

Introduction to worship at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church

By Rev. Mitch Trigger

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Before beginning today's online worship, we'd like to share a few thoughts with everyone.

All during this past week, the staff and leadership of Grace Covenant have been in dialogue with each other, with our church colleagues both here in our presbytery and around the nation, and with experts whenever possible. We're always felt blessed to have a number of members who work in many areas of medicine, but we were especially thankful to find out this week that Lisa Cox, Ph.D., is a professor of Public Health at the University of Kansas School of Medicine. The collective wisdom of these many sources is what brought our decision as a Session and as your pastors, to err on the side of safety and care for our members and only have worship together in this online setting. It really makes no difference whether a church is "mega-sized" or the smallest of congregations, we have all been affected by this health crisis and have turned to having worship in this online setting.

If there is a silver lining to all of this, it's simply that it has given us all pause to appreciate what we may have taken for granted at times – our communities of family, of friends, and this family of faith known as Grace Covenant.

Deacon Julie Webb wrote this beautiful message to her covenant group, saying, "As we travel these uncharted waters, I hope we can all remember that we have each other and that God is watching over each of us. (*John 16:33* reads) 'I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.' Breathe in. Breathe out. We will be there for each other. ***Privilege is the distance between disruption and devastation.*** We are privileged to have one another and our GCPC family. During this time try to think of those around you that may not be so blessed."

Deacon Barb Brown commented on the many conversations she had by phone with members, "There is a palpable spirit of gratitude and almost a feeling of a life 'reset' button after the events of this past week."

And finally, yesterday Elder Julie Passet shared these thoughts about our worship today: "While tomorrow might not be 'perfect' or 'as hoped', it **is** a tomorrow and for that right now we should be thankful. We are all navigating through unprecedented situations, not knowing what the right thing to do is or how things will turn out. But in extraordinary times like these, we must look beyond what is the norm and what we are comfortable with, and step out of our boundaries to do what seems to be the right thing to help us all."

Let us now worship together.