



Celebrating 40 Years on June 22, 2025!

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

GRACE NOTES

May 2025
Vol 43, Nbr 5

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.

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Overland Park, KS 66210
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gcpc.org

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

Living Easter Every Day: A Spring Reflection

Dear Grace Covenant Family,

May is a beautiful bridge between seasons and celebrations. The earth bursts into bloom, students graduate, and summer plans start to take shape. But most importantly, we are still in the season of Easter—a season, not a single Sunday, but seven weeks to practice living as resurrection people.



Easter is about new life, transformation, and hope that cannot be contained. And what better time to live out that hope than spring? The resurrection reminds us that God is making all things new. As flowers push through the soil and days grow longer, we are invited to notice signs of resurrection all around us—and within us.

Graduations remind us of the journeys we've taken and the new ones ahead. They are moments of letting go and leaping forward, trusting in God's call beyond what we can see. This season is a chance to ask ourselves: Where is God calling me next? How can I be part of new life in my community, my church, my world? These are not just questions for graduates. These are the questions we have been asking as we seek what is next for Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church as well.

As we prepare for summer, we also prepare to carry the Easter message with us wherever we go. Christ is risen—and that truth shapes how we love, serve, and live every single day.

This month, I encourage you to:

- **Notice resurrection in your daily life.** Where do you see signs of new life?
- **Celebrate the graduates among us.** Bless them, support them, and remind them of God's never-ending presence.
- **Find small ways to embody hope**—in a kind word, a helping hand, a generous act.
- **Keep showing up:** in worship, in prayer, in community. Resurrection is ongoing work!

May this Easter season continue to bloom in your heart and may God's Spirit lead you with joy into all that lies ahead.

—Grace and peace, Pastor Karen



Transition News

We hope you'll make plans to attend a **Called Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, May 11**, immediately following worship. This is an important time in the life of our church, and your presence and voice matter.

There will be three items of business for the congregation to vote on:

1. Approval of the Slate of New Elders – We will vote to approve those who have been nominated and feel called to serve as elders in this next season of ministry.
2. Approval of Updates to the Church By-laws – These changes have been carefully considered and recommended by Session. More information will be emailed to the congregation.
3. Vote to Call Rev. Karen as Designated Pastor – Perhaps the most exciting item is the opportunity to formally call Pastor Karen to serve as Designated Pastor of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church. The contract and more information will be emailed separately.

What is a Designated Pastor?

A Designated Pastor is an installed pastoral position with a set contract term. At our April Session meeting, the Session met with the Committee on Ministry (COM) and voted to enter a five-year contract with Pastor Karen. This would transition her from the current one-year transitional pastor contract to a longer-term commitment, providing stability and shared vision for the future.

The five-year contract is renewable, and it also leaves open the possibility of pursuing a more traditional called and installed pastoral relationship in the future, should both the congregation and Pastor Karen feel so led.

This step reflects prayerful discernment and careful listening to God's leading. We are grateful for the work of Ryan Hussey, Laura Johnson, Tom Stroud, and David Sutherland, who worked alongside Session to prepare the transitional report, and who guided us through adult education sessions, deacon covenant groups, and a congregational survey. Their leadership helped shape this moment of decision with grace and clarity.

Please plan to stay after worship on May 11 to be part of this meaningful and hopeful step forward.

—Grace and Peace, The Transition Team & Session

MUSIC NOTES

Share Your Musical Gift— Make Our Worship Even More Special!

Do you have hidden musical talent? Soloists are needed for summer services, and your gift can bring joy, inspiration, and deeper connection to our worship. We'd love to welcome you! If you're interested, please see Patrick O'Halloran or email patrick.ohalloran@gcpc.org.

Not able to commit to CHEX during the school calendar year? Consider singing in our Summer Choir! No Wednesday commitments — just a chance to share your voice and make our worship moments even more meaningful.

Embellish Handbell Ensemble - July 6

We are thrilled to welcome Embellish, a premier handbell ensemble from Western Michigan, for a special concert on the evening of July 6 at 7pm in the GCPC Sanctuary!

