



A New Year

The beginning of a new year is traditionally a time of looking both back and forward. We look back. We remember the significant events of the past year; the things we learned and the ways we grew; the new people who came into our life and the cherished memory of the people who left it. And we look forward to a better year to come—one filled with new relationships, new opportunities, and the making of new memories to last a lifetime.

The beginning of a new year in the church is no different. We look back. We remember where we were and what happened to us as a family of faith; and how we've changed and grown spiritually. And we look forward with hope and expectation to what God will call us to be and do in the year to come.

When 2020 began we were already in the middle of an interim, which is a process where some change is to be expected. But not the kind of wholesale upheaval wrought by the virus, racial unrest, economic instability and the political transfer of power. As an interim pastor I challenge people to give change a chance. I assure them that they are capable of more change than they think they are, and that they might just discover that a new way of doing things is okay! But 2020 wasn't what I had in mind!

Through God's providence and the congregation's faithfulness, Grace Covenant has not only endured, we have been transformed by this season of extraordinary change. We have come through this year more resilient, more capable

and more prepared for whatever uncertain future lies ahead. That is cause to celebrate.

Happy New Year!



Looking Ahead

Events May Be Postponed or Moved Online or Outside

January

- 1 - Office Closed
- 10 - Ordination and Installation
- 24 - Scout Sunday
- 31 - Annual Congregational Meeting
- 31 - Chili Cook Off - Cookie Bake Off

February

- 7 - Youth Sunday
 Souper Bowl Food Drive
- 12 - Youth Valentine Parents Date Night Out
- 17 - Ash Wednesday
- 24 - Lenten Program

March

- 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 - Lenten Program
- 14 - Teacher Appreciation Luncheon
- 21 - Quilt Sunday
- 28 - Palm Sunday
- 31 - Hops for Haiti

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Thank you

A big "Thank You" to Administration and Finance for the generous "Merry Christmas" gift! Now many children through "Toys for Tots" will have something to open on Christmas! Jesus is the reason for the season and Giving is part of the reason.

Nick Pazar

Cooking With Grace

Cooking With Grace is a once a month cooking group via Zoom. Sign up to receive a list of ingredients, steps to prep food in advance and the Zoom link to join in. "M" Waddell will be leading the cooking group on January 18 at 6 p.m. She will be sharing breakfast for dinner with Dutch Baby Pancakes.

We begin promptly at 6:00 preparing the food. Anyone can sign up to lead the group, share their recipes or join in the fun and learn to make new dishes with friends. Can't wait to get cooking!

To sign up, email Carolyn Castagno at carolyn@findingnewjoys.com

Ruth Circle

Our last meeting of 2020 was held on Dec 14th at Conway Hall. We continue to study the journey of Joshua - a fascinating study involving the meaning of the Promised Land. We will continue this study in 2021.

Our special project continues to center on Servant's Heart. For December we participated in a toy drive for children between the ages of 5-10. As always the members and friends of Ruth Circle were generous in their support as well as continuing to provide the much needed diapers.

Other people and organizations have joined our efforts. A member of the congregation donated many of her saved baby clothing, equipment and supplies for Servant's Heart to distribute to needy families. Director Chip Hanna and other staff members were overwhelmed with her thoughtfulness.

Small Blessings families also collected items to fill bags for the children served by Servant's Heart.

So many people are reaching out to help others in our community and that is what this season is all about.

Blessings to all in the new year. Barbara Hart

Welcome Carl Stokes

Starting in January, there will be a new member of the Grace Covenant staff. Carl Stokes joins us in the position of Facilities Manager after a long and varied career in construction management, facilities management, community association management, emergency response, and business development. He and wife Jenny are both Stephen ministers, both native Floridians and have seven children and five grandchildren between them. Carl will be working part-time on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Thank You Nick Pazar

Nick Pazar is a volunteer who goes the extra mile when needed—and the extra couple of months if that’s needed as well. The church had been looking to fill the facilities manager position when the pandemic hit. Although there was still a lot of work to be done on property, we held off filling the position. Nick Pazar stepped up to serve—acting as the “go-to” guy for minor repairs and to meet with vendors and contractors for Building and Grounds. What was expected to be a couple of months turned into a year. Thank you, Nick, for keeping things going during this challenging time.

What will 2021 bring?

Aren’t we all praying that 2021 will be better than 2020? At the start of a new year, full of possibilities, it’s always good to take stock of what we have accomplished during the last year. Despite all the challenges, our congregation has been faithful to support not only our church but also others in our community and elsewhere. Through the monies distributed from the Grace Covenant Endowment and donations from our members, we have helped the families of students at local schools and our neighbors near and far. We have provided gift bags for Share the Care, toys for children served by Servant’s Heart, and sent a donation to the Salvation Army for Christmas gifts for the children they serve, among many other things. We can look forward (maybe not right away, but soon) to starting up

our monthly food collections and other hands-on activities. We will serve at Daily Bread again this year, and there are always opportunities to prepare a meal for the families of Family Promise.

We all look forward to serving others in Christ’s name in 2021.

ROOTED Youth Group News

Our **summer Youth Conferences** are a go!!! High School Montreat is June 12-19, middle schoolers will either attend Middle School Montreat on July 14-18, or The Great Escape-Southwind on July 21-25. Watch for opportunities to help with fundraising!

