

GRACE NEWS

DECEMBER 3 | 2023

Grace members and friends,

There is something wonderful about the people who populate our Nativity scenes, who are a part of the story of the coming of Jesus - something wonderfully ordinary about each of them. We take this Advent to look at each one of them, people just like us, and how they point us to the greatest gift of all: Jesus!

To say that Jesus' parents' marriage started out on rocky ground is an understatement. The news of an unplanned pregnancy, angel visits to announce the impossible, a tough decision to marry, an arduous trip while pregnant to an overcrowded town, and the political jeopardy of carrying the Son of God made for a tough beginning. How did they survive? What was their secret? Join us this Sunday at 9am and 11:05am as we get ready for Christmas with The Couple at the Center of it All.

Your pastor and friend,

Tracey

The Characters of Christmas:

Unlikely people just like you and me are caught up in the story of Jesus

December 3	Mary and Joseph
December 10	Shepherds and Angels
December 17	Wise Men from the East
Christmas Eve 10am	The Innkeeper
Christmas Eve 2 & 7pm	Jesus
December 31	Anna, Simeon, and Herod

Get Involved at Grace!

End of Year Giving

Significant ministry is planned and will continue into 2024 and beyond. A year-end gift to the church allows you to enhance our mission and impact into the New Year. In celebration of the coming of Jesus, in the generous spirit Christmas, we invite you to give a gift as the Lord leads. To receive credit for your charitable donations in 2023:

- Checks sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be postmarked on or before December 31, 2023.
- Online donations at www.gracepc.org/give should be made by December 31, 2023.
- The church offices are closed December 25 – January 1, 2024. You may drop off your year-end gift to the lockable mailbox located outside the west Narthex doors on or before December 31, 2023. Your donation is 100% secure in the lockable mailbox.
- Stock transfers and IRA distributions may take additional processing time. To be eligible for a yearly tax deduction, you may need to initiate your donation early.

For questions, please contact John Moody, Director of Finance, john@gracepc.org or call him at 469.429.6808.

Thank you for your continued and faithful support of the ministries of Grace Presbyterian Church.

Sounds of Christmas - Dec. 3

Make plans to attend our annual Sounds of Christmas Concert tonight, featuring our adult, youth, and children's choirs, and Grace Notes, our adult handbell choir. The concert begins at 6PM. Invite your friends and family to this wonderful kickoff to the holiday season.

Women of Grace Christmas Party - Dec. 4

We warmly welcome all of the women of Grace to join us in celebrating the Christmas season! The party will be held at the home of Kris Turner this Monday, December 4, from 6-8pm. (4520 Reunion Dr. Plano 75024) Bring an ornament for an ornament exchange. Whether you have RSVP'd or not, please know you are welcome. We will have more than enough great food and look forward to sharing the holiday season with you.

Jigsaw Puzzle Group Christmas Gathering - December 8

Please join us on December 8th for our Christmas gathering at the Mattisons at 6719 Summer Meadow Ln, Dallas 75252. They are located 5 minutes south of Grace. We will have serve Christmas appetizers and even a Christmas puzzle. We are not meeting on December 22nd, so if aren't able to join us on the 8th, our next gathering will on January 12th.

New Members - December 10

We will be receiving new members on Sunday, December 10. If you would like to join our Grace family, or have questions about membership please reach out to Pastor Tracey at tracey@gracepc.org, or talk with any pastor following worship.

Spice of Life Christmas Lunch - Dec. 13

Seniors (50+), join us for a heartwarming Christmas lunch filled with good company, delicious food, and festive cheer. Your presence will make the celebration complete. The Spice of Life team will provide turkey, cornbread dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy, sweet potatoes, and green beans. You are asked to bring either some cranberry sauce, rolls, or a dessert to share. Let's share the joy of the season together! To help the team in preparations, we are asking you to RSVP on your connection card or by clicking on the link in your newsletter email.

Family Gateway Gift Return - Dec. 16

Thank you to everyone who adopted a family for our Family Gateway Christmas mission project. All the families have been adopted! If you still want to participate, please drop off Walmart giftcards in \$25 denominations to the church office and they will get distributed to the parents. Gifts may be dropped off at Grace in the bride's room closet beginning on Monday, Dec. 4, and all gifts must be delivered **no later than Saturday, Dec. 16 by 11AM**. Please refer to your email instructions on packaging your gifts for delivery. Thank you again for providing Christmas to the children of Family Gateway.