There is no cost to attend, but a love offering is appreciated to help offset the cost of the ensemble's travel. Join us for an unforgettable night of inspiring music. You won't want to miss this!

Clerk's Corner

The Session had a very exciting meeting the day after Easter. Prior to the meeting we received the first draft of our study report (which will be shared with the Congregation in the coming weeks). The report points out the strengths and weaknesses of our congregation.

Dale Jackson, Presbyter for Vision and Leadership and Krista Kiger, our Liaison from Heartland Presbytery's Commission on Ministry (COM) joined us for the beginning of our meeting. Dale and Krista talked with us about options for moving forward in Pastoral Leadership now that the Transition Study is almost complete. The "traditional" next step would be to form a Pastor Nominating Committee to conduct a national search for our next "called and installed" pastor. Dale indicated that Grace Covenant would be a very attractive call for potential candidates. Another option is to enter a "Designated Pastor" contract with a pastor that we know for a defined term of 3-5 years. Either way, the candidate for the role would have to be approved by COM and Heartland Presbytery. Our Session decided that we would like to move forward with a five year* contract with Karen Wright as our Designated Pastor. (See details of the Designated Pastor role on page 2). One advantage of this defined time period is that in the final year of the contract, everyone involved can take time to discern how the pastoral relationship is working. Dale recommended using our Transition study as a roadmap for the next five years. This relationship will be voted on by the Congregation on May 11; it will also have to be approved by COM and the Presbytery (hopefully at the June 7 Presbytery meeting). Assuming all parties approve (which seems likely), we will have a Service of Installation for Karen!

In other business, we approved some updates to the History section of the Personnel Manual and approved a very part-time position for an Assistant to the Head of Staff. We approved Worship in the Park for Sunday, September 7, and moved September Communion to September 14, so it won't be in the park. We authorized the use of interest from some of the Endowment Funds by the Facilities team in 2025.

We are also excited that the Nominating Team has found a new class of Elders to serve on Session starting in June. These candidates (Chris Cabe, Debbie Campbell, Kevin Johnson, and Frank Slovick) will also be elected at the May 11 Congregational Meeting.

At the March meeting, the Session gave preliminary approval to some changes in our Bylaws. Those will also be on the agenda for the May 11 Congregational meeting.

The Deacons have identified several members who have not been responsive. Staff has reviewed the list and Session has reviewed the list. People on that list who have not been involved in the life of the church in the 1-2 years will be sent a letter asking if they would like to remain active members of Grace Covenant.

Next month we will be discussing the value of Livestreaming worship and options for doing so.

We are getting excited as our 40th Anniversary approaches in June and hope that you are, too. If you haven't RSVP'd yet, please do so at gcpc.org/40th-rsvp.

Have questions? Ask an Elder!

—Melanie Townsend, Clerk of Session

* Did you know that the typical duration of a pastorate (whether Designated or traditionally Called) is 5-7 years?

Introducing Grace Notes Weekly

We're excited to share that our Midweek Announcements have a new name and an additional new format! Now called **Grace Notes Weekly**, this publication will continue to keep you connected with what's happening in the life of our church. Grace Notes Weekly will be shared via email every Wednesday afternoon and is also available anytime at gcpc.org/gnweekly.

If you have articles or information you'd like to include, please submit them to Patrick Bell in the church office by 10:00am each Wednesday for consideration in that week's edition. Be sure to check it out each week for updates, upcoming events, and opportunities to grow and serve together as a community of faith.

Generosity Fulfillment 2025 Update

Generosity through the Generations

The Generosity Team is excited to share our First Quarter 2025 fulfillment numbers. This quarter clearly shows that some of our members pay all or most of their pledge at the beginning, middle, or quarter of the calendar year. Our giving pattern this quarter tracks closely to last year's first quarter giving. The early payments of pledges have resulted in 31.3% of our pledged giving having been received. **We are appreciative of everyone who has contributed to Grace Covenant.**

Here is our progress shown by numbers of pledges:

Submitted Pledges (132)	March 31st
0-25% fulfilled	98
26-50% fulfilled	18
51-75% fulfilled	4
76-100% fulfilled	12
\$723,971	\$226,719

Four groupings are used to show giving progress and calendar relationship. They are 0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-100%. Each pledge falls into one of these groups.



