



GRACE NOTES

Happy New Year!

As we draw close to Epiphany and everyone is chosen by a Star Word, I hope this year brings with it the excitement of what the future holds. And yes, I did say that you are chosen by your word. Over the years, I have gotten a word and wanted to return it. One year I did return it and so I had two words. The first one, which chose me, was the word that resonated throughout that year. The first word was "endure." I picked up a second one, "delight." I thought, I like delight better, it sounds easier. But what I found was the word for 2022 was endure. I had both knees replaced 4 months apart and the second knee had to have a manipulation under anesthesia. I spent the year in physical therapy to regain strength, flexibility, mobility, and balance. It was a test of endurance. However, by December that year, I am pretty sure I was also delighted to have gone through it and now my knees no longer hurt.

Let the star word speak into your life this year. There will be changes ahead for all of us and for GCPC as well. God has been at work in this congregation, that is clear. However, God is not done yet! There is wonderful leadership from your staff and your officers. Ministry teams continue their work. There are glimmers of the Kingdom of God throughout GCPC. May the New Year bring hope, peace, joy and love as we wait and work for what God is doing in our midst!

Grace and Peace
—Pastor Karen

GCPC Weekend Crafters Mini Retreat!

GCPC Weekend Crafters invite all to our winter retreat on Friday/Saturday, January 12 and 13. Our time together will focus on some service projects and give you lots of time to make progress on your own projects. We love to see what everyone is working on and learn from one another. Bring any crafting supplies you no longer need and add to our giveaway table! **Registration is requested by January 8th.** Full details and registration form can be found at www.gcpc.org/crafters.



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.
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In-Person Worship and Online
Worship every Sunday on
Facebook and Zoom.

Visit gcpc.org/online for links!

MUSIC NOTES



MUSIC IN WORSHIP

January 7th – Epiphany/Baptism of the Lord/Star Sunday - Organ led worship. Kat Mason, flute solo. Chancel & Exaltation! Singers anthem, "How Bright Appears the Morning Star" by Johann Kuhnau, arr. John Leavitt with Donna Heer & Chris Lindsay, violins.

January 14th - Organ led worship. Chancel & Exaltation! Singers anthem, "This Little Light of Mine" arr. John Helgen

January 21st - Praise Team led worship.

January 28th - Organ led worship. Chancel & Exaltation! Singers anthem, "Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts" by Claude L. Bass

Music Ensembles Resume in 2024

Contact any of the directors listed below or Rebecca Prater to let them know you'd like to participate and/or for more information.

Sunday, January 7th at 10:45-11:05am
(at the beginning of Sunday school)

Joy! (4s-1st graders) – Room 26

Emily Hussey & Hilary Schmidt, directors
and **Celebration! Choir & Chimes (2nd-6th graders)**
Pam Kelly, director – Lara Schesser, assistant director
Angela Krug, accompanist – **Room 15**

Sunday, January 7th – from 12:45-2:00pm
Jubilation! Ringers (7th graders-Adults)
Kathy Bures, director – **Room 1**

Tuesday, January 9th from 7:00-8:15pm
Praise Team (Youth & Adults)
Vocals, Instruments, & Keys
Carrie DeVries, director

Wednesday, January 10th – 6:00-7:00pm
Charter Ringers (College – Adults) – Room 1
Chris Krug & Celia Nicholas, co-directors
Wednesday, January 10th – 7:05-8:30pm – Room 6
Chancel Choir & Exaltation! Singers (Youth & Adults) Rebecca Prater, director & Linda Dover, accompanist

Sunday, January 21st – 12:00-12:35pm – Room 1
Spirit! Ringers (5th-8th graders)
Rebecca Prater, director

GCPC Wind Ensemble – (8th graders – Adults)
Rehearsals Thursday, February 15th – 7-8pm
& **Saturday, February 17th – 10:30-11:30am**
Play in 9:30am Worship Sunday, February 18th
and
Rehearsals Thursday, March 14th – 7-8pm
& **Saturday, March 16th – 10:30-11:30am**
Play in 9:30am Worship Sunday, March 17th
Pam Kelly, director

Additional Music Ensembles

By invitation of the director(s)

Chancel Brass

Jim Kelly & Darryl Prater, directors

Dixieland Band

Bob Dover, director

Grace Mountain (Bluegrass)

Christopher Callender, director



Our Connected Church

Presbyterianism stands firmly on the connections between the 4 levels of the organization: the Church and its Session of Ruling Elders; the Presbytery comprised of Teaching Elders (pastors) and Commissioners from each congregation; the Synod comprised of Commissioners from each Presbytery; and the General Assembly comprised of commissioners from each Synod. News and information regarding actions and activities of Grace Covenant's Session are regularly posted in the GCPC newsletter. News and information regarding actions and activities from the other three levels will be posted as they take place so that members can remain abreast of how their church is moving forward.



