

GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GUIDING - PROTECTING - RESTORING

GRACE NOTES

May 2026
Vol 44, Nbr 5

God draws us together as a welcoming and faithful community, attentive to the Spirit's leading, to worship with joy, grow as disciples, and share our gifts in service to God and neighbor.

With gratitude for where we have been and hope for where God is leading us, we are sent to serve Christ in the world—extending Christ's love, strengthening community, and living out the gospel through lives of grace, justice, and compassion.

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 livestreamed on our website home page, Facebook and YouTube channel.

Tended by God, Tending to One Another

Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is one of the most beloved passages in all of Scripture because it reminds us of a simple and powerful truth: we are not left to wander alone. God is our shepherd—guiding, protecting, restoring, and providing even when life feels uncertain.

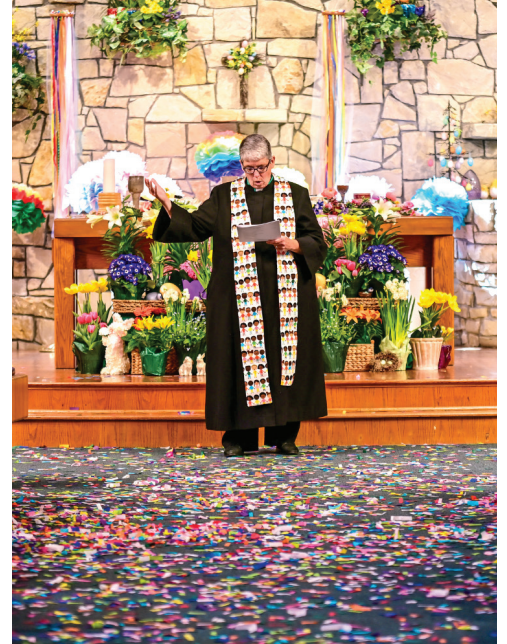
There are seasons when the green pastures are easy to see — times of joy, celebration, and peace. There are also seasons when we find ourselves walking through valleys shadowed by grief, anxiety, illness, or change. Psalm 23 does not promise we will avoid those valleys, but it does promise that we do not walk through them alone. The Shepherd is with us.

As a church family, we are called not only to trust the Shepherd's care, but also to reflect it. We are tended by God so that we may help tend to one another. This happens in simple but holy ways: a phone call to someone who is lonely, a meal shared with a grieving family, a prayer offered in quiet faith, a word of encouragement spoken at just the right time.

The church is not simply a place we attend; it is a flock we belong to. Together we follow the voice of the Good Shepherd, and together we help make sure no one walks alone.

May we rest in the assurance that God leads us beside still waters and restores our souls. And may we become people who help others find that same rest, peace, and belonging.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Karen



Clerks Corner

The Session held its regular meeting on Tuesday, April 20. At Karen's request, we spent time discussing what we think her priorities should be as our pastor. As a solo pastor for a busy, active congregation, she could easily get burned out and she is working to establish boundaries for herself. She will compare our priorities with hers to find a healthy balance.

We established a task force to look at the organizational structure of our church to identify areas of overlap and identify gaps. If you have thoughts about this topic, please share them with Paul Bruns, Kevin Johnson, or Eileen Thomson.

The Mission team plans to show a documentary about SowHope, an organization that we have supported for many years, this summer; KAIROS is planning to screen a documentary about immigration. These may be great ways to stay cool this summer!

We have called a congregational meeting to elect new elders on Sunday, May 10 (*yes, we know it's Mother's Day*). This is the earliest in a long time that a full slate has been ready and we applaud the nominating committee (Mikki Walker, Eileen Thomson, Donna Heer, and Jim Kelly) for their hard work. We also thank, in advance, Sandy Adams, Bob Dover, Laura Johnson, and Gay Lee Ludwig Bonney, for answering this call.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact me or any Session member.

—Melanie Townsend, Clerk of Session

Book Groups in May

The next meeting of the **PageTurners** will be on Thursday, May 7, at 7pm at Vicki Peck's home. The "NEW" address is 4801 W. 133rd St., Unit 303 in Leawood, 66209. It's between Nall & Roe and closer to Roe.

