



GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Annual Report 2024

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Report of the Interim Pastor	4
Clerk of Session Report	5
Team Reports	6

Report of the Interim Pastor

You are looking at the annual report for 2024. You will find within it, a recap of the what happened through the work of the various teams and members of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church. As we are looking toward the celebration of 40 years of ministry this summer, I continue to be amazed by the work that this church does within these walls and within the larger community. As we enter a new year, we find possibility and we also enter into the as yet unknown. I am reminded of Jesus' words in Matthew 6:34 *"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."* Take some time and reflect on what God has done through Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church in 2024 and what potential lies ahead.

There is so much to celebrate about what God is doing here at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church:

- **A Growing and Vibrant Community:** Our worship attendance has grown, bringing fresh energy and engagement.
- **The Next Generation:** The joy and enthusiasm of many children remind us of God's ongoing work in and through the young among us.
- **Inspiring Music Ministry:** Music continues to lead and shape our worship, lifting our hearts and drawing us closer to God.
- **The Spirit on the Move:** There is a palpable energy in this place—a testament to the Holy Spirit moving among us.

Staff transitions have been a theme throughout the year and continue as we enter 2025. Yet one truth remains clear: **You, the members of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, are the church.** Your faithfulness and dedication to living out God's call make this community a beacon of light.

Session and I have agreed to renew my contract as Interim Pastor. Together, we are discerning the future work God is calling us to do and exploring the ways my call might continue among you. We trust in God's timing and leading as we seek clarity and direction.

I encourage you to continue the faithful work of the Kingdom: sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, serving one another, and nurturing this vibrant community. God is at work here—something new is being brought forth.

Do not be anxious or afraid. Trust that God is with us, guiding us every step of the way.

Grace, Mercy, and Peace,
Karen Wright
Interim Pastor

TOTAL ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP AS OF	January 1, 2024	365 Members
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Reactivated	0
Profession of Faith	2
Reaffirmation of Faith	4
Transfer of Membership	1

7

Transfer of Membership	0
Remove from Membership	1
Deaths	5
Transfer Affiliate	0

6

366 Members

Wyatt Schendel	Josie Noren
Coen Armbricht	Nolan Noren
Sullivan Armbricht	

Keith Graham	George Moody
Jerry Kenefake	Catherine Moody
Walter Trueblood	

Jane Allen	Keith Langabee
Aaron Armbrrecht	Patrick Payne
Sarah Armbrrecht	Conor Schesser
Morgan Krug	

Team Reports

Worship and Music

Worship Team

In 2024 the Worship Team continued to enjoy the leadership of pastor Karen Wright. Over the summer months she urged us to tell our stories and to let go of what is no longer working. Then she challenged us to love our neighbors in a Mr. Rogers themed service. And during Advent she took us through the Holy Land on the road to Bethlehem.

The hiring of Emily Nelson Dixon as Christian Education Director was an unexpected bonus for Worship, as she has helped in leading worship, reading scripture and leading the children's time. Worship had also been led by various other people during Pastor Karen Wright's absence, including: Kristen Astew, Barbara Douglas and Kathy Bures.

We had our usual special services, including: Youth Sunday, VBS Sunday and Workship Sunday. We also had Worship in the Park in August, which was a big hit in spite of the heat.

After much discussion we decided it was time to stop using the pre-packaged cups of elements for communion. So in July we started having communion by intinction. There were a few small glitches, but it went well so we have continued serving communion that way. There are still gluten-free, and prepackaged elements for people who want them.

For many years the flower arrangements placed in the sanctuary were ordered from the same florist, with little price change. Unfortunately, that florist went out of business in 2024 and the prices at other florists are way too high. At the same time, the number of people wishing to have a special flower arrangement and dedication has decreased. So, the decision was made to only use the silk flower arrangements created by Linda McMaster for these dedications. If people wish to make a flower dedication, they can contact Chelly King. The donation will go to that month's mission partner. Linda McMaster agreed to make a few more arrangements so that we would have greater variety. We are lucky to have her!

Chelly King and Christine Hutchins stepped down from doing all the communion prep – which they have done for many years. Kevin Johnson quickly stepped in to take over for them. We are grateful to Kevin for volunteering. As usual, we enjoyed the decorating skills of Jan Rosché, assisted by Kathy Williams, for many of our special services throughout the year.

We look forward to what 2025 will bring with confidence in our leadership AND in the volunteers who step up when they are needed.

Kathy Bures
Worship Team Moderator

Music Team

Music is one of the key elements of Worship at Grace Covenant playing an integral part in the worship experience. We are blessed with extraordinarily talented musicians, both vocal and instrumental. Our dedicated music staff comprised of Rebecca Prater, Music Director, Linda Dover, organist and accompanist, Carrie DeVries, Praise Team director and Jill Endaya-Allen, percussionist, worked throughout the year with numerous volunteer leaders and musicians to provide our congregation with meaningful worship experiences.

