



Celebrating 40 Years on June 22, 2025!

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

GRACE NOTES

December 2024
Vol 42, Nbr 12

God gathers us in a welcoming community, with our curiosity and questions, to worship creatively, learn from God's word, share our gifts, and deepen our faith.

With grateful hearts and a spirit of adventure, we go to serve Christ in the world, sharing kindness with everyone, and working for justice rooted in God's love.

11100 College Blvd.
Overland Park, KS 66210
913-345-1256
office@gcpc.org
gcpc.org

In-Person Worship
and Online Worship
every Sunday on
Facebook and Zoom.
Visit gcpc.org for links!

On the Way to Bethlehem: Preparing for Advent Together

Advent is a season of anticipation and preparation, a journey that leads us to Bethlehem. Although our schedules always seem to get fuller and busier, find time to pause and reflect on the gift of God's love coming to us in the form of a child. *On the Way to Bethlehem* by Rob Fuquay invites us to experience the journey this season.



We are reminded that the road to Bethlehem is not just about reaching the manger. It's about transformation along the way. Each step invites us to grow in faith, deepen our trust in God's promises, and discover how Christ's coming reshapes our lives.

Through Fuquay's reflections, we are encouraged to think of Advent as more than a season; it's a spiritual pilgrimage. What expectations or fears might we need to release to fully embrace the gift of Emmanuel, God with us? Who might we meet on this journey, and how can we make room for them in our lives, just as there was room made for Jesus in the stable?

As we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, may we find ourselves drawing closer to God and one another. Let us journey together and prepare our hearts to welcome the Christ Child once again not only to the manger but also into the world around us. May the journey of Advent be a blessing to us all as we anticipate the coming of the Christ Child.

Grace and Peace — Pastor Karen

New Member Class - "This is Grace"

Worship is the central, shared experience where we praise God and are transformed and renewed to serve. In worship, Grace 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 Grace, come to "This is Grace" class on Sunday, January 12, 2025. Please contact Kathy Williams at kathykaskewilliams@gmail.com or call 913-485-1776 if you plan to attend.



Transition Process Update

Thank you to all who participated in the transition conversations during the adult Sunday school hour. There is lots of helpful feedback. In general, the feeling that Grace Covenant needs to continue its focus on Children and Youth, Music, and Mission came through. There was also conversation about looking long and hard at the projects that have been supported and if there is energy and people to continue that support. The idea of pruning programs is always hard and painful, but for the overall health of things can be necessary.

It was also interesting to hear from many that the feeling is Grace Covenant is in a process of revitalization and renewal (*which is part of the Matthew 25 Initiative*). There is a growing energy and it makes me curious to see what is waiting to be birthed anew in the life of the congregation.

Keep praying for Grace Covenant as a community, God is at work, the Holy Spirit is moving, let's follow where they lead.

Blessings,
— Rev. Karen Wright, Interim
Pastor, Grace Covenant
Presbyterian Church

Clerk's Corner

Session had our Stated Meeting on November 18. Karen is working on aggregating the feedback collected at four Sunday morning Transition discussion sessions (25-30 people attended each Session - and not all the same people each week). She noted that there seems to be energy in the Congregation for revitalization but it doesn't have a direction yet. Karen is talking with our part time music staff members to try to discern a productive path forward in our Music Ministry that is proportional to our congregation. Karen's current contract ends in February 2025; Session will be meeting with Presbytery representatives to discuss renewal options and processes.

The initial pledge drive results for 2025 exceeded our 2024 pledges, but still fell short of our proposed 2025 budget. The Generosity Team will be working on contacting folks who have not yet submitted pledges. If you have not made your pledge yet, please turn in a card ASAP, if only to let us know that you cannot commit yet. Karen and Tara Hyder are also working on contacting people whose 2024 pledges are not on track, just as a way to check in.

Our Interim Music Director search team has started its work and names have been suggested from around the community.

Session has called a meeting of the Congregation on December 8 to elect Deacons to start serving in January.

