



## Being the Church

“We are living in extraordinary times!” Those are words that we may have used in the past to describe technological advances or medical breakthroughs or shifting cultural or political views. But nothing we’ve experienced in the past compares to what we are experiencing now.

We have all been thrust into new ways of being and doing almost everything in our lives. Our family routines, workplaces, social interaction, spiritual connections—nothing looks the same these days.. The shift has been so swift and so overwhelming as to be almost unimaginable. Yet here we are.

It may not be possible for us to do church the way we’ve always done it. But that doesn’t mean we aren’t still called to be the church. Grace Covenant, like every other church, is finding new ways to “gather” for worship, fellowship, Bible study, service and meetings. And as with everything else that is happening now, God is with us. God will equip and enable us to be everything God calls us to be and do—even in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak.

How can you stay connected and current? Go to the church web-site at [www.grace.to](http://www.grace.to), follow the church Facebook page, or sign up for weekly email updates. The pastors, elders and deacons are calling and emailing members. Call the church office to update your contact information, for help getting on-line, or to sign up for email updates. Pray with and for each other.

Reach out to friends and neighbors. Serve as you are able. Trust in God,.

Be the church that we are being called to be in these extraordinary times.



### Looking Ahead Events May Be Postponed or Moved Online

#### April

- 8 - Hops for Haiti
- 9 - Maundy Thursday Service
- 10 - Good Friday Vigil
- 11 - Easter Egg Hunt
- 12 - Easter Sunday
- 18 - Grace on the Greens
- 19 - Celebration Continues Luncheon
- 23 - Fourth Thursday at the Garden

#### May

- 17 - Youth Sunday
- 31 - Pentecost

#### June

- 1, 2, 3, 4 - Music Camp
- 8, 9, 10, 11 - Vacation Bible School
- 15, 16, 17 - Small Blessings Bible School

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## Congratulations!



Hayden Ray Fitzgerald  
was born March 1, 2020.  
He is the son of Jeremy and Molly  
Fitzgerald and the grandson of  
Gary and Jeanne Carver.

## In Sympathy

We extend our Christian  
love and sympathy to ~

The family of Dottie Wilson who  
died February 23, 2020



October 2019

Please know that your gift  
in 2019 to Disaster Relief,  
Hurricane and Typhoon  
Relief, Hurricane Dorian  
relief, Bahamas relief and

rebuilding, blesses those who walk the hard road  
to recovery and helping them to find hope in the  
midst of chaos.

In Christ's peace,

Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus

Director, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance



Thank you **ALL** for helping make our annual  
Chili Cook-Off and Cookie Bake-Off a YUMMY  
success on March 1. Proceeds from the cook-off  
went to help off-set costs to our summer confer-  
ence trips in Montreat!!!



"I just want to say without your help, attending  
College Montreat Conferences would not be  
possible as a college student. At the 2020 Confer-  
ence, I was able to learn more about the Sabbath,  
and what it means to have a day of rest. If I  
didn't get a chance to go, my life would not have  
been changed for the better." – Kaki Gallagher,  
one of our participating college students on her  
College Montreat Conference experience.



## Grace on the Greens

Have you signed up to play  
in the **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Grace on  
the Greens** Golf Tournament,  
April 18th? Has your busi-  
ness 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, wor-  
ship services each 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.

For more information, please contact Mike  
[mike@grace.to](mailto:mike@grace.to) or (407) 898-6571.

## Good Friday Prayer Vigil

Brought back because of its powerful impact  
and people loved it, we'll once again have a  
church-wide **Good Friday Prayer Vigil** on Good  
Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup> in the Sanctuary from 6:30am-  
7am. Yeah it's early, but with so much going on  
in our lives: school, Prom, coronavirus, getting  
ready to graduate, this 30-minute guided prayer  
time will help to focus on why we have Holy  
Week, and prepare us for the glory of Easter.  
No need to sign-up, just show up!

## Dropping the Landline. . .



New contact  
number for  
Maxine Gokee

Beth Meadows





As a community organization, we strive to do everything we can to preserve the safety and health of our guests, volunteers, staff and community.

The Congregational Rotational Program will be placed on a temporary hold until April 12, 2020. While our families are not the most at-risk populations for this virus, many of our church volunteers are. In an effort to protect our volunteers and church partners, guests currently in the rotation program will shelter at an extended stay hotel or make other housing arrangements if possible.

