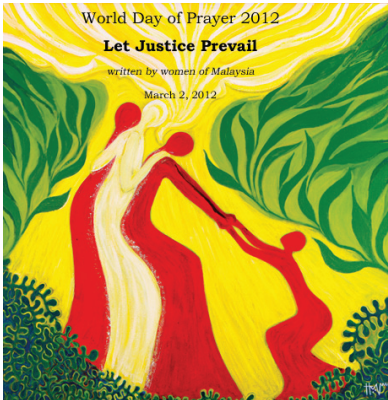


grace NOTES



WORLD DAY OF Prayer

World Day of Prayer will be observed with a gathering on Friday, March 2, 2012, in the Overland Park Christian Church, 7600 West 75th Street.

The theme "Prayer for all Seasons" was written by women of Kansas. World Day of Prayer has been observed for over 120 years. Today over 170 countries and regions around the world participate. Services will begin at dawn in Fiji and continue around the world till the final service in the evening in Hawaii. A printed program is made available in many languages.

Put March 2 on your calendars now and plan to attend. We will carpool from the church at 9:00 a.m. for refreshments and registration at 9:30 with the program at 10:00. Call Mary Johnson for more information, 913-897-1646.

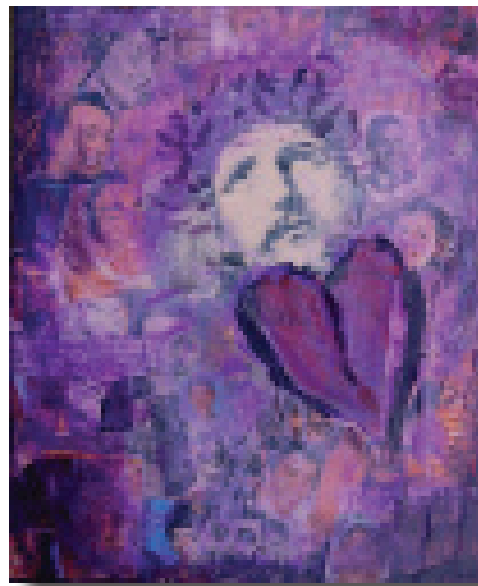
FEBRUARY 2012 AT GCPC LENT BEGINS

FEBRUARY 21 - SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKES

Shrove Tuesday, also called Fat Tuesday or Mardi Gras (in French), is the last day before Lent begins. In the Christian calendar it is the day to dispose of all the excesses, so that one can concentrate on the Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting, repentance and service. We will mark the day, as has become our tradition, with a Pancake Dinner sponsored by the Children's Ministries Team. It's a time of fun and festivity, family and frivolity. Join us on Tuesday, February 21, between 5:30 and 7:00 p.m. in Heartland Hall for food, fun and fellowship. Bring a friend. Everyone is welcome.

FEBRUARY 22 - ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of our season of reflection and service. Join us for worship at 6:30 p.m. on February 22, 2012. Music, prayer, and reflection will be a part of this worship service, as well as communion and imposition of ashes. Come, praise God together and enter this holy season with reverence and a time of personal dedication.



Mark 1:15

And saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."



Welcoming Team NOTES

"Welcome: To be gladly received"

The Welcome Team will be using our usual spot to occasionally remind us of the steps we can take to ensure Grace Covenant continues to be such a warm and welcoming place.

Welcoming Basics – our congregation does a GREAT job doing these but a reminder never hurts:

- Invite friends and family to visit GCPC
- Wear your name tag
- Smile and say, "Hello"
- "like" GCPC from your Facebook page
- "like" or share events listed on the GCPC Facebook page

Upcoming Dates – events happening at our church this month that may provide an opportunity for you to introduce someone to GCPC

- Saturday morning, February 4: Grace in Action – three great activities designed to help others. See details in the Outreach Section
- 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, February 21: Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner
- 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 22: Ash Wednesday Service
- Worship Services, Sunday, February 26: Youth Sunday – a joyous day when the youth of GCPC lead the way through worship

Final Reminder - the best way to help our church grow is for current members to reach out and invite friends, family and neighbors to visit Grace Covenant.



Contact the church office
if you need a new one!

FROM THE session

What an amazing year 2011 was at Grace Covenant! You heard all about it at the Annual Meeting (or you will, if this hits your mailbox early) but I wanted to recap a couple of things for those who might have to miss the meeting. Be sure to pick up a copy of the annual report if you want all the details.

•We completed our Mission study and elected our Pastor Nominating Committee. We want to thank all the folks on both of those committees for all their hard work and dedication to the future of Grace Covenant.

•We reduced our total debt from \$467,222 to \$295,300! (Another \$16,000 is about to be paid off, but the funds arrived too late in December for that to happen in 2011.)

•With the help of a December surge, pledges collected totaled 98% of our budget. Fortunately, non-pledged offerings and frugal teams kept us on track.