The next 6 weeks in the life of the church will be busy. Advent activities will occur on Sunday mornings as well as other times, we will celebrate Christmas and, on Epiphany, we will celebrate Rebecca Prater's ministry at Grace Covenant. Multiple teams are working together to make that a very special Sunday.

As always, we appreciate your prayers for the staff and officers of our Congregation. We seek to be the body of Christ in this community and discern what God has in store for us.

— Melanie Townsend, Clerk of Session

Budget Update from Pastor Karen

We knew that the asking budget represented a bit of a leap of faith. Grace Covenant has stepped up to the challenge and pledges so far are up by 15% which is amazing! Thank you for the generosity and the faithfulness to the ministries of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church.

We are not quite to our goal of \$797,000 in pledges for 2025. That level enables us to pass a balanced budget and to continue to provide a wide array of ministries for members and within the community. It also enables us to address some of the needs of our aging building in the process.

God has done great things through Grace Covenant for the past 40 years. Invest in the coming years with an additional gift for 2025. There is momentum and energy here, you can feel it in worship and in fellowship activities. Let's keep the energy and momentum going as we seek where God is leading.

Generosity through the Generations

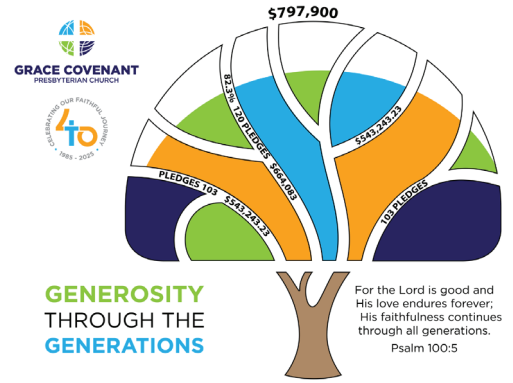
We are excited to share that our **Generosity Through the Generations** tree is filling with vibrant color! Your dedication embodies the Scripture, *“His faithfulness continues through all generations.”* As of November 15, 2024, we have received 120 pledges totaling \$664,083—exceeding our 2024 budget and marking a 15% increase in pledging from last year!

Our Finance team has set a 2025 budget goal of \$797,900, and thanks to your generosity, we are already at 82.3% of this goal. To fully meet the budget, we encourage each giving unit to consider an increase of \$20 more per week. For those who can participate, this would add up to an additional \$1,000+ for the 2025 budget. We understand this may not be feasible for everyone, and we deeply appreciate any level of contribution you can make.

To make additional pledges easier, we will be updating soon our online Onrealm pledge page (gcpc.org/pledge) with more flexible options. Throughout December, our teams will review their budgets for potential adjustments and cost-saving opportunities.

Keep an eye on our **Generosity bulletin board** on your way to Heartland Hall for updates on our progress. All pledges submitted online should have received a pledge confirmation thank-you email sent from notification@onrealmmail.org with the subject line “Pledge Confirmation.” **We’ve heard our members’ call: “No More Deficit Budgets!”** With your continued support, we can reach our 2025 goal together.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment and faith!
—2025 Generosity Team and Session Members



Complete your pledge card and return to Tara Hyder, Finance Administrator, via the church office using envelopes on Generosity bulletin board.

You can also email your pledge information to Tara at finance@gcpc.org.

Scan QR code to enter pledge online via OnRealm.



Generosity Fulfillment 2024 Update - What the Future Holds

In mid-November, the Generosity Team is excited to share our fulfillment numbers. Our team is humbled by the unwavering generosity and commitment of our members. 91.7% of submitted pledges and 85.4% of rollover pledges have been received. Wow!! We convey our thanks for the members who pay all or most of their pledge at the beginning, middle, or quarter of the calendar year, but 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 31	June 17th	November 19th
0-25% fulfilled	76	37	10
26-50% fulfilled	20	56	2
51-75% fulfilled	1	4	5
76-100% fulfilled	17	17	97
\$599,410	\$214,344	\$293,452	\$549,214

Rollover Pledges (16)	March 31	June 17th	November 19th
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	\$29,585

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.