We will still need food for families staying in the hotel. Prepackaged meals that can be reheated in a microwave can be donated and delivered to the Resource Center at 1000 Clay St. in Winter Park by 5 pm. We will deliver meals to the hotel. Contact Tia Avery: 407-951-8269, ext. 104 office or her cell \_\_\_\_\_ if you wish to coordinate for a meal.

**While volunteer opportunities are limited, we need our community now more than ever.**

### Ways You Can Help

Give Financially: This transition will increase costs for Family Promise of Greater Orlando, so your financial support during this time period will be significant. Please feel free to donate online at: <https://www.familypromiseorlando.org/donate>

Supply Donations: We are in need of specific supplies for cleaning, sanitation, and infant care during this time. Please follow us on Facebook to keep track of updated needs requests: <https://www.facebook.com/familypromiseorlando/> All other donations will need to be postponed until April.

Be Kind and Pray: We ask that you be kind to one another and pray for our neighbors and community during this time.

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Please submit articles to  
churchoffice@grace.to  
**Next Deadline - April 8**

## *Feeding the Body of Christ*

I think that one of the best things about being part of the church is becoming a part of God's family. When you are sick, in the hospital, or homebound you can feel disconnected from your family. Those of us who are in the church regularly can take for granted how important this family connection is. That is why I believe that taking the Lord's Supper to those who cannot attend Sunday morning worship is so important. It tells these brothers and sisters that they are still loved and important even when they are unable to come.

I am hoping to start with Maundy Thursday Communion. If you want us to bring you communion or know someone who would like to have it during Holy Week, April 9 or 10, please call the church office or email me. If you would like to help me deliver communion please let me know that as well! Love in Christ, Rev. Karen Estes, Parish Associate for Pastoral Care

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## VBS Mission Projects And You Can Help

The VBS students will be participating in three mission projects. You can help by providing some items they will be using .

1. Gently used sneakers for elementary- aged children to use at Eccleston School.
2. Items for Hygiene Kits for the homeless at Family Promise. Items include new toothbrush, small toothpaste, small comb, fingernail clippers, BAND-AID®, hand towels (16"x32" or 15"x28"), washcloths, and new bars of bath soap.
3. Save your pennies! Students will bring in pennies each day for a contest! This money is for our missionary, Dan Turk, in Madagascar. Dan helps the people there grow trees for food and to sell the fruit.

## Conversations with Children about COVID-19

As public conversations increase around coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), children may worry about themselves, their family and friends getting ill with COVID-19. Parents, family members, school staff and other trusted adults can play an important role in helping children make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, accurate and minimizes anxiety or fear. CDC has created guidance to help adults have conversations with children about COVID-19 and ways they can avoid getting and spreading the disease.

### Remain calm and reassuring.

- Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them and with others.

### Make yourself available to listen and to talk.

- Make time to talk. Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions.

### Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.

- Remember that viruses can make anyone sick, regardless of a person's race or ethnicity. Avoid making assumptions about who might have COVID-19.

### Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio or online.

- Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.

### Provide information that is honest and accurate.

- Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child. Talk to children about how some stories on COVID-19 on the Internet and social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.

### Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs.

- Remind children to stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing or sick.
- Remind them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash.
- Discuss any new actions that may be taken at school to help protect children and school staff. (e.g., increased handwashing, cancellation of events or activities)
- Get children into a handwashing habit.
- Teach them to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing, going to the bathroom, and before eating or preparing food.

If soap and water are not available, teach them to use hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer should contain at least 60% alcohol. Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol, especially in schools and childcare facilities.

## ROOTED Student Ministry Schedule

### ROOTED Youth Group - 5:15 - 7pm

Come for an awesome dinner, 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 3rd. See dates below.

Sunday School meets every Sunday (*except Easter*) in the Youth Room with FREE donuts, juice, and Jesus!!! Sunday School runs 9:30-10:30 a.m.

### April

5

ROOTED Youth Group - 5:15 - 7pm

10

Good Friday Prayer Vigil - 6:30 - 7:00 am

18

Grace on the Greens - 7:00 am - 2:30 pm

26

ROOTED Youth Group - 5:15 - 7pm

Children's Ministry needs our help with **EGG-CITEMENT** on Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, by hiding Easter eggs and shepherding the lil' chee-wees around from 9:30am-10:45am.

**THEN** stick around for our very own Easter egg hunt @ 10:45am-11:15pm.

Contact Mike if you can help.