Our book is *The Faculty Lounge* by Jennifer Mathieu. Please come even if you haven't read the book! We suggest you carpool, but there is some good news. The police department will post signs showing which side of the street (133rd St.) you can park on. The parking lot is rather small. Hope to see a lot of you! Call Vicki at 913-706-9679 if you have questions.

As the Page Turns will meet May 6 at 1:30pm in Room 3 at the church. The book selection is *James* by Percival Everett. Please join us for discussion and fellowship.

Presbyterian Women Spring Gathering

All women of Grace Covenant are Presbyterian Women and are invited to the Spring Gathering on Saturday, May 9, at **The Kirk of Kansas City**, 11430 Wornall Rd., KCMO 64114. The theme is *"The Joy of Giving Back."*

Schedule:

- 9:30am, registration, fellowship, and breakfast. Childcare is available.
- 10am, worship — Cheryl Keimig, leader. Special music — Linda Thomas, hammered dulcimer; Brenda Allen – cellist
- 11am, Keynote Speaker — Amy Cox from Flourish: A Furniture Bank. Flourish provides wrap-around services to empower referred families overcoming housing insecurity. The in-kind collection is new or gently-used kitchen utensils and dish towels.
- Noon, announcements and dismissal. Suggestions for lunch at area restaurants will be available.

For more information, or carpooling, contact Ginny Wirtz, 913-851-8797 or Chelly King, 913-634-4450.

VBS Decorating Volunteers Needed - Let's get creative!

Help create items that will transform our spaces for GCPC's Snowball Mountain Challenge VBS.

Please RSVP for any dates you plan to attend so we can be sure to have plenty of projects ready for everyone, and invite a friend to join the fun! All skill levels needed.

UPCOMING DECORATING DATES:

Meeting in Room 13 (Basement):

Wednesday, May 6, 9–11am; and Friday, May 15, 6–8pm

Meeting in Heartland Hall:

May 26–May 30, 10am–Noon and 2–4pm; and May 31, after worship until finished.

Whether you're crafty, handy with a paintbrush, or simply willing to help, there's a place for you.

We can't wait to see what we create together!

If you have any questions, or want **to RSVP, please contact Kristy Shaw or Christy Soule (or the church office).**

Thank you for joining in our fun!



Rosehill Donations

Rosehill Elementary continues to be a mission focus of GPC. As the school heads into state testing time, they are working to make sure the students have snacks available to help them stay focused and feel their best.

The school would truly appreciate any donations of the following items:

- MadeGood brand products
- SkinnyPop
- Cheez-Its
- Goldfish
- Beef jerky
- Cereal (without nuts, tree nuts, or marshmallows)

Simply drop them in the bins in the Weekday Entrance anytime you are at church. Thank you for your continued generosity.



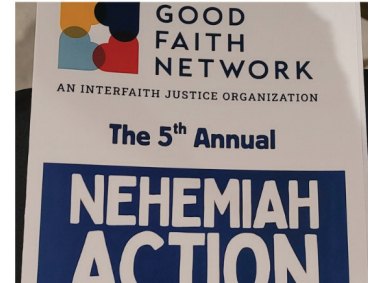
Help Provide Affordable Housing In Johnson County

Grace Covenant is helping to provide affordable housing in Johnson County through our participation in the Good Faith Network and by providing volunteers for the Habitat for Humanity “Pathway at Heritage Park” neighborhood construction at 159th and Black Bob in Olathe. Our April 7th volunteers were Nelson Townsend, Jim Byrd, Gay Lee Ludwig-Bonney, and Dave Pack.

Fourteen houses are being built in this neighborhood. They are scheduled for completion by December 2026. The project has been supported by both Johnson County and Olathe City government.

Our next workday is Friday May 8, but registration for that closed on April 24. Look for future workdays in the church bulletin and be one of our eight volunteers.

A special shoutout to Jim Byrd for volunteering with Habitat two days a week when the Byrds are in town.



