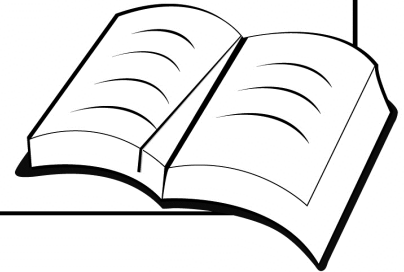


G R

C E
notesGRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

April 2019 — Volume 62, Issue 4

Welcome

We welcomed
Pastor Melanie Ruta
as our Interim Pastor at GCPC
beginning March 11th.



Reformed Theological Seminary in Oviedo. She eventually received the Master of Divinity from RTS and served briefly on the staff of Central Florida Presbytery. She completed her supervised ministry at St. Mark's in Altamonte Springs, and a pastoral internship at College Park Presbyterian.

Pastor Melanie has served as Interim Pastor at four other congregations in the Central Florida Presbytery: South Lake Presbyterian in Clermont, Tuskawilla Presbyterian in Oviedo, Riverside Presbyterian in Cocoa Beach, and First Presbyterian, Lake Mary. She is an active member of Central Florida Presbytery and is currently serving a second term on the Committee on Ministry.

Pastor Melanie and husband Steve met while they were students at Cornell Law School in New York. They moved to Maitland in 1990 where they have been active in the local church, community and schools.



Son Ted (25) is serving with the 82nd Airborne stationed at Ft. Bragg, N.C. Daughter Beth (22) is finishing her degree in bio-mathematics at FSU.



Pastor Melanie was working as a prosecutor in Orlando when she responded to God's call to seminary. She continued to work for the State Attorney's Office during her first two years at

Pastor Melanie was an active elder at Maitland Presbyterian where she served on a Pastor Nominating Committee, chaired Adult Education, taught all ages, was a lay reader, and helped lead a mid-week outreach service. She has traveled to Nicaragua with mission teams, and also served as a volunteer chaplain in the Seminole County Jail and for the Maitland Fire Department. She continues to serve as a Bible study leader at Compassion Corner downtown.

After ten years of law school and seminary, Pastor Melanie has had enough of formal education but she isn't done challenging herself to learn and grow in new ways. She has been learning how to do stand-up comedy at open mic nights. She and Steve are training for their next trek in the Alps of the former Yugoslavia. In 2017, they made it to Everest Base Camp. Pastor Melanie practices yoga, enjoys baking and traveling, and going to the theater. **She is eagerly looking forward to joining the GCPC family of faith as we discern God's leading for the future and prepare to call our next installed pastor.**

Welcome Pastor Melanie!

Ruth Circle continues the study *God's Promise - I am With You*, under the leadership of Winnie Rutherford. This study has evoked a great deal of discussion, which has been excellent.



In April, we will be putting together Easter Baskets for the children served by Servant's Heart. This will be a great opportunity to provide inspirational information within the format of the baskets.

In May, which will be our last meeting until September, we will complete our study and celebrate with a luncheon at a nearby restaurant.

As always, all are welcome to join our Circle at any time. If you have any questions feel free to contact Barbara Hart at 407-636-4715 or email at bhartart21@gmail.com.

I would like to thank my Grace Covenant Family for the calls, cards and messages as well as prayers during my recent illness. Such thoughtfulness is so helpful in keeping up the faith during stressful times.

Barbara Hart

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Thank you to all who have wished me well, sent cards, phone calls or thoughts and prayers. Hopefully my medical issues will be resolved shortly.

Gene Lang

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Thank you ALL for helping make our annual Chili Cook-Off and Cookie Bake-Off a YUMMY success on March 3. Proceeds from the cook-off will help off-set costs to our summer conference trips to Montreat!!!

The Rooted Youth Group

Save the Date Ladies!

Handbag Bingo Saturday, May 4th

1:30 pm
Conway Hall

Presale tickets = \$10.00

Proceeds to benefit the College Scholarship Fund.



Send Grace Notes items to Jane Heppner at jane.gracenotes@gmail.com

The deadline for the next issue is
April 15th.

Please include *Grace Notes* in the title of your email.

New Mailing Address

Betty Parks
Gentry Park
3201 Center Pointe Dr
Orlando, FL 32825

Karl Kesler
c/o 106 Commerce St.
Suite 107
Lake Mary, FL
32746-6217



Karl's physical address is still in Winter Park.

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See the church calendar online:

<http://www.grace.to/announcements/weekly-calendar/>



Come help spruce up
the church grounds for
Easter
on

Saturday, April 6th
at 8:11 AM



HOPS FOR HAITI

On **Wednesday, April 17**, the Small Blessings children will have their annual **"Hops for Haiti"** to raise funds for the Good Shepherd School in Haiti which is a ministry supported by Grace Covenant.

