



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

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

# GRACE NOTES

February 2025  
Vol 43, Nbr 2

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.

11100 College Blvd.  
Overland Park, KS 66210  
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[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.

## From Empty Bowls to Overflowing Blessings

February is here, which means two things: the *Souper Bowl of Caring* and, of course, the age-old debate—Chicken Noodle Soup vs. Tomato Soup. *(If you missed the rap battle, let's just say it was a epic!)*

While we may have fun debating our favorite soups, or gathering more canned goods than the Seventh Day Adventists, the real battle is hunger—and that's a fight we can all get behind. The *Souper Bowl of Caring* is an opportunity for us to share God's abundance with those in need. Just as Jesus turned empty nets into overflowing blessings (Luke 5:1-11), we can take what we have and trust that God will use it to make a difference.

All the canned goods we collect this month will go to the ReNewed Hope Food Pantry. We hope to have a little fun and a bit of a good-natured competition as we work together to provide for those in need. We know that food insecurity affects many people from many walks of life. So, whether you're Team Chicken Noodle or Team Tomato, let's all be Team Grace Covenant—serving, giving, and loving in Jesus' name.

Pastor Karen

*PS – and lets see just how many cans we can get! We want to win!!!!*

## New Livestream Resources!

We are excited to announce a change to our livestream worship services. Beginning immediately, our Sunday worship service at 9:30am will be available to view on our website and YouTube channel, in addition to our existing Facebook livestream. Considering these new options, **we will be discontinuing the livestream on Zoom.** We believe these new platforms will provide a better experience for those who cannot join us in person, and we encourage all who are unable to attend worship to join us online, wherever you may be. Please share this news with friends and family who may also benefit from this change. We look forward to continuing to worship together as a community of faith, both near and far.

**Watch worship live via these platforms:**

**YouTube Channel:** [www.youtube.com/@gracecovenant443](http://www.youtube.com/@gracecovenant443)

**Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/GraceCovenantPresbyterian>

**Website:** <https://gcpc.org/livestream>



## Transition Update

The Session and I agreed to another one-year interim contract. We are working to finish some things and to schedule a time for the Session to meet with COM about options to change my pastoral designation and enable me, if all parties are willing and this seems like a good fit, to remain as pastor for a longer time frame.

We continue to work on what the identity of Grace Covenant will be moving forward. I was struck by a line in Dr. King's sermon "Transformed Non-Conformist" which you can find in the worship bulletin from Jan 19th. He said "... [the church has conformed to] the status quo of the world. Ever since that time the church has been like a weak and ineffectual trumpet making uncertain sounds, rather than a strong trumpet sounding a clarion call for truth and righteousness."

It makes me wonder, who would it look like for GCPC to live into being a strong trumpet? What is it we are called to do to bring about righteousness and truth in the world?

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

## Clerk's Corner

The January session meeting was held early in the month due to Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and many teams had not met since Christmas.

We approved a renewal of Karen's Transitional Pastor contract for another year (Feb. 2025-Feb. 2026). The transition team will be sending a written survey out to the congregation soon. The information from that survey along with the information gathered on Sunday mornings in November will be used as a starting point for identifying our next pastor. We have heard that many in the congregation would be interested in having Karen stay in a more permanent role. One option we are discussing with the Commission on Ministry is hiring Karen as a Designated Pastor. A Designated Pastor is kind of a sweet spot between a Transitional Pastor and a Called and Installed Pastor. A Designated Pastor is hired by contract, not call, but it is a contract with the congregation for a defined term (typically 1, 3, or 5 years), which can be renewed. (As a Transition Pastor, Karen has a contract with the Session, not the Congregation, for a one-year term).

Because we did not have 2024 year-end financials yet, we opted NOT to approve a 2025 budget. We are very close to having a balanced budget and plan to approve one in February.

Karen is initiating discussions with different members involved in our music ministry about the future of that ministry and what it might look like. Music at Grace Covenant has always been exemplary, but this is not the same world, community, or congregation that we lived in 5 or 10 years ago and we want to move our music ministry forward with the congregation that we are and are becoming.

The 2024 Clerk's report was approved. We started 2024 with 365 members and ended the year with 366. We gained seven new members and lost six; of those six losses, five were deaths. We are excited about another class of new members joining us in the next month or so. Officers of the Corporation for 2025 were elected and plans for the Annual Meeting were solidified. ([Download 2024 Annual Report here.](#))

—Melanie Townsend, Clerk of Session



## Vacation Bible School “Road Trip - On the Go with God” June 2-6, 9am-Noon

***Sign up at [gcpc.org/vbs](http://gcpc.org/vbs)***

Pack your bags for an unforgettable adventure! Join us June 2-5, 9am-Noon, for “Road Trip - On the Go with God,” where kids (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.

Through captivating stories from the Navigator’s Guide (the Bible), Travelers will explore timeless tales of faith from the Old and New Testaments. With interactive games, engaging activities, and meaningful lessons, kids will deepen their understanding of God’s love while forming bonds with their peers and community.

