpc.org.

2025 Operating Budget

Dear Grace Covenant Family,

The Finance Team and Session have approved the 2025 Operating budget. Our projected revenue for 2025 is **\$797,500**, with projected expenses of **\$825,000**. While this reflects a difference of **just under \$30,000**, it represents less than **4% of the overall budget**.

Based on our history of faithful giving—where actual contributions often exceed projections—as well as our historically careful spending, the Finance Team and Session are confident in moving forward with this budget. Additionally, we continue to seek ways to make use of restricted funds designated for specific ministry areas. Restricted funds are available outside the Operating Budget.

We will monitor our financial situation closely and keep the congregation updated throughout the year. We will also be discussing **per capita giving**. For Heartland Presbytery, per capita is \$44.98 for every youth and adult member. The church remits payment to Presbytery based on our current membership numbers. For every individual who pays their \$44.98, less is paid from our operational budget. Per Capita funds Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly and supports ongoing work at those denominational levels. If every member pays their per capita, we reduce the spending by \$16,000.

Thank you for your ongoing generosity and commitment to Grace Covenant's ministry. Your faithful stewardship enables us to worship, serve, and grow together as we live out God's calling. If you have any questions about the budget, please feel free to reach out to a member of the Finance Team or Session.

With gratitude,
Pastor Karen
On Behalf of the Finance Team and Session
Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church



Transition Process

Ryan Hussey, Laura Johnson, Tom Stroud, and David Sutherland, along with the Session are working to send out a congregational survey as part of the transition process. We thank Harold Frye for his assistance in creating questions to be asked. The survey will add further information to the Adult Sunday school classes and feedback from the Covenant Groups at the Potluck on February 23rd. If you have specific comments or concerns about the transition or what you would like to see for Grace Covenant in terms of the next pastor or ministry, please speak with Ryan, Laura, David or any of the Session members.

Blessings — Rev. Karen Wright, Transitional Pastor,
Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church

Clerk's Corner

Session held our stated meeting on February 17 on Zoom due to the bitter cold weather. We provided feedback on the survey that will soon be sent to the congregation by the Transition Team. We approved the 2025 budget, which you can read about elsewhere in this newsletter. Musicians have been surveyed recently and the gap between our children's music programs and our adult music programs was identified as an area for growth. Interviews with prospective Interim Music Directors are ongoing.

We heard reports from the committees, which show the wide variety of life in our congregation. Increasingly, members of our congregation are reaching out with transportation and care needs. Next month we will be considering proposed changes to the Operations Manual made by the teams. We are also aware of several long time team moderators who have announced that they will be moving on to other activities in the near future. We authorized the use of \$3,000 from General Memorial Funds for the 40th Anniversary Celebration.

As always, if you have questions about what the Session is doing, please reach out to me or any current Session member. —Melanie Townsend, Clerk of Session



As we turn toward the season of Lent, our Lenten series will focus on overcoming temptation. We are all tempted by things of the world. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus was too. So how do we learn from Jesus to turn from temptation and turn toward God? This is what we will be exploring in worship and in adult Sunday school over the coming weeks.

Lent is often associated with the spiritual practice of fasting, of giving up something to help one's focus on the divine. Over the past few decades there have been litanies about fasting from those things which hold us back or feasting on that which draws us closer to God. [One can be found here.](#)

May we focus these forty days on turning and relying on God.
—Rev. Karen Wright

March 9 - Week 1

"Facing the Wilderness"

Scripture: Luke 4:1-13

Jesus triumphs over temptation in the wilderness.

March 16 - Week 2

"Tempted to Turn Away"

Scripture: Luke 9:51-56

The temptation to respond to opposition with anger.

March 23 - Week 3

"The Temptation of Status"

Scripture: Luke 14:7-14

Choosing humility over the lure of status and recognition.

March 30 - Week 4

"Tempted by Wealth"

Scripture: Luke 18:18-30

The temptation to trust in possessions rather than God.

April 6 - Week 5:

"Tempted by Fear"

Scripture: Luke 22:54-62

Peter's denial and the temptation to distance ourselves from Christ out of fear.

April 13 - Week 6

"Victory in Surrender" (Palm/ Passion Sunday)

Scripture: Luke 23:44-49

Jesus' ultimate victory over temptation as He entrusts His spirit to God on the cross.

