Happy Thanks Giving!

We know it feels a bit early to say that, but not for us! October 10 marks the beginning of our Season of Thanks Giving, when we give special focus in our worship and fellowship for the many things we have to be thankful for from God.

We thought one of the best ways to start giving thanks was to many of the individuals in our congregation that make Grace Covenant a special faith community. We won't be able to mention everyone in this note, but we'll do our best to express our thanks to everyone in the next few weeks. This seems especially important after the last year and a half, when most of us didn't see who was doing the work of the church. For instance…

The members of our Facilities Team, led by Marc Feyh. This includes Dave Peck, Harold Farren, Cal Sweeten, Knute Rosche, Steve Becher, Liz Chandler…while most of the rest of us stayed at home taking part in on-line worship and activities, these folks took the opportunity to get a lot of jobs done around the church, keeping it in tip-top shape.

Members of the Children’s Team, Sunday School teachers, and other volunteers working with our kids. When children’s Sunday School was forced online for a while, there were SO many wonderful examples of music, story-telling, and hands-on activities for our kids to learn from and enjoy!

Everyone involved in caring for each other – the Deacons, Chelly King & Nancy Kalesz from Connections & Care, as well as many others who kept a close eye out for the well-being of friends and neighbors.

The MANY individual members who, when called upon, helped out in hundreds of ways, from providing food and needed items to support groups like Argentine Baby Closet, KCK Hot Lunch, Uplift, Catholic Charities, Johnson County Christmas Bureau and more, as well as individuals in need during the pandemic.

If you feel left out, just wait…we’ve only begun to give thanks for all of you!

— Mitch and Sue
3rd and 4th Grade Bible Workshop and Presentation

All 3rd and 4th graders are invited to join Rev. Sue for a Bible workshop Sundays October 3 and 10 during the Sunday school hour. We will review Bible basics about the Bible, where it came from, what is in it, and how to look up chapter and verse. Classes will begin following music time with Pam and Lara at 10:45am in Room 15. We will move to Room 10 and dig into the Bible! Those who complete the class will be presented with their own study Bible during worship on Sunday, October 24. Contact Rev. Sue (sue.trigger@gcpc.org) to sign up, or show up Sunday morning. We look forward to seeing you!

Trunk or Treat

Get your costumes ready, find your favorite treat collection container, and get ready or games, activities, and trunk or treats Sunday, October 24, 4-5:30pm. Weather permitting all will be held outside in the parking lot. Rain or snow? We’ll move inside. (Watch for details about how we can set up trick or treat stations inside the building if weather prevents an outdoor event.)

We need Trunks and Treats for this event. If you would like to set up your car and pass out treats you provide or donate candy for games and prizes, please sign up at: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0A45A4A722A4FC1-trunk1 or contact Rev. Sue at sue.trigger@gcpc.org.

Donations for Sanctuary Flowers

GCPC would like to bring back the tradition of celebrating anniversaries, birthdays, the remembering of loved ones, or any special event, with flower arrangements for Sunday morning worship. The cost is $35–$40, whether the flowers are real or a beautiful faux arrangement made and donated by Linda McMaster. If you would like to donate, please contact Chelly King at chelly41rn@gmail.com or 913-634-4450. (Note, the number in the last directory is no longer correct.)

Please provide: occasion, which type of flower arrangement (real or faux), date, and memorial/honorarium name. The check can be made payable to GCPC with real or arrangement in the memo line and can be mailed or dropped off in the wooden box in the sanctuary as you enter or leave the service. If you order real flowers, please feel free to take them with you after church. Orders for real flowers must be placed by the Monday before the next Sunday. Thanks! —Chelly King

IHN Volunteer Training

Do you want to be part of the solution to homelessness in Johnson County? Come to IHN Volunteer Training which is scheduled for Wednesday, October 27, 2021 from 6:30 promptly to 8:30 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church, 12251 Antioch, Overland Park, KS.

Also, please let Jane Knoche, GCPC IHN Primary Coordinator, know if you are attending or have questions.

October SMASH Follow Jesus Together

Being a follower of Jesus is something we don’t do alone, but together with the family of God. At the October SMASH we are going to explore ways we can follow Jesus together. K-5th/6th grade kids are invited to come and enjoy some fun activities in the Spirit of Fall. Join us on September 19 from 4-6pm in Heartland Hall. Our youth interns, Adriana and Wisdom, are creating and leading our activities. Christy and Rev. Sue will be there, too.

Please RSVP to help us safely prepare for supplies. RSVP to Rev. Sue at sue.trigger@gcpc.org. Please let her know how many children will attend.