Session has adopted two WILDLY IMPORTANT GOALS for 2012. One is to INCREASE MEMBERSHIP and the other is to INCREASE PARTICIPATION in the life of the church. Different teams will be brainstorming in the next few months about ways that they can implement these goals. Most of us who have been involved in church activities can attest to the ways that involvement has strengthened our connection to our congregation and to God.

Cindy Huston, Ky Weekley and Johnnie Baker have all moved into new offices. If you're looking for them, Cindy is at the end of the hall in the education wing (formerly known as 26C); Ky is in Cindy's old office, and Johnnie has moved to Ky's old office. This moves Johnnie closer to the main office and prepares a space for our new head pastor. The space that has been Johnnie's office will be adapted for small groups to use.

If you have any other questions about what Session has been doing, feel free to contact any member.

ADULT CLASSES AND STUDIES

SUNDAY MORNING CLASSES – 10:00 a.m

PARENTING CLASS -

Sundays at 10:00 a.m. in Room 10.

The GCPC Parenting class meets each Sunday from 10:00 to 10:50 a.m. in Room 10 downstairs. *Please join us to talk about a variety of subjects - spirituality, discipline, sibling issues, friends, teachers, activities, bullying, health issues for kids and parents, and more! This is a lively group and the discussion is rich.* Bring your stories, concerns, and questions to share as we explore diverse topics relating to raising young children. Check the bulletin on Sunday mornings for weekly topics. All are welcome, whether you come every week or just drop-in once in a while. We would love for you to join us!

Upcoming Topics this Month:

February 5 – Sexuality Workshop Follow-up

February 12 – Open Discussion

February 19 – Helping Kids Deal with Grief and Tragedy

February 26 – Nutrition and Exercise

If you have any questions regarding the class or suggestions for the topic ideas, please contact the class facilitators by phone or via email: Leigh Cummings 314-477-5561 or todd.p.goldie@gmail.com or Chris Specht 913-851-9667 or specht.chris@gmail.com We hope to see you soon in Room 10!

NAKED SPIRITUALITY

Book Discussion Group— Room 15

This group is using the book by Brian McLaren which offers an overview of the spiritual life in a framework 12 practices arranged in four stages of growth and development: simplicity, complexity, perplexity, and harmony. Then, in each stage, you'll be introduced to three practices, moves, or soul-postures that will help you deepen your life with God. Brian lodges each practice in a simple word and then offers guidance for working with each word. We hope this class will grow into a long term class that discusses various topics and books chosen by the group on an ongoing basis. Our goal with this class is to nurture and grow an individual's spirituality through written information, discussion and communion.

SPEAKER SERIES CLASS – in room 26

February 5 and 12 – More Images of Faith -

Jan Cummings, teaching

Save the date now for an afternoon visit to the Nelson Atkins Museum after class on February 12.

These classes explore the relationship of religion, worship, and art. We'll look at the role that art has historically played as a part of worship as well as artistic interpretation of religious beliefs. Our two spring sessions February 5 and 12 will focus on the Middle Ages, the proto Renaissance and Renaissance. All are welcome for the Sunday morning sessions! Sunday afternoon, February 12, at 1:00 p.m., we'll take our discussion to the Nelson Atkins Museum for an up close and personal one hour gallery walk. Sign up is required for the Nelson-Atkins tour and due to space/noise constraints in the galleries will be limited to 20 people.

February 19-March 25 – Homosexuality and the Church with Paul Creekmore, teaching

In this four-week series, Paul Creekmore will present a broad examination of the implications of homosexuality for the church. We will consider the historical pattern of growth and change in the church as the Holy Spirit continues to speak to us even today. Inevitably, our never-ending quest to discern God's truth gives rise to uncertainty, and in preparation to review the Bible's treatment of same-sex relationships we will look for mature ways to identify that truth. The discussion will ultimately center around the "clobber passages" in the Bible that are often used to condemn same-sex relationships. Here we will gather wisdom and context revealed to us in the Bible and in our daily lives to arrive at an understanding that is in harmony with Christ's teachings. Finally, we will take a hard look at the consequences of our actions and inactions as a society and as a church on this often invisible minority among us.

LENTEN DEVOTIONS 2012

It's that time again. We are seeking writers to submit articles for our 2012 Lenten Devotional booklet. Traditional Lenten themes are always welcome and scripture passages for 2012, as well as a sign-up sheet, will be posted on the bulletin board beside the kitchen. You may submit more than one article. Children and youth are encouraged to contribute. Articles should be less than 300 words. Entries are due by Monday, February 13. Devotional booklets will be available to pick up the following week. If response is poor we may do a "limited" devotion book with only two or three articles per week. Call (913-345-1256) or e-mail kimby.young@gcpc.org to volunteer to write a devotional, or sign up on the bulletin board next to the kitchen. Turn them in to Kimby anytime.

CHILDREN'S ministries

Information for ALL our members, not just those with young children!

OPERATION OVERBOARD – GO DEEP WITH GOD!

June 18 - 22! Save the dates now for member's children who will be 3 by June 1 - children completing 5th grade.