Good Faith Network Gathering

More than 50 members of Grace Covenant attended the Good Faith Network’s Nehemiah Action gathering on April 28, joining over 1,700 people from interfaith communities across Johnson County to advocate for affordable housing and aging-in-place support for seniors. Representatives addressed local leaders and asked an important question: “If not now, when?” Discussions focused on creating a sustainable affordable housing fund and expanding access to the proven CAPABLE program for older adults as the community reaffirmed its commitment to working together until meaningful action is taken.

Thank You Church Family!

Thank you so much to everyone for the cards, text messages, prayers, meals, visits, flowers, and every act of kindness shown while Donna was in the hospital for lung surgery and now at home recovering. We are deeply grateful for our church family and for the love, care, and support we have received. Your encouragement has meant so much to us during this time and has been a true blessing. — Donna Goeckler and Kim Krueger

MUSIC MINISTRY



Bell Fest XXXVI "Americana"

Sunday, May 3, 6pm

Join us for Bell Fest! This year's concert celebrates the rich sounds and spirit of Americana, featuring music inspired by American folk traditions, beloved hymns, and classic melodies with a warm, roots-inspired feel. While handbells are at the heart of the concert, BellFest also showcases a wide variety of musical gifts, making this a joyful and unique evening of music for the whole community. Bring your friends and family and experience an evening filled with beautiful music, community, and the spirit of Americana.

Summer Choir! All Are Welcome!

Have you ever thought about singing in the choir?

Summer is the perfect time to try it. We would love to have you join us. The Summer Choir sings on select Sundays and does not meet for weekly rehearsals, making it an easy and flexible way to participate - no long-term commitment required. If you're interested, reach out for more information: patrick.ohalloran@gcpc.org

Supporting Our Music Ministry

If you've ever considered supporting the music ministry in a tangible way, one meaningful option is helping to provide an anthem for worship.

There is absolutely no expectation, but gifts like these quietly help us continue to grow and share new music with the congregation. If you'd like to learn more, you're welcome to reach out at patrick.ohalloran@gcpc.org.

May brings a rich mix of ensembles and styles as we continue through the Easter season, observe Ascension, and celebrate Pentecost.

Sunday, May 3 - 5th Sunday of Easter - Communion

Our Praise Team leads worship, carrying forward the energy and joy of Easter.

Sunday, May 10 - 6th Sunday of Easter (Mother's Day)

Our Celebration Choir will help lead worship as we celebrate Mother's Day. The Chancel Choir will sing *If Ye Love Me*, a reflective setting centered on Christ's call to love one another.

Sunday, May 17 - 7th Sunday of Easter (Ascension Sunday)

The Chancel Choir sings *Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise*, an Ascension anthem that proclaims the risen and reigning Christ.

Wednesday, May 13 - Final Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, May 24 - Pentecost Sunday

Our Praise Team leads worship on Memorial Day weekend, as we hold together remembrance and hope.

Sunday, May 31 - Trinity Sunday

The Chancel Choir offers a well-loved favorite, *Go Light Your World* by Allen Pote, as we reflect on the fullness of God and our call to carry Christ's light into the world.

A Note of Thanks

As we come to the close of the program year, I want to extend a sincere thank you for an excellent year of music-making together. It has been a season marked by joy, growth, and meaningful worship, and I'm deeply grateful for the time, energy, and heart that so many have given. It has been a tremendous year, and I look forward to all that is ahead.

—Patrick O'Halloran, Director of Music Ministries



KAIROS KLUES – Advocating for Peace, Justice, & Earthcare

A Big Thank You for an Incredible April!

The **Growing Gardens Feeding Children** was a wonderful event. You supported us and welcomed Rev. Trisha Tull in service, Sunday school, and at the Lunch & Learn, where we ate a typical Kenyan lunch, eaten by school children. We were also able to recycle and/or compost over 95% of the items used in the preparation and eating of the meal.