Family Promise Supply Drive

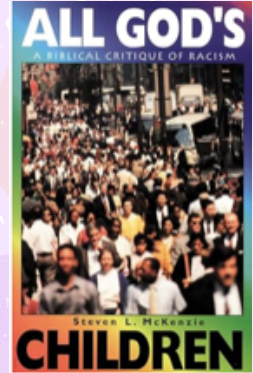
GPC will be supporting Family Promise of Collin County this Holiday Season by providing supplies for families in the program and the FPCC Day Center. Use the QR code to go to our sign up genius, or click on the link in your newsletter email to participate. Supplies must be returned to the church by Wednesday, December 20. Drop off is on the table in the narthex.



All God's Children - A Biblical Critique of Racism

Book Study

Grace Members are invited to join a Zoom book study on racism led by Portia Stephens on Monday evenings from 7-8:30 p.m. beginning January 8 for 14 weeks. The book is *All God's Children - A Biblical Critique of Racism* by Steve L. McKenzie, which can be purchased at the PC(USA) Store or on Amazon.



Racism is an ever-growing social issue worldwide, and Presbyterians are not immune. This study is intended to provoke thought and discussion about racism, specifically within Christian lay communities and the church. It claims that the Bible is not compatible with racism, and tries to show how interracial unity, as described in the Bible, is God's ultimate goal for humanity. The author's hope is that readers will take action to integrate and unify their communities. If you would like to join this book study, please check your connection card in worship or contact Portia at portia.stephens@gmail.com or text to 214-991-0104.

Holy Land Trip Update - October 2024

Information from the Educational Opportunities people on the ground in Israel is that beyond Gaza, the infrastructure remains in place, businesses are open, and physical life continues as usual. There is a huge desire by all living in Israel for tours to resume. Airlines are anxious to resume as well, as U.S. carriers took many flights to Tel Aviv. There is no date set by EO to resume tours to the Holy Land, but they are a lot closer than two weeks ago. Inside government sources expect major fighting to conclude soon and Gaza to remain occupied. Anticipated resumption of tours is early in 2024. Safety is their first priority, so be assured that they and other companies who have led trips to this region for decades will not resume unless it is safe to do so.

If you have registered already, EO has paused all payment requests for Holy Land tours until they resume. If we get to Spring 2024 and tourist travel to the Holy Land has not resumed, we can either reschedule the trip or change destinations. If you have not yet registered and are interested in going, wait until the Spring.

My advice is to be patient. We will meet again this spring to decide how to proceed. I still have the hope that we will be able to go safely.

Pastor Tracey

Our Prayer Team

The inspiration for creating a Prayer Team at GPC came from Larry Thorson, our Associate Pastor in 1999. Its purpose would be to bless and pray for the opening of our new Christian Education building that year. Donna Jasper was an excellent recruiter and soon the Prayer Team came into being. Pastor Larry's idea was that we would meet for about three months and then it would end. That didn't happen because the Prayer Team is still meeting almost every Sunday afternoon at 4 pm to pray! Many members have come and gone but Bill Harrison and Andrea Bailey are two of the original members who just won't quit! Mike Shaw, Jeanne Peck and Jane White are also members.

Mike Shaw prepares each week's prayer requests and adds them to the requests that are always on the list—the Pastors, Session, Deacons, Support Staff, new members, and every person on every committee at Grace. We feel it is an important and vital part of our ministry at Grace to lift these folks to the Lord in prayer. Praying for one another creates a very strong bond in the body of Christ.

We welcome anyone who would like to join us to pray for these requests. Also, if you are in need of prayer for any reason, you are welcome to come to MB2 and we will pray with you and for you.

We believe that prayer is the very heart of our Grace family. It is both an honor and a joy to be a part of that ministry and hopefully, more of you will answer that call and join us on Sunday afternoon.

May the Lord bless you!

Andrea Bailey, Prayer Team

Prayers are Being Answered

Your Prayer Team meets every Sunday in MB2 to pray over the prayers that have been shared with us. We meet at 4 PM, if you would like to have personal hands-on prayer, or wish to join us. If you would like to receive a list of the prayers weekly, send a message to Mike Shaw at brancosrbest@verizon.net to be added to our efforts to connect to the Lord and the community. Every week, God responds and answers. Here are some God answered this past week:

Chris Doherty's friend, Teri, has been cured of her cancer.

Pastor Wilson's Fantasy Team had a win!

What Does it Mean to be a Deacon?

Being a deacon means a lot of things to a lot of different Christians. Deacons in the United Methodist Church are ordained clergy. In our denomination, deacons are ordained but one doesn't have to engage in years of theological study. Our understanding of the role of a deacon has evolved across denominational lines since the first seven deacons were called back in Acts 6. Even in our own congregation the role of a deacon has changed. Maybe you remember deacons as the people who spend lots of time visiting members in the hospital, or maybe you heard that they meet a lot and not really much else. It is true that deacons are responsible for a variety of different tasks. We meet, we make visits, we reach out to people, we care for people, we serve Communion, and we serve people, among many other responsibilities. In a nutshell, it's a ministry of compassion and service. Sometimes it seems like a lot, but if you ask a current member of our GPC Deacon Council, I believe they'd tell you it's a manageable responsibility and so unbelievably worth it. It's a vital ministry to our congregation and community, and it really does make a difference.