One of the many perks of being a center or group leader at VBS is that you get first choice of your assignments the next year! So in February, Julie Passett, Kristy Shaw and Cindy Huston will start calling past leaders to see what their choice is for VBS 2012. **We wait to ask anyone else until we**

hear back for last year's leader! So please, when you get a call or an email, let us know your plans! We have a lot of spots to fill, and it helps so much to know how many new leaders are needed. We first work on finding leaders for all the centers - Music, Crafts, Recreation, Story Telling and Discovery for both Preschool and Elementary. At registration, we will start lining up leaders for the "Dive Groups." Then we will fill in the day to day volunteers to make sure we always have two adults/youth per group. We love finding spots for new people, so if you want to see how your talents can best be used, please contact one of us. We'd love to plug you in! Live registration will be in Heartland Hall from 9:45 - 11:15 on March 25, April 1, and April 15. After that time the forms will be available on the church website. The registration deadline will be May 20.

WHO DOESN'T LOVE PANCAKES? Who likes a night when someone else does the cooking? Plan now to attend our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper with Chris Cakes Tuesday, February 21 from 5:30-7:00 p.m. in Heartland Hall. The cost is \$5 a person for all the pancakes and sausages you can eat.

PROMISE EVENTS COMING UP FOR 2ND AND 3RD GRADERS

Get to Know your Bibles for third graders and parents will be on March 4 at 1:00 in Heartland Hall. Children will receive their Bibles at the workshop, and learn how to use them through a variety of games and activities.

Communion Awareness Workshop for second graders and parents will be on April 15 at 1:00, starting in the Sanctuary. Children will learn about all the aspects of communion that make it so special to us. First communion will be received on May 6 at both services.

WANT TO RAISE A LIFE LONG READER?

I remember when Jessica was in kindergarten and a friend's mom asked me what I did to make Jess love to read so much. I wasn't really sure, but I told her that I love to read, and since she sees me read for pleasure, she wanted to read too. The mom didn't like my answer - "But I don't like to read!" Obviously modeling parents' behavior is one way kids will want to read! But here are some other tips from Common Sense Media:

- **Read aloud:** This comes naturally to lots of new parents, but it's important to keep it up. Kids will enjoy it longer than you think. For babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and kids in early grade school, it's wonderful to have a kid on your lap, snuggled next to you on the couch, or drifting off to sleep in bed as you enjoy picture books together. You may have to read your kid's favorite a hundred times, but just go with it. Your kid will remember the closeness as well as the story. And try nonfiction for those who are curious about pirates, Vikings, robots, castles, history, sports, biography, animals, whatever. For second through fifth graders, read those rich and meaty books that might be missed otherwise, maybe classics like *Treasure Island* or *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.
- **Savor the series:** It's common for kids to become book lovers for life after getting hooked on a series. And there are lots of good ones that keep kids hungry for the next installment. Some reliable prospects: *Ivy and Bean*, *Judy Moody* for beginning readers; *Harry Potter*, *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, and the *Percy Jackson* series for middle graders; and *Hunger Games*, *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*, and *Twilight* (unless you think vampires are too creepy) for older kids.
- **Grab onto a genre:** Kids go through phases of genres they're passionate about, from girl detectives to science fiction and fantasy. Don't get hung up on whether it's considered great literature (although some genre books are). Be happy that your kid is devouring books one after the other.

(Continued top of next page)

•**Feed the favorite-author addiction:** Once your kids finds a writer they love, they may want to read all of his or her books -- a great excuse for a trip to the library or an opportunity for book swapping among friends and classmates. Here are some good bets for favorites. Younger kids: Dav Pilkey (The Adventures of Captain Underpants), Beverly Cleary (Beezus and Ramona). Middle grade: Kate DiCamillo (Because of Winn-Dixie), Neil Gaiman (The Graveyard Book). Tweens and teens: Judy Blume (Are You There God, It's Me Margaret) and Sarah Dessen (Just Listen).

•**Count on the Classics:** Books are called classics because they continue to engage readers generation after generation. There are no guarantees, but you could try introducing your kids to books you loved as a kid and see which ones click. Some good ones to try are the Dr. Seuss and Narnia books, Charlotte's Web, and The Secret Garden. Check out our Classic Books for Kids list to find more.

•**Find Books About the Things Your Kid Loves:** If your kid adores horses, try Black Beauty or any of the titles on our list of best Horse Books. If he's wild about cars, trucks and trains, check out our list of Vehicle Books. Librarians, booksellers, and Internet searches will help you find books on any favorite topic.

•**Funny Is Fine:** Some parents wrestle with letting their kids read Captain Underpants, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, and other edgy humor books about kids getting in trouble. Talk to your kids about the content, but keep in mind that kids like these books not because they want to imitate the characters' actions but because they can live vicariously through their bad behavior. Humor is a great pathway to book loving.

•**Comics Are OK:** Graphic novels are among the hottest trends in children's publishing, and they can get kids hooked on reading. Kids may start with Squish and Babymouse and move on to Diary of a Wimpy Kid. But these series can also lead to more sophisticated fare such as Marzi and American Born Chinese. Find other titles in our list of best Graphic Novels.