As we write this, the **Soles-4-Souls collection** is still being counted, packaged, and shipped. Thanks to you, we met and exceeded the final challenge. Be sure to watch the final numbers, hopefully by mid-May. If you feel called and can help with the shipping of these shoes (*the boxes average \$50 a box — boxes average about 25 pairs/box*) DONATE IN ONE OF THE BIG BOOTS AT CHURCH or directly here: <https://onrealm.org/gcpc/give/SOLES4SOULS>

NEW from RecycleSpot.org

RECYCLE BETTER Guidelines and flyers on what you can/cannot put in the bin. Pick up a copy at church or from <https://www.recyclespot.org/resources>

MOVIE NIGHT

KAIROS continues our movie offering night. This year the subject will be immigration. We will show a movie and have a panel to answer some questions you may have. Keep your eye/ears on announcements.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

April SMASH was awesome!

SMASH is for kids K–5th grade and meets on the 3rd Sunday of each month.

SMASH was truly out of this world! With a theme of “winning through teamwork,” we explored big ideas inspired by the Artemis II mission while celebrating Earth Day—seeing God’s beautiful creation from a whole new perspective.

Our 15 kids and 5 amazing volunteers had a blast building lunar habitats, reading Earth Day stories under the trees, making music together, and creating art. And of course, the snacks were stellar—rocket fruit kabobs, Oreo moon phases, and DIY pretzel constellations!

We wrapped up in prayer, where our kids shared gratitude for God’s gifts: the earth, trees, family, friends, and love.

A huge thank you to our SMASH team and incredible volunteers for the ways you care for the kids of our church - you make moments like this possible!

Just ONE more SMASH event left this school year!

May at a Glance

- May 3** Worship, ATW, All-music Sunday for 4yo-5th graders; 6pm Bell Fest 6pm (children participating)
- May 10** (Mother’s Day) Worship, ATW, Sunday School
- May 17** Worship, ATW, LAST DAY of Sunday School and ATW for the school year. We take a break in the summer; 4–6pm SMASH fellowship for K–5th graders
- May 24** (Pentecost) Worship, No ATW, No Sunday School
- May 31** Worship, No ATW, No Sunday School, VBS check-in after worship
- June 1–5** VBS, 9am–Noon
- June 7** VBS Sunday! VBS campers and helpers in worship.



Snowball Mountain Challenge VBS

Get ready for a faith-filled summer adventure at Snowball Mountain Challenge Vacation Bible School, happening **June 1–5, from 9am to Noon. Children ages 4 (potty-trained) through 5th grade** are invited to become Challengers in this exciting winter-themed experience full of games, music, learning, and joy.

Snowball Mountain Challenge invites kids to an exciting winter sports event where they become Challengers, gearing up for frosty games, snowy surprises, and hands-on lessons about resilience and faith. They will come to realize that with the strength God provides, they can share their gifts, be brave, give their all, pray, and hope.

With a unique winter theme that will remind us all of the fun of the Winter Olympics, Snowball Mountain Challenge VBS delivers joy and meaning in equal measure, teaching kids that “I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13, NRSV) which ALSO happens to be our theme scripture for SMASH this year!

\$10 registration fee per child, due when registering. *(If the registration fee prevents you from registering, please register and leave us a note in the special needs section.)*

Sign up online at gcpc.org/vbs

VBS Volunteers Needed!

Snowball Mountain Challenge VBS wouldn’t be possible without wonderful volunteers!

Middle and High School Youth encouraged to volunteer! Opportunities are available for all ages and interests, including music, crafts, Bible stories, snacks, recreation, and science.

Sign up to volunteer at gcpc.org/vbsvolunteer

SMASH was truly out of this world! With a theme of "winning through teamwork," we explored big ideas inspired by the Artemis II mission



YOUTH MINISTRY

May Youth Events at a Glance

- May 3 Worship, Sunday School, 6pm Bell Fest
- May 10 (Mother's Day) Worship, Sunday School
- May 17 Worship, LAST DAY of Sunday School for the school year. We take a break in the summer; 4–6pm YOUTH GROUP – last of the school year
- May 24 (Pentecost) Worship, NO Sunday School
- May 31 Worship, NO Sunday School, VBS check-in after worship
- June 1-5 VBS—please sign up to volunteer asap (May 2) to be sure we have your t-shirt and get you placed where you'd like to serve!
- June 7 VBS SUNDAY! We need LOTS of youth help here!
- July 13-18 Youth Summer Trip (completed 8th–12th grades)

