



GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Celebrating 40 Years
on June 22, 2025!

*Join us as we reflect upon
God's faithfulness throughout
our church's journey.*



Photos from 1987



GRACE NOTES

June 2024
Vol 42, Nbr 6

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.
Overland Park, KS 66210
913-345-1256
office@gcpc.org
gcpc.org

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

Visit gcpc.org for links!

What is the story we tell?

I have heard from a few of you some of the stories of your experience at Grace Covenant. I look forward to more of them. In the past few weeks, we have experienced stories of the youth and children as they have led and participated in worship. We have also seen the generational nature of Grace Covenant as Wyatt was baptized and his grandmother was the elder who presented him. We have heard stories of new beginnings and Pentecost. We have heard Isaiah say "Here I am, send me."

We will begin a summer sermon series on June 23rd that will span the entire summer, entitled "Telling Our Story." We will spend three weeks looking at lament. This is to give time to grieve what has been lost or has never come to fruition. A key element of lament is that in bringing complaints and sorrow to God, there is always a turn to hope and a reminder of God's promises to us. We will participate in some interactive elements to share laments such as ripping cloth, using dissolving paper, and making a banner out of our laments.

Once we have time to grieve parts of our stories, we will look at how God is at work re-forming and re-shaping us. How are we molded like the potter molds clay? How are we transformed from the inside out, and how do we have the courage to make the changes needed in moving forward? Finally, we will ponder what God is calling Grace Covenant to be in the next chapter of her story. What does it mean for us to be gathered as a community of faith? How are we being equipped for ministry and what is the Spirit sending us out to do in the world today?

Our stories point out what we value and we can learn a lot about ourselves from them. As we gather stories and memorabilia for the 40th Anniversary – Save the Date for June 22, 2025 – and as we seek to begin the mission study part of the transition, stories can help identify what are the core values of the congregation and what God has called GCPC to do in the world and what God is calling GCPC to do and to be in the coming years ahead.

Grace and Peace — Rev. Karen

karen.wright@gcpc.org
913-345-1256, ext. #10



Transition Update

To answer some questions about the process, a PNC has not yet been elected. There are steps in the process to work through before we get there.

We hope to begin the Mission Study piece this summer and are talking with the Committee on Ministry for Heartland Presbytery about it. This will involve a team of GCPC members who will be tasked with gathering information from the congregation and in a nutshell, writing the current story of the congregation. After that work is done the PNC is elected and we move into the next phase of the process.

Please continue to pray for GCPC and prayerfully consider how you might be involved with the Mission Study or later with the PNC.



SAVE
the
DATE

**GRACE COVENANT CELEBRATES
40 YEARS OF MINISTRY!!!
JUNE 22, 2025**

Clerk's Corner

Your Session met on May 20 at 7pm. One major topic of discussion was changes to the PCUSA Board of Pensions which will impact how much we are contributing to any/all Pastors' salaries starting in 2025. This is an item which is beyond our control, but the Session and Personnel Team are aware of it and will include it in future budgeting.

So far, our finances for 2024 are looking pretty good, but our aging facility continues to provide challenges.

Pressing issues include HVAC, water heaters, the elevator, the garbage disposal and dishwasher on the lower level, and building security. We appreciate the efforts of our facilities team (especially Liz Chandler) to stay on top of these issues. We are discussing options for managing these expenses including loans, funds from our endowment, a capital campaign, or a single year budget push. No decisions have been made in this area; if members have suggestions for how we might manage these large expenses, please share those thoughts with an elder (or the entire Session) in conversation or writing.

The Session approved a motion from the Personnel Team to establish a Sabbatical Policy for non-clergy, director-level staff. We are delighted that Rebecca will be able to take advantage of a sabbatical opportunity this summer after all of her years of service at Grace Covenant. We also approved a building use form which all non-GCPC groups which use Grace Covenant will be required to complete. Regular users (i.e. woodworkers, AA) will be able to complete the form seasonally and not for every individual use.

The nominating team is currently in the process of calling our next class of Elders. Please prayerfully consider whether God is calling you to serve Grace Covenant in this way for the next year. While it is a challenging job, it is also very rewarding.

As always, feel free to talk to any member of Session if you have thoughts about the governance of our congregation.

—Melanie Townsend, Clerk of Session

MUSIC NOTES

MUSIC IN WORSHIP

June 2nd – 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Organ led. Chancel & Exaltation! Singers anthem "Keep God's Light" by Mark Patterson with Jill Endaya-Allen, djembe. Andrew Alka, solo.

June 9th – VBS Led Worship

Our crew from Vacation Bible School will be leading worship. The theme this year was: "Camp Firelight: A Summer Adventure with God."

June 16th – 4th Sunday after Pentecost

Organ led. Act II, a 24-member ensemble from EncoreKC!, will sing in worship

June 23rd – 5th Sunday after Pentecost

Music leadership by Praise Team

June 30th – 6th Sunday after Pentecost

Organ led. Chancel & Exaltation! Singers anthem "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" arr. Craig Courtney with Donna Heer, violin.

