



**Celebrating 40 Years on June 22, 2025!**

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

# GRACE NOTES

April 2025  
Vol 43, Nbr 4

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  
913-345-1256  
[office@gcpc.org](mailto:office@gcpc.org)  
[gcpc.org](http://gcpc.org)

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

## Greetings GCPC Family!

As we welcome April, we are moving ever closer to Easter! We will once again have services at 9am and 1am. We look forward to celebrating the season of resurrection, renewal, and transformation as we seek to live as resurrection people.

Before we get to Easter however, we have lots going on. Trivia Night, SMASH, and the Easter Egg Hunt, just to name a few. As you look through the newsletter and as you see events listed online and in the bulletin, I want to invite you to find a way to get more involved in the life of the congregation.

Prayer for others, if you are a crafter find out about prayer shawls and other ways to craft. Musicians have lots of opportunities, talk to Patrick O'Halloran about where you might enter in. There are always ways to be a part of children and youth ministry. Check in with Emily Nelson Dixon about what is coming up. Get to know the amazing children and youth of GCPC.

Resurrection changed the disciples and can change us. Read through the newsletter, talk to others in the congregation, find ways that you can step even more fully into this resurrection life that we seek together!

Blessings —Rev. Karen Wright

## 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 **GCPC history trivia questions**. We'd love to include your contributions in our celebration of all things GCPC 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!





## Transition Process

**Keep those congregational surveys coming!** We want to hear from everyone about what we are doing well and areas in which we need to work. What do you want the future of GCPC to look like? Your participation is essential in helping us shape the next chapter of our ministry together.

[Click here for the Survey!](#)

**We ask that all surveys be completed by March 31.**

Thank you for your time, prayers, and commitment to this important endeavor.

Grace and Peace,  
The Transition Team & Session

## Clerk's Corner

The Session met as scheduled on March 17 — with many of us decked out in green! We received initial feedback from the congregational survey and look forward to discussing the full results in a few weeks. We will have representatives from Heartland Presbytery's Commission on Ministry join us in April to discuss our transition process and how we want to move forward.

We received reports from many of our Teams. There are many ongoing maintenance needs (minor sheet rock repairs, painting, etc.) and the Facilities Team is looking for volunteers who are willing to help with these. We had a discussion of the value of streaming worship. In general, we feel like it is an important part of our ministry, but we need to decide whether we want to continue to do it with a patchwork of "personal" video equipment or if we want to invest in a commercial grade system. The Facilities Team will investigate some more exact prices and this conversation will continue. Funds from the Mary Johnson Memorial account will be used to replace some furniture in the nursery.

We granted KAIROS permission to sell reusable shopping bags on Earth Day and discussed a proposal for installing a water bottle filling station. We discussed the type and location and the feeling that this may be more of a "want" than a "need." KAIROS will gather more information.

We approved updates to several sections of the Operating Manual to bring the manual into better alignment with our actual current practice and updates to the Personnel Manual to clarify some details of benefits and part-time employment. We also approved some minor updates to the church bylaws. These will have to be approved by the congregation but are not time sensitive, so those will be presented to the congregation the next time we have a congregational meeting.

As always, if you have questions feel free to reach out to any Session Member —Melanie Townsend, Clerk of Session

## Kairos Committee Selling Grocery Bags

**We are excited to introduce a new recyclable grocery bag for our GCPC members and friends.** The bag has the GCPC, Earthcare and 40th Anniversary logos pictured on the front. We hope to encourage more use of recycled bags vs plastic for grocery store use. **The bags will available for \$3 each, and you can pay by check or cash.**

We will share more information about them on Palm Sunday and we will have a special children's time on May 4th to talk about how we can care for the Earth. **Bags can be purchased after the service on Palm Sunday or May 4th.** Any additional donations over the \$3 will be used to help fund PeaceWorks KC, whose mission is: To nonviolently embody and empower our community through organizing acts of civil resistance and works for peace. Peace is attained only through justice for all.