Our Finance Team has been adjusting for unanticipated 2024 expenses including the elevator repair and roof repair. Along with the Personnel team, they have been able to defer hiring the Director of Christian Education (DCE) and avoid interim pastor relocation expenses. Other teams have been reviewing and utilizing specific reserved team accounts that were sitting on the books. We were fortunate to have a 2023 budget carryover to also supplement our expenses. **Again, our member’s reliability in giving,** allows our Finance Team and Session to respond to these challenges much more reasonably. Thank you again!



"A Christmas Exclamation!"

Sunday, December 8th at 6pm

View in-person or via Zoom

Come see and hear our ensembles sing and ring Christmas favorites, then join in with the congregation to sing Christmas carols and songs.

GCPC's Ensembles

Joy! Singers (4s-1st graders)

Celebration! Chimes (2nd-5th/6th graders)

Celebration! Choir

Jubilation! Ringers (Youth & Adults)

Charter Ringers (Adults)

Special Guest Ensembles from EncoreKC!

Act II – Choir

Woodwind Ensemble

Woodwind & Brass Ensembles

Kent Ensign, soloist

Ukelele Ensemble

There will be some fun videos and treats for the kids and this fun holiday program is a "don't miss event!"

AS A PART OF THE ADVENT SEASON THE MUSIC MINISTRY WILL PRESENT

December 1st, 1st Sunday of Advent ~ HOPE

Songs will be shared in 9:30am worship by

Praise Team

Carrie DeVries, director

"Make Room" by Mark Hall & Matt Maher

"O Come, Divine Messiah" Traditional Advent Hymn
by Robbie Seay Band

"Magnificat" by Keith & Kristyn Getty

"Emmanuel" by Steve Angrisano

December 8th, 2nd Sunday of Advent ~ PEACE

Songs will be shared in worship by

GCPC Wind Ensemble

Pam Smith Kelly, director

"All the Angels Sing" by Rob Romeyn

"Olde English Carol" (What Child Is This?)

arr. Robert W. Smith

Finale from "Rhapsody on Christmas Carols"
by Claude T. Smith, arr. Joseph Benjamin Earp

December 15th, 3rd Sunday of Advent ~ LOVE

Songs will be shared in worship by

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers & Instrumentalists

Rebecca J. Prater, director

"Awake, Arise and Hail the Morn," arr. Mack Wilberg

Chancel Brass, Percussion, Linda Dover, organ

"The Angel Gabriel" arr. John Leavitt

Linda Dover, piano

"Awake My Love, Arise and Sing!" by Debra Scroggins

Bob Dover, clarinet, Linda Dover, organ

Jill Endaya-Allen and Keith Langabee, percussion

"Sure On This Shining Night" by Morten Lauridsen

Linda Dover, piano

"A King Is Born" arr. Tim Sarsany

Jill Endaya-Allen and Keith Langabee, percussion

David Sutherland, tenor soloist, Linda Dover, piano

December 22nd, 4th Sunday of Advent ~ JOY

Songs will be shared in worship by

Praise Team

Carrie DeVries, director

"Wexford Carol" An Irish Folk Song

"Breath of Heaven" by Amy Grant

Donna Goeckler, soloist

"Joseph's Lullaby" by Millard & Bannister

"Rose of Bethlehem" by Selah



The Longest Night (Service of Remembrance)

Sunday, December 22, 7pm

Led by Rev. Karen Wright, Members of Praise Team, and Cal Sweeten, dulcimer

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. Feel free to bring a photo or remembrance item, and experience God's love and find solace in community.

Christmas Eve Services

Join us for candlelight and carols as we celebrate Jesus' birth.

5:00pm Worship

This family friendly service will feature our children and youth as they take us to the manger with Joseph and Mary and their newborn son. The youngest worshippers will join in lighting their own glow stick candle with the congregation to sing "Silent Night." Music will be shared by Joy! Singers and Celebration! Choir.