•**Make Reading a Family Value:** Actions speak louder than words. Take your kids to the library once a week or once a month to get new books, make regular outings to your local bookstore, hunt for low-cost books at used bookstores or second-hand shops, and show kids that finding a good book is like a treasure hunt.

•**Fit reading into your family lifestyle.** Set aside time for reading only -- turning off the TV, computer, and cell phone. For older kids, a parent-kid book club can be fun. Read to kids at bedtime. Provide time and space for your kids to read for pleasure in the car (if they don't get car sick!), on vacation, after homework is done, on their own before bed. Warning: It could be habit-forming!



PEW DWELLERS' HEALTH NOTES

Blood Pressure Entrepreneurs, Part One

Perhaps in 2011, you were among the 2.5% of the congregation who participated in the planned monthly blood pressure checks. Maybe you are among the members of the congregation who now hold specific information about blood pressure measurement results, such as the following:

•Acceptable blood pressure measurements according to American Heart Association guidelines.

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic	Diastolic
Normal	Less than 120	Less than 80
Prehypertension	120 – 139	80 – 89
Hypertension, Stage 1	140 – 159	90 – 99
<i>High Blood Pressure</i>		
Hypertension, Stage 2	160+	100+
<i>High Blood Pressure</i>		
Hypertensive Crisis (An Emergency)	180+	110+

The difference between systolic and diastolic measurements:

- Systolic pressure refers to the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats (when the heart muscle contracts)
- Diastolic pressure refers to the pressure in the arteries between heartbeats (when the heart muscle is resting between beats and refilling with blood).

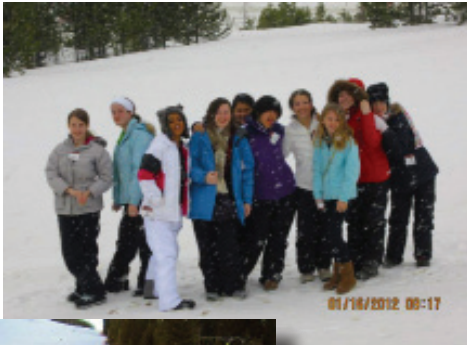
THANK YOU, CRAFTERS!

There are a bunch of "crafty women" who have been very busy making warm gifts for the Christmas Bureau. Using mainly leftover yarn and materials, 29 hats, 4 sets of baby booties, and 3 prayer shawls were donated by members of the Crafters group (and a couple of other random knitters in the congregation!). It's a good way to use up extra yarn and give someone a hand-made gift at the same time.

YOUTH Page

SKI AND SNOWBOARD RETREAT

For a second year in a row there has been a storm in God's incredible Rocky Mountains and we had to miss our last day of skiing. Naturally there were some disappointed youth and youth leaders on the bus but positive attitudes abounded. We worshiped our Lord in the snow Monday morning and sang Kum Ba Yah and Sanctuary, as large flakes fell on us and our beautiful mountain background. A big thanks to Donna Heer for coordinating the trip one more year and to the other adults whose patience and positive attitudes made the retreat fun for everyone!



“SOUPER” BOWL OF CARING – FEBRUARY 6

The Youth Group will once again be partnering with Harvesters in the “Souper Bowl of Caring.” Our special project this year will be packing sack lunches for hungry teens in the Kansas City area, a program that Harvesters calls “Give Lunch.” Last year, because of your generosity, we packed 400 sack lunches. We would like to match or even exceed that number of lunches this year. If every congregation member donates the \$3.00 needed for one lunch, we will easily reach our goal. There are two ways that you can help: 1) Write a check to GCPC with “Give Lunch” noted on the memo line. 2) Go shopping for the items we need (details are posted at church). We will put a tub in the hallway near Heartland Hall to collect your donations.

CONFIRMATION

This year we have nine Confirmation students divided into two small groups and they are going quite well. Thanks to David and Lara Schesser, Cheryl Johnson, Erin Weekley, Brendon Kane, and Jennifer Battaglioli for guiding our students through this important adventure in faith development.

JOPLIN

Following our service trip to Joplin, MO, this fall the youth were moved by what they experienced and by the generosity of our host church in their efforts to serve the needs in their community. That church, Abundant Life Christian Center, hosted us without charge and transported people like us and supplies in an old van which broke down while we were there. Our youth sent a \$400 check to Abundant Life to help cover repairs. That check came from the proceeds of our pop machine. We praise God and thank our congregation for providing resources that we can use to help others!

SUMMER INTERN

The Youth Team has started our search for a summer intern and we already have one great candidate. We are seeking candidates who love Christ, love youth and want the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our students over the summer. That person should be over the age of 21 and needs a very flexible schedule. Please contact Miles or any of our youth team members if interested.