## 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*

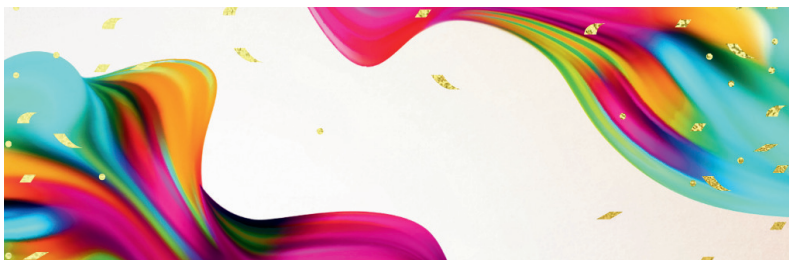
Worship services at 9am and 11am

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, Organ,  
Percussion, Charter Ringers, & Chancel Brass



## Adult Sunday School

10:45am, Room 3

During Lent, our Adult Sunday School class will be following along with Rev. Karen's Lenten sermon series, **Journey of Resistance: The Temptation Found in Luke**. This will give us a chance to dig deeper into each week's themes and how they apply to our daily lives during this Lenten season and beyond.

**April 6, Week 5:** "Tempted by Fear"

Scripture: Luke 22:54-62

Teacher: Rick Randolph

**April 13, Week 6:** "Victory in Surrender" (Palm/Passion Sunday)

Scripture: Luke 23:44-49

Teacher: Jake Schmidt

**April 20:** EASTER, no Sunday School

**April 27:** Rick Randolph teaching microplastics in honor of Earth Day.

## Thank You Church Family!

Thank you to our church family for the love and support you've shown Kevin and me following his recent health issues and surgery. We've been treated to tasty meals, many encouraging texts and phone calls — and even a welcome delivery of a vanilla shake. You all are truly amazing at how you share God's love, and we are so fortunate to be a part of this congregation.

—Cheryl & Kevin Johnson

To Grace Covenant Members, Friends and Family, Thank you for the beautiful cards, prayers and blessings. My blood pressure illness is improving. Thank you! Thank you!

—Sincerely, Nathan Littlejohn



# MUSIC NOTES

## Message from Patrick

I am absolutely overjoyed to rejoin the Grace Covenant Church Family and continue to develop its rich tradition of great music! Your warm welcome and unwavering support have been truly heartwarming, and I am SO grateful for the love and encouragement shown from the congregation, staff, and various teams associated with the church.



The late, great Luciano Pavarotti once said, "Music making is the most joyful activity possible, the most perfect expression of any emotion." This quote resonates deeply with me, as there have been times in my life when I neglected to embrace the joy and meaning music brings. My career in music, with all its highs and lows, has taken me to incredible places. Ultimately, it led me back home to GCPC, where my heart belongs. This new position means the world to me, and I am committed to giving it my best.

This opportunity to serve and share in the joy of music with such a wonderful community is a blessing. I can't wait to create beautiful music together and celebrate our faith through song! —Patrick

## Calling All Musicians

Have you ever heard GCPC choir or musical group perform and thought to yourself, "Yeah, that's something I could see myself being a part of!?" Well... what are you waiting for? No matter what your experience level, we want to welcome you with open arms. If you've ever had even the slightest hunch that joining a musical group could be fun, trust your intuition — you're probably right! Now is the time to join, and we promise you won't regret it. Don't let a case of "what ifs" hold you back.

### **Become a part of the vibrant musical community here at GCPC!**

Whether you've never sung in public or rung handbells before, now is the perfect time to dive in and explore the joy of music with us. We are all learning together, and there's a place for everyone. The church offers a variety of ensembles catering to different age ranges and talents. Simply reach out to Patrick at [patrick.ohalloran@gcpc.org](mailto:patrick.ohalloran@gcpc.org), or say, "Hello," before or after the service, or visit him in his office for more info.

We are here to support you in your musical journey and help you discover the joy and meaning that music can bring to our lives. Together, we can create beautiful music and meaningful experiences.

## Music in Worship

**April 6 – 5th Sunday of Lent**  
Chancel & Exaltation! Singers sing  
"Out of the Depths" by Debra Scroggins

**April 13 – Palm/Passion Sunday**  
Praise Team, Joy! Singers &  
Celebration! Choir

**April 17 – Maundy Thursday Service**  
Praise Team

**April 18 – Good Friday Service**  
Chancel & Exaltation! Singers sing  
"My Jesus, I Love Thee"  
arr. Dan Forrest  
"Thy Will Be Done"  
by Craig Courtney  
"Lamb of God" by John Reim w/  
string duo or trio & tenor drum  
"Were You There" arr. Kyle Pederson

**April 20 - Easter Sunday**  
9:00am  
Praise Team

11:00am  
Organ, Chancel & Exaltation! Singers,  
Chancel Brass, Percussion,  
& Charter Ringers  
"Christ the Lord Is Risen"  
setting by Jeremy J. Bankson  
with brass & percussion  
"Alleluia" by Elaine Hagenberg  
"Lift High the Cross"  
arr. Paul Leddington Wright  
(brass, & percussion)







**Join us for  
Bell Fest XXXV  
May the Fourth Be with You  
Sunday, May 4, 6pm**

This year's Bell Fest promises to be out of this world with performances that will transport you to a galaxy far, far away.