ENCORE KC! is sponsored by GCPC as our Artist in Residence group. This group is composed of musicians aged 50 plus. The ACTII Ensemble from this group has sung in several worship services during the year.

In 2024, our Music Ministry included:

♪ 4 vocal ensembles

♪ 4 handbell/chime ensembles

♪ Orchestra

♪ 3 instrumental ensembles plus various instrumental soloists

These ensembles included:

♪ Joy! Singers (4s-1st grade) – directed by Emily Hussey and Hilary Schmidt

♪ Celebration! Choir & Chimes (2nd-5th grades)-directed by Pam Kelly with Angela Krug, accompanist and assistants Katie Hearn and Keith Langabee

♪ Chancel & Exaltation! Singers – CHEX (6th grade - adults) – directed by Rebecca Prater

♪ Praise Team – directed by Carrie DeVries

♪ Charter Ringers – directed by Celia Nicholas and Chris Krug

♪ Jubilation! & Exaltation! Ringers (6th grade-adults) – directed by Kathy Bures

♪ Spirit Ringers (5th-7th grades) – directed by Rebecca Prater

♪ GCPC Orchestra (8th grade-adults) – directed by Pam Kelly

♪ Chancel Brass – directed by Darryl Prater and Jim Kelly

♪ Wind ensemble – directed by Pam Kelly

♪ Dixieland Band – directed by Bob Dover

♪ Grace Mountain – Bluegrass

Outreach Activities & Music Events in 2024:

♪ Holy Week services: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter – March 24-31

♪ Music Appreciation Sunday – April 14

♪ East Hill Singers Concert – April 28

♪ Bell Fest: “Make ‘em Laugh, Help ‘em Smile, Give ‘em Joy” – May 5 - all ringing choirs

♪ Youth Sunday – May 12

♪ VBS Sunday – June 9

♪ Summer Choir – June – August

♪ Exaltation! Reunion Choir for 40h Anniversary – November 27, Thanksgiving Eve

♪ A Christmas Exclamation! – December 8

♪ “Songs of the Season” – Chex - December 15 (Chancel Choir & Exaltation! Singers)

♪ “Songs of the Season” – Praise Team - December 22

♪ Two Christmas Eve services – 5pm & 8pm: Joy! & Celebration! Singers, CHEX (Chancel Choir & Exaltation! Singers) Christopher Callender-guitar

Submitted on behalf of Music Team 2024

Linda Dover – Staff, Rebecca Prater – Staff, Chris Lindsay – Clerk, Katie Hearn – Moderator, Barbara Douglas – Moderator, Celia Nicholas, Michelle Gailliez-Frye, Anne Stroud, Donna Heer

Education and Nurture

Children’s Ministry Team

Children’s Ministry Team is thrilled that the year 2024 included the hiring of our new Director of Christian Education, Emily Nelson Dixon! Children’s ministry is thriving in our church, and we are grateful to have a staff member again to help us sustain and hopefully grow even more! Following are some highlights of our program this past year.

- We continue to offer Sunday School for toddlers through fifth grade.
 - Our toddlers learn Bible stories through play.
 - Our preschoolers use the Presbyterian curriculum, *Follow Me*.
 - Our Kindergarten through fifth-graders are still utilizing the Workshop Rotation model. In Workshop Rotation Sunday School, the same Bible story is taught for two weeks in a row. Each week classes rotate into new and unique workshops such as art, video, games, drama, cooking, computer, etc. We are thankful for volunteers that sign up to teach a lesson for two weeks and also believe the volunteers appreciate the flexibility of only having to commit to two weeks of teaching at a time. We are

always looking for more teachers. If you are interested, you can sign up here:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0A45A4A722A4FC1-50460455-workshop#/>

- Kristy Shaw continues to do a phenomenal job of coordinating Awakening to Worship! Children ages 4–1st grade go to Awakening to Worship after Children’s Time. In Awakening to Worship, children hear Bible stories, learn the meaning of church traditions and participate in worship practices. If you are interested in helping either as a greeter or storyteller, Kristy would love to tell you more about it!
- Our SMASH (sports, music, arts, service, hanging out) program is a SMASHING success, thanks in no small part to our fearless leaders, Christy Soule and Amy Sellers. Once a month, Kindergarten through fifth graders come together to be nurtured in faith by building relationships with a variety of adults of all ages. In the 2024-2025 school year, our students have been learning about the fruits of the spirit. We couldn’t hold SMASH each month without extra volunteers to help us manage the growing number of children that come each month. If you would like to spend a couple hours a month with our children, you can sign up here:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0A45A4A722A4FC1-smash1#/>
- In June, we held our annual Vacation Bible School. This year we had 49 kids attend and as many volunteers if not more than the number of kids! Our theme was Camp Firelight, and we learned that “Whenever I’m afraid, I put my trust in you.” (Psalm 56:3) with exciting Bible stories, music, crafts, science, recreation activities and snacks!
- Our team continued offering various additional opportunities throughout the year including the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper, Easter Egg Hunt, Trunk or Treat and the Advent Fair. Coming in the spring of 2025, we will again be offering our Communion Workshop for second graders and the Bible workshop for third-graders.
- Not to go unnoticed, Nancy Taylor, a church office volunteer, helps our team manage the worship bags that are utilized by children who stay in worship.