Heartland Presbytery representing churches in Eastern Kansas and Western Missouri

Among its training and experience events, Heartland plans the following events. If you are interested in any and want further information, contact Presbytery State Clerk Jen Baer.

Anti-Racism Experiences/Training for the First Half of 2024:

- **February 26, 2024, 4:00-5:30pm:** Black Archives of Mid-America tour, 1722 E. 17th Terr, KCMO. Join members of Heartland Presbytery Council for this tour and follow-up discussion, location TBA.
- **April 9, 2024, 1-3pm:** Racial Wealth Gap Simulation developed by Bread for the World. We will experience this simulation following the April presbytery meeting and lunch, location TBA.
- **April/May 2024:** Walking tour of Quindaro Black Township, Kansas City, KS.
- **July 25, 2024 (Time TBD):** "Dividing Lines" Driving Tour, which recounts the 20th century history of segregation in Kansas City. Participants drive the route using the Voice Map App – we suggest that you form small groups for the drive. We will hold the discussion at a location TBA.

Synod of MidAmerica represents 355 congregations in Kansas, Missouri, and Southern Illinois

- On January 15, 2024, a permanent executive will assume the office of Synod Executive. Deborah Boucher-Payne was appointed by the SoMA Assembly in October. She comes from her former position as Executive Presbyter of the Missouri Union Presbytery. Deborah's office will be maintained at Central Presbyterian Church in Kansas City, Missouri. The Assembly agreed with the Nominating Committee that Deborah's skills will help move the Synod forward as it seeks to support churches and Presbyteries.
- At its October Assembly meeting, Harold Frye was installed as Moderator of the Synod, and Rev. Doris Evans was installed as Vice Moderator. Doris is pastor of Garden City (KS) Presbyterian Church. Rev. Brian Ellison was appointed for a four-year term as Synod Stated Clerk.
- SoMA made excellent progress in 2023 by adopting its mission, vision, and values statements and goals and objectives to guide its work. These documents can be found at www.synodma.org.
- Annual per capita for all levels of church governance has been set at:
 - Heartland Presbytery \$30.99
 - Synod of Mid-America \$3.15
 - General Assembly \$9.80
 - Total Per Capita: \$43.94 (no increase from 2023)
- SoMA's next meeting will be held in March. The date will be announced after January 1.

Office of General Assembly

The 226th Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) will take place June 25-July 4, 2024. The hybrid meeting including in-person events in Salt Lake City, Utah, and committees meeting by Zoom. Complete information can be found at <https://ga-pcusa.org/>. Of interest to many in PC(USA) congregations are overtures brought forward to the Assembly for consideration. At the site above, you can register to receive newsletter information by email.

What the Future Holds Pledge update

Our pledge Goal is \$635,000. We have received 99 pledges totaling \$538,200! Thank you so much to all our folks that are walking with us to build our future! This is the firm number that your Session is using to work out the 2024 budget. We believe that there are at least 27 pledges that haven't come in yet for 2024. These would significantly help us reach our pledge goal.

We hope this gentle reminder will have you go to our Generosity Bulletin Board and pick up a pledge slip, envelope and fill it out, and then put it in Tara Hyder's office. You may also can go to our pledge portal <https://onrealm.org/gcpc/AddPledge/2024pledgedoffering> and enter it there! Tara always appreciates e-mails(finance@gcpc.org) or phone calls — leave a message. Please write yourself a note or tear this part of the bulletin/newsletter out for a reminder!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dave Sutherland, Ryan Hussey, or Jane Knoche.

Thank You Church Family

Dear Grace Covenant Family,
We gratefully acknowledge and thank you for your many kind expressions of sympathy during the loss of my cousin, Sarah Clark.
—Sylvia and Nathan Littlejohn

Dear GCPC Friends,
“Thank you” is hardly adequate to express the blessings from so many of you after my sister passed away. Cards, hugs, calls, get-togethers ... all have meant so much. I will miss my “big sister” dearly, but it helps to be reminded of what a loving, caring church we have.
—Love in Christ, Maggie Blankers

Souperbowl of Caring 2024

A GCPC tradition, the SouperBowl of Caring is the championship of food drives!

This year we're directing donations straight to **ReNewed Hope Food Pantry** rather than Harvesters. ReNewed Hope was founded out of the desire that no person in our community go hungry. Their mission is to feed the hungry and help our neighbors as God asked us in Isaiah 58: *“...if you pour yourself out for the hungry / and satisfy the desire of the afflicted / then shall your light rise in the darkness / and your gloom be as the noonday.”*

Any nonperishable packaged food is welcome, but the most needed items are: peanut butter, jelly, pasta, pasta sauce, canned fruit, canned soup, and crackers. Please leave your donations in the weekday entrance bin any time before February 1. Both weekday entrance bins can be used if needed!