7:45pm Prelude Music

Music by Linda Dover, organ and additional musicians.

8:00pm Worship

This beautiful, traditional service of lessons and carols will celebrate the tenderness and joy of Jesus' birth. The telling of the story will culminate with the lighting of candles as we sing "Silent Night" led by Christopher Callender, guitar. Choral music will be provided by Chancel and Exaltation! Singers and instrumentalists.

Sunday School Notice

There are no Sunday School classes on December 29. Classes resume on January 5, 2025.

December Office Hours

The church offices will be closed Wednesday and Thursday, December 25–26 and January 1, 2025.

Please call ahead if you plan to come to the church to make sure the building is open. Thank you!

December 29th, 9:30am Worship

1st Sunday after Christmas Day

Music will be Organ led with Chancel & Exaltation! Singers sharing the anthem, "Sing We Noel" by Noël Goemanne

January 5, 2025, 9:30am Worship

Epiphany/Star Sunday

Music will be Organ led with Chancel & Exaltation! Singers sharing the following anthems,
 "What Star Is This?" arr. Craig Curry
 "Pilgrims' Hymn" by Stephen Paulus
 "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" by Peter C. Lukin

Welcome to Our New Members!

We are excited to extend a warm welcome to the new members of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church! We welcome Patrick Payne, Jane Allen, Keith Langabee, and Aaron, Sarah, Eloise, Margo, Coen, and Sullivan Armbrecht. It's a joy to have you join our community, and we look forward to growing in faith together.

At Grace Covenant, these new members will find a supportive family ready to embrace them. From worship to fellowship events, Christian education, and small groups, GCPC offers a chance to connect with others and deepen your faith journey.



Jane Allen: Originally from Chicago, Jane has lived in Overland Park for about 25 years. After trying a couple of times, she finally retired in 2023. New pursuits include crocheting, quilting, and sewing, and she is reading a lot more these days. She joined GCPC in October after having visited the church at the invitation of Bob and Linda Dover, her first friends on arrival in Overland Park. *"I enjoy the music, welcoming spirit, and an abundance of opportunity to give to others as I have been blessed in my life."*

Recently, her little 4-year-old miniature poodle, Toby, became a Certified Therapy Dog with ATD, and they look forward to enriching lives as they visit nursing homes, schools, and hospitals as we find opportunities to serve. At 6 1/2 pounds, Toby has the heart of a giant and has learned the joy of loving others.



Meet the Armbrecht family! Aaron, Sarah, Eloise (10), Margo (6), Coen, and Sullivan (15m) are thrilled to be new members at GCPC. The family had been searching for a new church home for quite some time and wandered through what felt like the church-searching version of Goldilocks. This all changed one early spring morning. After being invited to attend a GCPC service by Amy Sellers, the family felt quickly and warmly welcomed by its members, discovered the congregation held the same core values as their family, and appreciated the quantity and variety of programming. The search was over, and the family knew Grace Covenant felt "just right."

In their free time, the Armbrecht family has a variety of interests. Aaron, a substation manager at Kiewit Engineering, is an avid pickleballer and golfer. Sarah works part-time at JCCC as an event coordinator. She enjoys reading and planning family parties and adventures. Eloise is in 4th grade and loves dancing, singing, and theatre. Margo is in 1st grade and has a fantastic imagination. You can often find her creating elaborate stories with her "stuffies." Coen and Sullivan celebrated their first birthday in August and are beloved by all. Now that they are on the move, it's all hands on deck, and the family greatly appreciates all those who have participated in their entertainment during church services.



