



GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship — December 15, 2024

*“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that
Some have entertained angels without knowing it.” — Hebrews 13:2*

WELCOME TO WORSHIP! Thank you for worshipping with us today.

ELDER ON DUTY: Lara Schesser

HEAD USHERS: Mike & Susan Fitzgerald

HEARING ASSIST DEVICES ARE AVAILABLE. Please ask at the sound booth.

NURSERY CARE is available during worship, located in Room 22 in the east wing.

RECORD YOUR ATTENDANCE AT TODAY'S WORSHIP SERVICE WITH OUR VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE

PAD: Click this link: <https://bit.ly/GCPCattendance>, or scan the QR Code below.



CONTACTING STAFF: The office is open 8am to 4pm, M–F. To reach a staff member by e-mail:

- **Rev. Karen Wright (Interim Pastor):** karen.wright@gcpc.org
- **Emily Nelson Dixon (Dir. of Christian Education):** emily.dixon@gcpc.org
- **Rebecca Prater (Dir. of Music Ministries)** rebecca.prater@gcpc.org
- **Lindsay Callender (Youth Coordinator):** lindsaymichelle0130@gmail.com
- **Patrick Bell (Office Admin.):** patrick.bell@gcpc.org
- **Tara Hyder (Finance Admin.):** finance@gcpc.org
- **Jason Turner (Audio/Technical Dir.):** Please e-mail both darktrainfilms@gmail.com & gcpc.media@gmail.com. If you need a video or audio played in worship, please send the link to Jason on the Wednesday prior to Sunday's worship.

"Pray for one another" — James 5:15

We encourage you to remember the following in prayer:

All Grieving the Death of a Loved One

Surgeries/Hospitalizations/Illnesses: Cal Sweeten

Cancer Treatment: Harold Farren, Katie Rickley, David Schesser

Aging Challenges: Lee Will

Military Service: David Zak, C.J. Bradley, Seth Lorimer, Mary E. Johnson II, Alanna Funk, Shannon Lorimer, Clara Frye, Eliana Wilson. **All veterans, deployed military, and reservists.**

Our Mission Co-Workers: Jeff and Christi Boyd in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Leslie Vogel, PC (USA) Regional Liaison for Guatemala and Mexico.

Peace and Relief Workers; Unemployed and Underemployed; Families Struggling with Separation and Divorce; Individuals Struggling with Depression; Those Contemplating Suicide and Those Left Behind.

Heartland Presbytery Partnership of Prayer: First Presbyterian Church, Lee's Summit, MO; New Springs Community Presbyterian Church, Lee's Summit, MO

(If you have a prayer request you would like to include in the bulletin, please contact the church office at office@gcpc.org, or send to gcpc.prayers@gmail.com.)

SPOTLIGHT

ADVENT — "ON THE WAY TO BETHLEHEM" — *"Where are you going?"* is the most common question upon hearing that someone is heading out of town. While the destination is perhaps the impetus for deciding to "go," it is often the journey itself that offers the most memorable moments — frustrating or delightful. **This Advent season, we will pay attention not just to the destination of Christmas,** but also to the places where events occurred that led to a starry night on which a child was born who would change the world. And we will ponder our own milestones — the progress and the potholes "on the way." Visit our website to learn more about the upcoming events and services at GCPC during Advent, as we journey **"On the Way to Bethlehem."** Visit gcpc.org/advent to get details and to download our Advent Devotion Booklet, written by members of the church.

GENEROSITY THROUGH THE GENERATIONS PLEDGE UPDATE: As of December 10, 2024, we have received \$705,011, which is 88.4% of our \$797,900 goal! The Generosity Team has been reaching out to members who have not yet pledged, and we have received wonderful responses and positive interactions. Your generosity has resulted in \$125,000 more in our 2025 pledges compared to 2024. This dedication embodies the Scripture, "His faithfulness continues through

all generations.” With your continued support, we can reach our 2025 goal together. If you would like to help us reach our goal, pledge increase cards are available at the back of the sanctuary. We understand this may not be feasible for everyone, and we deeply appreciate any level of contribution you can make. Thank you for your unwavering commitment and faith!

