



GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship — December 22, 2024

*“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that
Some have entertained angels without knowing it.” — Hebrews 13:2*

WELCOME TO WORSHIP! Thank you for worshipping with us today.

ELDER ON DUTY: Kristy Shaw

HEAD USHERS: Dave & Vicki Peck

HEARING ASSIST DEVICES ARE AVAILABLE. Please ask at the sound booth.

NURSERY CARE is available during worship, located in Room 22 in the east wing.

RECORD YOUR ATTENDANCE AT TODAY'S WORSHIP SERVICE WITH OUR VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE

PAD: Click this link: <https://bit.ly/GCPCattendance>, or scan the QR Code below.



CONTACTING STAFF: The office is open 8am to 4pm, M–F. To reach a staff member by e-mail:

- **Rev. Karen Wright (Interim Pastor):** karen.wright@gcpc.org
- **Emily Nelson Dixon (Dir. of Christian Education):** emily.dixon@gcpc.org
- **Rebecca Prater (Dir. of Music Ministries)** rebecca.prater@gcpc.org
- **Lindsay Callender (Youth Coordinator):** lindsaymichelle0130@gmail.com
- **Patrick Bell (Office Admin.):** patrick.bell@gcpc.org
- **Tara Hyder (Finance Admin.):** finance@gcpc.org
- **Jason Turner (Audio/Technical Dir.):** Please e-mail both darktrainfilms@gmail.com & gcpc.media@gmail.com. If you need a video or audio played in worship, please send the link to Jason on the Wednesday prior to Sunday's worship.

“Pray for one another” — James 5:15

We encourage you to remember the following in prayer:

All Grieving the Death of a Loved One

Surgeries/Hospitalizations/Illnesses: Cal Sweeten, David Schesser, Pam Hearn

Cancer Treatment: Harold Farren, Katie Rickley, David Schesser, Kevin Johnson

Aging Challenges: Lee Will

Military Service: David Zak, C.J. Bradley, Seth Lorimer, Mary E. Johnson II, Alanna Funk, Shannon Lorimer, Clara Frye, Eliana Wilson. **All veterans, deployed military, and reservists.**

Our Mission Co-Workers: Jeff and Christi Boyd in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Leslie Vogel, PC (USA) Regional Liaison for Guatemala and Mexico.

Peace and Relief Workers; Unemployed and Underemployed; Families Struggling with Separation and Divorce; Individuals Struggling with Depression; Those Contemplating Suicide and Those Left Behind.

Heartland Presbytery Partnership of Prayer: Kaw Prairie Community, Lenexa, KS; Heartland Presbytery Committee on Representation; support staff and volunteers of our churches

(If you have a prayer request you would like to include in the bulletin, please contact the church office at office@gcpc.org, or send to gcpc.prayers@gmail.com.)

SPOTLIGHT

REMINDER: The church offices will be closed Wednesday, December 25, and Thursday, December 26, for the Christmas holiday.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES AT GRACE COVENANT:

Join us for candlelight and carols as we celebrate Jesus' birth on Tuesday, December 24.

5pm Worship — Bring the whole family to this heartwarming service featuring our children and youth as they guide us to the manger with Joseph, Mary, and the newborn Savior. This year, we are sharing *The Birds of Bethlehem* by Tomie dePaola, a fresh and inventive Nativity story told from a bird's-eye view. This enchanting tale captures the awe and anticipation of Christ's birth as the birds of Bethlehem gather to share the news and embark on a journey to witness the miraculous event. Kids can join in the celebration by lighting their own glow stick candles to sing "Silent Night" with the congregation. Music will be offered by the Joy! Singers and Celebration! Choir.

7:45pm Prelude Music — Music by Linda Dover, organ and additional musicians.

8pm Worship — This beautiful, traditional service of lessons and carols will celebrate the tenderness and joy of Jesus' birth. The telling of the story will culminate with the lighting of candles as we sing "Silent Night" led by Christopher Callender, guitar. Choral music will be provided by Chancel and Exaltation! Singers and instrumentalists.

GCPC WEEKEND CRAFTERS will be hosting their annual winter craft retreat on Friday, January 17, 6–9pm and again Saturday, January 18, 9am–4pm. We welcome anyone to join for parts of all of the retreat. RSVP details will be available soon.

B-I-N-G-O-! You won't want to miss out on another amazing evening of GCPC Bingo. Mark your calendars for Friday, January 31, 2025! Liz Chandler has agreed once again to be our illustrious caller. Something new this year will be a delicious lasagna dinner, served before Bingo starts. The meal is graciously being covered by an anonymous donor. Make sure to get signed up before and after church services on January 19 and 26!