ReNewed Hope is also our Communion Offering recipient for January. If you would like to support them financially, use the “Communion” option in the online portal or write “Communion Offering” on your check or envelope. If you'd like to give directly to the Pantry, check out <https://renewedhopefoodpantry.org/donate/> for more information.



SAVE THE DATE!

The Care and Connections Team
will be hosting a
BINGO AND PIZZA NIGHT
on Friday, January 26, 2024, 5:30–7:30pm.
You won't want to miss this fun
intergenerational event! Please mark the
date down in your calendars!

Children's Team



SERVICE - MUSIC - ARTS - SPORTS - HANG-OUT

Once a month, SMASH happens! We ordinarily meet the third Sunday of the month from 4 – 6 pm in Heartland Hall. This popular program is an activity for kindergarten through 5/6th 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.

In December, our SMASH kiddos did some Christmas caroling with residents at Aberdeen Village. After spreading our Christmas cheer, we came back to GCPC for a birthday party for Jesus. We talked about what Jesus might have been like as a child too.

We will be studying David in January where we learn yet again small can be mighty! Join us January 21st from 4pm - 6pm in Heartland Hall.

Thank you Volunteers!

The Children's Team would like to thank all of our volunteers for everything they have done for us this semester. We invite our volunteers to a breakfast on January 7. Stop by our Children's Education office anytime from 9-11am to enjoy just a small token of our appreciation. Our children enjoy you very much and our church couldn't put on such a successful children's program without amazing volunteers like you!

Children's Events at a Glance

- Jan. 7 ATW, Music & Sunday School
- Jan. 14 ATW, Music & Sunday School
- Jan. 21 ATW, Music & Sunday School and Smash
- Jan. 28 ATW and our music program will meet for the entire Sunday School hour
- Feb. 13 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 5:30pm - 7pm

Grace Studies:

Our youngest ones, 2 through 5 are introduced each week to some of our favorite stories of the Bible.

2s/3s will meet in Room 23 at 10:45 am.

4s/5s will meet in Room 26 at 10:45am for music, then will be escorted to Room 25 at 11:05am for Sunday School.

Grace Makers:

Our Kindergarten through 5th grade students will begin a new season of creative learning through art, cooking, and drama. We will begin by looking at the diversity of God's creation and Biblical teachings that call us to love one another equally.

Kindergarten – 1st Grades: Room 26 - 10:45 am gathers here for Joy! Singers and will be escorted to their workshop rotation after. Please know our workshop rotations move each week, so check the wall just outside the basement stairwell for each week's activities.

2nd—5th/6th Grades: Room 15 - 10:45 am gathers here for Celebration! Singers and will be escorted to their workshop rotation after. Please know our workshop rotations move each week, so check the wall just outside the basement stairwell for each week's activities.

ATW - Awakening to Worship

Our Awakening to Worship program invites children age 4 – 1st grade to join us for a special children's worship experience. Children should attend worship with their families and immediately following Children's Time, one of our ATW greeters will meet them in the back of the sanctuary to escort the children to our ATW room (Room 12). You may pick your children up after worship concludes from our ATW room.

Worship Bulletins are available from the ushers every week. Children's busy bags are available outside the sanctuary as well.

Music Programs

Joy! Singers: Our preschool – 1st grade children enjoy singing under the leadership of Emily Hussey and Hilary Schmidt. **Celebration! Singers:** Angela Krug, Lara Schesser and Pam Smith Kelly bring their talents to leading the Celebration singers. The children are not only singing; they are ringing chimes!

Clerk's Corner

For the second month in a row, the Session spent a significant amount of time discussing finances. This month's main topic was the 2024 budget. We appreciate the significant work done by the Finance Team and especially Beth Lillian to align budget requests, reasonable expectations, and historical activity and to find funds in various reserve accounts that could be used to cover some of our expenses. We also appreciate the hard work done by the Generosity Team, which has resulted in more pledged income for 2024 than we had in 2023. Despite all that hard work, though, our budget ask still exceeds our anticipated income for 2024. The Session spent time exploring options to reduce anticipated spending. The proposed budget will be revised and approved (either as revised or with further revision) at the January Session meeting. Our intention is to share that approved budget with the Congregation prior to the annual meeting on January 28, 2024 so that everyone has time to look at it and ask questions. *(Reminder - the Session, not the Congregation, approves the budget, but we share it with the Congregation because this is work we are all doing together.)*

We learned that the fire detection system repair will begin in January, the facilities team is looking for bids for some tree trimming, and a spring workday will likely be held in January. The way that we collect the Communion offering will be changing in 2024 and Mission Team will be rolling out more detailed information about that. Mission Team is also excited to coordinate the Souper Bowl of Caring this year with proceeds to benefit the Renewed Hope Food Pantry.

