



40 YEARS OF MINISTRY

GRACE NOTES

June 2025
Vol 43, Nbr 6

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
913-345-1256
office@gcpc.org
gcpc.org

In addition to in-person worship, our service is also streamed online on our website, Facebook and YouTube channel.

June at GCPC: A Season of Joyful Journeys

June is shaping up to be a joyful and meaningful month at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church.

We will start the month with a building full of laughter and singing as we hold our annual VBS June 2–6. **Road Trip: On the Go with God** reminds us that God is with us wherever we go. Make sure to join us on June 8 for our VBS themed worship as well. Thank you to all the volunteers who create a week of fun and for all the children who will join us on the road.

On June 22, we will gather to celebrate 40 years of ministry at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church. It is a day to celebrate all who have come before us. We live into the theme that *"God's love endures forever"* as we celebrate the past and look ahead to more years of faithful ministry together. Join us for worship and stay for brunch. [Please RSVP through the church website.](#) There will be food and games outside so we can celebrate as the family of God.

On a personal note, I am excited and grateful to continue to journey with Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church. My family has found a welcome here and pending a favorable vote of Presbytery on June 7, I look forward to exploring the new horizons to which God calls us next.

May we enjoy the journey together and keep following the nudging of the Holy Spirit, even when she takes us into new and surprising horizons. Let us remember that God's love endures forever and that God is with us wherever we go.

Grace, Mercy, and Peace

Pastor Karen





“The smallest seed of faith can grow into something beautiful.”

The story of Grace Covenant begins not with walls or programs, but with a shared prayer. In 1984, a group of believers dared to dream of a community grounded in Scripture, covenantal love, and God’s grace. These early years were filled with simple joys: folding chairs, borrowed hymnals, and heartfelt sermons. What they lacked in resources, they made up for in courage, commitment, and hospitality. In this section, we remember the planting of the seed—and honor those who nurtured it.

In February 1985, 50 faithful individuals made a bold commitment—to start a new church. From that moment on, Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church has been *“Growing by God’s Grace.”*

Our first worship service was held on Palm Sunday of that year in the cafeteria of Indian Valley Elementary School. We officially chartered on June 22, 1985, with 123 founding members. From day one, Grace Covenant was more than a Sunday gathering; it was—and still is—a seven-day-a-week church. Our members have always carried their faith into their homes, schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods, sharing the Good News wherever they go.



The church quickly grew. In February 1986, our cold winter Sundays welcomed over 200 people in worship. That Easter, 273 celebrated in worship—many sporting the popular *“I’m Growing with Grace Covenant”* T-shirts. By Easter 1987, over 400 gathered in praise, and that summer we broke ground for our first church building.

On August 14, 1988, we opened the doors to our new sanctuary. So many came that we had to hold two services. A few years later, we added a third service to reflect the congregation’s growing diversity in worship styles. In 1992, we completed a second phase of construction, opening our education wing.



You're Invited!

Let's Celebrate 40 Years of Faithfulness Together!

Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church's 40th Anniversary Worship and Brunch is happening on **Sunday, June 22, at 9:30am**, and you won't want to miss it! Under the inspiring theme *"Celebrating Our Faithful Journey,"* we will gather to honor four decades of worship, service, fellowship, and God's enduring faithfulness—rooted in the powerful words of Psalm 100:5: *"For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations."*

This milestone celebration is more than a moment of remembrance—it's a joyful reunion, a powerful testimony, and a hopeful look toward the future of our vibrant church community. ***It's also a chance to fill the sanctuary and the fellowship hall with friends, family, and former members who have been part of our shared journey.***

RSVP today at
gcpc.org/40th-rsvp

Let us know you're coming—and invite others to come with you! Whether they moved away years ago or are just down the street, help us spread the word so we can fill the church with familiar faces and joyful hearts.

GCPC Trivia

GCPC's Charter Sunday was June 23, 1985.

Grace Covenant held services before August 1988 in the cafeteria at Indian Valley Elementary School.

The first service held at 11100 College Blvd. was on August 14, 1988. The date of the church building dedication was September 25, 1988.