It is an exciting time for children’s ministry in our church with a growing number of children and a new Director of Christian Education. We are very thankful for the many members who volunteer their time and fulfill the baptismal promises they have made to these children. Please let Emily Nelson Dixon or any member of Children’s Team know if you would be interested in getting more involved in any way with our team or programs.

Angela Krug, former moderator; Kristy Shaw, moderator and Elder liaison; Christy Soule, secretary; Erin Frye, Emily Hussey, Amy Sellers

Youth Ministry Team

The Youth Team philosophy is to provide opportunities and inspiration for youth to develop a life-long relationship with God. We strive to offer a variety of meaningful worship opportunities, service and outreach events, thoughtful programming, and intentional connections with others to help youth develop and grow in their faith journey. We hope that

through their involvement at Grace Covenant, youth will find strength, guidance, encouragement, and hope in Christ. While the majority of 2024 was spent without a Youth Director on staff, the Youth Team has continued to focus on maintaining connections while adapting programs as needed given the specific needs of our youth.

We were thrilled with the addition of Emily Nelson Dixon as the new Director of Christian Education for GCPC.

We are excitedly looking forward to 2025, when our Youth will have continued opportunities to participate in:

- Sunday school classes
- “Connect” youth group gatherings
- Mission and Music Trip — While we did not have a large enough number of high school youth to accommodate a full mission trip in 2024, when we do, these trips will be brought back.
- Trunk or Treat
- Red Bag Shopping: the youth “adopted” a child in 2024 and provided a full set of gifts.
- Other outreach events were held regularly over the spring, summer, and fall.
- And, of course, Youth Sunday.

The Youth Ministry is successful at Grace Covenant because we have many caring adults who are active as well as our church staff to help nurture our youth in their love of Christ. We are grateful for those who minister to our youth through participation as youth leaders, Youth Team members, Sunday school teachers, Confirmation mentors, food preparers, and event coordinators. We could not do what we do for GCPC youth without these caring and dedicated servants.

With your ongoing support, our youth program will continue to remind GCPC youth that they are God’s precious children, cherished since birth, blessed and loved beyond words.

Lara Schesser – moderator, Pat Kowalczewski – secretary, Jenny Stromberg, Ryan Hussey

Care and Connection Team

The mission of the Care and Connection team is to facilitate member connections through the provision of social gatherings and through support of a variety of small interest groups. The Care and Connection team assists in the assimilation of new members and provides support to church members in need of prayers by sending cards, notes, making calls and visits.

The team consists of 14 members. They meet once a month on the fourth Thursday at 6:30pm usually by Zoom. We planned four social events in 2024. In January there was a Pizza and Bingo night. In April, a Trivia Night with appetizers provided by the attendees. There were crafts and

sitters provided for the children. The Mission Fair was held in August and the BBQ Potluck in October with 93 in attendance. The Dixieland Band provided entertainment.

There are 19 small interest groups that are coordinated through the Care and Connection Team. These include game groups such as bridge, Bunco, Pickleball, and poker. Study groups include Women's circles, Bible study, and book groups. There are social and dining groups, such as, Dinner for 7 or 8, It's Only Breakfast (Men), Ladies' Lunch Bunch and GCPC Brunch Bunch. Crafters have three groups. The prayer chain is maintained by Cheryl Johnson. Members of the team take turns sending cards and /or notes to those on the prayer chain. One member sends cards to those church members who turn 80. Prayer shawls made by crafters have been delivered to members identified as needing a healing touch.

The team continues to try and meet our purpose of providing social gatherings and care to Grace Covenant Church members.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann Weyforth, moderator: Lynn Long, Sandy Adams, Caroline Becher, GayLee Ludwig-Bonney, Karen Fankhauser, Cathy Haun, Jean Hampton, Kathy Hockley, Teresa Ilten, Nancy Kalesz, Chelly King, Ann Shadburn, and Joy Wilson

Outreach

Mission Team

- In 2024, Mission team continued the practice of directing the monthly Communion Offering to a partner agency.
 - The totals collected through Communion Offering each month follow:
 - January — Renewed Hope — \$1,120
 - February — Rosehill — \$384
 - March — One Great Hour of Sharing — \$1,773.01
 - April — IHN — \$5,770
 - May — CROP Walk — \$190
 - June — Presbyterian Mission Agency — \$100
 - July — PCUSA Pentecost Offering — \$1,033
 - August — Mission Coworkers — \$327
 - September — Johnson County Christmas Bureau — \$125
 - October — Care Beyond the Boulevard — \$50
 - November — Red Bag Project — \$600