The A/V Tech position was increased from "up to 10" to "up to 15" hours per week based on the time that it actually takes to keep up with all of the activities. Session also instructed the Personnel Team to begin the search for a Director of Christian Education, working with Children's Team and Youth Team to develop an appropriate job description.

The IPNC has started conducting interviews and they will continue to keep the Session and the Congregation posted on their progress.

Session passed a motion allowing Session and/or Generosity team members to receive the names of members who make a pledge each year so they can be thanked in writing. The amounts of the pledges will not be available to anyone other than our Financial Administrator and people writing notes will not receive entire lists of pledgers, just partial lists of people who they can thank.

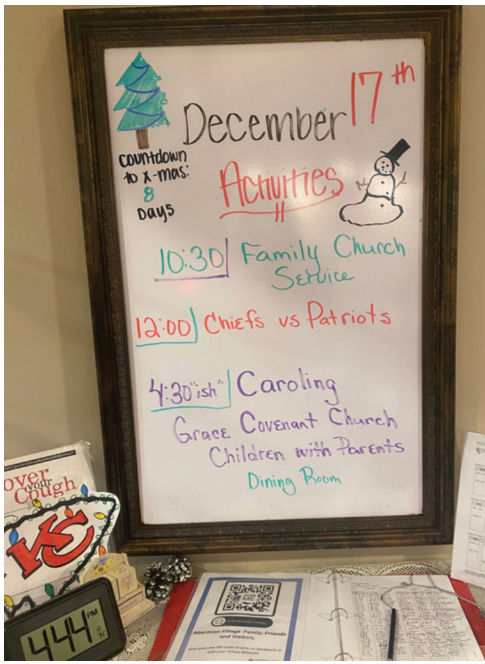
Presbytery reviewed and approved our minutes from 2020-2023 this month. There are a few things we need to document more closely but most importantly, we need to start having some sort of review of our financial documents. This does NOT have to be a formal audit by a CPA. We will work with Presbytery to develop a plan that will meet the requirements.

In January we will be creating a committee to liaise between GPC and the Arab Christian Fellowship. If you are interested in being a part of this group, please contact Melanie Townsend or Karen Wright. We will also be looking for a team to plan and coordinate our 40th anniversary celebration in the summer of 2025. Again, please let Melanie know if you're interested in being a part of this team.

The January Session meeting has been moved to Tuesday, January 16, 2024 so as not to be held on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

As always, if you have any questions about how the Session is serving the congregation, please feel free to ask any Session member.

— Melanie Townsend, Clerk of Session





GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Inclusive. Family Oriented. Welcoming.

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

gcpc.org

New Year's Day Office Hours

The church offices will be closed
Monday, January 1, 2024.

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



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CHURCH STAFF

Director of Music Ministries

- Office hours: Monday-Wednesday, Friday

Rebecca Prater, rebecca.prater@gcpc.org ...ext. 13

Church Administrator

- Office hours: Monday-Friday

Patrick Bell, patrick.bell@gcpc.org ext. 10

Youth CoordinatorLindsay Callender
lindsaymichelle0130@gmail.com

Finance AdministratorTara Hyder
.....finance@gcpc.org

OrganistLinda Dover

Audio/Visual Technician Jason Turner

Contemporary Music Coord. Carrie DeVries

Contemporary Music Drummer.....Jill Endaya

Child Care Coordinator.....Carolyn Chaffin

Wedding CoordinatorKristy Shaw

Funeral CoordinatorMary Sue Thomas

ELDERS

Joy Circo	Jaylee Soule
Barbara Douglas	Tom Stroud
Katie Hearn	Melanie Townsend, Session clerk
Jane Knoche	Bill Turner
Angela Krug	Michala Walker
Lara Schesser	Mary Ann Weyforth
Jake Schmidt	
Kristy Shaw	

SUPPORT STAFF

Deacon Moderator	Anne Stroud
Operating Committee.....	Angela Krug, Lara Schesser, Katie Hearn, Tom Stroud
Newsletter Editor/Marketing.....	Kim Krueger
Prayer Chain	Cheryl Johnson
Website Administrators	Kim Krueger, Patrick Bell, Christy Soule

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Instagram: @gcpc_overlandpark

MINISTRY UNITS

Congregational Nurture Unit Moderators

Care and Connections....	Mary Ann Weyforth
Worship and Music.....	Kathy Bures, Katie Hearn

Education Ministry Unit Moderators

Adult	Tom Stroud
Children	Angela Krug
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	David Sutherland
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

February 2024 issue - Deadline, January 19
March 2024 issue - Deadline, February 20