Keith Langabee: Keith is originally from Gladstone, MO, but has lived in Overland Park for the past 17+ years to be close to where he works as a substation engineering designer with Black & Veatch. When not at work, or at home with his cat, Rascal, you'll find him most evenings/weekends, travelling around and splitting time between one of many hobbies he has all over the metro! As an active Scout leader for 22+ years in Troop 1288 of Kansas City, he helps teach outdoor skills, takes kids camping monthly, and helps with service projects or lead fun activities to make scouting fun for those participating. As a percussionist/drummer, he presently plays in four different community bands/orchestras across the metro, plus occasional side gigs with theater groups and the Truman High School choirs in Independence. He also serves as a historian for the Scouts/the music groups he plays in —

taking photos for the ensembles, or at scouting events throughout the years as kids grow up in the program, and helps maintain several social media pages/websites for the music groups/scouts as well. And, as a Kansas City Royals Superfan — collector of sorts (bobbleheads, autographs; things special to him), you'll find him out at the "K" a lot, hanging out with friends until the end of each win or loss, and sometimes making fun and supportive signs to cheer the team on. He's also a Chiefs fan and used to perform with the Chief's Rumble Drumline for seven seasons leading into the pandemic year. (He has a Super Bowl ring from his last year with the group in 2019!) Keith also likes puzzles, escape rooms, and testing his creativity in things, as some of you might have seen during Trunk or Treat this year.

(Keith Langabee cont.) Keith came to GCPC by way of his first involvement with the GCPC Orchestra nearly two years ago. Following college in 2007, he originally joined the church his Scout troop was sponsored by up north, because of the church's strong support for scouting at the time, and because of other interests the church had. Last year, after 66 years, that church decided to stop sponsoring the scouts, citing several reasons, and they in turn, had to find a new place to call home, which they did. That moment, combined with a number of activities he used to partake in and enjoy disappearing over time, he decided to look for a new church to call home, and since coming here starting in February, a fading spirit of his has been renewed! He's a part of not only the orchestra, but also now rings handbells in Charter, sings tenor in CHEX, is helping out on the Generosity Team, and is helping with youth activities such as VBS this past summer, and presently, Sunday school as a shepherd.



Patrick Payne: Born and raised in DeSoto, TX, Patrick Payne attended Texas A&M and Tartleton State University and received his associate degree in agriculture business. He has been in the Kansas City area for 35 years where he raised two children, Taylor (31) and Alisa (23). He started his career with Braniff Airlines and now works for BNSF Railroad. He was also Captain of the Platte City Fire Department for a number of years.

Patrick supports many philanthropic causes including Kansas 4-H, Kansas State University, sits on the committee for the Olathe Health Yuletide Gala, and is a proud supporter of the American Royal, where he is on the Rodeo Committee. He is an avid golfer, BBQ guru, hunter, and always has a home project in the works. Patrick is engaged to Liz Anne McElhaney who has been a GCPC member since 2013.

Page Turners Annual Christmas Soup Supper/Book Exchange

This anticipated holiday event will be held on **Thursday, December 5, at 6:30pm** at Cheryl Johnson's home, 12840 Century St., Overland Park. Bring an appetizer, bread, or dessert to share. Soup will be provided. For the gift exchange, please bring a book and bookmark in a gift bag.

We will have a short discussion of *The Murder of Mr. Wickham* by Claudia Gray. This is a light-hearted murder mystery featuring characters from many Jane Austen novels. In case you want to discover some insight into Mr. Wickham's character, read *Pride and Prejudice* (recognized as one of the best books of the last millennium). Or, you can watch one of the movies — two excellent choices — the 1995 A&E version with Colin Firth or the 2005 version.

Please RSVP to Cheryl at agathatoo@gmail.com or on the GCPC Page Turners Facebook page. Everyone is welcome — even if you haven't read the book!

Join Us for a 40th Anniversary Celebration Tea Party!

We would like to invite everyone to join us as we mark our 40th anniversary with a delightful tea party!

Sunday, January 12th at 2:00pm, in Heartland Hall, Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church.

Bring a touch of personal charm by bringing your own tea cup from home or feel free to use one provided by our committee. When you RSVP, please let us know if you'll be bringing your own tea cup.



The tea party planning committee will provide finger sandwiches and beverages. We also invite you to contribute by bringing a small plate of bite-sized desserts or treats to share.