The "themes" of GCPC's stained-glass windows are Fire, Earth, Water, Air (Spirit). Nature's phases of life, birth, death, and rebirth are captured in Kathy Barnard's 12 carved glass doors, "Beauty in the Cycles of Life," in our concourse. The set of 12 entry doors form a wall 40 feet long.

The East/South wing added to the church building in 1992.

The six languages on the original Peace Pole were English, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, Hebrew, Swahili. It was installed in 2006 in memory of Janie Brown, mother of Elizabeth McKell, spouse of Founding Pastor J. Dicks McKell, Jr.

The origin of the cross we "flower" and "lift high" on Easter Sunday was from a live Christmas tree the church had in 1988.

The name "Grace Covenant" was voted upon at a monthly potluck on May 12, 1985 by the Charter Members.

GCPC first participated in the KCK Hot Lunch, then called St. Mary's Soup Kitchen in October 15, 1988. Mary Sue Thomas was the first coordinator.

Our current church logo was designed by Mac Fechtling and was introduced in September 2013. With visual inspiration from the unique and remarkable stained glass installations in the church sanctuary, the cross and the Ichthus (symbol), Mac created a stylized logo design that represents the many aspects of our community. The curved lines represent the Ichthus with color forming the stained glass surrounding the cross. Bright colors were used to demonstrate joy and nature.

Nancy Kalesz was lovingly named the "Star Lady" at GCPC in recognition of her heartfelt dedication to creating and organizing the Epiphany Stars shared with the congregation each year.

The Allen Organ Company presented an organ dedication recital in our sanctuary with internationally acclaimed organist Maestro Hector Olivera on September 20, 2015.

GCPC has been a Matthew 25 church since August 2020.

Workshop Sunday was first held on October 20, 2019.

In 1992, Pioneer Pre-School moved to Grace Covenant, where 140 students thrived in their bright new environment under the leadership of Pre-School Director Geri Allcorn.



Clerk's Corner

At the May Session meeting Karen Wright distributed worksheets for teams to start putting together budget numbers for 2026. We will be looking at "basic survival" budgets and "dream big" budgets and hopefully land in a comfortable place in between the two. Beth Lillian, Finance Team moderator, will be meeting with us to discuss our financial organization and best practices moving forward. The Finance Team will also be meeting with other teams in the next few months to assist with their 2026 budget planning. We can all look forward to *"Stewardship Stories & Scrambled Eggs"* in September when we will have an opportunity to discuss budget priorities as a congregation.

We heard about repairs being made to our building in preparation for the 40th Anniversary in June. We also spent time discussing the hardware and software needed to livestream consistently. We will be reflecting on our discussions and may make some significant decisions at the June Session meeting. If you have thoughts about how or why we livestream worship, please share them with a Session member.

We are in the process of reaching out to members who have not been in contact with the congregation in a while to find out if they still want to be considered an active part of the congregation. In June we will be welcoming our new class of elders and thanking the four elders who are retiring from Session for their service.

We look forward to seeing many current and former members and church staff at the 40th Anniversary worship and lunch. If you haven't RSVP'd yet, please do so NOW. We will be inviting attendees to contribute to the Facilities Reserve Fund as a way of expressing gratitude for the role Grace Covenant has played in their lives.

—Melanie Townsend, Clerk of Session

MUSIC NOTES—

Past and Present Chancel and Exaltation Singers!

We would be absolutely thrilled to invite you to lend your voices in celebration of GCPC's 40th Anniversary on Sunday, June 22, at 9:30am! We can't think of a better way to mark this milestone by coming together and making music! [To help us with planning, please fill out this brief questionnaire: GCPC - 40th Anniversary \(LINK HERE\)](#)

Dates to consider:

Wednesday, June 18 (6:30pm Rehearsal)

Saturday June 21 (10:00 am Rehearsal)

Sunday, June 22 (9:30am Service/Celebration - Call Time TBA)

We ask that you are available for at least one rehearsal, preferably both. Your responses will help us coordinate rehearsals and ensure we have a fantastic choir to celebrate this special occasion. We are so excited about the possibility of singing with you all! — Gratefully, Patrick O'Halloran

Lift Your Voice! Join the Chancel and Exaltation Singers!

Have you been thinking about joining the choir but haven't taken the leap? Now's your chance! We warmly invite you to become a part of our Chancel and Exaltation Choir.