Adult Christian Education for Lent

March 9 - April 13, 10:45am, Room 3

During Lent, our Adult Sunday School class will be based upon our Lenten Sermon Series, Journey of Resistance: The Temptation Found in Luke.

Rev. Karen Wright will dig deeper into each week's theme and it applies to our daily lives during this Lenten season and beyond. Come and join in the discussion. Themes and topics for each week are listed above.



Holy Week Services

April 13, Palm / Passion Sunday

Worship at 9:30am

- Music by Chancel & Exaltation! Singers, Joy! & Celebration! children choirs.

April 17, Maundy Thursday

Worship at 7:30pm

Sacrament of Communion

- Music by the Praise Team.

April 18, Good Friday/Tenebrae Service

Worship at 7:30pm

- Music by Chancel & Exaltation! Singers.

April 20, Easter Sunday Worship

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

Worship services at 9am and 11am

Sacrament of Communion.

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

- Music at 9am by the Praise Team.
- Music at 11am by Chancel & Exaltation! Singers, Charter Ringers, & Chancel Brass.

Calling All Volunteers:

Help Make Our 40th Anniversary Craft Fair a Success!

Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church is celebrating 40 wonderful years, and one of the highlights of our celebration will be our 40th Anniversary Craft Fair on Saturday, March 29! This exciting event will bring together talented artisans, crafters, and our church community for a day of fellowship, creativity, and fun. But to make it all happen, we need your help!

Volunteer Opportunities

We are looking for volunteers to assist in a variety of ways both before and during the Craft Fair. Whether you can lend a hand for a few hours or a few days, your help will be invaluable in making this event a success.

Before the Craft Fair (March 26 and March 27)

- Clearing out Heartland Hall – Help us prepare the space by moving furniture and making room for vendors. (Wednesday, March 26, 9:30am-noon; 1pm-3pm)
- Marking booth spaces – Assist in measuring and marking designated areas for each vendor. (Thursday, March 27, 12:30pm-4pm)
- Setting up tables and chairs – Ensure each booth has the necessary setup for a smooth and welcoming experience. (Thursday, March 27, 1:30-4pm)

On the Day of the Craft Fair (March 29, 8am-3pm)

- Greeters – Welcome guests with a friendly smile and help direct them to different areas of the event.
- Raffle Table Volunteers – Assist with raffle tickets.
- Lunch Helpers – Help sell pre-packaged lunches to vendors and visitors to the fair outside the kitchen area.
- Clean-up – Help getting Heartland Hall and the Concourse area ready for worship on Sunday after the Craft Fair ends at 2pm.

How You Can Sign Up

If you're available to volunteer, [please sign up on our website at gcpc.org/volunteer](https://www.gcpc.org/volunteer). Even an hour or two of your time can make a big difference!

Let's work together to make this Craft Fair a wonderful part of our 40th Anniversary Celebration. Thank you for being part of this faithful journey!



CRAFT FAIR
Saturday, March 29
9-2pm

Unique, handmade crafts and goods from local artisans

Gift basket raffle
Baked goods and refreshments
No direct sales products
Enjoy shopping, fellowship, and fun!

  **GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

11100 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS 66210 | [gcpc.org/craftfair](https://www.gcpc.org/craftfair)
Booth proceeds support 40th Anniversary Fund



Welcome New Members!

We were overjoyed to welcome our newest members to Grace Covenant on Sunday, February 9! *Group photo: (Back row) Alex, Carrie, and Jeff Devries; (Middle row) Chris, Emily Nelson Dixon, and Esme Dixon, Allen York, and Holly and Bryan Tamke; (Front row) Pastor Karen, Eloise and Gilbert Dixon, Shirel York, and Nolan and Quinn Tamke.* Join us in celebrating and welcoming them to our faith family!

CHILDREN'S TEAM

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper!

Get ready to flip for pancakes!