Looking ahead:

ROOTED this month meets on the 10th and 24th from 5:15pm-7pm. We’ll have dinner, games, music, prayers, announcements, and a lesson. And YES, a brand, spankin’ new “Bring Friendz to ROOTED” contest!!!!

Look for info on a possible **ROOTED Lunch Bunch** during Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday via our social media outlets.

For more details on our events and other news, friend us on Facebook: Grace Covenant PC Youth, and on Instagram: @rootedgpc

A Note from the Scholarship Committee

25 YEARS AND COUNTING!

GCPC has been awarding scholarships to our college students since December of 1995 and approximately 50 students have received scholarships during that time including three students in 2020. The scholarship fund is made possible completely by donations from church members and various groups within the church. Each year we need to replenish the funds and now is the time to start rebuilding the account so we can continue this wonderful tradition. If you would like to contribute, please make your check payable to the church and indicate “Scholarship Fund” at the bottom.

Book Club

Grace Covenant Book Club will be meeting by Zoom on Tuesday, January 26th at 7 p.m. Our January book selection is "**Outbreak**" by Davis Bunn, and should provide an interesting discussion on a timely topic. We'd love for you to join us. For more information, contact Jane Heppner.

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When you make a purchase on Amazon, go to
<https://smile.amazon.com/>

Designate Grace Covenant as the non-profit to support.

Stay Connected and Current

Sermons, bulletins and announcements can be found on the church website. In addition to monthly Grace Notes newsletters, Grace Covenant offers short weekly email updates delivered to your inbox. To subscribe, call or email the church office. You can also follow the church on Facebook and subscribe to the church YouTube channel. If you're not receiving your Grace Notes by mail or email, call the church office.

Please submit articles to
churchoffice@grace.to
Next Deadline - January 15



Please contact the church office if you would like a copy of the birthday and anniversary list.

Session Summary

December 2020

Session met in a special called meeting to receive the report of the Pastor Nominating Committee. Session approved the Ministry Information Form and will submit it to the Committee on Ministry with the request for authorization to post it online. Session also approved the Mission Study Report which will be submitted with financial reports in support of the church's request.

Session also approved Finance motions to transfer operating account funds to reserves and an Outreach motion for distribution of the balance of the 2020 Endowment funds.

New Leadership

New elders and deacons will be ordained and installed during both services on Sunday, January 10. We will have to forgo the traditional laying on of hands due to COVID precautions but sustaining elders are encouraged to be a part of blessing and praying for the next class of church leaders from their pews or homes beginning even now! All four of our incoming elders have been ordained previously which will give them and the church a head start: Bonnie Keller, Carole Pate, Nancy Venable and Joe Waddell. Susie Findell, Joyce Julian and Stephanie Kelly will be ordained and installed along with returning deacons Craig Marquis and Frank Quiett.

We recognize and thank those officers whose terms of active service are ending: Elders Barbara Baker, Kathy Gallagher, Don Lein, Jim Pate, Tracy Umpierre and Deacons Sarah Lein, Debbie Munson, Sally Schlichenmaier, and Lamar Turner. Well done, good and faithful servants.

Good Samaritan Fund

The church has a Good Samaritan Fund which has been used in the past mostly for emergency assistance (e.g., bus passes, grocery cards) for those seeking help from the church office; and holiday assistance (e.g., toys and food) for member families. This year the Care Committee which has oversight of the Fund, provided

"unemployment gap" assistance under the Fund guidelines to a number of Grace Covenant members as well as staff and families of Small Blessings, Share the Care and Scouts. The Care Committee also hosted bus card and grocery card distribution events for restaurant workers along Curry Ford. Direct giving has surpassed \$8,500 this year and the need continues. Thank you to those members and church groups who have made regular donations or special matching grants this year to meet the extraordinary need right here in our own congregation and community.

Pastor Nominating Committee Report

After being elected and trained in September, the PNC got right to work meeting every week both online and in person at the church.

The PNC reviewed the forms and instructions for completing the church's profile called a Ministry Information Form or MIF. The MIF lets potential candidates know about the church and its mission, and what characteristics and qualifications the church is seeking in our new pastor. The PNC also reviewed congregational survey results and discussion group comments; the Mission Study Report from Session about the mission and goals of the church; and demographic and other information about our local community.

The PNC then worked together to write the MIF which was presented to Session at a special called meeting in December. Session authorized the MIF to be sent to Presbytery with the request that it be approved for posting online where it will be matched with pastors who are seeking a call to a church. As matches are made, the PNC will be prayerfully reviewing the profiles of potential candidates to discern which ones to interview. Continue to pray for the members of the PNC as we begin this next phase of the process.

Robert Taylor, PNC Chair, Danielle Alchin, Brian Gallagher, Maxine Gokee, Gary Munson, Scott Porter, Laura Regier, Joe Waddell

January 2021



**GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Sunday Worship

8:45
10:45 a.m.
Online

Office Hours

Monday–Thursday: 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.
Friday: 8:30 a.m.–noon

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Notice of Annual Congregational Meeting

January 31, 2021

11:45 am

Conway Hall AND via Zoom

To attend in-person

Enter through Conway Hall Reception. The partition will be open to the gym. Masks required. Social distance.

To attend via Zoom

Email the church office to receive the Zoom invite and instructions.
Voting will be by reaction buttons. Multiple users on one computer can
“chat message” their multiple votes.

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