REBECCA PRATER'S SABBATICAL

Rebecca will be taking a 6-week sabbatical from Sunday, June 16 – Sunday, July 28, as presented and approved by Personnel Team, and authorized by the Session.

She will begin her sabbatical by attending Presbyterian Association of Musicians Worship and Music Conference at Montreat Conference Center. After that week, Rebecca will spend some days in visioning for the music ministry and spend a good amount of time in days of Sabbath.

Rebecca would like to thank GCPC, for the gift of days for education and retreat, for the opportunity to spend time to look ahead, and for days of rest and renewal.

*"The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you."
(2 Timothy 4:22) – Rebecca J. Prater*

(On right, 2024 Bell Fest Photos)



Children's Team



Camp Firelight Vacation Bible School

VBS is here! The church noise and activity level will pick up on June 3–7, 9am–12 noon as your campers and volunteer staff enjoy a week at Camp Firelight. Thank you to all of our amazing planning committee, volunteers and donation helpers. We are excited to help the children learn our camp call out *"Whenever I am afraid, I put my trust in you!"* (Psalm 56:3)



Join us in worship on Sunday, June 9, 9:30am as we share some of our songs and stories from VBS. Following worship, stop by Heartland Hall to see some of our work on display and perhaps you can engage in an activity or two from VBS too.

SMASH!

Our SMASH program concluded for the 2023–24 school year on May 19. We discussed how Samuel listened to God and how we can listen to God too. Our SMASH program will be back in August with a kick off water play event. We hope everyone has a fantastic summer!



SERVICE - MUSIC - ARTS - SPORTS - HANG-OUT

Children's Events at a glance

June 3–7 Vacation Bible School
June 9 Join our VBS participants as we share our VBS experiences during worship
Happy Summer everyone!

Volunteer Opportunities for 2024–25 School Year

As summer begins, our Children's team begins planning for the new school year. We are in need of volunteers in several areas:

- Sunday school teachers for our youngest kiddos. We'll offer a class for ages 2–3 and 4–5.
- Our elementary kiddos will continue with our Workshop rotation which requires:
 - Shepherds to accompany the kids to the rotation each week
 - Teachers to lead the rotation each week
- Our Awakening to Worship program requires a storyteller and two greeters each week. Our greeters can be Youth!

Training is provided for all roles and the rewards are endless as you develop relationships with our GCPC children.

Please consider if you are being called to help this coming year. If you feel called or have questions, please reach out to anyone on children's team or e-mail gpcchildren@gmail.com.

If you are new to Children's Ministries at GCPC, Welcome!

We are glad you are here. Our programming takes a slight snooze during the summer but will be back up and running again in mid-August. To get an overview of our children's ministry program during our school year, please see our January 2024 newsletter or visit our web page: <https://gpc.org/children-youth/children/>



Welcome New Members!

Kevin and Amanda Hearn

New members Kevin and Amanda Hearn married and have lived in Olathe for 13 years. Kevin has lived in Olathe for 26 years and Amanda 21 years. Their family is complete with Chloe a goldendoodle dog. Kevin works for Net Reputation in sales. They enjoy going to movies swimming with kids and anything Disney! Amanda is a stay-at-home mother for their son Nathan and daughter Sophia.



When asked what brought them to Grace, they replied “We were introduced by Katie Hearn years ago and attended service on and off for years. So, we decided to make it official and become members.”

They are active with the Children’s programs, Bell Choirs and Grace fellowship events such as BINGO, Halloween Trunk or Treat, and Easter Egg Hunt. They plan to continue participating in the fellowship opportunities offered at Grace.

“Thank You” Church Family

Dear Grace Covenant Family, “Thank you” is hardly adequate words to express the blessings received from so many of you while I was hospitalized at Mayo in Phoenix, AZ the past several months. God carried me through a very critical medical journey, but along with the compassion from Pastor Karen and the prayers from my faithful friends at GCPC, I am at home and starting my recovery. It was comforting to feel your support through the kind acts of cards & notes, flowers, the beautiful handmade prayer shawl, delicious meals when we arrived home through the meal train and personal calls. As I wrap myself in my lovely shawl I can feel the warm embrace of my wonderful church family. God bless each of you!

Grace and Peace, —Rosemary and Richard Gibson

Generosity Team Update - What the Future Holds

The generosity of Grace Covenant continues! As we come to mid-May we have seen an increase in submitted pledges from 103 to 114. We are not quite 40% of the way through the year and we have received 48% of the pledges, which is amazing. We give thanks for those who pay all or most of their pledge at the beginning of the year, but we are just as grateful for the continued generosity throughout the year.

As we move into the summer months, please don’t forget about giving of your time, talent, and treasure at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church. Generosity is about the spirit in which we live our lives in response to the love God has given freely to us. This community has been generous in the first 39 years of ministry and continues to be so today and for whatever the future holds.