KAIROS KLUES – May Edition

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.

International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers
May 29, 2025 — A day to remember those who served in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations. They also honor the memory of people who died in the name of peace.

"Plastics are now one of the greatest environmental disasters on our planet, polluting the Earth that we are passing on to our children and subsequent generations," said Gillette, volunteer moderator for Presbyterians for Earth Care. "God placed Adam in the garden to serve it and to preserve it. It is time for the Presbyterian Church to preserve Creation by becoming free from plastic pollution."

Plastics and Human Health <https://www.beyondplastics.org/fact-sheets/plastics-and-human-health>

Kairos Selling Grocery Bags

Start your walk to save plastics in your daily activities. Think you have "enough" reusable bags?

IDEAS the bags can be useful for: bringing items to and from church activities; bringing donations to church members who would love to have some brownies or just a visit; share the love you have for GCPC by having them in all stores when shopping — grocery, library, hardware, pharmacy, yoga work out, travel bag (yes it fits under the airplane seat in front of you), emptying the lockers at the end of the school year. What uses could you have for these bags?

SAVE THE DATE - MAY 4: Any donations OVER the \$3.00 base cost of the bag will be donated to the local organization PeaceWorksKC (see more information on the bulletin board outside Heartland Hall.)



You're Invited! Let's Celebrate 40 Years of Faithfulness Together!

Mark your calendars and make your plans—**Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church's 40th Anniversary Worship and Brunch** is happening on **Sunday, June 22, at 9:30am**, and you won't want to miss it! Under the inspiring theme *"Celebrating Our Faithful Journey,"* we will gather to honor four decades of worship, service, fellowship, and God's enduring faithfulness—rooted in the powerful words of Psalm 100:5: *"For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations."*

This milestone celebration is more than a moment of remembrance—it's a joyful reunion, a powerful testimony, and a hopeful look toward the future of our vibrant church community. *It's also a chance to fill the sanctuary and the fellowship hall with friends, family, and former members who have been part of our shared journey.*

RSVP today at gcpc.org/40th-rsvp

Let us know you're coming—and invite others to come with you! Whether they moved away years ago or are just down the street, help us spread the word so we can fill the church with familiar faces and joyful hearts.

Let's Get Ready Together! Help Make Our 40th Anniversary Special!

The 40th Anniversary Committee is hard at work planning a celebration to remember—but we can't do it alone. We're calling on YOU to help us prepare and host a truly welcoming and meaningful event.

Volunteer Opportunities

Sign up to assist with:

- Church cleaning projects (before the big day!)
- Greeting guests on the day of the event
- Children's games and activities
- Brunch setup, serving, and cleanup
- Decorating the church and fellowship spaces

This is your chance to roll up your sleeves, pitch in, and help us create an atmosphere that reflects the joy and gratitude we feel as we mark this milestone together.

Sign up gcpc.org/40thvolunteers

As we reflect on 40 years of God's goodness, we also look ahead with anticipation and hope. The celebration on June 22 is just one piece of a larger story we'll continue to tell throughout the year—through shared memories, acts of service, and the ways Grace Covenant continues to be a beacon of love and faith in our community. Let's come together in gratitude. Let's celebrate boldly. Let's honor our faithful journey—and get ready for the chapters yet to come.

- **RSVP now at gcpc.org/40th-rsvp**
- **Spread the word to friends, family, and past members**
- **Volunteer to help make it all possible. Sign up gcpc.org/40thvolunteers**

See you June 22! Let's fill the church with joy, memories, and celebration.



CHILDREN'S TEAM

Road Trip - On the Go with God

Vacation Bible School, June 2 - 6, 9am-Noon

Ages 4 yrs – 5th Grade

Embark on a fun journey with God through the Bible! Pack your bags for an unforgettable adventure, where kiddos (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. **REGISTER SOON to get a T-shirt!! Register kiddos and volunteers at gcpc.org/vbs**

Thank you for VBS Donations!