THE LONGEST NIGHT, SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE: Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church warmly invites you to our “**Longest Night**” service on **Sunday, December 22, at 7pm**. We recognize that the holiday season can be particularly challenging for those experiencing grief, loss, illness, or hardship. While many celebrate, some may feel a deeper sense of loneliness. **Join us for a time of music, scripture, silence, and prayers.** This service offers a space to connect with God in comforting ways, honoring loved ones and sharing hope, as we turn toward welcoming the Christ Child. Those we love are never far from us, even though at the holidays it can feel that way. Bring a photo or remembrance item, and experience God’s love and find solace in community.

JOIN US AS WE MARK OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A SPECIAL TEA PARTY on Sunday, January 12, at 2pm, in Heartland Hall. **The Tea Party is open to ALL AGES.** Bring your own tea cup or feel free to enjoy one provided by our committee. When you RSVP, please let us know if you’ll be bringing your own cup or will want to use a cup provided by the committee. The Tea Party Planning Committee will serve finger sandwiches and beverages, and we invite you to contribute by bringing a small plate of bite-sized desserts or treats to share. **RSVP how many are attending, and sign up to bring a treat at gcpc.org/teaparty.** We look forward to celebrating this special milestone together!

DIY MINI GOLF EVENT! Join Us for a 40th Anniversary DIY Mini Golf Night on Saturday, February 8, at 7pm in Heartland Hall. Gather your friends, family, or co-workers and join the fun at GCPC’s DIY Mini Golf event! Design and build your own creative mini golf hole and compete for prizes in design and golf scores. Each team (*up to 5 members*) will create a unique golf hole using a 3’ x 8’ space. Setup must be completed by 7pm. After the course is ready, enjoy a round of mini golf, light snacks, and plenty of laughs. Don’t miss this chance to showcase your creativity and skills! Register now at gcpc.org/golf to reserve your spot! Registration ends on Saturday, February 1.

WORSHIP IS THE CENTRAL, SHARED EXPERIENCE where we praise God and are transformed and renewed to serve. In worship, Grace Covenant has welcomed 21 new members in the last year and a half. If you would like more information or if you are thinking about joining GCPC, come to “This is Grace” class on Sunday, January 12. Please contact Kathy Williams at kathykaskewilliams@gmail.com or call 913-485-1776 if you plan to attend.

2024 PER CAPITA GIVING: The Session of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church has committed to supporting the operations of our General Assembly, Synod of Mid-America, and Heartland Presbytery by contributing **\$43.94 per member, the designated 2024 per capita amount.** We invite each member to prayerfully consider contributing their \$43.94 to help offset this expense in GCPC’s 2024 budget. Your participation helps ensure our continued support for the work of our leaders and officers within The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Donations can be made via check payable to GCPC with “per capita” noted in the memo line, or online at gcpc.org/give (select “Per Capita” as the fund). Thank you for your generosity.

ADULT

ADVENT ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION — DECEMBER 1–DECEMBER 22 — 10:45AM ROOM 3

“On the Way to Bethlehem” – Adult Education Advent Study: Rev. Karen Wright will lead our Advent Adult Education class as we follow the long journey to Christmas through a series of lessons based on “On the Way to Bethlehem” by Rob Fuquay. The journey to Christmas begins in Rome with a decree issued from the seat of worldly power for a census, setting into motion events leading to the birth of the Savior of the world in a town that represents the very opposite of worldly power, Bethlehem. The series will provide insight into the geographical and historical significance of Rome, Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Bethlehem, along with the important characters through whom the Christmas drama unfolds.

CHILDREN

ATW, MUSIC & SUNDAY SCHOOL: All are welcome to join our Sunday school programming today. If you need further information, please check the Children's Bookcase outside the sanctuary for details.

TODAY IS A SMASH SUNDAY! SMASH is for K-5th graders and friends. Our theme this month is Fruit of the Spirit: Patience. If you can help facilitate this session, visit <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0A45A4A722A4FC1-smash1> to sign up. We will MEET AT ABERDEEN Village to carol and spread some Christmas cheer and then travel (as families) back to GCPC for the rest of the SMASH time.