YOUTH SUNDAY FEBRUARY 26

We are quickly approaching what is certain to be another incredible Youth Sunday! Our seniors have been getting together to plan and prepare a worship experience that we hope will be meaningful and spirit-filled for our congregation. We will recognize and honor our seniors at this service and they, along with the rest of our youth, will have the opportunity to share the word of God with all of us and lead us in worship. Don't miss it!

SUMMER EVENTS

- June 2-10 Montreat (completed 8-12th grade)
- June 22-29 M&M Trip to Chicago (completed 8-12th grade)
- July 11-16 Massanetta (completed 6-8th grade)
- July 16-21 Massanetta (alternate date) (completed 6-8th grade)
- July 29-Aug. 5 International Trip (completed 11-12th grade)

PRESBYTERIANS AROUND THE WORLD

"The Bible begins in the garden of creation and ends with a garden. God's justice requires that we live harmoniously with and in this garden and that corporate greed and profit are not to be attained at the expense of the lives and well-being of the poor or the destruction of this garden planet."



2012 Presbyterian Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study, "Better Together" Section

Global Gardens

The United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Durban, South Africa, with the expected ending date of December 6, 2011, concluded that the conference "advanced in a balanced fashion with the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, the Bali Action, and the Cancun Agreements." The outcomes included a decision by the parties to adopt a universal legal agreement on climate change as soon as possible, and no later than 2015.

The Cancun Agreements include five plans. One of these plans is the Green Climate Fund, which will support projects, programs, policies, and other activities in developing countries.

The Bali Roadmap includes the Bali Action Plan. The Bali Roadmap consists of a number of forward-looking decisions to ultimately tackle climate change

IHN ANNOUNCES FIRST 2012 TRAINING SESSION

The Interfaith Hospitality Network, which has helped hundreds of homeless Johnson County families get back on their feet, is hosting its first 2012 training program for volunteers from 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. on February 1 at the Overland Park Church of Christ.

Although completion of the training program is required to interact with IHN's guests, pre-registration is not required. Overland Park Church of Christ is located at 13400 West 119th Street. GCPC is one of 11 IHN host churches, which provide a full week of overnight shelter, meals and other

services four times annually on a rotating basis. The guests are housed during the day in IHN's Family Center in Olathe.

GCPC will host 14 IHN guests from February 5-12. In addition, volunteers from 21 other IHN support congregations assist host churches throughout the week by preparing meals, providing transportation and donating gift cards. IHN is the only non-profit organization in Johnson County working around the clock on a 24/7/365 basis to help homeless families get back to living normal lives.

KAIROS

KAIROS will be very busy this year and we would love to have you join us as we practice justice, peace and care for the environment activities throughout the year. Join us and/or join our e-letter by sending an email to gpcckairos@gmail.com with "Suscribe" in the subject box.

Two exciting activities are happening very soon and we need YOU!

Struttin' Our Stuff returns for a 2nd year. Put February 11, 2012, from 9:00 -3:00 on your calendar. Not only are you invited to come and learn/see/shop, but think about Struttin' your talent with us. Are you a dog walker, computer geek, house sitter, child care giver, designer, architect, yard person, tax preparer, academic tutor, musician or give music lessons - the list is endless. Maybe you would like to highlight your small group with a table or just a poster display. Contact KAIROS @ gpcckairos@gmail.com for any questions or application or pick up an application from the KAIROS bulletin board – fill it out and drop it in the KAIROS folder or Johnnie's box.

Interested in gardening or want to learn? KAIROS members Lauren Bond and Rosalie Meredith are coordinating a Hunger/Food justice project. We have 'rented' a 4'x20' plot at the Overland Park Community Garden (<http://www.opgarden.org/picture-gallery/>) and will donate all the fresh local garden-grown produce to a local food charity for the hungry in our area. If you would like to get involved in any way (we'll need at least planting, watering, weeding, harvesting & delivering help) contact Lauren at lab@korl.com or 913-906-9896.

music notes

February Music Events

Sunday, February 5

Super Bowl Sunday's alternate rehearsal schedule:

12:15-2:30 (K-1 12:15-1:15) p.m. Chapel Choir

12:15-1:00 p.m. New Spirit Ringers

3:00-3:40 p.m. Ex! Ringers

3:45-4:45 p.m. Exaltation!

3:45-4:45 p.m. New Spirit Singers

Saturdays, February 11 & March 3

Chancel Choir Rehearsal on Mozart's *Requiem*

10:00 a.m. to Noon

Friday PM – Sunday Noon, February 17-19

Worship Team Training with

Branon Dempsey of Houston, TX

for 8:50 a.m. Worship Leaders & Youth Band

Plus Branon will help lead in both Worship Services 2/19

Sunday, February 26 – Youth Sunday

8:50 a.m. Ex! Ringers & New Spirit Singers ring/sing

11:05 a.m. New Spirit Ringers & Exaltation! ring/sing

M&M Registration Ahead

M&M Registration Forms Available by Sunday, February 19

By email, on the youth board & online at www.gcpc.org on youth & music pages

M&M Registration form & fee Due Sunday, March 18 to Miles's mailbox.