- December — Argentine Baby Closet — the amount was not yet known when this report was prepared.
- We also continued the tradition of selecting a monthly donation partner. In-kind donations were directed to: Renewed Hope Food Pantry, The Little Free Pantry, Uplift, A Gathering of Friends, VBS, The Starfish Project, Safehome, Crosslines, Johnson County Christmas Bureau, Care Beyond the Boulevard, Red Bag Project, and Argentine Baby Closet.
- We organized two Noisy Offerings this year; the organizations that received the funds and totals follow:
 - March 10 — Heart to Heart (hygiene supplies for women in Gaza) — \$268.25
 - November 10 — School Lunch Debt at Rosehill Elementary — \$544.43
- We had held our 6th Workshop Sunday event in October; GCPC members finished big quilts and tactile quilts, made upcycled plastic mats for The Starfish Project, organized donations for the Savers FUNdraiser, and did cleaning and maintenance of the church building inside and out, prepared a meal for the residents of Shalom House, and made lunch for everyone at church.
- We continued supporting GCPC's Good Faith Network team leaders and publicizing GFN events to the congregation. Mikki Walker and Linda Hoffman serve as our board members and Dave Pack, Eileen Thomson, and Joy and Don Wilson are our team leaders. Interest and participation in GFN among GCPC members is strong.
- We hosted IHN guests in February and May. Our planned host weeks in August and November were cancelled. Over the past few years, IHN was forced to make changes in how they serve guests, first due to the pandemic and then due to loss of several host churches. In November, Jane and Christine reached the sad conclusion that it was time for GCPC's participation in IHN to end. Jane and Christine's dedicated service is greatly appreciated! A recognition of GCPC's long history of participation in IHN's ministry is being planned for early 2025.
- The quilting group adopted the name Piecemakers this year. In 2024, Piecemakers finished and donated:
 - 6 quilts to Uplift
 - 25 stockings to the Red Bag Project
 - 7 tactile quilts for nursing homes and school therapy programs
 - 32 burp cloths and 4 receiving blankets for the Overland Regional NICU
 - 1 lap blanket for our own sanctuary.
 As always, GCPC's quilts and other fabric projects are made with upcycled and donated materials. Donna Heer continues her outstanding work coordinating this group.
- We continued sending food and volunteers to KCK Hot Lunch and UpLift on a monthly basis. GCPC members donate a large number of portable protein and easy open canned

food, batteries, clothing and outdoor bedding to Uplift every month. This amounts to several hundred dollars of donations over and above the meals for 60-90 folks each month. Meredith Watson and Kevin Johnson continue to do excellent work coordinating GCPC's participation in these programs.

- We continued directing the food donations collected in the Weekday Entrance to the Renewed Hope Food Pantry, which is operated by the New Haven Seventh Day Adventist Church. Response from the congregation is generous as always; the bin is always full by the end of the month. We also continued sending volunteers to help at Renewed Hope on a regular basis. One of GCPC's men's group also started making peanut butter sandwiches to donate to Renewed Hope monthly. Knute Rosché continues his exceptional coordination of our donations to and participation with Renewed Hope as a member of their board.
- The Soule family continues their sterling work to stock the Little Free Pantry with budget support from Mission Team; it receives steady use.
- The GCPC CROP Walk team raised \$3,965. Jane Knoche and Dave Pack were integral to this effort.
- In collaboration with Kairos team, we were able reinstate our composting program through KC Can Compost. Seven GCPC families participate in this program, which allows GCPC to compost food waste produced at church at no cost to the congregation. In the nine months we participated in 2024, we diverted just over 1,000 pounds of compostable waste from the landfill.
- Early in 2024, we updated the Mission Handbook and put copies of the revised publication around the church for distribution.
- In April, we collaborated with Music team to organize the East Hill Singers Concert. Mission Team organized the meal for the singers, while Music Team handled logistics for the concert itself. The event was successful and well-attended.

Members of the Mission Team: Mikki Walker, moderator; Dave Pack, Knute Rosché, Meredith Watson, Christine Hutchins, Jane Knoche

KAIROS Team

In March of 2024, the We Are All in This Together group that met to discuss Earth care, requested to reform the Kairos Team with Rick Randolph and Christine Caseres as co-moderators. The hope was to reestablish a team that focuses on earth care with the inclusion of justice and peace issues. In February we updated our tri-fold that is available in various locations around the church.

Here are the activities we want to share from both the small group and Kairos:

Composting: GCPC contracts with KC Can to establish an opportunity to not only compost at GCPC, but for members to have an opportunity to do so as well. Currently, the seven member households' participation pays for the program. This project is managed by Mikki Walker as a separate project from Kairos.

EarthCare Congregation: Annually, Kairos collects data and applies to Presbyterians for Earthcare to renew our Earthcare Congregation designation. We hit our 13-year anniversary along with newly conducting a Carbon Footprint Survey to track and then improve on our consumption and emission of carbon.