The GCPC Children's Team invites you to our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on **Tuesday, March 4, from 5:30- 7:30pm in Heartland Hall.**

Enjoy pancakes, sausage, and drinks, while tapping your toes to the lively sounds of the Dixieland Band! Join in on the Mardi Gras-themed fun, games, and fellowship, all while supporting a great cause—proceeds benefit the Children's Team and its ministries. **The cost is \$5 per person or \$20 per family (4+).**

RSVP & Volunteer Opportunities - To ensure we have enough pancakes and seating, **please RSVP at gcpc.org/shrove-tuesday**

We also need cooks, set-up helpers, clean-up volunteers, and food donations. If you'd like to lend a hand, check out the sign-up options at link above and let us know where you can help. Come hungry and ready for a festive night of food, music, and community.



March Event Calendar!

March 2, 9:30am Worship

- FIRST COMMUNION in Worship for 2nd graders and their families.
- Joy! and Celebration! Choirs singing in worship.

March 9: Daylight Savings! Spring Forward!

March 16 and March 23: Combined Sunday School, due to Spring Break. Preschool and Toddlers will meet together and K-5th will meet together.

March 16: SMASH Children's Fellowship, from 4-6pm, Fruit of the Spirit: Faithfulness! [Sign up to help here!](#)

March 29, 9am-2pm: Children's service project - Hosting a Lemonade Stand at the GCPC Craft Fair. [Sign up for a time to help here!](#)

Vacation Bible School
June 2 - 6, 9am-Noon
Ages 4 yrs - 5th Grade
Register at gcpc.org/vbs

GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Vacation Bible School

June 2-6, 9am-Noon
Children age 4 - 5th grade
[Sign up at gcpc.org/vbs](http://gcpc.org/vbs)

Pack your bags for an unforgettable adventure! Join us for "Road Trip - On the Go with God," where kids (Travelers) will set out on a fun-filled journey to exciting destinations.

Guided by the Navigator and their trusty, adventurous pup, Scout, kids will discover that God is always with them, no matter where the road leads. Don't miss this opportunity to grow in faith, friendship, and fun.

Sign up today and join the adventure!

Volunteers Needed!

The Children's Department is looking for help from the **WHOLE CHURCH** to pull off our summer VBS program!

Would you like to help lead kiddos, organize, serve snacks, decorate, donate funds, or something else?

Any help at all will be greatly appreciated! It takes a village to pull an event like this off! You can be an important part of this life-changing event at our church!

[Sign up to help here: gcpc.org/vbs](http://gcpc.org/vbs)

Also, check with Emily Nelson Dixon and she will find a spot for you to help out: emily.dixon@gcpc.org

MUSIC NOTES

March Music!

The Lenten season is approaching! This is always a great time to reflect upon the music selections through a different lens. Each piece has been purposefully chosen according to the service scripture. Text speaks to each of us individually. Familiar text can bring new meaning and insight every time we hear it repeated. New text can bring new ideas to approach our old issues and struggles. The melodies played on the organ and by the bells reach us on a totally different level whether familiar or new. Music is where both sides of our brains meet and create a cross-cortico connection. This is where thoughts meet emotions, the body meets the soul, and the outside world is invited inside. Allowing yourself to be open and participate in worship is allowing God's voice the opportunity to speak through the music and text to connect with you. Join us on Sunday!

Love to you all! —Carrie DeVries

Music in Worship

March 2 – Music Appreciation Sunday

Celebration! Choir, and the Chancel & Exaltation! Singers sing "Give Glory All Creation" by Donna Butler Douglas; Music also by the Joy! Choir, and the Charter Ringers

March 9 – 1st Sunday of Lent

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers sing "In the Shadow of Your Wings" arr John Leavitt, Bob Dover, clarinet; Music by the Jubilation Ringers

March 16 – 2nd Sunday of Lent

Praise Team

March 23 – 3rd Sunday of Lent

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers sing "Speak, Lord" by Tom Trenney

March 30 – 4th Sunday of Lent

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers sing "Laudate Dominum" Mozart, Beth Lillian, soloist; Music by the Charter Ringers

Celebrating Music at GCPC

Music is one of the most powerful ways we express our faith, lift our hearts in worship, and join together as a community. At Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, we are blessed with a vibrant and diverse music ministry that encompasses singers and instrumentalists of all ages and skill levels. From joyful children's choirs to resonant handbell ensembles, from the moving harmonies of Chancel and Exaltation! Singers to the energetic voices of the Praise Team, and the rich contributions of our gifted instrumentalists, our church is filled with sacred sound that glorifies God.