MISSION

DECEMBER DONATION PARTNER AND COMMUNION OFFERING RECIPIENT: This month's offering will support the Argentine Baby Closet at Argentine United Presbyterian Church. This ministry is in its 38th year of providing support to families in Kansas City, KS, and Grace Covenant has been one of its faithful partners for most of this time. The Baby Closet serves 45–50 families each month with diapers, wipes, clothing and other basics for infants and toddlers, including sleepers, blankets, burp cloths, books and other baby equipment (when available). This year the items most needed are:

- diapers — sizes 4 & 5
- shoes/boots — sizes 3-7
- formula — especially Similac (blue lid)
- toddler finger foods (Puffs, yogurt bites, etc.)
- new or gently used warm clothes — sizes 18 months to 2T

UPDATE ON THE GOOD FAITH NETWORK: As we mentioned earlier this year, the Good Faith Network is composed of faith-based organizations and individuals who seek to foster a more just society. For the past several years the Network has focused on the need for a mental health crisis center, the need for affordable housing and the need to respond to homelessness. This past

November the Network members voted to add a fourth area of need related to elder care. If you are interested in learning more about the Good Faith Network please contact one of the following: Dave Pack: djpack.12645@gmail.com, Don Wilson: donjoywilson@gmail.com, Eileen Thomson: esthomson@gmail.com

MISSION

GENEROSITY FULFILLMENT 2024 UPDATE — WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS: We have an early December update on our fulfillment numbers. Our team is humbled by the enduring generosity and commitment of our members — 94.5% of submitted pledges and 88.5% of rollover pledges have been received. Wow! **We are appreciative of everyone who has contributed to Grace Covenant.** Here is our giving progress shown by numbers of pledges:

Submitted Pledges (114)	March 31st	June 17 th	Dec. 7th
0-25% fulfilled	76	37	10
26-50% fulfilled	20	56	0
51-75% fulfilled	1	4	5
76-100% fulfilled	17	17	99
\$603,174	\$214,344	\$293,452	\$570,211

Rollover Pledges (16)	March 31st	June 17 th	Dec. 7th
0-25% fulfilled	10	6	4
26-50% fulfilled	5	8	3
51-75% fulfilled	0	1	0
76-100% fulfilled	1	1	9
\$34,662	\$6,668	\$11,175	\$30,376

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.

Upcoming Events and Services

The Longest Night Service
Sunday, December 22, 7pm

Christmas Eve Worship Services
Tuesday, December 24th
Children & Family Service
5pm Worship
Traditional Service
7:45pm Prelude Music
8:00pm Worship

Church Office Closed - Christmas
Wednesday, December 25
Thursday, December 26

Office Closed - New Year's Day
Wednesday, January 1, 2025

VBS 2025 Registration Begins Online
Wednesday, January 1

Epiphany Star Sunday
Sunday, January 5, 9:30am
Reception for Rebecca Prater, 10:45am

GCPC 40th Anniversary Event
Intergenerational Afternoon Tea Party
Sunday, January 12, 2-4pm
RSVP at gcpc.org/teaparty

Annual Church Meeting
Sunday, January 26, 10:30am

Bingo & Lasagna Night!
Friday, January 31, 5:30-7:30pm

GCPC 40th Anniversary Event
Intergenerational DIY Mini Golf
Saturday, February 8, 7pm
Sign up to play at gcpc.org/golf

Covenant Group Brunch Potluck
Sunday, February 23, 10:30am

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
Tuesday, March 4, 5:30-7:30pm

Lent Begins
Wednesday, March 5

GCPC 40th Anniversary Event
Craft Fair
Saturday, March 29

Trivia Night!
Saturday, April 5

Easter Egg Hunt
Saturday, April 5, 10am

Holy Week
Palm Sunday, April 12, 9:30am
Maundy Thursday, April 17, 7:30pm
Good Friday, April 18, 7:30pm
Easter Sunday, April 20, 9:30am

Vacation Bible School
"Road Trip - On the Go with God!"
June 2 - June 6, 9am-Noon

GCPC 40th Anniversary Celebration
Brunch Following
Sunday, June 22, 9:30am



GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Full details on these events and services are shared in the midweek email announcements, bulletin, newsletter, and on Facebook and Instagram.

For an online church calendar, visit gcpc.org/calendar