RSVP and Sign-up to bring a treat here: <https://bit.ly/gcpcTeaParty>

Thank you to my GCPC family.

I returned safely from the Ukraine last Sunday. The trip was a blessing to all the Ukrainians that we treated and to those that we served with and to me. I will lead a Sunday school class in the near future, and you will have a chance to learn more about what we did and what we will do. —Rick Randolph

Children's Team



The GCPC Children's Team would like to wish our GCPC families a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We can't wait to see you this season!



Road Trip - On the Go with God VBS, June 2nd-6th, 2025



Come journey with us at Vacation Bible School next summer! In January, our ROAD TRIP VBS registration will be open. ROAD TRIP is for potty-trained 4-year olds, through completed 5th graders. We'd love our completed 6th grade and older friends to volunteer to be junior leaders! And we'll need LOTS of adult volunteer helpers! Volunteer sign ups will be coming out soon, too!

Sunday Schedule for Children

9am-11:45am	Nursery Care Available, Room 22
9:30am	Worship in Sanctuary
9:45am	4 year olds - 1st graders travel together to Awaken To Worship (ATW) , from worship after the children's sermon. Children are picked up by parents after worship in room 12, all other children remain in worship with their families.
(approx)	
10:30-10:45am	Fellowship for ALL AGES (coffee and snacks) in Heartland Hall
10:45-11:05am	Music, JOY! Singers, K-1st graders, in Room 25
	Music, Celebration! Choir, 1st-5th graders, in Room 15
	Toddler/Preschool Sunday school for 2-4 year olds, in room Room 23
11-11:45am	*Sunday School, ALL ages – check board for pick-up location, when you drop off for music time. (*occasionally the entire 10:45-11:45am time slot is reserved for music-ALL MUSIC Sunday)
4-6pm	SMASH (ONCE a month Fellowship) K-5th graders and their friends

December Children's Activities

Dec 1	ATW, Music & Sunday School
Dec 8	ATW, ALL MUSIC Sunday, and 6pm "A Christmas Exclamation" (see music notes for further details)
Dec 15	ATW, Music, Sunday School, and 4-6pm SMASH
Dec 22	ATW, Music & Sunday School
Dec 25	5pm Family Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship service
Dec 29	Worship only, all other children's activities will resume Jan. 5, 2025 (nursery available)

In November, our SMASH participants continued their study of the Fruits of the Spirit, this time we studied Peace. We talked about finding peace in hectic times. A good reminder for all ages during this busy season!

Join us on December 15th from 4pm - 6pm for our next SMASH event. We will meet at Aberdeen Village, (17520 W 119th St, Olathe, KS 66061) at 4pm for a round of Christmas caroling with residents at Aberdeen Village. We ask parents to drive their children to/from Aberdeen Village. We will return to GCPC after caroling for the rest of our SMASH time and continue our studies of the Fruits of the Spirit. This month is Patience. The season of waiting is an opportune time to talk about patience!

RSVP via our GCPC Children's group December SMASH Facebook event.



Advent/Christmas Series
ON THE WAY TO
BETHLEHEM



**“On the Way to Bethlehem”
Adult Education Advent Study**

December 1 – December 22; 10:45am in Room 3



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.

(More Advent Fair photos on our Facebook page.)



Kairos Wishes You a Sustainable Merry Christmas

During this season of celebration, let us remember to tread lightly on this Earth by celebrating in a sustainable way. Here are some ideas from **One Tree Planted** ([Read entire article here.](#))