On Music Appreciation Sunday, March 2, we take a moment to recognize and celebrate the many talented individuals who share their musical gifts with our congregation. We give thanks to the dedicated choir members who lead us in worship each week, the instrumentalists who bring depth and beauty to our services, and the directors who guide each ensemble with passion and care. Whether you sing in the pews, ring a bell, or play an instrument, your contribution to the music at GCPC enriches our worship and strengthens our connection to God.

We also take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to those who work behind the scenes to support our music ministry. From the directors and accompanists to the volunteers who help organize, schedule, and manage music programs, your efforts make it possible for our congregation to experience the beauty and power of sacred music. Your dedication ensures that GCPC remains a place where all are welcome to sing, play, and praise God through music.

As we celebrate Music Appreciation Sunday, let us remember that every voice lifted in song, every note played, and every chord struck is an offering of worship. Together, we create a symphony of praise, glorifying God with the very best of our abilities. **Thank you to all who contribute to this vital ministry—your music is a gift to our church and a blessing to all who hear it.** —GCPC Staff





This Month's KAIROS KLUES!

Helpful links for supporting KAIROS shared call for Peace, Justice, and Care for God's Creation and help you live more deeply into the shared call yourself.

March 1: Time to Act: Boots on the Ground Volunteer Fair. A fair connecting volunteers and non-profits, featuring workshops on LGBTQIA + rights, Racial Justice, Immigrations Protections, Climate Change and more....
<https://bit.ly/3QtHJv>

Plastics and Human Health: Start the walk to reduce the plastics in your life. <https://www.beyondplastics.org/fact-sheets/plastics-and-human-health>

March 29 – Re.Use.Full's Un-Dumpster Day is a free event where people can drop off used items for donation to local nonprofits. Free paper shredding and tire disposal. South-Broadland Presbyterian Church, 7850 Holmes Rd., KCMO, 1-5 pm

Attend the **FREE Chuck Gillam Lecture Series on Earthkeeping.** This year's lecture, *"A Call to Arms: Protecting Children from Chemicals Causing Disease,"* will be held at Village Church on Saturday, March 29. Keynote by author and investigative journalist Carey Gillam. [RSVP at gpcpc.org/gillam-series](https://gpcpc.org/gillam-series)

Visit Suds Refillery: Tired of all the waste and single-use plastic associated with cleaning and body products. [Visit Suds Refillery](#) where you can fill your own (or one of their) containers, reducing the number of plastics you purchase use in your home. The goal of Suds is to grow the community of environmentally-minded consumers in the KC area.

Tread Lightly for Lent is the annual calendar of daily reflections/actions regarding Creation Care from PCUSA Hunger Program. Download the calendar for ideas, connections, questions, and more for you and your family to reflect on how to restore and protect all God's Creation. <https://bit.ly/438d0uO>

Don't Forget - Check out more on the bulletin board outside Heartland Hall. Let us know if you have a question or just need advice at gcpckairos@gmail.com

IHN Volunteer Appreciation Lunch – March 16th at Noon

Join us for a special **Volunteer Appreciation Lunch** to celebrate Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church's incredible 20-year commitment to the **Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN)**. The event will be held on March 16th, around noon, with a light lunch featuring sandwiches, fruit, and cookies.

Please RSVP to <https://tinyurl.com/lunchIHN>

GCPC volunteers and our supporting congregation volunteers are invited. If you are still in contact with anyone who has been involved with IHN over the years, please pass this invitation along to them, or share their updated contact information with Jane Knoche or Christine Caseres so they can personally invite them.

For two decades, Grace Covenant has been a proud host church for IHN, welcoming hundreds of guests (*a total of 927 individuals*) into our church home, offering meals, and building relationships with families and individuals in need. IHN's church-based model is designed not just to provide shelter and meals, but to walk alongside families on their journey back to stable housing. Through these experiences, we've come to know our guests as neighbors, and their stories remind us that homelessness can happen to anyone.

We are deeply grateful to all of our volunteers and to GCPC for its ongoing dedication—from the very start of the program to being among the last churches still involved with IHN's original church-based model. While the program will continue through 2025 with the motel model, your prayers and financial support are more important than ever.