If you feel called to serve as the hands and feet of Jesus in this way, or even if you are on the fence, I encourage you to go to gracepc.org/deacons. Look at our list of deacons, maybe you know one of them. If you do, ask them about their experience. Or maybe you don't know anyone on the list and you aren't sure about serving. If that's the case, just email Pastor Wilson at wilson@gracepc.org. He'd love to talk to you about it. We are continuing our work to build a diaconate with a sustainable foundation centered on the love of Christ to serve our community in 2023 and beyond. If you are reading this and serving as a deacon sounds like you, your God-given gifts of compassion and service would really make a difference to our team, and we'd love to have you join us!

It's a Boy!

Congratulations to Lee Anne and Cory Swinton on the birth of their son, Matthew Lee Swinton, born on Monday, November 6. Matthew joins big brothers Corbin and Charlie. Welcome to the family Matthew!

Sincere Sympathy

Nancy Henning as she grieves the loss of her mother, Jo Albert.

Prayers of comfort, hope, and peace.

"Precious in the sight of Lord is the death of his holy ones."

Psalms 116:15

We're Hiring!

We are looking for a part-time (approximately 30 hours weekly) Administrator for our Family and Adult Ministries to work closely with Pastor Cara and Pastor Wilson.

Duties include:

Administrative tasks associated with our Children and Youth, Adult Christian Education, and Nurture ministries including:

- organizing Sunday School materials
- keeping up with records and forms in CCB
- communication on behalf of the pastors
- tracking registrations and payments
- assisting with events (occasionally on Saturday and Sunday)
- attending weekly staff meetings (Tuesdays at 10am) and the monthly Deacon meeting (last Tuesday of the month at 7pm)

Desired Skills:

- Administration: Attention to detail, strong administrative skills
- Deadline Management: proactively planning, communicating regularly with the pastors and leaders of Children's, Youth, Family and Adult Ministries
- People Skills: Ability to work and collaborate with other staff members, volunteers and members of the congregation

To inquire or apply, contact Pastor Tracey. Tracey@gracepc.org

Christmas Eve Worship Schedule

10AM	Worship service & fellowship
1-2PM	Petting Zoo
2PM	Christmas Eve family worship service
7PM	Christmas Eve candlelight worship service

Children's Ministry

Text for Children's Information

If you would like to receive our weekly children's communications, text @gpc-kids to the number 81010 and get connected and informed about upcoming children's events.

Advent Wreaths - December 3

Our children's ministry will be making Advent Wreaths this Sunday, December 3 during the Sunday School hour (10am). If your child would like to make a wreath, head upstairs in the CE building and Pastor Cara will make sure they are in the right room.

Grace Christian Day School

We are blessed by a thriving Day School. Check out their newsletters using the links in your newsletter email.

Youth Ministry

Youth Connect

We will not be having Youth Connect in December, so make plans to attend the Christmas party on the 17th.

Youth Christmas Party - December 17

Join us for an ugly sweater Christmas party at the home of Steve and Tanya Valenta on Sunday, December 17, from 4-6pm. Prizes for the best sweaters. We will have a gift exchange (max \$10), and a dessert bakeoff. If you would like to join in our bakeoff, each family is invited to bring 1 dessert for the competition. Food is provided from Chipotle. If your youth is planning to attend, please check your connection card to help us in preparations.

Young Adults Ministry

Young Adults will be adhering to our 1st and 3rd Sunday schedule for November and December, please note the following events and add to your calendars:

In December, the Young Adults will meet on **December 17** only.

Upcoming College Social

All college-age students, please mark your calendar for a winter break get-together on Sunday, December 17 at 6:30 p.m. Details to come. Parents of college-age students, please share this date with your students. It will be fun opportunity to reconnect with friends over the holiday break!

For questions or more information about the Young Adult Ministry at GPC , please reach out to Bonnie Moreland at 972-523-1266.

All are welcome, so please invite your friends to join us.

Grace Presbytery is sponsoring a Young Adult Gathering at ICE at the Gaylord Texan on Saturday, December 9. ICE and the Gaylord Texan's holiday decorations are guaranteed to put you in the Christmas Spirit! And the evening is very reasonably priced! So, bring a friend and have a fun and memorable evening!