All skill levels are welcome – whether you're a seasoned vocalist or just love to sing, there's a place for you. Come share your talent and passion for music with our welcoming community. **Rehearsals begin in August**, giving you plenty of time to get ready. And if you're still not sure, why not test the waters by joining us for the summer choir? It's a perfect opportunity to experience the joy of singing with us in a relaxed setting.

We can't wait to make music with you!

E-mail patrick.ohalloran@gcpc.org for details.

Thank You Church Family!

God is good! After a freak accident at home, one failed surgery and a second, much more extensive surgery, I am back at my home. All lost strength was restored! I am now engaged in what will be a fairly prolonged recovery. I will be rejoining activities at GCPC as healing and pain allows. Thank you everyone for the prayers and support. God is good.

—Rick Randolph

Thursday Bible Study

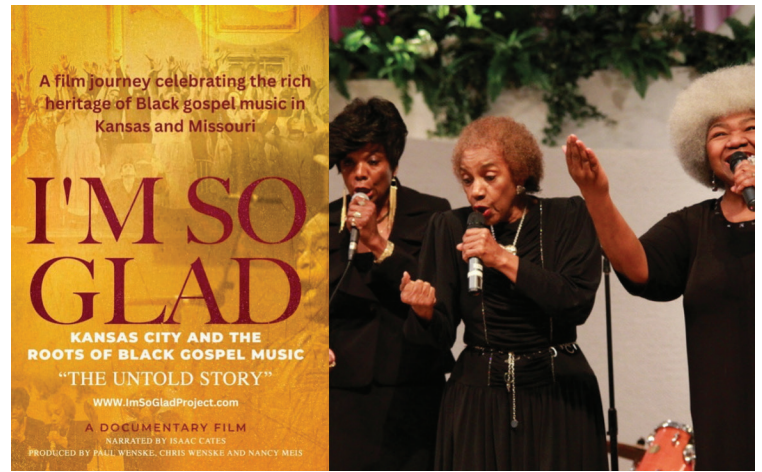
During their summer hiatus, the Thursday morning Bible study group is meeting monthly to discuss a book with spiritual aspects. Everyone is invited to join us. The meetings are all on a Thursday in members' homes. Here are the details:

- July 17, 9:30am: *The Just Kitchen* by Derrick Weston and Anna Woofenden. Discussion will be at Glenda Johnson's house (11712 W. 108th St). RSVP to Glenda at geojohnso@aol.com
- August 14, 9:30am: *Stone Yard Devotional* by Charlotte Wood. Discussion will be at Cindy Schendel's house (11654 Grant Dr). RSVP to Cindy at cschen56@hotmail.com

If you have any questions, please contact Cheryl Johnson at agathatoo@gmail.com.

Presbyterian Women "Noisy" Birthday Offering Results

The total amount collected was **\$408.18**. Thank you to the congregation for supporting this special offering and to the children for collecting it. The PW Birthday Offering funds up to five projects each year, in amounts of \$75,000 to \$150,000 each. The two projects this year are **Leland Presbyterian Church Windward Volunteer Housing Facility**, Leland Mississippi, to house volunteers who travel from outside the area to help with disaster relief; and **Red Cloud Renewable Lakota Thiyuha Dome Home Project**, Pine Ridge, South Dakota, will construct three dome homes, providing housing as well as creating publicity for this affordable option on the reservation.



Special Movie Event:

I'm So Glad – Kansas City and the Roots of Black Gospel Music, the Untold Story

Sunday, July 13, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

GCPC Sanctuary

Child care available by reservation

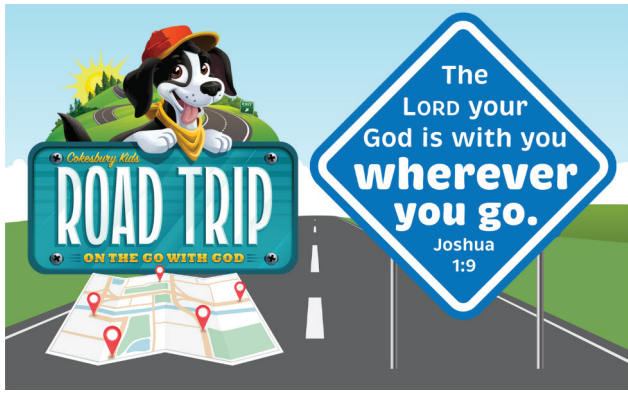
Join us on Sunday, July 13, from 3-6pm in the GCPC sanctuary for a powerful afternoon of music, history, and storytelling as we present the documentary *I'm So Glad: Kansas City and the Roots of Black Gospel Music, the Untold Story*. This compelling film uncovers the forces that shaped both black gospel music and the black community in and around Kansas City, Missouri, and pre-Civil War Kansas. Through rich stories of the region's pioneers and insightful interviews with historians and scholars, the documentary reveals a vibrant musical and cultural heritage. A time for questions and discussion will follow the screening.

Highlights include:

- The impact of Free State Kansas and the courageous enslaved people who escaped from Missouri
- The musical legacy of Western University—the first black college west of the Mississippi
- The fusion of gospel and jazz at 18th & Vine that gave birth to Kansas City's unique gospel swing

Child care for children 5 and under will be available by reservation. To reserve a spot, please email the church office at office@gcpc.org with your name, the number of children, and their ages. Reservation deadline is Monday, July 7, at noon.

Don't miss this opportunity to explore the untold story of a powerful musical tradition and the community that shaped it. Learn more at www.imsogladproject.com



A Prayer for VBS

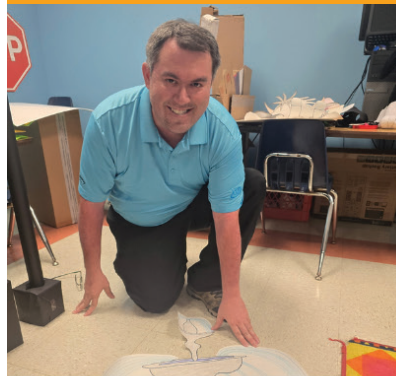
Road Trip: On the Go with God
Vacation Bible School, June 2 - 6, 9am-Noon
Ages 4 yrs – 5th Grade

Heavenly Father, As Vacation Bible School begins, we lift up every child, teacher, volunteer, and staff member to You. We pray for safety, joy, and a strong sense of belonging for each child. May they feel deeply loved by their leaders—and by You. Let the songs, stories, crafts, and activities draw them closer to Jesus.

We pray for the staff and volunteers—grant them energy, patience, creativity, and unity as they serve. Bless everyone who prepared in big and small ways, and may they feel appreciated and supported. Stir the hearts of parents through their children's excitement and curiosity. May this VBS not only bring smiles and laughter but also plant seeds of lasting faith and love for You. Let it be a week that changes lives—both young and old—for Your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.



VBS DECORATING!





GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Inclusive. Family Oriented. Welcoming.

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

gcpc.org



GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Follow us on Social Media!

Facebook: facebook.com/GraceCovenantPresbyterian

Instagram: @gcpc_overlandpark • **YouTube:** @gracecovenant443

CHURCH STAFF

Transitional Pastor, Rev. Karen Wright
karen.wright@gcpc.org ext. 15

Church Administrator Patrick Bell
patrick.bell@gcpc.org ext. 10

Director of Christian Education
Emily Nelson Dixon ext. 18
emily.dixon@gcpc.org

Finance Administrator Tara Hyder
finance@gcpc.org

Interim Dir. Music Ministries... Patrick O'Halloran
patrick.ohalloran@gcpc.org ext. 20

Praise Team Director Carrie DeVries
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;
gcpc.media@gmail.com

Praise Team Drummer Jill Endaya-Allen

Child Care Coordinator Carolyn Chaffin

Wedding Coordinator Kristy Shaw

Funeral Coordinator Mary Sue Thomas

ELDERS

Johnnie Baker	Frank Slovick
Paul Bruns	Jaylee Soule
Chris Cabe	Eileen Thomson
Debbie Campbell	Michala Walker
Barbara Douglas	Mary Ann Weyforth
Kevin Johnson	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

Streaming on YouTube, Facebook, gcpc.org

Visit gcpc.org/online for links

Upcoming Newsletter Article Deadlines

July 2025 issue - Deadline, June 20

August 2025 issue - Deadline, July 18