For more information, please reach out to Jane (jeknoche@att.net) or Christine (crcaseres032@gmail.com). We also want to express our **gratitude to the Mission Team for their generous support**, which is covering the costs of this event. We look forward to celebrating with you!



GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Inclusive. Family Oriented. Welcoming.

11100 College Boulevard
Overland Park, KS 66210
Phone: 913-345-1256

gcpc.org



Thank you!

This week, I returned from my second medical mission to the Ukraine. The distances were long, but we saw many patients in our clinics who would otherwise have no healthcare. Despite seeing drones and hearing the artillery, we were all safe. Thanks be to God! Your support helped us to see those patients and provide them with lifesaving medications. My next mission to the Ukraine will be this May. Thank you for your prayers and support. —Rick Randolph

Trivia Night!

Get ready for our annual Trivia Night on **Saturday, April 5, from 5:30 to 7:30pm!** Our amazing trivia master, Jake Schmidt, will be back to guide us through another fun-filled evening of questions and friendly competition. Pizza will be provided, so come hungry and ready to test your knowledge!



As we gear up for the event, keep an eye out around the church for a box where you can submit your own **GPC history trivia questions**. We'd love to include your contributions in our celebration of all things GPC at Trivia Night! Put on your thinking caps and join us for an unforgettable night of trivia, fun, and community! We can't wait to see you there!



GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CHURCH STAFF

- Interim Pastor, Rev. Karen Wright**
karen.wright@gcpc.org ext. 15
- Church Administrator.....Patrick Bell**
Mon.-Fri.; patrick.bell@gcpc.org ext. 10
- Director of Christian Education**
Emily Nelson Dixonext.18
emily.dixon@gcpc.org
- Finance Administrator.....Tara Hyder**
finance@gcpc.org
- Pre-Interim Dir. Music Ministries..Carrie DeVries**
cdevriesbe@olatheschools.org
- Organist.....Linda Dover**
- Audio/Visual Director.....Jason Turner**
Email both addresses if you need a video or audio played in worship. Send on the Wednesday prior to Sunday's worship. darktrainfilms@gmail.com; gcpc.media@gmail.com
- Praise Team Director.....Carrie DeVries**
- Praise Team Drummer Jill Endaya-Allen**
- Child Care Coordinator.....Carolyn Chaffin**
- Wedding Coordinator.....Kristy Shaw**
- Funeral CoordinatorMary Sue Thomas**

ELDERS

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Johnnie Baker | Jaylee Soule |
| Paul Bruns | Tom Stroud |
| Joy Circo | Eileen Thomson |
| Barbara Douglas | Michala Walker |
| Lara Schesser | Mary Ann Weyforth |
| Jake Schmidt | Melanie Townsend |
| Andrew Sellers | Session Clerk |
| Kristy Shaw | |

SUPPORT STAFF

- Deacon Moderator Nelson Townsend
- Operating Committee..... Lara Schesser, Tom Stroud, Barbara Douglas, Mikki Walker, Melanie Townsend, Rev. Karen Wright
- Newsletter Editor/Marketing..... Kim Krueger
- Prayer Chain Cheryl Johnson
- Website Administrators Kim Krueger, Patrick Bell

Follow us on Social Media!

Facebook: facebook.com/GraceCovenantPresbyterian

Instagram: @gcpc_overlandpark

MINISTRY UNITS

- Congregational Nurture Unit Moderators**
Care and Connections....Mary Ann Weyforth
Worship and Music..... Kathy Bures, Barbara Douglas
- Education Ministry Unit Moderators**
Adult Tom Stroud
Children Kristy Shaw
Youth..... Lara Schesser
- Reach Out Ministry Unit Moderators**
Kairos Rick Randolph
Mission Mikki Walker
Welcoming Kathy Williams
- Supportive Ministry Unit Moderators**
Facility Liz Chandler
Generosity Jane Knoche, Andrew Sellers
- Finance..... Beth Lillian
Personnel Kevin Mason

Worship Schedule

9:30am Worship

Streaming on YouTube, Facebook, gcpc.org
Visit gcpc.org/online for links

Upcoming Newsletter Article Deadlines

April 2025 issue - Deadline, March 21
May 2025 issue - Deadline, April 18