***Get ready for the ride of a lifetime!***

Don’t miss this opportunity to grow in faith, friendship, and fun. Sign up today and join the adventure!

### **Volunteers Needed!**

Sign up to volunteer at [gcpc.org/vbs](http://gcpc.org/vbs). Volunteers needed in a wide variety of areas during the week and VBS and before with planning and creating. Experience the joy of helping children learn about God in a meaningful way during this special week.!

## **IHN Volunteer Appreciation Lunch – February 16th at Noon**

On February 16th, join us for a special Volunteer Appreciation Lunch hosted by Jane Knoche and Christine Caseres to celebrate Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church’s incredible 20-year commitment to the **Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN)**. The event will begin around noon, right after Sunday School, with a light lunch featuring sandwiches, fruit, and cookies.

**We are extending the invitation not only to GCPC volunteers but also to our supporting congregation volunteers.** If you are still in contact with anyone who has been involved with IHN over the years, please feel free to pass this invitation along to them or share their updated contact information with Jane or Christine so we can personally invite them.

For two decades, Grace Covenant has been a proud host church for IHN, welcoming hundreds of guests (*a total of 927 individuals*) into our church home, offering meals, and building relationships with families and individuals in need. IHN’s church-based model is designed not just to provide shelter and meals, but to walk alongside families on their journey back to stable housing. Through these experiences, we’ve come to know our guests as neighbors, and their stories remind us that homelessness can happen to anyone.

We are deeply grateful to all of our volunteers and to GCPC for its ongoing dedication—from the very start of the program to being among the last churches still involved with IHN’s original church-based model. While the program will continue through 2025 with the motel model, your prayers and financial support are more important than ever.

For more information, please reach out to Jane ([jeknoche@att.net](mailto:jeknoche@att.net)) or Christine ([rcaseres032@gmail.com](mailto:rcaseres032@gmail.com)). We also want to express our **gratitude to the Mission Team for their generous support**, which is covering the costs of this event. We look forward to celebrating with you!



# MUSIC NOTES

## Pre-Interim Director of Music Ministries

Friends, it is my pleasure to take the reins as the pre-Interim Director of Music Ministries at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church! I realized only recently that we are nearing the 5-year anniversary of becoming the Praise Team Leader. Time moves quickly when you feel loved and are truly enjoying every note of song in worship as well as in rehearsal. Each new person I meet brings warmth and welcome, and I look forward to many more years together!

If you were otherwise unaware, I wanted to introduce my background a bit more to you all. I have been a church musician since I was a child, which started my journey to becoming a singer, pianist, and choral director. I graduated with my Bachelor of Music Education - Choral from UMKC in 1999 and earned my Master of Performance - Choral Conducting from Hardin-Simmons University (Abilene, TX) in 2004. I have taught secondary choirs in Missouri, Alabama, and Texas and have been teaching elementary general music in the Olathe School District since 2007. Along the way, I have served as pianist, singer, and Music Director in Episcopal, Disciples of Christ, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches which offered a broad scope of worship practices. To bring people to accept, honor, and love the sound of their own voice whether speaking or singing alone or with others has been my clear path. People are meant to make music — it's about connection, not perfection, and can bridge our gap of understanding between the human and the Divine.

There is ALWAYS a place for YOU in the music making ensembles of the church. Consider joining us for rehearsal as we move forward together! Music is a moving art — it waits for no one! Get on board!

Carrie DeVries  
Pre-Interim Director of Music Ministries



## Music in Worship

February 2nd

4th Sunday after Epiphany

Communion Sunday

Praise Team led worship

Anthem "I'm Listening," by Chris McClarney

February 9th

5th Sunday after Epiphany

Organ led worship. Chancel & Exaltation! Singers anthem, "Lord, Here Am I," by John Ness Beck

February 16th

6th Sunday after Epiphany

Organ led worship. Chancel & Exaltation! Singers anthem, "Christians, We Have Met to Worship," arr. Lloyd Larson

February 23rd

7th Sunday after Epiphany

Praise Team led worship





## The Tradition of Trivia Continues...

Get ready for our annual Trivia Night on **Saturday, April 5, from 5:30 to 7:00pm!** 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!

So, 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!

## Flower Dedications

We are no longer maintaining a flower calendar, but if you would like to honor a special celebration or memory, please contact Chelly King. Many members have chosen to use Linda McMaster's beautiful floral arrangements in place of real flower deliveries.

Donations in honor of your dedication will go to the designated mission partner for the month unless you specify otherwise. If you prefer to support a different charity, please send your donation directly to them.

To ensure your dedication is included in our printed materials, please provide at least two weeks' notice. For more information or to arrange a dedication, contact Chelly King at [chelly41RN@gmail.com](mailto:chelly41RN@gmail.com) or 913-634-4450.



## Do You Enjoy Dining Out and Connecting with Friends?

**Join the Grace Covenant Lunch Bunch (GCLB)!**

We meet monthly at local restaurants to enjoy great food and even better company. An email invitation will arrive about a week before each gathering, and we kindly ask for an RSVP so we can save you a seat. Our usual lunch date is the **third Wednesday of the month**.