PW’s Fall Gathering

Ladies, add the Presbyterian Women’s Fall Gathering on Saturday, October 16 to your calendar. You can join us virtually via ZOOM or in-person at Grace Covenant from 10am-1:00 p.m. Our Guest speaker is Courtney Thomas, CEO of NewHouse Women’s Shelter sharing “In Her Shoes.” Our worship leader is Rev. Elizabeth Meador.

Please register by October 11 by contacting Ginny Wirtz (gwirtz@everestkc.net) for the registration form. A free box lunch is provided for all persons registered.
Care and Connections

Are you looking for some easy jobs to do around church without much time commitment? Do we have a few jobs for you! Please contact Diane Schmit, diane.schmit@lumen.com, if you can help.

- We are looking for a few individuals who could send cards to members who may need a pick me up … singles living alone or are lonely, caregivers, and people who are ill. A list would be provided to you by Care and Connections and/or pastors.
- We are looking for a few volunteers who could be available to set up/take down (tables, chairs, etc.) for various events at the church. Events would be once a quarter and shouldn’t last more than an hour.

BINGO Night!

Friday, November 12 at 6:30pm
Get ready for a fun night of Intergenerational B-I-N-G-O fun for the whole family.

We will be having an intergenerational B-I-N-G-O night Friday, November 12, starting at 6:30pm in Heartland Hall. We are asking everyone one to bring heavy hors d’oeuvres. Beverages will be provided or bring your own. B-I-N-G-O cards will be provided. We will enjoy fellowship and many games of B-I-N-G-O. Bring your family and friends to this fun night of competition. Hope to see you all there.

GCPC Young Adults & Families
October 9, 3pm
Johnson Farms, 17701 Holmes Road Belton, MO 64012
Come join other church young adults and young families for our annual pumpkin patch outing! To guarantee entry, pre-purchasing tickets for this date and time is highly recommended! You can purchase tickets here: www.johnsonfarms.net/. Hope to see you all there!

The Great GCPC SMOKE-OFF

Preparations continue for the Great GCPC Smoke-off on Saturday, October 23. We hope that you can join us for this fun potluck! Please bring a dish or two to share (salad, side dish, dessert). C’mon up at 4:00pm for music and a lesson on grilling and smoking. The judging will start at 5:30pm.

We have several smokers/grillers signed up, but we can always use more. You can also choose to grill or smoke your food at home and then bring it up for the competition, if you choose. Please contact Tom Stroud at thomas.w.stroud@gmail.com or 913-515-0591 if you can join the cooking brigade.

We are blessed to have Christopher Callender and his musician friends ready to entertain us with Bluegrass music before the meal from 4:15pm-5:15pm.

Proceeds from your cash votes for best BBQ will be donated to Heifer International. Plan A is to be outside for the event, but we can move the judging and eating inside if the weather doesn’t cooperate. And there’s plenty of space in the church to spread out for dining! Make sure to get this event in your calendar.

If you have questions, please call Teresa Ilten at 913-515-1087.
Fall Sunday School Classes

We have had a great response to our Fall Sunday school classes and everyone is enjoying being together in person or online. Our children’s classes have been full of energy and joy! Our new Grace Makers classes for K-2nd and 3rd- 5/6th grades have explored ways that we welcome others through art, Bible skills and games, drama, mission, and music. What an exciting way to learn!

This month, our children and the adult Follow Me class will focus on discipleship. What does it mean to follow Jesus? For children, the idea of discipleship goes hand in hand with exploring and experiential learning in church and in their daily lives.

Our adults will discuss the lifelong journey of discipleship. It takes more than the head, checking off boxes of belief. It even takes more than the heart, feeling deeply about another person or a cause. Following Jesus is about these things and more. It is also about doing. And it takes practice. And practice. And more practice. Followers of Jesus spend a lifetime practicing putting faith and love into action.

Together we will dive into the essence of what makes a Christian. Find the class that is right for you.

Adult Education

When Jesus says, “Follow me,” we are being invited into God’s reality of reconciling love. When we choose to follow Jesus, to become a disciple, we are choosing to be taught and formed into someone who is Christlike. Jesus shows us what we are choosing; restored fellowship with God and one another.

Follow Me is a Biblical study of the practices of faith in a whole new learning format. The curriculum is divided into 4 – 6 week units that address a particular faith practice. We are currently in a unit about discipleship, “Follow Jesus.” In this series of study, we will consider what it means to accept Jesus’ invitation to follow. Jesus invites people to join him so he can show them something, something that he knows they’ve been looking for. Come find out more.