WE'RE HIRING! Career opportunity at GCPC - Interim Director of Music Ministries. The Interim Director of Music Ministries will be the driving force behind our church's diverse and dynamic music program. The person filling this role will have the opportunity to nurture spiritual growth through music, coordinate various choirs and ensembles, and create unforgettable worship experiences for our congregation. JOB DESCRIPTION and full details at gcpc.org/careers.

GENEROSITY THROUGH THE GENERATIONS PLEDGE UPDATE: As of December 10, 2024, we have received \$705,011, which is 88.4% of our \$797,900 goal! The Generosity Team has been reaching out to members who have not yet pledged, and we have received wonderful responses and positive interactions. Your generosity has resulted in \$125,000 more in our 2025 pledges compared to 2024. This dedication embodies the Scripture, "His faithfulness continues through all generations." With your continued support, we can reach our 2025 goal together. If you would like to help us reach our goal, pledge increase cards are available at the back of the sanctuary. We understand this may not be feasible for everyone, and we deeply appreciate any level of contribution you can make. Thank you for your unwavering commitment and faith!

THE LONGEST NIGHT, SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE: Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church warmly invites you to our "**Longest Night**" **TONIGHT at 7pm**. We recognize that the holiday season can be particularly challenging for those experiencing grief, loss, illness, or hardship. While many celebrate, some may feel a deeper sense of loneliness. **Join us for a time of music, scripture, silence, and prayers.** This service offers a space to connect with God in comforting ways, honoring loved ones and sharing hope, as we turn toward welcoming the Christ Child. Those we love are never far from us, even though at the holidays it can feel that way. Bring a photo or remembrance item, and experience God's love and find solace in community.

JOIN US AS WE MARK OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A SPECIAL TEA PARTY on Sunday, January 12, at 2pm, in Heartland Hall. **The Tea Party is open to ALL AGES.** Bring your own tea cup or feel free to enjoy one provided by our committee. When you RSVP, please let us know if you'll be bringing your own cup or will want to use a cup provided by the committee. The Tea Party

Planning Committee will serve finger sandwiches and beverages, and we invite you to contribute by bringing a small plate of bite-sized desserts or treats to share. **RSVP how many are attending, and sign up to bring a treat at gcpc.org/teaparty.** We look forward to celebrating this special milestone together!

DIY MINI GOLF EVENT! Join Us for a 40th Anniversary DIY Mini Golf Night on Saturday, February 8, at 7pm in Heartland Hall. Gather your friends, family, or co-workers and join the fun at GCPC's DIY Mini Golf event! Design and build your own creative mini golf hole and compete for prizes in design and golf scores. Each team (*up to 5 members*) will create a unique golf hole using a 3' x 8' space. Setup must be completed by 7pm. After the course is ready, enjoy a round of mini golf, light snacks, and plenty of laughs. Don't miss this chance to showcase your creativity and skills! Register now at gcpc.org/golf to reserve your spot! Registration ends on Saturday, February 1.

WORSHIP IS THE CENTRAL, SHARED EXPERIENCE where we praise God and are transformed and renewed to serve. In worship, Grace Covenant has welcomed 21 new members in the last year and a half. If you would like more information or if you are thinking about joining GCPC, come to "This is Grace" class on Sunday, January 12. Please contact Kathy Williams at kathykaskewilliams@gmail.com or call 913-485-1776 if you plan to attend.

ADULT

ADVENT ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CONCLUDES TODAY AT 10:45AM ROOM 3. Rev. Karen Wright leads the final class, following the long journey to Christmas through a series of lessons based on "On the Way to Bethlehem" by Rob Fuquay

THE NEW YEAR IS ALMOST HERE AND HOPE YOU'VE HAD TIME TO DO SOME READING! Page Turners will meet at Johnnie Baker's house, Thursday, January 2, at 7pm to discuss *Wild Women and the Blues* by Denny Bryce. Johnnie's address is 8608 W. 152nd Terr., Overland Park. (Carpooling suggested — end of cul-de-sac! Also adjacent driveway on left is available that night.) Please RSVP to 913-219-3893 or johnniebkr@gmail.com, or you can use the Bookclubs app or Facebook to RSVP.

AS THE PAGE TURNS BOOK GROUP will meet January 8 at 1:30 p.m. in Room 3 at the church. The book selection is *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus. Please join the group for discussion and fellowship.

CHILDREN

ATW, MUSIC & SUNDAY SCHOOL: All are welcome to join our Sunday school programming today. If you need further information, please check the Children's Bookcase outside the sanctuary for details.