1. Get creative with sustainable gift wrappings such as old comics, magazines, newspapers, or reuse paper shopping bags. Consider fabric wraps such as bandanas, scarves or even dish towels.
2. **Switch to LED holiday lights** saving you around \$50 over the season since they use 90% less energy. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, if everyone replaced their conventional string lights with LED it would save 2 billion kWh electricity each month.
3. **Give Sustainable Gifts**, choose a gift from a One Tree Planted partner that is crafted by small businesses and for each purchase there will be a tree planted. This includes stylish, high-quality clothing and unique, well-made toys. ([Find gift guide here.](#)) Make simple gifts. Agree to swap gifts from prior years, or give experiences that leave only memories.
4. **Send a Card that Plants a Tree.** Buy eco-friendly gift cards made from recycled or recycled paper. Choose to send a card from a One Tree Planted partner that plants a tree for every card ordered ([Order here](#)), or just send an electronic card using zero resources and with zero waste.
5. **Donate to Charity.** There reaches a time when most of us feel like we have enough stuff already. Donating to a favorite charity is always a great option. Or you can choose to have a tree planted in their name [by going here.](#)

Check out all 15 by reading the [entire article here.](#) Merry Christmas!

Thank You Church Family

GCPC Family, Thank you very much for the prayers, concern, and support during the recent loss of Nathan's aunt, Phebie Hall. Again, we feel so blessed to be a part of the GCPC family of faith.

—Sylvia and Nathan Littlejohn

December Communion Offering

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

This Advent Season, Consider the Christmas Joy Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage.

In 2022, 272 retired church workers and their surviving spouses were assisted with fund from the Christmas Joy Offering; and 621 emergency assistance grants were made to current and retired PCUSA workers.

As you consider your charitable giving during Advent, please consider a gift to the Christmas Joy Offering. **If you like, you can make donations directly to PCUSA using this link:** <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/make-a-gift/gift-info/christmas-joy/>

GCPC at Composting – A Sustainable Solution to Food Waste

Over 365 million pounds of food is wasted daily in the United States resulting in 40% of food production going to waste. If “wasting food” was its own county, it would be the 3rd largest emitter of greenhouse gases after China (#1) and the United States (#2) due to the energy used to produce unused food and the carbon dioxide and methane emitted from landfills as it decays. Fruits, vegetables, and bread are the three most common food wasted.

What Can You Do

1. **Reduce/Reuse.** Plan your shopping around meals, plan one “Use It Up” meal a week, reuse leftovers, freeze excess food for later use and avoid buying bulk items that go bad quickly. Eat at home more and cook using the food you buy in your refrigerator. Cut-up and portion out your food for your meals to take to lunch and to have easily available throughout the week.
2. **Compost.** If you haven’t already, start to compost your waste food. The city of Olathe has a free composting service ([link](#)) or sign up to be part of composting at GCPC collected by **KC Can**. Mikki Walker reports below on the success GCPC has had so far this year. Great Job Mikki!
3. **Volunteer for food recovery.** There are many non-profit organizations that are providing food and meals to those with food insecurity by accepting excess food.
 - [Renewed Hope Pantry](#) receives food from grocery stores such as Hy-Vee, Sprouts, McKeevers, etc., accepting bread, produce, meats, and other items with a limited shelf life. Many GCPC members are involved in volunteering at this pantry.
 - [Pete’s Garden](#) accepts food from caterers, schools, vendors such as the KC Chiefs, Pembroke High School, the New Theater and then repackages it for families to pick up for healthy meals from day care centers, schools, and local charities. You can volunteer to assist [at their SignUp Genius](#).

GCPC KC Can Composting Report as of November 2024

We currently have seven member households participating. Those seven households, plus the compostable waste we generate at church, has resulted in 975 lbs of food waste diverted from the landfill which has a CO2 equivalent of 6.4 seedling planted or not driving 967 miles or 43 gallons of gas. (See graphic.)

There’s no limit on how many households can participate - more participants would be welcome. For new participants, there’s a small sign-up fee to buy a bucket (between \$15-\$35 depending on what options you want), and the cost thereafter is \$13/month. Participating households get the code to unlock our orange bin in the parking lot and can dump their household compostable waste into it anytime, 24/7. Participants also get some educational materials on what is compostable and what isn’t.

To learn more about **KC Can** go to kccancompost.com.

You can contact Mikki Walker at michala.walker@gmail.com to participate, for more information or any questions you might have.