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

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



## *Session Summary*

March 2020

The church continued to have a positive cash flow through February; but the suspension of worship services and use of the property will be a challenge moving forward. Members are encouraged to continue to support the work of the church by mailing tithes and offerings to the church office or donating on-line through the church's web-site.

Session discussed that if the church can hold steady through this time, a request could be made later this spring for approval to begin the pastor search process.

The Officer Nominating Committee will be seeking names to nominate a deacon for the class of 2020.

Session approved the recommendation of Finance and Stewardship for allocation of the Kesler bequest. Ten percent was tithed to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for the Nashville recovery effort; half was allocated to the B&G Reserve; and the balance was allocated for new Children's Ministry initiatives and improvements promised under the agreement with Share the Care.

Approval of the AV-Upgrade Improvements was ratified. Installation is scheduled for late March but may be delayed due to supply chain interruptions. Improvements around the church property are continuing—including repurposing of Smith Hall rooms, and landscaping of the Sanctuary drop off.

Reports were received from standing committees of Session, church boards, and from the spring Presbytery meeting. Presbytery approved the church's request for micro-grant funding for hosting funerals for community members.

Five members are now working as a commission of Session charged with making recommendations for improving church communications.

Session removed Dot Wilson (passed) and Diane Stukonis (transferred) from the rolls.

Session welcomed our new Parish Associate and Children's Ministry Director and noted the impact they have already had in such a short time.

## *One Great Hour of Sharing*

Through One Great Hour of Sharing, we become the household of God. We extend shelter to those who have no place to stay, offer compassion to those who have pain—be it physical, emotional or spiritual—and we set a feast, with God, for those who lack access to enough food to eat. God's household is filled with love and everyone is welcome. In fact, OGHS is the single largest way Presbyterians come together every year to work toward a better world.

There are several ways to give:

Watch for the One Great Hour of Sharing brochure and envelope in the bulletin, donate by credit card online at [www.presbyterianmission.org/give-oghs](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/give-oghs)

or text OGHS to 20222 to give \$10.

***IF WE ALL DO A LITTLE, IT ADDS UP !!!***

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## *Scholarship Fund*

The Grace Covenant Scholarship Fund helps meet the needs of our college students. The fund is not part of the church budget but relies solely on contributions from individual members, Sunday School classes, Presbyterian Women, circles and other groups within the church. Make checks payable to the church and indicate "Scholarship Fund" on the memo line. Thank you for helping our youth meet their educational goals.

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## *Book Club*

Book Club will meet at 7:00 pm at Panera's located at 3138 S. Orange Ave., Orlando, FL. Join Us!

April 28 - *Twenty Wishes* by Debbie Macomber

May 26 - *The Land of Silence* by Tessa Afshar

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## *Fourth Thursday at the Garden*

Join with family and friends at the Olive Garden Restaurant on East Colonial, April 23, at 6:30 pm for good food and fantastic fellowship with one another.

No agenda...just a time to relax and be together.

April 2020



**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**

Non-Profit Organization  
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Orlando, FL

Return Service Requested

To:

**Egg-Citment Egg-Stravaganza  
Egg-Citment!**



Translation:  
GCPC Easter Egg Hunt!

Saturday, April 11, 2020  
10:00 AM-11:00 AM

Preschoolers through Fifth Grade  
*Everyone leaves with a bag of  
Easter Eggs filled with  
prizes and candy!*

Volunteers needed to set out eggs  
and help children.

For more information  
contact "M" Waddell.

***Grace on the Greens***



Golf Tournament  
Saturday, April 18, 2020

The goal is to raise money so our  
students can attend the Montreat  
Youth Conferences this summer.  
Montreat Youth Conferences have  
been impacting our students'  
journey in faith for several years in  
amazing ways.

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

***Vacation Bible School!***



JUNE 8-11, 2020  
9 a.m. to noon

Completed grades K-5  
Invite your Friends!

Fun! Bible stories, crafts, games,  
mission projects, music, snacks!  
Get registration forms from the  
Church Office or in Narthex (lobby).

Think of the children in your  
neighborhood who might enjoy VBS!

Return forms by May 4th

For more information  
contact Marian Bauer.

Please continue to support the work of the church by mailing your tithes and offerings to the church office or by making a donation through the church website. Go to the "Online Giving" page at [www.grace.to](http://www.grace.to) and click on the "Give Now" button.