GCPC Youth Summer Trip July 13-18

Completed 8th–12th grades

The GCPC youth group will be dipping our toe back into the waters of summer trips! We are excited to attend the [Synod Youth Workshop conference](#) in Tulsa, OK, July 13–18! This will be a regional conference-style event where we will explore our faith through recreation, worship, service, and tons of fellowship! This will be a great way to connect as a group and have a lot of fun along the way!

We will travel in vans and stay in the Tulsa University dorms. A packing list will be sent out in May with trip meetings on June 7 and July 12! The cost is \$450, but scholarships are available. There is a \$100 deposit due upon registration. The remaining \$350 is due by June 21, 2026.

REGISTER HERE to be redirected to a Google Doc to sign up: gcpc.org/youthtrip



Thank you to everyone who came out tonight for GPC Trivia Night!
What a fun evening filled with laughter, great food, and a little friendly competition!



During worship on Easter Sunday, the air fills with a shower of bright, beautiful confetti—drifting down the aisles, covering the pews, clinging to our clothes, and even finding its way into our hair.



On Easter Sunday, our hearts—and our sanctuary—were filled with joyful music! From the powerful voices of our Chancel Choir to the shimmering tones of the Charter Ringers and the rich beauty of our Orchestra.





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Inclusive. Family Oriented. Welcoming.

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

gcpc.org



GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Follow us on Social Media!

Facebook: facebook.com/GraceCovenantPresbyterian

Instagram: @gcpc_overlandpark • YouTube: @gracecovenant443

CHURCH STAFF

- Pastor, Rev. Karen Wright**
karen.wright@gcpc.org ext. 15
- Church Administrator**..... Patrick Bell
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
- Director of Music Ministries**.... Patrick O'Halloran
patrick.ohalloran@gcpc.orgext. 20
- Praise Team Director**.....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 Drummer** Jill Endaya-Allen
- Child Care Coordinator**.....Carolyn Chaffin
- Wedding Coordinator**.....Kristy Shaw
- Funeral Coordinator**Caroline Becher, Ashley Jeffries

ELDERS

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Johnnie Baker | Frank Slovick |
| Paul Bruns | Jaylee Soule |
| Chris Cabe | Eileen Thomson |
| Debbie Campbell | Michala Walker |
| Barbara Douglas | Mary Ann Weyforth |
| Kevin Johnson | Melanie Townsend |
| Andrew Sellers | Session Clerk |
| Kristy Shaw | |

SUPPORT STAFF

- Deacon Moderator Ginny Wirtz
- Operating Committee..... Paul Bruns, Barbara Douglas, Mikki Walker, Johnnie Baker, Melanie Townsend, and Rev. Karen Wright
- Newsletter Editor/Marketing..... Kim Krueger
- Prayer Chain Cheryl Johnson
- Website Administrators Kim Krueger, Patrick Bell

MINISTRY UNITS

- Congregational Nurture Unit Moderators**
Care and Connections....Mary Ann Weyforth
Worship and Music.....Debbie Campbell, Barbara Douglas
- Education Ministry Unit Moderators**
AdultKevin Johnson
Children Kristy Shaw
Youth.....Chris Cabe
- Reach Out Ministry Unit Moderators**
Kairos Andrew Sellers
MissionMikki Walker
Welcoming Kathy Williams
- Supportive Ministry Unit Moderators**
Facility Paul Bruns
GenerosityJane Knoche, Eileen Thomson
- Finance..... Beth Lillian
Personnel Kevin Mason

Worship Schedule

9:30am Worship

Streaming on YouTube, Facebook, gcpc.org

Visit gcpc.org for links

Upcoming Newsletter Article Deadlines

June 2026 Issue - Deadline May 22

July 2026 Issue - Deadline June 19