Your Environmental Impact

Statistics based on CO₂E (Carbon Equivalency). This number allows us to translate abstract measurements into concrete terms we can understand, such as the emissions from cars, households, or power plants. To learn more visit the EPA’s [Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator](#).



975 lbs diverted!

This is the total weight we have collected from you so far.



6.4 seedlings planted!

Composting has a huge impact on the environment. From a greenhouse gas equivalency standpoint your composting efforts are equivalent to 6.4 urban trees seedlings grown for 10 years.



967 miles offset!

Your composting efforts are equivalent to not driving 967 miles. Whoa.



43 gallons of gas!

The number of gallons of gasoline offset by diverting food scraps from the landfill

Things to Know About GCPC

Did you know that each week a dedicated GCPC member volunteers to tidy and organize the sanctuary? This important task involves checking the pews to ensure envelopes, pencils, and other items are in place, while collecting any left-behind bulletins or trash for recycling or disposal.

You can help keep our sanctuary welcoming! Before leaving after the service, take a moment to check your space. Turn pencils point-up so our volunteer can quickly see if replacements are needed, place your bulletin in a recycling bin, and dispose of any trash in the appropriate bin. Your assistance makes a difference!

Join Us for a 40th Anniversary DIY Mini Golf Night!



When: Saturday, February 8th, 7 PM
Where: GCPC, Heartland Hall
Registration Deadline: Friday, February 1st
Register Here: gcpc.org/golf

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 to reserve your spot!

BINGO & Lasagna Dinner!

Save the date for BINGO on Friday, January 31, 5:30–7:30pm.

The 40th Anniversary Committee and the Care and Connection team are coming together to host a lasagna dinner with our annual Bingo Night. Watch for the upcoming details in January.



CHURCH STAFF

- Interim Pastor, Rev. Karen Wright**
karen.wright@gcpc.org ext. 10
- Director of Music Ministries.....Rebecca Prater**
Mon.-Wed., Fri.; rebecca.prater@gcpc.org ext. 13
- Church Administrator.....Patrick Bell**
Mon.-Fri.; patrick.bell@gcpc.org ext. 10
- Director of Christian Education**
Emily Nelson-Dixonext.10
emily.dixon@gcpc.org
- Youth Coordinator** Lindsay Callender
lindsaymichelle0130@gmail.com
- Finance Administrator**.....Tara Hyder
finance@gcpc.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 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 | Melanie Townsend |
| Lara Schesser | Session Clerk |
| Jake Schmidt | Michala Walker |
| Andrew Sellers | Mary Ann Weyforth |
| Kristy Shaw | |

SUPPORT STAFF

- Deacon ModeratorJean Hampton
- Operating Committee..... Lara Schesser, Tom Stroud, Barbara Douglas, Mikki Walker, Melanie Townsend, Rev. Karen Wright
- Newsletter Editor/Marketing..... Kim Krueger
- Prayer ChainCheryl Johnson
- Website AdministratorsKim Krueger, Patrick Bell, Christy Soule

Follow us on Social Media!

Facebook: facebook.com/GraceCovenantPresbyterian

Instagram: @gcpc_overlandpark

MINISTRY UNITS

- Congregational Nurture Unit Moderators
- Care and Connections....Mary Ann Weyforth
- Worship and Music..... Kathy Bures, Barbara Douglas
- Education Ministry Unit Moderators
- Adult Joel Ilten
- Children Angela Krug
- Youth..... Lara Schesser
- Reach Out Ministry Unit Moderators
- Kairos Rick Randolph
- MissionMikki Walker
- Welcoming Kathy Williams
- Supportive Ministry Unit Moderators
- Facility Liz Chandler
- GenerosityJane Knoche
- Finance..... Beth Lillian
- Personnel Kevin Mason

Worship Schedule

9:30am Worship

In-Person, Facebook & Zoom
 Visit gcpc.org/online for links

Upcoming Newsletter Article Deadlines

January 2025 issue - Deadline, December 17
 February 2025 issue - Deadline, January 21