The leader for the “Follow Jesus” unit is Kathy Williams. Come for a unit, come for a class, or come every Sunday! The adult class meets in Room 3. You can Zoom in at: https://tinyurl.com/yanmupj9

Look at what’s coming up:

- **October 3, 10** - **Follow Jesus**: Learn to See Everything Through the Lens of Love; and Follow Jesus in the Making of Disciples
- **October 17-November 21**: **Confess**: As Individuals; **Repent**: As Communities; Repair
- **December 5- January 2**: **Baptize**: Remember Your Baptism; Cross the Divide; Die and Rise; Honor the Body

Follow Me Café Conversations - If you are looking for a more reflective, light conversation about discipleship, join Rev. Mitch for a café conversation. These conversations provide brief information and invite a self-guided study. Class meets in Room 21.

Shalom: Finding Peace in the Bible

Shalom: Finding Peace in the Bible is a six-week adult Bible study led by Kevin Johnson which will be loosely taken from the Kerygma study “Shalom: A study of the Biblical Concept of Peace”. We will meet in Room 4 during the Sunday school hour 10:45-11:45am through October 31. We will look at the theological dimensions of peace as God’s intention for this world, our continuing hope for peace, and our call to be peacemakers.

PLEASE BRING YOUR BIBLES and a pen.
You can Zoom in at: https://tinyurl.com/krd5pz84
Join the Grace Makers Team!

We have created a new and exciting experience for children to learn Bible stories through creative workshops in art, science, music, puppetry, games, and more. Each week the children will experience a story through one of these workshops. Leaders will select a favorite area (science, art, etc.), partner with a friend, and lead a workshop for two weeks in a row. There will be 6–8 weeks between your workshops. This is a great way for children to learn in a variety of ways and build relationships with our adults. If you love working with children and would like to be part of this program, please contact Rev. Sue at sue.trigger@gcpc.org.

Sunday, October 3rd – World Communion Sunday
- Praise Team

Sunday, October 10th
1st Sunday in the Season of Thanks Giving
- Chancel Quartet, Brass Sextet, Clarinet Quintet, and Chancel & Exaltation! Singers (CHEX II)

Sunday, October 17th – WORKSHOP SUNDAY
2nd Sunday in the Season of Thanks Giving
- Joy! (4s-K) & Celebration! (1st-6th graders) sing during the 9:30am Prayer Service

Sunday, October 24th
3rd Sunday in the Season of Thanks Giving
- Praise Team & Charter Ringers

Sunday, October 31st – REFORMATION SUNDAY
4th Sunday in the Season of Thanks Giving
- Chancel Quartet & Chancel Singers III

Sunday, November 7th – ALL SAINTS’ SUNDAY
5th Sunday in the Season of Thanks Giving
- Chancel Quartet, Jubilation! Ringers, and All 3 Chancel and Exaltation! Ensembles will combine for today’s anthem, “Swingin’ with the Saints” arr. Mark Hayes (Pre-recorded or Live based on safety)

Sunday, November 14th
6th Sunday in the Season of Thanks Giving
- Praise Team, Joy!, Celebration!, & Charter Ringers

Sunday, November 21st – CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY
7th Sunday in the Season of Thanks Giving
- Chancel Quartet & Chancel Singers I

Sunday, November 28th – “A Season of Hope”
1st Sunday of ADVENT
- Chancel Quartet and Chancel & Exaltation! Singers (CHEX II)
2 AMAZING New Interns!

We have EXCITING news for you!!! This school year we have not one, but two interns from Heartland Camp! They started at GCPC in early September and have helped develop and lead some GREAT Connect activities!!! Here is a little something from them:

Adriana
Hi! My name is Adriana, I am 21 years old. I am from Wheaton, Illinois, which is a suburb right outside of Chicago. I am currently in the middle of a gap year, but previously I was attending College of DuPage. I hope to go into full time ministry after I finish school. I love meeting people, so I am so excited to meet every one of you!

Wisdom
Hey guys! My name is Wisdom Manaka, I am 26 years old, and I am from Harare, Zimbabwe. I am a holder of a B.Sc. honors degree in Geographical Information Sciences and Earth Observations from the University of Zimbabwe. I am so excited to be here guys and I am looking forward to great, fun, and Godly moments together. I really can’t wait to see you. Hoping we can create some good music together too!

Sunday Morning Class and Connect

Sunday Morning Classes for youth are going great this fall but we wish we had more youth attending. Classes meet at 10:45 on Sundays in the youth wing with breakfast snacks before class. Students can also join via Zoom if they give us a heads-up beforehand.