Whether you're a Jedi, a Sith, or just a fan of great music, come together for a night of music, fun, and community.

Don't miss out on this intergalactic celebration!



AN INTERFAITH JUSTICE ORGANIZATION

**Supporting the Good Faith Network is Easy!**

Grace Covenant is among twenty-seven congregations in Johnson County that support the Good Faith Network's (GFN) efforts seeking justice through interactions with Johnson County government.

In its initial years, the network worked on issues of mental health, ending homelessness, and affordable housing. The 2025 opening of a mental health crisis stabilization unit for voluntary patients, as early as June, is one outstanding result of GFN's efforts.

During the 2024–25 cycle, GFN has added elder care to the issues it is working on. Their research has uncovered a program called CAPABLE (Community Aging in Place Advancing Better Living for Elders) that has significant promise. (Check it out by Googling "CAPABLE program.")

**How can you support GFN?** Twenty-seven Grace Covenant members are "members" of GFN through their commitment to try and attend four GFN events. One of those events, the **Nehemiah Action on Tuesday May 6 at 6pm** at Resurrection Methodist Church in Leawood, is the event where GFN demands are made to Johnson County government. To show the power of the network, there is a goal of 1,600 people attending that event, with at least 75 from Grace Covenant.

**Could you attend and perhaps bring friends?** It would be helpful if you let Dave Pack, Eileen Thomson, or Joy or Don Wilson know that you plan to attend.

Another significant event for the GFN is the **Solutions Briefing on Sunday, April 6 at 3pm** at Grace UMC, 11485 South Ridgeview Road in Olathe. At this event, the asks to be presented to Johnson County government at the Nehemiah Action will be revealed.

It is easy to support the GFN by attending these events. Know that it is the standard GFN practice that events will last no longer than 90 minutes.

# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

## 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. **Head here to register and sign up to volunteer:** <https://gcpc.org/vbs/roadtrip.html>

## Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper BIG Thank you!

A special thank you to our GCPC family for making our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper a success again this year! Thank you for braving the storms that night to support our kiddos! We had a blast and made some much-needed funds for our awesome summer VBS program. Not only did we pack out the room with people, music, laughter, and pancakes, we also had SO many helpers! Thank you! Whether you donated supplies, helped set-up, flipped pancakes, or helped clean-up, you *batter* believe we appreciate you!

## SMASH, K-5th Grade Fellowship

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.

**Coming up: April 13, Gentleness, and on May 18, Self-Control.**



## Easter Egg Hunt, April 12

Hop on over to our **Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday April 12 at 10am**. We'll begin our event with some fun and games inside Heartland Hall and conclude with an egg hunt (*outdoors if the weather allows*). Children of all ages are welcome. Invite your friends too! We're taking candy donations now, please drop off in the church office, or bring with you on Sunday morning.

## Easter Egg Candy Donations Needed

The Children's Committee is looking for candy donations for our Easter Egg hunt in April. There will be a collection site in the Concourse, and feel free to bring them to church during office hours as well.

## Bible Workshop, April 6

We are excited to offer our 3rd grade children a Bible Workshop in the coming weeks. One parent or loved one is encouraged to attend our workshop, and it will be held on April 6 at 11:45am. Our children will receive a Bible on behalf of GCPC during worship that day.

## Youth Sunday, April 27

The middle and high schoolers of GCPC will be leading the worship service on April 27. We are planning during our Sunday school classes and will have a rehearsal on Saturday, April 26 from 10-1pm (including lunch). Contact Emily with questions.



## Get to Know our New Members!



**ALLEN AND SHIREL YORK** came to Grace because of an invitation from Rebecca Prater. Besides the invitation, they have enjoyed the music program and the inclusive theology at Grace. Allen has a 45-year history of music ministry serving in churches in Missouri, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and North Carolina.