Earth Day activities included an earth care message with the children focusing on native plants along with a Sunday School class on Carbon Offsets. The class described the offset calculation and invited the Giving Grove to present how Jo and Rick Randolph donated to their mission of planting trees to offset carbon usage and emissions from traveling.

Movie Night: *Cooked — Survival by Zip Code* to discuss the Chicago 1995 heatwave, social justice issues that magnified its effects and the future challenges we face for future heatwaves as the earth continues to warm due to climate change. This was an event that was sponsored by not only GCPC but Kansas Interfaith Power and Light, Sustainable Sanctuary and the local Presbyterians for Earthcare Group. We thank all who attended and helped us have a meaningful conversation after the movie.

Crop Walk: Kairos provided encouragement to increase participation in the Crop Walk, organized by Dave Pack. With Dave, we made a goal of 24 walkers in 2024 and were pleased that the congregation responded with 26 walkers. The goal for 2025 is to have 40 walkers in celebration of our 40th anniversary.

Peace Pole Art Project: We gathered to view the annual Peace Poles located at Black Hoof Park around Lake Lenexa. The congregation was invited to bring their own dinner and to view the Peace Pole created by various local artists. Jane Knoche led us in a deep conversation by reflecting on meaningful questions about peace and how the poles affected us individually.

Ukrainian Global Care Force Medical Mission Trip: To provide non-combatant care for the people of the Ukraine, Rick Randolph deployed to previously occupied areas in the Ukraine over the period November 4–17, 2024. The people of Grace Covenant Presbyterian helped to fundraise to pay for the medication and in country transportation. Rick's next trips are in February and May 2025.

Kairos supported Grace Covenant Presbyterian's participation in the Good Faith Network. In 2025, Kairos will provide half of the required financial support of the Good Faith Network from Grace Covenant.

Plastic Bag Recycled Mats: We invited Sarah Stolberg of Bed of Bags to join us for our Workshop Sunday to assist her in her mission to create sleeping mats for our unhoused neighbors. Since then, a small group has continued to create *plarn* for her. It takes her about 9-10 hours to make the mats, with only about one hour needed to croquet it. Sarah Armbrecht organized a service

event with high school students at Johnson County Community College donating *plarn* to this effort.

Soles for Souls: GCPC is a collections site for used shoes diverting waste from our landfills while providing shoes to those in need. This year we collected 940 pairs of shoes!

We use our budget to donate to various causes that forward our peace, justice and environmental mission including Sustainable Sanctuary Coalition, Kansas Interfaith Alliance, Good Faith Network, Presbyterians for Earth Care, Bread for the World, Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, and Presbyterians Mission.

Most important: We thank the congregation of GCPC for their dedication to earth care. Many groups strongly encouraged those attending meals and gatherings to bring their own durable table setting. The congregation has embraced composting, making the bucket available when cleaning up after meals and in the kitchen for consistent use. We particularly want to thank Jane Knoche, Mikki Walker, Nelson Townsend, and Liz Chandler for their dedication for all the ways they promote projects that demonstrate caring for others while caring for our earth. Please forgive if we missed others because there are many. We see and do take credit on our Earth Care Congregation application for all the ways you support this effort.

Our planning session for 2025 was January 11, and we are excited to share our goals and planned activities with the congregation. If you are passionate about social justice issues, concerned about the environment or just want to be a part of helping others who are, we would love to have you join us. We meet on the third Wednesday of the month via zoom at 5:30pm and always welcome new members.

Submitted by: Rick Randolph, Co-Moderator, Christine Caseres, Co-Moderator, Jo Randolph, Patty Smithson, Jane Knoche, and Kelly Scarbrough.

Welcoming Team

The Welcome Team continued throughout the year staffing a volunteer at the sanctuary entrance to identify and provide a special welcome to visitors. Team members are Chris Binkley, Lynn Long, Ginny Wirtz and Linda Rosine. Follow-up notes are written by Rosemary Gibson, providing visitors leave their address. As a team, we do not have meetings. I send out the schedule for six months and if there is a conflict, the team members switch Sundays. This has worked out so far.

We had many visitors wanting to join the church this year. I organized a New Members meeting on Sunday, August 18. Several Elders and Deacons attended to provide information about the church. The following visitors attended Jane Allen, Keith Langabee, Patrick Payne, Aaron and Sarah Armbricht. They attended the Session meeting on September 16, 2024. They were introduced to the congregation on September 22, 2024.

They were featured in the GCPC November newsletter.

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



Armbrechts



Keith



Patrick

A This is Grace class was scheduled for January 19, 2025, with 6–8 people possible new members.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Williams

Marketing & Communications

This report provides an overview of the current state of marketing and communications at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church (GCPC) with the goal to ensure alignment with the church's mission, vision, and growth objectives while fostering engagement among current members and reaching new audiences effectively.

As a support ministry, volunteers and church staff create marketing and communication materials for services and ministries at GCPC to make visitors and members feel welcomed and included in a congregation that is very open, inviting, loving and dedicated in serving God. Through a variety of communication platforms, we welcome and inform members and non-members about the mission of our church and promote GCPC to the surrounding community as an engaged, inclusive, caring, and faithful congregation.