The children gather pledges from family and friends and then "Hop" for a designated time to see how many hops they can do. Once again, **we need "hop counters"** from the Grace Covenant family. You will gather in the gym by 9:00 am. As you sit, a child will be in front of you hopping and you just need to count the hops so they can be recorded.

Please call or email Candy at 407-898-6571 or candy@grace.to if you would be willing to come count the hops. It is great fun and the more counters we have, the faster it goes.

Did you notice something missing at Grace Covenant this spring?

After an 8 year run, the Outreach Committee decided to discontinue Hoops for Haiti as a fundraiser for the **Good Shepherd School**.

But stay tuned for more information about a new fundraiser later this year.

In the meantime, those who wish to donate to the school can make checks payable to the church, marked for Good Shepherd.

Likewise, if you would like to donate to the **Robert Eckard Haiti Student Scholarship Fund** that supports pre-med student, Midelson Fleurissaint, checks can be marked for that fund.

As always, please continue to pray for the Haitian people as they weather the storms of an unstable government.

Thank you for your continued support of our friends in Haiti.

Merci!



- Have you signed up to play in the Fourth Annual Grace on the Greens Golf Tournament on **Saturday, April 27 at 8:30 am**.
- Has your business helped with buying hole signs or other sponsorship levels?

The goal is to raise enough money so that our students can attend the Montreat Youth Conferences this summer, after they've made their deposits. Montreat Youth Conferences have been impacting our students' journey in faith for several years in amazing ways through: small group discussions, mission, two worship services a day, and fellowship with other students from all parts of the US. Many of us have heard from the students themselves, in their Youth Sunday sermons, how much this conference has helped them to understand what it means to be in a relationship with Christ, and how to strengthen that relationship.

Please contact Mike Beam at mike@grace.to, or (407) 898-6571 for more information.



We extend our Christian love and sympathy to ~

The family of ***Eric Kimani*** who passed away March 14, 2019.



It's A Boy!

Carver Francis Townes

Carver was born March 11, 2019. He is the son of Jenny and Owen Townes and the grandson of Gary and Jeanne Carver.

CHILDREN'S EASTER ACTIVITIES



Easter Egg-citement

Saturday, April 20, 10 - 11:30 am
Conway Hall

Join us to make some Easter crafts and visit with friends. After our crafting time, we'll have a special Easter Egg hunt and share refreshments. All you need to bring is your smile! Children.....bring your parents and/or grandparents and come join the fun!



Cross of Love

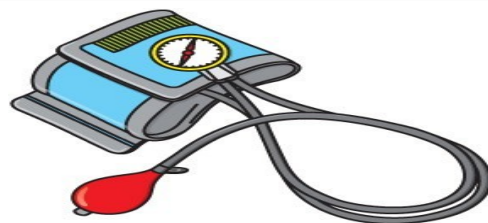
On Easter Sunday, at 9:35 am, we will gather at the wooden cross placed outside the north side of the Sanctuary to add fresh flowers to the cross and release the

butterflies that we have been watching develop.

All are invited to bring a fresh flower to add to the cross.

You might also want to bring your camera...

...it's a great photo op!



Did you know???

On the **first and third Sundays of each month** following the 10:45 service, you can have your blood pressure checked? Stop by the table in the rear of the Sanctuary ...just one way you can keep tabs on this important number in your life!

Celebration Continues

Please join with your Church family on **April 28, the Sunday after Easter**, at Noon, for a pot luck lunch in Conway Hall. This is a way to continue to celebrate the Easter season. Bring the dish of your choice and join us for this special time.



Lenten Season Is Time for One Great Hour of Sharing

Isaiah 58 calls us to open our doors and join in mission and ministry with all our neighbors in need. For 70 years Presbyterians have joined together in this effort to share God's love through ministries that provide relief to those affected by disasters, food for the hungry and support toward self-development of poor and oppressed communities.

During Lent, Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church focuses on these needs and provides assistance to meet these needs through the **One Great Hour of Sharing** offering. Here is how your support is shared:

- 32% - Restoring Hope through the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Working alongside communities as they recover and find hope after natural or human-caused disasters.
- 36% - Reducing Hunger through Presbyterian Hunger Program. Supporting initiatives that create sustainable food systems and alleviate root causes of poverty so that all may be fed.
- 32% - Partnering in Progress through Self-Development of People. Providing resources and education to oppressed and disadvantaged communities working to overcome poverty and injustice through initiatives they own and directly benefit from.