MISSION

DECEMBER DONATION PARTNER AND COMMUNION OFFERING RECIPIENT: This month's offering will support the Argentine Baby Closet at Argentine United Presbyterian Church. This ministry is in its 38th year of providing support to families in Kansas City, KS, and Grace Covenant has been one of its faithful partners for most of this time. The Baby Closet serves 45–50 families each month with diapers, wipes, clothing and other basics for infants and toddlers, including sleepers, blankets, burp cloths, books and other baby equipment (when available). This year the items most needed are:

- diapers — sizes 4 & 5
- shoes/boots — sizes 3-7
- formula — especially Similac (blue lid)
- toddler finger foods (Puffs, yogurt bites, etc.)
- new or gently used warm clothes — sizes 18 months to 2T

UPDATE ON THE GOOD FAITH NETWORK: As we mentioned earlier this year, the Good Faith Network is composed of faith-based organizations and individuals who seek to foster a more just society. For the past several years the Network has focused on the need for a mental health crisis center, the need for affordable housing and the need to respond to homelessness. This past November the Network members voted to add a fourth area of need related to elder care. If you are interested in learning more about the Good Faith Network please contact one of the following: Dave Pack: djpack.12645@gmail.com, Don Wilson: donjoywilson@gmail.com, Eileen Thomson: esthomson@gmail.com

MISSION

GENEROSITY FULFILLMENT 2024 UPDATE — WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS: We have an early December update on our fulfillment numbers. Our team is humbled by the enduring generosity and commitment of our members — 94.5% of submitted pledges and 88.5% of rollover pledges have been received. Wow! **We are appreciative of everyone who has contributed to Grace Covenant.** Here is our giving progress shown by numbers of pledges:

Submitted Pledges (114)	March 31st	June 17 th	Dec. 7th	
0-25% fulfilled	76	37	10	
26-50% fulfilled	20	56	0	
51-75% fulfilled	1	4	5	
76-100% fulfilled	17	17	99	
\$603,174	\$214,344	\$293,452	\$570,211	

Rollover Pledges (16)	March 31st	June 17 th	Dec. 7th
0-25% fulfilled	10	6	4
26-50% fulfilled	5	8	3
51-75% fulfilled	0	1	0
76-100% fulfilled	1	1	9
\$34,662	\$6,668	\$11,175	\$30,376

Four groupings are used to show giving progress and calendar relationship. They are 0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-100%. Each pledge falls into one of these groups.

Upcoming Events and Services

The Longest Night Service
Sunday, December 22, 7pm

Christmas Eve Worship Services
Tuesday, December 24th
Children & Family Service
5pm Worship
Traditional Service
7:45pm Prelude Music
8:00pm Worship

Church Office Closed - Christmas
Wednesday, December 25
Thursday, December 26

Office Closed - New Year's Day
Wednesday, January 1, 2025

VBS 2025 Registration Begins Online
Wednesday, January 1

Epiphany Star Sunday
Sunday, January 5, 9:30am
Reception for Rebecca Prater, 10:45am

GCPC 40th Anniversary Event
Intergenerational Afternoon Tea Party
Sunday, January 12, 2-4pm
"RSVP at gcpc.org/teaparty"

Annual Church Meeting
Sunday, January 26, 10:30am

Bingo & Lasagna Night!
Friday, January 31, 5:30-7:30pm

GCPC 40th Anniversary Event
Intergenerational DIY Mini Golf
Saturday, February 8, 7pm
"Sign up to play at gcpc.org/golf"

Covenant Group Brunch Potluck
Sunday, February 23, 10:30am

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
Tuesday, March 4, 5:30-7:30pm

Lent Begins
Wednesday, March 5

GCPC 40th Anniversary Event
Craft Fair
Saturday, March 29, 9am-2pm
"Seeking vendors through February 15"

Trivia Night!
Saturday, April 5

Easter Egg Hunt
Saturday, April 5, 10am

Holy Week
Palm Sunday, April 12, 9:30am
Maundy Thursday, April 17, 7:30pm
Good Friday, April 18, 7:30pm
Easter Sunday, April 20, 9:30am

Vacation Bible School
"Road Trip - On the Go with God!"
June 2 - June 6, 9am-Noon
"Registration begins January 1"

GCPC 40th Anniversary Celebration
Brunch Following
Sunday, June 22, 9:30am



GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Full details on these events and services are shared in the midweek email announcements, bulletin, newsletter, and on Facebook and Instagram.

For an online church calendar, visit gcpc.org/calendar