Before retiring, Shirel was a sales support specialist for Smithfield Foods and Corbin International. Their family includes their dog named Jax and sons Michael and James. James' wife is Taylor, and their children are Jay and Briar Rose. Allen's hobbies include fishing and golf. Shirel enjoys cooking and gardening. They have enjoyed the music program, Workshop Sunday and Dinners for 7 or 8. They are open to other opportunities including property/facilities.



**JEFF AND CARRIE DEVRIES** are the proud parents of Derek (19) and Alex (15). Jeff is an occupational therapist, helping people rehab from fingertip to shoulder. Carrie has taught all levels of choral music and has been teaching elementary music in Olathe School District. Derek graduated from Olathe East in May 2024 and is preparing for a career in cyber security. He went on the last M&M trip and loved getting to know the youth at GCPC. Alex is a freshman at Olathe East and is a wrestler with a big heart. He is an animal whisperer, so he pets Nevin every chance he gets! He is now taking part in youth activities as much as possible! The DeVries family is happy to become members of GCPC and ready to share their time, talents, gifts, and service.



The **NELSON DIXON FAMILY** is made up of Emily and Chris and their children Esme (15), Eloise (11), Gilbert (6), and their 4-year-old dog Minerva "Minnie". They live in Olathe, KS. Chris is a facilities manager, and Emily is the Director of Christian Education at GCPC. Chris grew up farming in western Kansas and loves history, woodworking, brewing beer, and BBQ. Emily grew up in Parkville, MO, and loves all things musical theatre, reading, cooking, and conversations. The kiddos are into music, art, theatre, law, dance, Legos, and Minecraft. The Nelson Dixons have found Grace Covenant to be a warm and welcoming community and are thankful to be part of a church that is so focused on social justice, inclusion, Earth-care, and music!



The **TAMKE FAMILY**, Bryan, Holly, Nolan (9), and Quinn (6) feel so welcomed by the congregation of Grace Covenant and are very happy to be new members. Bryan and Holly moved to Overland Park from north Kansas City (outside of Liberty, MO) three years ago and had been casually searching for a church home. Both knew they wanted to find a church with the same traditions and values they grew up, but also one that is progressive in their beliefs, places importance on social causes and offers a wide variety of programming and musical expression — something they have now found at GCPC!

Bryan is a marketing director at WellSky and enjoys all things football — Nebraska Cornhuskers, managing his three fantasy teams, watching as much as time allows (not nearly enough!). Holly is in customer marketing at Oracle (formerly Cerner) and loves to read, craft with her kids, and thrift. Nolan is in 3rd grade and loves basketball, rollerblading, and movies. He stays busy with soccer, basketball, and Cub Scouts. Quinn is in 1st grade and loves to dress up, play school or "family," and do crafts. She participates in Girl Scouts, piano, basketball, soccer, and will start softball this spring. Both kids are excited to participate in VBS this summer!

The Tamke's are excited for the upcoming programs and family-fun events at GCPC, looking forward to meeting more of the congregation, making lifelong connections!





# GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**Inclusive. Family Oriented. Welcoming.**

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

[gcpc.org](http://gcpc.org)



## GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Follow us on Social Media!

Facebook: [facebook.com/GraceCovenantPresbyterian](https://facebook.com/GraceCovenantPresbyterian)

Instagram: @gcpc\_overlandpark

### CHURCH STAFF

- Interim Pastor, Rev. Karen Wright**  
[karen.wright@gcpc.org](mailto:karen.wright@gcpc.org) ..... ext. 15
- Church Administrator.....Patrick Bell**  
Mon.-Fri.; [patrick.bell@gcpc.org](mailto:patrick.bell@gcpc.org) ..... ext. 10
- Director of Christian Education**  
**Emily Nelson Dixon** .....ext.18  
[emily.dixon@gcpc.org](mailto:emily.dixon@gcpc.org)
- Finance Administrator.....Tara Hyder**  
[finance@gcpc.org](mailto:finance@gcpc.org)
- Pre-Interim Dir. Music Ministries..Carrie DeVries**  
[cdevriesbe@olatheschools.org](mailto: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](mailto:darktrainfilms@gmail.com); [gcpc.media@gmail.com](mailto: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 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

### 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](http://gcpc.org)  
Visit [gcpc.org/online](http://gcpc.org/online) for links

### Upcoming Newsletter Article Deadlines

May 2025 issue - Deadline, April 18  
June 2025 issue - Deadline, May 23