Watch for the One Great Hour of Sharing brochure in the Bulletin on Sunday, April 21, and be ready to participate in this offering. **There are several ways to give:** through the Grace Covenant offering on April 21, donate by credit card online at www.presbyterianmission.org/give-oghs or text OGHS to 20222 to give \$10.



ROOTED Student Ministry Schedule

April 6

Saturday 7:30 am - 1:30 pm

Gleaning - PYC Mission Event

Meet in the GCPC parking lot at **7:30am**

WITH a bagged lunch. Drinks provided.

We should return to GCPC at **1:30pm**.

Check with your guidance counselor to see if this qualifies for Bright Futures Scholarship.

April 18

Thursday 8:30 pm

Maundy Thursday Watch and Lock-in

April 20

Saturday 9:30 - 10:45 am

Easter Egg-citement

April 14 and 28

Sundays 5:15 - 7:00 pm

Rooted Youth Group

We'll have awesome dinners, games, music, prayers, announcements and a lesson. Bring your friendz as we only have **TWO** more times we meet before announcing the winner of our "Bring your Friendz to ROOTED" contest on May 5th.

Sunday School meets every Sunday, 9:30 - 10:30am, in the Youth Room with **FREE** donuts, juice and **Jesus!!!**

Please bring your friends to anything we do!

They don't have to be members of GCPC, Presbyterian, or even believers but you **DO** need to tell them that the Gospel of Jesus **will** be taught in some kind of way.

For more details on our events and other news....

you can friend us on Facebook at: Grace Covenant PC Youth,
and on Instagram at: rootedgcpc.

Something new!!!

We'll have a **Maundy Thursday Watch and Lock-in** on **Thursday, April 18**, starting after the Maundy Thursday worship service, so we start around **8:30pm**.

We'll have games, watch a movie, and **WILL** be asleep by midnight because most of you do have school the next morning.

Early in the morning, we'll get up and go to the Sanctuary for a guided 30-minute prayer vigil; parents are more than welcome to join us at this time. With so much going on in our lives....school, Prom, getting ready to graduate....this lock-in will help to focus on why we have Holy Week, and prepare us for the glory of Easter. **Sign-up deadline is 11:30am on Wednesday, April 17, and is FREE!**

Easter EGG-CITEMENT

Pastor Candy needs our help with Easter EGG-CITEMENT

on **Saturday, April 20th**, by hiding Easter eggs and shepherding the lil' chee-wees around. She needs you from 9:30am-10:45am. Contact her if you can help.



The deadline to apply for the **GCPC College Scholarship** is **June 1st**.



Spring is here and the children at **Small Blessings Child Care** are ready to participate in three fun events!

First event for the children is HOPS for HAITI. Come watch them HOP Wednesday, April 17th, 9:00 am, in the gym or talk with Pastor Candy about being an official hop counter. **Who knew hopping could provide three to five thousand dollars a year to the GCPC Haiti Water Project?**

Friday the 19th., they will be celebrating Easter with classroom parties and Easter Egg Hunts on the church grounds. SBCC children are also invited to participate in the GCPC Easter Egg-citement event on Saturday, April 20.

Finally, **Friday, April 26th**, they will be displaying their art in the **SBCC Annual Spring Art Fair**. **The fair starts around 4:00 pm and you are invited!** You will be amazed at the work these "Budding Artists" display. This is not a craft fair! It is art that you will not believe. Outreach Missions Committee will be serving cookies and punch during the show as a "Thank You" for the children's help with Haiti.

SBCC will also be open **Sunday, April 28th**, after each church hour for you to view the art.

Come support SBCC and give them thanks for their support of GCPC!

GCPC Scholarship Fund ???

What is it? A wonderful way for church members, church groups and others to offer financial help to our graduating seniors and GCPC students already attending college. Donations can be placed in the offering plate or sent to the church office (please designate for the scholarship fund). Any donation amount is much appreciated by our hardworking students.



Scholarship Fund

FOURTH THURSDAY AT THE GARDEN

Thursday, April 25
6:30 pm

Friends and family gather for a meal and fellowship together on the 4th Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm. No agenda...just a time to catch up with old friends and meet new friends.

We'd love to have you with us at the
Olive Garden Restaurant
on East Colonial Drive.

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Family Fun Nite will resume  
Tuesday, May 21.



## Vacation Bible School 2019 "To Mars and Beyond"

DON'T FORGET..... Vacation Bible School will take place  
June 10 - 13, from 9:00 am - Noon.

ALSO..... Small Blessings Bible School will be held  
June 17, 18 and 19 from 9:00 - 11:30 am

For more information contact Candy at 407-898-6571 or [candy@grace.to.](mailto:candy@grace.to.)