Our online reach to the community is an important part of our mission. The procedures for marketing our online worship services, through Facebook and Zoom, continues to require a lot of communication with office staff and teams (*music, tech, etc.*) to share updated information on our website, and through church email publications and reminders on social media channels.

- A website page for each worship service is created with details of the service, and graphics around the theme of the service are posted each week. Each website page contains: PDFs of the bulletin, announcements, children's bulletin and any applicable special inserts; scripture passages; sermon title; groups leading music, including special music; Facebook, Zoom, online giving and attendance portal links; Christian Education details if shared in advance. Website pages are archived each month and held available for viewing on the church website for two months.
- A website home page spotlight image guides viewers to the online worship page for the weekly service and any special services. They also are created for special events, concerts, newsletter and mission programs.
- Facebook posts are shared at least 4-5 times a week advertising the services and giving links to the online worship details. Instagram posts and stories are also shared at least 4-5 times a week, advertising the services and giving link to the online worship details.
- Excerpts from services are often shared on social media platforms showcasing choir performances, sermons or other activities.

Marketing also includes sharing photos/videos on social media of worship, activities by children and youth, photos from online worship, and sharing PCUSA messaging/images, which were timely for events happening in the country.

Every Sunday, online worship is monitored in real-time on Facebook by a series of messages guiding viewers through the worship service through the comments section, sharing announcements, welcoming and giving thanks, encouraging prayer requests, asking viewers to say hello, sharing details on adult education and special events, etc. This engagement gives another layer to the interaction between viewers of the service and the church. It helped to continue to build community for those who cannot attend (*for whatever reason*) in-person worship. Average viewership is 19-25 on Facebook, and 9-12 on Zoom (approximately). The Facebook moderator is volunteer Kim Krueger.

Digital Communication Channels

- Website: Updated weekly with worship information, events, and announcements. Monthly visitors: 1,400 (average) Most frequently visited pages: About Us, Worship, Calendar and Newsletters
- Email Newsletters: Sent weekly to 432 subscribers with an average open rate of 62.1%
- Social media: (2024 trend: Most followers were active around 5pm on Mondays.)
 - Facebook: 1138 followers; 71.5% women; 28.5% men; Majority 55+
 - **65+; women 29.4%, men 10%**
 - 55 - 64: women 12.2%, men 5.7%
 - 45 - 54: women 10.5%, men 4%
 - 35 – 44: women 13%, men 5.3%
 - 25 – 34: women 5.1%, 3.5%
 - 18 – 24: women 1.2%, men 0.1%
 - Instagram: 203 followers; 70.4% women, 29.6% men; Majority 35+
 - 65+; women 17.1%, men 6.2%
 - 55 - 64: women 13.7%, men 7.5%

- 45 - 54: women 9.6%, men 7.5%
- **35 – 44: women 17.8%, men 6.2%**
- 25 – 34: women 8.2%, 4.1%
- 18 – 24: women 2.1%, men 0%
- YouTube subscribers 77

Miscellaneous Marketing and Communications Tasks

- Convey information and details about our church life through the monthly newsletter *Grace Notes*, weekly email on Wednesdays (Midweek Announcements), Thursday worship email, weekly bulletin and other various communication and emails as needed. Work to share calendar of events to congregation to encourage participation.
- Create a variety of posters, brochures, postcards, logos, T-shirts, flyers, etc. advertising special events and programs in the church.
- Special landing pages on the website for VBS registration, small group event sign-ups, WORKshop Sunday, etc.
- In addition to sharing/creating branding about special events that each ministry group of the church have scheduled, marketing and communications develop and implement church branding graphics for social media and print marketing campaign for major seasonal events such as Lent, Holy Week, Easter, VBS, Generosity campaign, Advent, Christmas services.

2025 Marketing and Communication Plan Initiatives

1. SEO – Search Engine Optimization: Optimize the church website with local search terms to improve visibility for potential new members.
2. Confirm all photos and graphics have alternative text (“alt-text”) an accessibility tool for describing an image, graphic or visual on a webpage.
3. Enhance website calendar to share more detailed information and links.
4. Audit church website to update photos, content, and enhance communication links.
5. Create more reels and short video content that highlight the work of the church and share via social media and on the website.
6. Work with various volunteers to scan photo history of church and archive digitally.
7. A streetside (College Boulevard) banner stand needs to be re-installed so we can use it to drive guests to the church.

Improving Communication for Better Engagement

As we reflect on the past year, we celebrate the incredible work and dedication of our church staff, moderators, and team leaders. Your efforts have brought meaningful ministry, fellowship, and service opportunities to our congregation and community. **To ensure these initiatives reach their full potential**, it is vital that the Marketing and Communications team receives timely and detailed information about your plans and activities. Sharing your updates well in advance allows us to effectively communicate these opportunities to the congregation through our various channels, creating greater awareness and participation. We kindly ask all ministry leaders to prioritize consistent communication regarding your events, initiatives, and projects. Whether it’s providing event details, promotional content, or updates, your collaboration enables us to amplify your message and keep our congregation engaged and informed.