REGISTER for GRINCH-MAS

Saturday, December 9, 2023

In Person Event

Starting at: Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center
1501 Gaylord Trail, Grapevine, TX 76051

Click on the registration link in your newsletter email.



Want to Sing or Ring?

The GPC Music Ministry's school year rehearsal schedule is below.

Choirs

Sanctuary Adult Choir

Wednesdays, 7:00 – 8:15pm

Sanctuary

Michael King, Director

Exultation Choir

Youth choir for grades 6 – 12

Sundays, 4:00 – 5:15pm

Sanctuary

Michael King, Director

Voices in Praise (VIPs)

Children's choir for grades 2 – 5

Sundays, 5:15 – 6pm

Room CE215

Hannah Allen, Director

Cherub Choir

Children's choir for PK thru 1st gd.

Sundays, 4:15 – 5pm

Room CE215

Hannah Allen, Director

Handbell Choirs

Grace Notes

Advanced adult handbells

Sundays, 6:00 – 7:30pm

Room: Sanctuary

Michael King, Director

Credo

High school handbells

Sundays, 2:45 – 4:00pm

Room: Sanctuary

Katie Schnittker, Director

Tintinnabulators

Middle school handbells

Sundays, 2:45 – 4:00pm

Room CE204-205

Hannah Allen, Director

Carillon Ringers

Children (Grades 3-5)
handbells

Sundays, 4:30 – 5:15pm

Room CE 204/205

Michelle Rutherford, Director

Feel free to contact any of the ensemble directors for more info we would love to have you!

Hannah Allen – Children's Choirs, Tintinnabulators (MS handbells), hannah@gracepc.org

Michael King – Exultation, Grace Notes, Sanctuary Choir, michael@gracepc.org

Katie Schnittker – Credo Director (HS handbells), katie.schnittker@gmail.com

Michelle Rutherford – Carillon Ringers Director (Children handbells),

mmrutherford1@sbcglobal.net

Want to Learn?

Children's School Year Sunday School & Godly Play Schedule

Preschool SS	CE211
K-1st SS	CE214
2nd-3rd SS	CE212
4th-5th SS	CE216
Godly Play	CE213
(Godly Play Worship Center)	

Youth School Year Sunday School Schedule

Middle School SS	CE201-203
High School SS	CE201-203
Confirmation	(Begins Jan. 7, 2024)

Adult Sunday School

Word of Life	MB4
Visions of Faith	MB3
Bible Boomers	Wheelus Hall
Koinonia	CE204/205
Trinity	MB2

Weekly Bible Study Opportunities

Mon. PM Men's, 7-9PM	MB4
Tues. AM Women, 10-11:30AM	MB2
Wed. AM Women of Wonder, 10:30AM	MB4
Thurs. PM Women Generations of Grace, 7PM	MB3
Fri. AM Men's, 7-9AM	MB2
Every Other Sat. Men's Bible Study, 8-10AM	MB2

Calendar

DECEMBER

- 2 Men's Saturday AM Bible Study, 8AM (MB2)
- 2 Gotta Have Fun Game Night, 6:30PM (Youth Room)
- 3 First Sunday in Advent
- 3 Contemporary Worship, 9AM
- 3 Sunday School for All, 10AM
- 3 Traditional Worship, 11:05AM
- 3 Godly Play, 11:15AM ((CE213, Godly Play Worship Center)
- 3 Prayer Group Meeting, 4PM (MB2)
- 3 Sounds of Christmas Concert, 6PM
- 4 Cancer Support Group Meeting, 12PM (Zoom)
- 4 Women of Grace Christmas Party, 6PM (Turner's)
- 4 Monday PM Men's Bible Study, (MB4)
- 5 Tuesday AM Women's Bible Study, 10AM (MB2)
- 5 Nurture Council Meeting, 1:30PM (MB2)
- 5 Dayschool Committee Meeting, 7PM (Zoom)
- 6 Career Transition Support Group, 9AM (MB2)
- 6 Women of Wonder Bible Study, 10:30AM (MB4)
- 6 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal, 7PM
- 7 Children & Youth Committee Meeting, 7PM (Zoom)
- 7 Generations of Grace Women's Bible Study, 7PM (MB2)
- 8 Jigsaw Puzzle Group Meeting, 7PM (Mattison's)
- 9 Quilt Ministry Meeting, 9AM (CE204/205)
- 9 UTD Concert, 7:30PM (Sanctuary)
- 10 2nd Sunday in Advent
- 10 Contemporary Worship, 9AM
- 10 Sunday School for All, 10AM
- 10 Traditional Worship, 11:05AM
- 10 Godly Play, 11:15AM ((CE213, Godly Play Worship Center)
- 10 Session Meeting, 12:15PM (Wheelus Hall)