Interested? Contact Ginny Wirtz at 913-851-8797 or [gwirtz@everestkc.net](mailto:gwirtz@everestkc.net) to learn more and get added to the list. We'd love to have you join us!







## Introducing KAIROS KLUES! *Walking Together in Peace, Justice, and Earth Care*

We're excited to announce a new column in the GPC monthly newsletter: **KAIROS KLUES!** As an Earth Care and Matthew 25 congregation, we aim to share three practical ideas, tips, or actions each month to inspire small but meaningful changes in your daily life. These suggestions are designed to help you live more deeply into our shared call for Peace, Justice, and Care for God's Creation.

### Have questions or need advice?

Whether it's "Where can I \_\_\_\_?" or "How do I \_\_\_\_?", feel free to reach out to us at [gcpckairos@gmail.com](mailto:gcpckairos@gmail.com).

## This Month's KAIROS KLUES!

Small suggestions to help you walk into Peace, Justice and Earth Care.

- 1. Discover Opportunities**  
Stop by the KAIROS bulletin board outside Heartland Hall to explore ways to engage with Peace, Justice, and Earth Care initiatives.
- 2. Recycle Your Shoes**  
Love creation by keeping shoes out of the landfill! Drop single shoes, worn shoes, or new shoes into the *Soles4Souls (S4S) collection box* in the daytime entrance. GPC has donated over 10,000 pairs of shoes since 2010, benefiting [S4S](#), [Cherith Brooks](#), and [Single Mom KC](#).
- 3. Learn About Environmental Justice**  
Mark your calendar for a [free webinar](#) on **February 19 at NOON**. This event, sponsored by [More2](#) and [Re.U.s.Ful](#), will explore practical ways to put Environmental Justice into action.

Join us on this journey as we make small but significant steps toward a better world. Check out **KAIROS KLUES!** in each month's newsletter for fresh ideas and inspiration!

**GRACE COVENANT**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**INTERGENERATIONAL FRIENDS & FAMILY**

## JOIN US FOR DIY MINI GOLF

**Saturday, February 8, 7pm**  
Heartland Hall

Teams of *up to 5 members* design and build their own creative mini golf 3' x 8' hole and compete for prizes in design and golf scores.

Set-up must be completed by 7pm.  
Enjoy a round of mini golf, light snacks, and plenty of laughs.

**SIGN UP BY FEBRUARY 1**  
[gpcpc.org/golf](http://gpcpc.org/golf)

# CRAFT FAIR

**Saturday, March 29**  
**9-2pm**

**Unique, handmade crafts and goods from local artisans**

**Gift basket raffle**

**Baked goods and refreshments**

*No direct sales products*

Enjoy shopping, fellowship, and fun!

11100 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS 66210 | [gpcpc.org/craftfair](http://gpcpc.org/craftfair)  
Booth proceeds support 40th Anniversary Fund



# UPCOMING EVENTS AND SERVICES

## **GCPC 40th Anniversary Event Intergenerational DIY Mini Golf**

Saturday, February 8, 7pm  
Heartland Hall



## **Covenant Group Brunch Potluck**

Sunday, February 23, 10:30am

## **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**

Tuesday, March 4, 5:30-7:30pm  
Heartland Hall

## **Lent Begins**

Wednesday, March 5



## **GCPC 40th Anniversary Event 40th Anniversary Craft Fair**

Saturday, March 29, 9am-2pm  
Heartland Hall and Concourse

## **Trivia Night!**

Saturday, April 5, 5:30-7pm  
Heartland Hall



## **Easter Egg Hunt**

April 12, 10-11am  
Heartland Hall and Outdoors



## **Holy Week**

Palm Sunday, April 13, 9:30am  
Maundy Thursday, April 17, 7:30pm  
Good Friday, April 18, 7:30pm  
Easter Sunday, April 20, 9am & 11am

## **Vacation Bible School**

### **"Road Trip - On the Go with God!"**

June 2 - June 6, 9am-Noon  
Children Ages 4 yrs - 5th Grade  
Volunteers needed - sign up  
at link below

Register online at [gcpc.org/vbs](http://gcpc.org/vbs)

## **GCPC 40th Anniversary Celebration and Brunch Following Worship**

Sunday, June 22, 9:30am



## **GCPC 40th Anniversary Friendship Bracelet Making Party**

Saturday, July 12, 1-3pm  
Heartland Hall





# 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. 10
- 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.10  
[emily.dixon@gcpc.org](mailto:emily.dixon@gcpc.org)
- Youth Coordinator** ..... Lindsay Callender  
[lindsaymichelle0130@gmail.com](mailto:lindsaymichelle0130@gmail.com)
- 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  
In-Person, Facebook & Zoom  
Visit [gcpc.org/online](http://gcpc.org/online) for links

### Upcoming Newsletter Article Deadlines

March 2025 issue - Deadline, February 21  
April 2025 issue - Deadline, March 21