Let’s work together to continue sharing the good news of what God is doing through Grace

Covenant Presbyterian Church. Thank you for your commitment to fostering clear and timely communication as we move into the coming year!

Marketing and Communications initiatives are implemented by volunteer Kim Krueger and staff member Patrick Bell.

Administration

Personnel Team

2024 has seen one transition after another.

In January we drafted a new position description and formed a search committee for the newly created Director of Christian Education position, and the committee's work concluded in September with the hiring of our wonderful new DCE Emily Nelson Dixon. Huge thanks to committee members Erin Frye, Barbara Douglas, Chris Krug, Bill Turner, and Kevin Mason.

In February Karen Wright agreed to transition from our bridge pastor to our interim pastor. She and Session are doing phenomenal work in this interim period preparing the congregation for the future.

In October we updated (with Rebecca Prater's insight and guidance) our Director of Music Ministries position description and formed a search committee to find our next Interim Director. Paul Bruns, Linda Dover, Jami Howe, Terri Monrad, and David Sutherland are staffing that committee.

In December we said farewell to Lindsay Callender in her role as Youth Coordinator. Lindsay took the reins of the youth group and youth program after Miles McDonald's departure and skillfully guided those ministries to the safe harbor of our new DCE Emily. Please say thank you to Lindsay for all her efforts with and on behalf of our youth.

In other business in 2024, Personnel Team:

- Considered and recommended to Session for approval a sabbatical policy for director-level staff to fit with a growing trend among peer churches;
- With the help of Financial Administrator Tara Hyder, navigated the substantial changes to the Board of Pensions benefits program to ensure benefits continuity for staff members; and
- Engaged in a Herculean task (led by Chris Krug) to review, update, revise, and format Grace Covenant's Operations Manual including the Manual of Personnel Policies.

Finally, a quick note about our staff members. Each one of them serves this church faithfully and helps make this congregation the loving, welcoming, caring place it is.

This year in particular, Financial Administrator Tara Hyder has gone above and beyond. She has managed the significant changes to the Board of Pensions benefits plans (as mentioned above), has organized and participated in an “audit swap” with Knox Presbyterian where she audited Knox’s books and in return finance staff at Knox audited ours, and has successfully persuaded some of our partners, most prominently Johnson County Community College, to contribute funds to Grace Covenant in recognition of their use of our facilities.

And Church Administrator Patrick Bell has done essential work during this interim/transition period, first in line to manage and care for our facility; keeper and organizer of church communications, policies, and procedures; and essential link to and repository of our organizational history.

To all our staff—Patrick Bell, Carolyn Chaffin, Carrie DeVries, Linda Dover, Jill Endaya-Allen, Tara Hyder, Emily Nelson Dixon, Rebecca Prater, Jason Turner, Rev. Karen Wright—thank you. We could not do it without you.

Personnel Team

Meredith Watson, Terri Monrad, Chris Krug, Anne Stroud, Kevin Mason (moderator)
Bill Turner, Johnnie Baker (elder liaisons)
Rev. Karen Wright (staff representative)

Facilities Team

The Facilities Team thoughtfully planned for 2024 with the hopes of completing some of the items on our 15-year plan for this year. January 15th changed some of the plans because of a water pipe break which damaged some HVAC systems and walls. The planned replacement of the fire detection system moved ahead as planned. However, connecting 2024 electronics to 1990 electronics caused the elevator to stop working March 15. During the spring and summer, several rooms were painted. This is in preparation for our 2025 Anniversary. We continued our work around the outside as our mission to our neighbors by trimming trees, planting flower beds, and general upkeep on the outside. We continue with the mission of this church to gather, equip, and send by keeping our building and grounds well kept. We work to provide an inviting inside to encourage people to come inside so we can continue the ministry of GCPC. Finally, we encourage everyone to go back out into the community and beyond to share our mission.

The Facilities Team

Liz Chandler, moderator; Harold Farren, Dave Peck, Cal Sweeten, Ric Cummings, Chris Dixon, Chelly King, Steve Becher, Kirk Heer, Paul Bruns (Elder liaison), Patrick Bell (staff liaison)

Generosity Team

The 2024 Generosity Team was co-moderated by Elder Andrew Sellers and Jane Knoche, with the support of Kim Krueger, Keith Langabee, and Rev. Karen Wright. The team convened regularly

from July through December to fulfill its mission of encouraging faithful stewardship within our congregation.

From March to December 2024, **Pledge Fulfillment Charts** were published in newsletters and bulletins to communicate progress toward the year's pledge goals. A **Generosity Bulletin Board** was also introduced to share this information visually. In August, we collaborated with Tara Hyder to send letters to members who had fulfilled less than 50% of their pledge, inviting feedback and conversation.