Remember: M&M goes to Chicago this year, Fridays, June 22-29, plus home worship on Sunday, July 1

THANK YOU

- To Mike & Celia Nicholas and Eulalia Will for donations to the handbell & choral library.

- To Kathy Burdette for the donation of "One Simple Candle" by Kathy Burdette & Donna Butler Douglas to the music library.

If you would like to donate an anthem or handbell piece to the music library in honor or memory of a person or event, now would be great time to do so.

Contact Rebecca Prater for more information.

UPCOMING MUSIC EVENTS

Saturday, March 31 – New Spirit Singers & Ringers Outreach & Overnight

Thursday, April 5 – Maundy Thursday Service 7:30 p.m. Ex! & Ex! Ringers provide music

Friday, April 6 – Good Friday Service 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir & Orchestra present *Requiem* by Mozart

Sunday, April 8 – Easter – Music by Praise Team, Chancel Choir, Charter Ringers, & Chancel Brass

Sunday, April 22 – Music Appreciation @ 8:50 & 11:05

Sunday, April 29 – Chapel Choir presents the musical, "Oh, Jonah" by Pote & McCann 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 6 – Bell Fest 6:30 p.m. This year's theme is "Pop, Patriotic, and All That Jazz!"

Wednesday-Sunday, June 6-10 – members of Chancel Choir to NYC's Lincoln Center to sing Mozart's *Requiem*

Fridays, June 22-29 – M&M Trip to Chicago

Sunday, July 1 – M&M Led Worship & Lunch 10:30 a.m.

Training Opportunity

 for Female Youth Leaders, Mentors and Mothers of Teens

Members of GCPC have been invited to send our female youth leaders, mentors, and mothers of teens to Mentoring With No Regrets, a unique discipleship training event that will help adult women more effectively disciple the next generation for Jesus Christ. They will receive practical training from gifted speakers and opportunities to network with others working with high school students in our community. This Discipleship Training event, which will be held at Grace Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Lawrence, Kansas, will be held at two different times: Friday, April 13, from 6:00-9:00 p.m. and Saturday, April 14, at 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. This event is in preparation for a one-day conference designed for High School girls and their female leaders called Finishing With No Regrets which will be offered on Saturday, October 6, 2012. For more information, contact Julie Hubble or go to www.finishingwithnoregrets.com.

OUTREACH NEWS

It's time to sign up to assist with our February 5 -11 **IHN Hosting Week**. Opportunities still exist for Overnight Hosts, set up the afternoon of February 5, tear down on the afternoon of February 11, meals, van drivers, and dinner time hosts. You can be part of our Gather & Equip & Send efforts this week. Contact Pat Collins (jcollins134@kc.rr.com), Alan Purvis (alanpurvis54@yahoo.com), or Terri Jones-Meineke (terrijonesmeineke@gmail.com) to sign up.

Your Outreach Team has agreed to be listed as a participating congregation for **IHN's PASS the HAT** fundraiser in February 2012. We will be making a donation as a church. If you wish to add to that donation let Johnnie Baker know immediately. Feel free to wear your hat in support of the effort. Remember you have a home to hang your hat in; our guests will hang their hats at Grace Covenant for just 7 days. Two of our GCPC members are on IHN's Board of Directors – Gerard Lillian and Jennifer Kisner.

February's Communion Offering partner is Harvesters Community Food Network. We are joining our Youth in collecting cans and non perishable food items. Your communion offering will help support Harvester's. Don't forget the posters detailing the food for homeless teens the youth will assemble.

Our first 2012 Grace in Action is a terrific way to spend Saturday Morning, February 4. You may choose to join a group heading for Harvesters' warehouse to participate in the Souper Bowl Week of Caring, assemble school supply kits for Operation International Children, or make Valentines in Heartland Hall.

- Volunteer at Harvesters sorting & repackaging donations, meet at GCPC at 9:45, work 10:30-12:30, must be at least 6 yrs old (adult supervision needed for children).
- Assemble school supply kits at Operation International Children, meet at GCPC at 8:45 and work 9:30-11:30, all ages (adult supervision for Children)
- Make Valentines for veterans at GCPC Heartland Hall, 10-12, all ages
Sign up with Kristy Shaw by emailing kristinasha@msn.com.

You are always welcome at our Outreach Meeting on the first Monday of the month - next meeting is February 6 at 7:00 p. m.

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Thank You

My dear church family,
"Thank you" just doesn't seem enough in helping me express my gratitude to all of you! Your calls, cards, meals (from my Circle) and visits from Kimby and some of our church family, have meant the world to Bob and me. This has been such a difficult year with my serious health issues yet your prayers lifted us and nourished us and helped me keep the fight going. Since the expected and then two weeks later, unexpected surgeries, I am feeling more and more like myself, and each day is a bit better than the previous one. Between my wonderful Oncologist; Oncology Surgeons; Bob's around the clock care and all your prayers, how could I not be doing this much better? Am still not running races yet, but I do feel so much better and look forward to seeing you as often as possible at worship and hopefully before too much longer, at various activities at church. You know who each of you are and we thank you from our heart for your loving kindness and support.