Grace Covenant  
has partnered with  
United Against Poverty  
Orlando  
for the past several years.  
Your contributions,  
both financial  
and through service days,  
make it possible for UP to  
extend a hand up  
to many more families than  
Grace Covenant  
could reach alone.

Thank You,  
The Outreach Committee



February 15, 2019

Pastor Maynard Pittendrieh  
Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church  
1655 Peel Avenue  
Orlando, FL 32806

Pastor Pittendrieh,

On behalf of the families we serve, thank you for your total heartfelt investment of \$2315 in 2018. Nothing is more vital in fulfilling our mission than the dedicated supporters who provide the fuel needed to lead sustainable change in our community. We are so grateful that you share in our vision of lifting others to economic self-sufficiency by offering a hand up, rather than a handout.

Your kindness helped to create a future filled with hope and independence for 11,224 unique households last year. For those seeking a dignified food assistance program, relief came in the form of our Member Share Grocery Program which helped Central Florida families retain \$4,797,563 in resources in 2018. Those in crisis situations were able to receive 10,729 units of service in our Life Enrichment Center, where they were able to stabilize their life and build the confidence needed to work towards their long-term goals. For those struggling to overcome barriers to employment, your investment helped 63 individuals secure employment through our Success Training Employment Program. Throughout the year we were able to help a total of 48 families successfully lift themselves above the poverty line—20 of which went on to achieve self-sufficiency above 200% of the federal poverty level. None of this would be possible without your generosity!

With the arrival of the tax filing season, we wanted to take this opportunity to again thank you for your continued commitment to our mission. Below you will find a summary of your 2018 charitable contributions:

| Donation Amount | Date      |
|-----------------|-----------|
| \$50            | 1/24/2018 |
| \$265           | 1/25/2018 |
| \$2000          | 11/1/2018 |

With gratitude,

Eric Gray  
Executive Director

*Thank you Grace Covenant  
Family! Eric*

United Against Poverty is a registered 501c3 nonprofit organization and your contributions are tax-deductible. Our Federal Tax ID is 11-3697936. If you have any questions about your charitable contributions, please contact Caitlyn Beersdorf at 407-650-0774 ext. 1730 or [caitlyn@unitedagainstopoverty.org](mailto:caitlyn@unitedagainstopoverty.org). A copy of our financial report is always available upon request by contact us at 407-650-0774. In addition, Florida residents may obtain financial information directly from their state agency, as indicated below.  
Florida: A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free, 1-800-435-7352 (800-HELP-FLA) within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state. Florida Registration CH-05316.

150 W. Michigan Street | Orlando, FL 32806 | [uporlando.org](http://uporlando.org)

## A Look Back at 2018

11,224

Unique  
Households  
Served



10,729

Units of Stabilization  
Services Provided  
in our Life  
Enrichment Center

Our Member Share  
Grocery Helped  
Families Retain  
\$4.79 Million



An Average of  
123

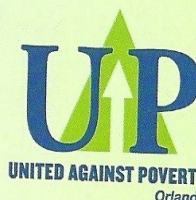
New Individuals  
Enrolled in our  
Programs Each Week

63  
STEP Graduates  
Employed



48

Families Lifted  
Out of Poverty



None of this would be possible without you!

**APRIL 2019**



**GRACE COVENANT  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**Sunday Worship:** 8:30 & 10:45 a.m.

**Office Hours:**

Monday–Thursday: 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.

Friday: 8:30 a.m.–noon

1655 Peel Ave., Orlando, FL 32806

Phone: 407.898.6571

E-mail: churchoffice@grace.to

WWW.GRACE.TO

Rev. Melanie Ruta  
Interim Pastor

Candy Vander Weide  
Commissioned Lay Pastor

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Permit No. 3597  
Orlando, FL

Return Service Requested

To:



**April 14: Palm Sunday**



**April 18: Maundy Thursday Supper and Service**

Our Church family will share a meal at **5:30 pm** in Conway Hall.

Worship with communion will begin at **6:30 pm**. You are encouraged to attend the service even if you don't attend the dinner. Please join with your Church family in remembering and reflecting on this time in the life of Christ.



**April 19: Good Friday Service - Noon**

Washington Shores Presbyterian Church, 3600 Rogers Dr., Orlando 32805

This is a joint service with other Presbyterian churches in the Downtown Orlando area. Clergy from Presbyterians of Downtown will participate.

A light lunch will follow the service.



**April 21: Easter Sunday**

**Sunrise service** in the courtyard, 7:00 am

Continental breakfast in Conway Hall following the Sunrise Service

**Services in the sanctuary, 8:30 and 10:45 am**

Sunday School for all ages - 9:30 - 10:30 am

Nursery available from 8:15 am - Noon.