Connect

We will continue with “Connect” Youth Group events this fall mostly scheduled 6:30-8pm on Sunday evenings plus random special events including the Homeless Night Out in mid-November. Our interns are knocking it out of the park in terms of planning and leading great events! Fall youth calendars are available on the Youth Wall and on gracecovenantyouth.shutterfly.com.

Fall Presbytery Youth Retreat | September 25th

Youth from Heartland Presbytery gathered for our first full presbytery leadership retreat in quite a while at Heartland Camp Saturday September 25th. We participated in leadership activities, a high-ropes course, games, and more. Our goal as a Presbytery is to have annual semester retreats (Fall & Spring) for youth. We are excited to see what God can do in the lives of our students as we strive to connect them in new ways!
“Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church celebrates God’s grace for everyone. We gather to worship. We equip ourselves to share faith. We send ourselves to serve.”

In 2020 we created the beginning of a strategy for the future that included connecting with our community. The priorities that came from Visioning Day 2020 were:

1. Connect with our community — Increase our relationship with our closest neighbors including City Place and JCCC.
2. Focus — Keep focused on the work we need to do to:
   1. Be faithful disciples of Jesus. 2. Revitalization.
   3. Mission - Particularly look at our mission emphasis and continue to evaluate effectiveness.
   4. Invite people to join us on our journey.
3. Improve Congregational Involvement — work to involve new leadership and include more members in the work of the church.

The pandemic certainly put a damper on our plans. Despite the pandemic, we managed to:

• Connect with JCCC about partnering with their efforts to improve JOCO transportation that negatively impacts people of color and students.
• We are also blessed with a new connection to JCCC through Amy Sellers who is the new Program Director Early College Par Outreach/ High School Partnerships & Outreach at JCCC.
• Our online worship increased our outreach into the community and beyond.
• We were blessed with 4 new members and many visitors online and in person.

While we weren’t able to do the work we’d hoped, we have managed to do work we hadn’t imagined.

On Saturday, November 13, 9am – Noon, we will put our hearts and minds together to envision where God is calling us, and to build a strategy for the future. This will be an important collaborative conversation during which every voice is valued. In order to include everyone, we will hold the meeting in the sanctuary so that those who desire to join us from home will be able to ZOOM into the meeting at: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84130023306?pwd=K1FNnJXTjFVbmJQcmcwRIN1UDI2dz09. Meeting ID: 841 3002 3306 Passcode: GCPC2021.

Open Forum: Bill Turner said the Youth team discussed what can be done to help people complete the activities from the Poster Palooza event from before the pandemic.

Consent agenda: The minutes of the August 16 Session meeting were approved. Harold Frye and Jane Knoche were affirmed as commissioners to the September 21 Presbytery meeting.

Team minutes: Generosity team: The pledge drive will start October 10 and end on November 7, Pledge Sunday. The church budget will be formed based upon pledges received by November 7. The theme will be Growing In Faith Together, and members will be encouraged to increase their pledge by 5%. Music team: The team discussed planned group activities in relation to COVID protocols. Singers will be wearing masks. Instead of the full orchestra, there will be smaller woodwind and brass ensembles.

Clerk’s report: After recording the death of Larry Baker, we have 399 members.

Co-pastors’ report: There were no questions about the co-pastors’ report submitted by Rev. Mitch Trigger. He commented on what he’d learned by attending the Stewardship Conference last week, noting how fortunate Grace Covenant is to have the technology to provide our services both in-person and virtually. Rev. Sue reported that the Adult Sunday school classes are well-attended, and the children’s program is going well. She also noted we’ve had visitors regularly coming to worship.

Deacons’ report: Jerel Williams noted how difficult it is to track visitors because we’re not passing pew pads. There’s a guest book in the concourse for them to sign in.

Old business: None.

New business: Refreshments between services: We discussed whether serving refreshments after service before Sunday school was wise, considering COVID and that children would be taking their masks off to eat. The decision was that Heartland Hall was a big space and that the timeframe was short, so it’s probably not a problem. Men’s group breakfast: Session passed a motion to allow a group of men to meet for breakfast in Heartland Hall on the last Monday of a month. Per capita: Jane Knoche mentioned that we need to encourage members to pay their per capita of $43.07 a member.

After sharing joys and concerns, the meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m. and Rev. Mitch Trigger closed with a prayer.
Worship Schedule
9:30am In-Person & Online Worship
Visit gcpc.org/online for links