The **2025 Stewardship Campaign** was launched with the theme "*Generosity Through the Generations*." Kim Krueger designed campaign graphics, pledge cards, and communications to reflect this theme. Members were initially encouraged to prayerfully consider increasing their pledges by 7% over 2024 levels. The campaign featured five weekly *Stewardship Moments* presented by various church members, highlighting the importance of giving. A tree graphic, part of our generosity logo, symbolized pledge progress. A poster displayed on the Generosity Bulletin Board showcased this graphic, with the tree gradually filled with color to represent progress.

On **September 29**, we hosted our second **Budget Town Hall**, which included a Hy-Vee brunch funded by the Generosity Team and supplemented by juice and coffee. RSVPs included 92 adults and 17 children. Our Deacons and Congregational Care Team served food and drinks, and members supported our Earth Care efforts by using compostable plates. Leftovers were donated to Safehome. During the meeting, we emphasized the core Grace Covenant values—*Gather, Equip, Send*—and included a narrative explanation of the budget, with team leads sharing their activities and results. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive.

For the **2025 Pledge Drive**, we tested the online portal to streamline pledging. Each completed pledge received an immediate online confirmation and thank-you message. Rollover pledges were not available this year. To achieve 100% pledge submissions by Grace Covenant members, Generosity Team members contacted about ten members who had not submitted their pledges, leading to meaningful and positive conversations.

The Finance Team proposed a **2025 budget** of \$874,000, with \$797,900 anticipated as pledged income budget. In the final weeks of the campaign, Pastor Karen encouraged members to consider adding \$10 per week to their pledge to help close the gap. As of the campaign's conclusion, we received **130 submitted pledges totaling \$717,471.16**, achieving **89.9% of our pledged income goal**.

In January, handwritten thank-you notes will be sent by Session and Generosity Team members to every pledging household. These notes will reflect our immense gratitude for the congregation's faithful and generous commitment. **Thank you, Grace Covenant, for your steadfast generosity and support.**

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Knoche, Generosity Team Co-Lead

Finance Team

The GCPC Operating Manual states that the Finance Team has four major functions:

1. Soliciting funds through the annual pledge drive and special events
2. Developing a church-wide budget for Session approval
3. Overseeing general accounting and reporting responsibilities
4. Fostering the growth of the endowment fund and managing its operations

Finance Team members include Beth Lillian (Moderator), Tara Hyder, Karen Wright, Tom Stroud, Aaron Soule, Donna Heer, Jim Byrd and Mac Fechtling.

I am not able to give a full accounting of 2024 year end numbers, because they are not yet finalized. However, preliminary reports indicate that we will finish close to break-even, despite about \$125,000 in unexpected facility repairs, including a water damage and a broken elevator. There were also about \$10,000 more in pledges than were expected in 2024!

For 2025, the budget is not yet finalized and approved by Session. We hope to have that information for you in the next month or so.

The great news for Revenue is that we have 130 pledges totaling \$717,471 to put into the revenue budget! This is an increase of over \$100,000 in pledges, which is amazing! Thank you to the congregation for this confidence in what God is doing at GCPC!

In terms of expenses, the way the budget process works is that we ask each Team to submit a budget request for what they feel their Team will need in the coming year for their ministries. The Finance Team then rolls those requests up into a full Operating Budget for the next year, and that goes to Session for discussion, revision and approval.

Historically, this budget “ask” is usually more than what is actually spent by the end of the year. We also have available what is called “Restricted Funds”, which are donations designated for specific purposes. For example, donations to enable Youth to go on summer trips. These funds can be used to supplement the operating revenue and expense budget. The biggest portion of the expense budget is for Personnel, and the most challenging part of the expenses in 2025 will be Facility needs.

I hope you feel the same energy and blessing of God at GCPC that I do! Thank you for your generosity in helping GCPC fulfill its mission, and for allowing me to serve as your Finance Team Moderator.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Lillian

GCPC: A vibrant PC(USA) congregation, caring for our community and each other

Our Core Values

Jesus Christ is the HEAD of the Church

God has put all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The church's life and mission are a joyful participation in Christ's ongoing life and work. (PCUSA Book of Order F-1.02)

Christ with our HEADS

We Are Equipping through Education:

- Theologically curious, intellectually honest, spiritually growing
- Multi-generational
- Space for diverse opinions

Christ with our HEARTS

We are Worshipping Creatively:

- Immersed with music and other arts
- Embracing various styles, abilities, and ages
- Compelling, imaginative, relevant

Christ with our CENTER

We are Embracing Diversity:

- No place for discrimination
- LGBTQ+ affirming
- Ecumenical and interfaith openness

Christ with our HANDS

We Are Acting in Faith:

- Service to the community
- Social justice advocacy
- Vibrant, caring, engaged

Christ with our FEET

We are Sharing Faith Openly:

- Committed to following Christ
- Spreading news of Christ's transforming work and word
- Sharing our stories and God's impact in our lives



GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