Blessings and love, *Poppy Zurcher*

Harold and I wish to thank everyone for their prayers, visits, meals and cards while I was recovering from spine surgery. What a beautiful church! – *Linda Rosine and Harold Farren*

Babysitter Needed

Anyone interested in babysitting GCPC member Martha Johnson's 6-month-old grandson in your home? Contact Martha's daughter, Lindsay, at 913-748-7624 or Lindsay's work at 913-649-0468, extension 103. We need a full-time sitter that wouldn't mind Nana picking him up on days she feels good. Lindsay will pay for full week if he is there or not.

COVENANT NETWORK NEWS

As one of their early actions as a full-fledged ministry unit, KAIROS team members have voted unanimously to continue GCPC's support of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians. Since 1997, this broad-based, national group of clergy and lay leaders has worked for a church that is simultaneously faithful, just and whole. Covenant Network's primary goals have always been to work for the removal of ordination barriers to the full participation of LGBT Presbyterians, and to support the mission and unity of the denomination.

With the passage of Amendment 10-A (previously, G-2.0104b) this mission has been greatly advanced. At the same time, given that there are many in the PC(USA) who are troubled by the change in ordination standards, Covenant Network lifts up this effort while mindful of its deep commitment to tend to church unity.

KAIROS invites members of GCPC to prayerfully consider making personal financial commitments to advance the work of the Covenant Network – particularly as it seeks to support the full mission and unity of our denomination. If you would like more information, please contact Maggie Blankers, at 913.563.7114.

NEW PICTORIAL DIRECTORY

Ever wonder what our entire congregation looks like? Us too! Mark your calendars coming this March we are joining hands with Olan Mills to put together our church pictorial directory. Every family photographed will receive a \$25 gift certificate to be applied to any portrait package you purchase, or to use for your choice of several items free. Dates for pictures are March 16, 17, 23, 24 and 27. Sign up starts January 29 at church and you can also sign up online at <http://signup.olanmills.com>. We are looking for helpers on picture days and photos to share in our new book. Please contact Alison Alka at 816-353-8679 or alkaali@aol.com if you want to volunteer or have photos to share.

FROM THE 'RABBI'

When we knew in 1979 that Tracy had been accepted to KU Medical School, it became nearly impossible to keep the secret that I would be leaving First Church, Wichita. . . [though I was amazed at how many youth, and even some of their folks, thought one of us might 'commute!']

Accordingly, the staff and Session asked Presbytery to allow them to begin the search for a new pastor before I had ended my relationship with them.

That presented no problems until it was accompanied by a growing "need" to have my replacement selected at least by the time I was departing for Kansas City! There were three initial candidates the search committee was interested in. I got to meet and visit with all three. The first seemed a perfect match and I envisioned everyone saying in just a few months, "Ky who??" He decided he wanted to create his own program from scratch [just as I had had to do a few years before] rather than move into an established program.

The second and third candidates were not nearly as engaging, and I actually found myself wondering what the committee was thinking with the third candidate. The second one took herself out of consideration and that left only the third one. . . . They extended a call to him.

Ten months later the relationship had ended and everyone was relieved that he was moving onto another church.

I share this experience because I've mentioned on a few occasions recently that I'm anticipating that your Pastor Nominating Committee will be presenting you with a candidate to be your next pastor sooner rather than later. That would still be my guess. . . BUT, I really want to encourage all of us to give the PNC all the time they need to discern God's best choice for Grace Covenant in a new pastor!! I fully recognize that for some this has been a long and drawn-out process, but it is even more important to make sure that we get this decision right than to hurry-up and get into a relationship that proves to be disappointing. I am with you as long as you need me and as long as the PNC needs to make their best call!

We are moving ahead in some dramatic and exciting ways! You've stepped up in enviable ways in your commitment to Generosity and providing a stable and secure financial setting for the next pastor to step into. . . . You are continuing to offer a welcoming and inviting presence for potential new members – and they're responding! As many of you know, we will have added another dozen folks to the membership by the time you're reading this! Outstanding!!

We certainly have areas in which we can grow and strengthen our witness, but we are not standing still. . . we're not simply maintaining our ministry! And you are to be commended for that effort, that vision, that good work!

Blessings!
Ky

APPLAUSE & WORSHIP

THE FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED BY Director of Music Ministries Rebecca Prater for use with the Choir in December: The pastors thought it was worth sharing with the congregation!

Allow me to share with you some thoughts I have about how our congregation will end worship tomorrow.

They will more than likely respond with applause. I struggle with applause as a response in worship. I know many of you do, too.

It's not about me and applause tends to make me feel like the focus – the praise even is about me . . . and you.

However, there is something I know about your congregation. There is a spirit here unlike anywhere I've been. This place is overflowing with vibrancy and has an amazing positive energy. I am absolutely confident that the spirit here is the Spirit of God moving among us. You can sense it when you walk through the door.