Here is our giving progress shown by numbers of pledges:

Submitted Pledges (114)	March 31st	May 21
0-25% fulfilled	76	37
26-50% fulfilled	20	56
51-75% fulfilled	1	4
76-100% fulfilled	17	17
\$599,410	\$214,344	\$287,477

Rollover Pledges (16)	March 31st	May 21
0-25% fulfilled	10	6
26-50% fulfilled	5	8
51-75% fulfilled	0	1
76-100% fulfilled	1	1
\$34,662	\$6,668	\$10,019

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.

Adult Christian Education Focus on “Christian Mindfulness” in June

Christian mindfulness meditation is a powerful spiritual practice which can help with day to day life. It has been shown to relieve stress and anxiety and to bring people who practice it to a more centered place in their lives, their faith and their relationships.

James Finley's 12 Session Audio book “*Christian Meditation: Entering the Mind of Christ*” will be the focus of a 5 week (10:45 am June, 2, 9, 16, 23, 30) adult study, led by Kevin Johnson, in learning to practice meditation.

Thursday Morning Bible Study Group - Summer

During the Summer, the Thursday Morning Bible Study Group will meet in members' homes for monthly book discussions. Everyone is welcome to join us — whether or not you have read the book. Dates and books are below. Contact Cheryl Johnson (agathatoo@gmail.com) if you have questions:

June 20 at 9:30 am - *The Hiding Place* by Corrie Ten Boom at Glenda Johnson's house (11712 W. 108th Street). RSVP to Glenda at ggeojohnso@aol.com.

July 18 at 9:30 am - *Look for Me There: Grieving My Father, Finding Myself* by Luke Russert at Sarah Byrd's house (7821 W. 115th Street). RSVP to Sarah at sbyrdks@gmail.com.

August 15 at 9:30 am - *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus* by Ann Spangler at Lee Mattix's house (11107 W. 132nd Court). RSVP to Lee at lamattix@gmail.com.

Grace Covenant will be celebrating our 40th anniversary on June 22, 2025.

Look for announcements that will share ways in which you can contribute to the storytelling of our congregation's faith journey. Join us as we take a reflective journey through the church's history, milestones, and growth over the years.

Help Wanted!

Would you like to help Grace Covenant stride into its future? Our Generosity Team meeting date is flexible and only one hour. Participation by Zoom is available. Once a month, the Generosity team meets to review pledge fulfillment. Quarterly we meet with the Finance Team. Come share your ideas and dreams! Our pledge drive planning begins in July and culminates in November. Please contact Rev. Karen Wright or Jane Knoche for more information.

Summer Opportunities

Pickleball Players?

Are you a pickleball player or interested in playing? Pickleball is a great way to have fun and get to know each other better. If enough interest is out there, we would like to start a GCPC Pickleball Group.

Please visit this link ([Pickleball Survey](#)) to access a short survey and send to Mike Mattix, mattixopks@gmail.com.

Sunday Brunch Bunch

Starting in June, you are invited to meet once a month for brunch following Sunday services and church school at different restaurant around town for fun, food and fellowship. For the summer, we have elected to meet on the third Sunday of each month (June, July and August). We will wait for the fall calendar before making additional plans.

Our inaugural Brunch Bunch outing for 2024 will occur on Sunday, June 16, at noon at 12:15pm at Chicken N Pickle, 5901 W. 135th Street (just west of the Prairie Fire main complex). Below is a link to their menu, including Sunday brunch: [Overland Park Menu - Chicken N Pickle](#). This is a family-friendly place, so hope to see lots of you there. No reservations needed (or taken).

If you have ideas for future locations for the Brunch Bunch, please e-mail Mike Mattix, mattixopks@gmail.com.



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

Inclusive. Family Oriented. Welcoming.

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

gcpc.org

CHURCH STAFF

Interim Pastor, Rev. Karen Wright

karen.wright@gcpc.orgext. 10

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

Organist..... Linda Dover

Audio/Visual Technician Jason Turner

Contemporary Music Coord. Carrie DeVries

Contemporary Music Drummer.....Jill Endaya

Child Care Coordinator.....Carolyn Chaffin

Wedding Coordinator.....Kristy Shaw

Funeral CoordinatorMary Sue Thomas

8

Follow us on Social Media!

Facebook: facebook.com/GraceCovenantPresbyterian

Instagram: @gcpc_overlandpark

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 ModeratorJean Hampton
 Operating Committee..... Angela Krug,
 Lara Schesser, Katie Hearn, Tom Stroud
 Newsletter Editor/Marketing..... Kim Krueger
 Prayer Chain.....Cheryl Johnson
 Website AdministratorsKim Krueger,
 Patrick Bell, Christy Soule

MINISTRY UNITS

Congregational Nurture Unit Moderators
 Care and Connections....Mary Ann Weyforth
 Worship and Music..... Kathy Bures,
 Katie Hearn

Education Ministry Unit Moderators
 AdultTom Stroud
 Children Angela Krug
 Youth..... Lara Schesser

Reach Out Ministry Unit Moderators
 Kairos Rick Randolph
 MissionMikki Walker
 Welcoming Kathy Williams

Supportive Ministry Unit Moderators
 Facility Liz Chandler
 GenerosityJane Knoche
 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

July 2024 issue - Deadline, June 21
August 2024 issue - Deadline, July 19