Thank you for your generous donations for our VBS supplies in April. With this generosity, we can provide VBS to our church community and neighbors at a very low cost.

Throughout the month of May, we'll continue to have a donation board outside of the sanctuary and items on our **Amazon Wish List:** bit.ly/GCPCVBSDonations. Your donations can be returned to the bin just outside the sanctuary by May 20th please and thank you again! You make this awesome event possible with your donations.

VBS Decorating!

VBS planning is underway and that means many creative minds and hands are putting things together to bring our Road Trip theme to life for VBS. We've set up these working sessions and welcome anyone to join us.

Please RSVP to Kristy Shaw or Christy Soule, it will help ensure we have supplies and plans ready for all the helping hands.

VBS Decoration dates:

Decoration Preparations

Wednesday, May 14: 9am - 11:30am

Tuesday, May 20: 6 - 8pm

Decorating the week before VBS

Tuesday, May 27: 9 - 11:30am and 6 - 8pm

Wednesday, May 28: 9 - 11:30am and 1 - 3pm

Thursday, May 29: 9 - 11:30am and 1 - 3pm

Friday, May 30: 9 - 11:30am and 1 - 3pm

Saturday, May 31: 9 - 11:30am and 1 - 3pm

Sunday, June 1: 12 - 2pm

Easter Egg Hunt Thanks

BIG Thank you to all who donated, volunteered, and participated in our Easter Egg Hunt! I was a BLAST and we could not have done it without YOU! You are EGGScellent and that's no YOKE!

Children and Youth Families Event Calendar:

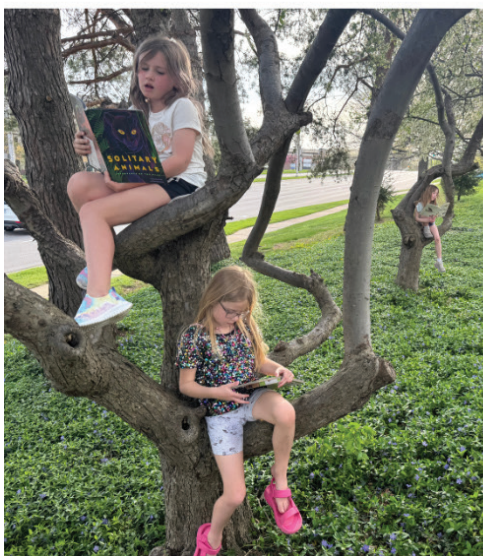
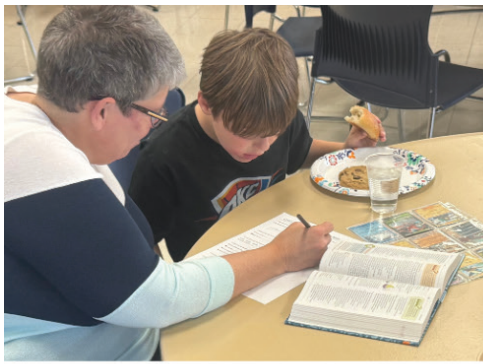
- May 4** 9:30am ATW
10:45am All-music Sunday School
6pm Bell Fest—Celebration! Choir will be singing
- May 11 Mother's Day**
9:30am ATW
10:45am Regular Sunday School
- May 18** 9:30am ATW
10:45am Regular Sunday School
4-6pm SMASH
- May 25 Memorial Day**
ATW, Sunday School, and SMASH summer break starts

SMASH, K-5th grade Fellowship - May 18

This popular program is an activity for kindergarten through 5th 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. We're currently working through the fruits of the spirit. **Our LAST Fellowship of the school year will be May 18!**

Bible Workshop Thanks

We had a lovely time getting into our NEW Bibles at the Bible workshop last month. Thank you to all who participated and to GCPC for our wonderful Bible gifts!



Children's Ministry Activities in May

Bible Workshop, Easter Egg Hunt & SMASH!



GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

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finance@gcpc.org

Interim Dir. 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..... Mary 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

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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

June 2025 issue - Deadline, May 23
July 2025 issue - Deadline, June 20