Kathy Burdette captured it perfectly when she wrote these words about Grace Covenant:

*It was only brick and stone when I first walked through the door,
but something stirred my spirit here and now it's so much more.*

Our hearts and doors stand open; surely God is in this place.

*May the light of loving kindness shine from each and every face—in
this place.+*

This brings me to the realization that “in this place” we hear the word of the Lord and we respond to it. We speak our praise, our confession, and our petition and God replies. That is the nature of worship . . . a conversation between God and God's people.

With music in worship - sometimes that response is a holy & quiet moment . . . and *“sometimes I hear God's music . . . and I must add my voice, my voice.”**

Perhaps I have been misinterpreting our congregation's applause. Perhaps they are adding their voices to what they just heard and experienced. Perhaps it's a “me too, God” moment.

I can't control the response of the people of God. I can only control how I will interpret and receive it.

So, rather than receiving their act of applause as though it's for me . . . or actually turning away from it . . . I am going to choose to allow their voice to be added to mine. For them to be able to say, “that's what I think about You too, God.” Rather than taking it into my person I will embrace their voice with mine and reflect it to God.

We say it every week, Lord . . . for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory . . . and the glory . . . and the glory forever . . . and we mean it. The glory is Yours alone, Lord. Amen.

Quoting the lyrics of “In This Place” by Kathy Burdette+ and “Sometimes I Hear God's Music” by J. Paul Williams.*

PRESBYTERIANS AND PER CAPITA

Description of per capita: “In order to give meaning to the interdependent nature of Presbyterian polity...” (Book of Order, G-9.0404), per capita is the responsible way of sharing the costs that equitably belong to the whole Presbyterian church community expressing the essential unity of the church. The payment of the per capita apportionment can be seen as a sign of healthy relationships within the church, giving tangible witness to the unity and wholeness promised to us in Jesus Christ.

It has been said that per capita apportionment is like a utility bill. Just as we pay for heat, light, water, and telephone in order to remain connected to the utility systems and benefit from the services provided, we also pay per capita so that the Presbyterian system can function on behalf of all of us. It is the necessary linkage in our connectional system. We, at Grace Covenant, pay a per capita assessment of **\$33.70** per member. This amounts to \$21,871 in the 2011 Operating Budget. As you know, our budget is greatly strained and each of us can help by contributing **\$33.70** per member to defray this expense. A special envelope will be included in your February packet.

KID'S DAY OUT AND PIONEER



PRESCHOOL

Priority Enrollment for Fall 2012 Kid's Day Out (KDO) and Pioneer Preschool began “priority” enrollment” for Fall 2012 on January 9, 2012. Please contact Kathy at KDO (913-345-8191) and Geri at Pioneer Preschool (913-338-4282). Grace Covenant members will participate during “priority enrollment” ending January 27. Forms are available on the church website for KDO and at www.pioneerpreschool.com for preschool.



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Johnnie Baker, johnnie.baker@gcpc.org .. ext. 21

Organist

Linda Dover

Contemporary Music Coord.

Denice Trawicki

Contemporary Music Drummer

Pat Adams

Child Care Coordinator

Carolyn Chaffin

Kid's Day Out Director

Kathy Connor

ELDER'S

Maggie Blankers

Pat Collins

Pat Crorkin

Jean Nelson

Matt McBride

Mike Mattix

Laura Patton

Christine Nance

Abby Slovick

C.C. White

Dee Zak

Melanie Townsend

David Zimmermann

Rick Randolph

SUPPORT STAFF

Communication Elder.....Melanie Townsend

Deacon Moderator Larry Baker

Executive Committee.....Maggie Blankers, Pat

Crorkin, Pat Collins, Mike Mattix

Newsletter Editor Jami Howe

Prayer Chain..... Cheryl Johnson

Presbyterian Women Moderator vacant

Wedding Coordinator..... Lara Schesser

ministry units

Congregational Nurture Unit Moderators

Connections and Care.....Christine Caseres

Endowment David Steen

Music.....John Utz

Stephen Ministry.....Jean Hampton

Generosity Team..... David Sutherland

Worship.....Jennifer Battaglioli

Education Ministry Unit Moderators

Adult Missy Taylor

Children Liz Albers

Youth..... vacant

Reach Out Ministry Unit Moderators

Welcoming Team Brendon Kane

Outreach..... Tom Stroud

Kairos.....Jo Randolph

Supportive Ministry Unit Moderators

Facility Bryan Evans

Finance..... David Huston

Personnel Linda Bridges

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

8:50 a.m. Praise Team Led Worship

10:00 a.m. Church School All Ages

11:05 a.m. Choral Led Worship

Childcare is provided during Worship.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES/MAILING

MARCH 2012 ISSUE:

Article Deadline - March 20

Newsletter folded/mailed - March 27

PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF THESE!

APRIL 2012 ISSUE:

Article Deadline -April 17

Newsletter folded/mailed - April 24

CELEBRATING GOD'S ALL ENCOMPASSING LOVE