



Lent at Grace

Easter is the holiest day of the Christian year. It is a day of joyful affirmation of our shared faith. But the significance of Easter and the joy with which we celebrate it ring hollow unless we also devote ourselves to Lent, the solemn days of penitence leading up to Easter.

Lent can be a hard sell for many worshipers. Lent is a time of acknowledging our sinfulness and leaning on the mercy of God. It is also a season of self-denial and spiritual discipline. Lent is a meaningful time of year—a time for wrestling with the hard things in our lives as we also walk with Jesus through the darkest days of his life.

From the earliest days of the church Lent has been a time of preparation for baptism of new believers and a time of penitence leading to the reconciliation of those estranged from the community. It remains customary to welcome new members during Lent. Grace Covenant will receive the 2021 Confirmation Class on Palm Sunday.

Lent stretches between Ash Wednesday and Easter. Recalling the 40 days of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, we are called to use the 40 days of Lent as a time of reflection on our sins, and the ways that we separate ourselves from God and from one another. During Lent this year we will learn new spiritual disciplines through our Lenten programs and preaching series on the Book of James. Come with the expectation that this work of introspection and renewed discipleship will continue beyond Easter.

Use the 40 days of Lent as the foundation to a lifetime of faith.



Looking Ahead

Events May Be Postponed, Moved Online or Outside

March

- 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 - Lenten Wednesdays at Grace
- 14 - Teacher Appreciation Sunday
- 21 - Quilt Sunday
- 28 - Palm Sunday / Confirmation Sunday
- 31 - Hops for Haiti

April

- 1 - Maundy Thursday
- 2 - Good Friday Vigil
- 3 - Egg Hunt
- 4 - Easter
- 10 - Grace on the Greens?
- 11 - The Celebration Continues
- ?? - Food Distribution Event

May

- 9 - Mother's Day
- 16 - Youth Sunday
- 20 - SBCC Graduation
- 24 - Pentecost
- 31 - Memorial Day - Office Closed

Inside this issue:

See the church	Small Blessings CC	2
calendar online:	Christmas Alternatives	3
http://www.grace.to/ announcements/weekly- calendar/	Confirmation	4
	Easter Ham Drive	4
	Session Summary	5

Thank You

We thank our Church family for all your thoughts, prayers and cards in the passing of Darby's grandmother Jeanne Grierson. Jeanne lived a long good life of 100 years old. We all are so blessed and truly grateful with friends and family for your tremendous support and love.

In Christ's Love, The Grierson family

In Sympathy

We extend our Christian love and sympathy to the families of

Verna Eckholm - January 7, 2021

Barbara DiOrio's mother



Birnie Greer - January 11, 2021

Beverly Greer's husband



Jeanne Grierson - February 5, 2021

The Grierson family's mother and grandmother

Growing and Learning

The children at Small Blessings Child Care (SBCC) are blooming like flowers in the Springtime. Our babies are growing and changing everyday.

Clapping their hands when they hear a song. Learning to eat solid food from God's great lands. This month's lesson plan is "I can". What a great lesson to remember for all of us. We welcome Mrs. Lauren to the baby room. May she feel the love from our babies and our gratitude from everyone at Grace.

Our toddlers are learning about God's love for us, the heart shape and the color pink. They love singing Baby Shark and Old McDonald Had A Farm, and they love story time. A new Bible verse lesson is 1 John 4:8 "God is Love".

The PreK children are learning the letters N for Nicky Narwhal, O for Oscar Otter and P for Penny Penguin. It's so much fun learning letters associated with God's creatures. The words being emphasized are "love and "compassion" as they learn to share and care for one another.

We are blessed with God's love and what springtime brings to us. Trees are coming to leaf with happy

birds and flowers blooming just as our SBCC children are doing. We are grateful to God, our SBCC teachers, staff and parents. What a marvelous ministry to have on our Grace campus.

Ruth Circle

Our February meeting was held in Conway Hall. We are on lesson six of the study of Joshua - A Journey of Faith. We studied what it means to be outsiders and insiders. Most of us could relate. We learned about Rehab, her special courage and her great concern for her family. We also learned how God uses men and women as agents.

Our church has demonstrated over and over its strong desire to make all people feel included.

In March, we will be filling 36 Easter baskets for Servant's Heart to pass out to the many families with children they serve.

In May, we look forward to our end of the year gathering which this year will be held off campus.

We welcome all who wish to visit and/or attend Ruth Circle. We meet in Conway Hall the 2nd Monday of the month at 10 a.m. We wear masks and practice social distancing.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Barbara Hart.

Cooking With Grace

Cooking With Grace is a once a month cooking group via Zoom. We will be cooking together again on March 15 at 6 p.m. Anyone can sign up to lead, share recipes or join in the fun learning to make new dishes with friends. Sign up to receive a list of ingredients, steps to prep food in advance and the Zoom link. Email Carolyn Castagno at

carolyn@findingnewjoys.com

AV Tech on Sundays

The production of weekly online worship services has put significant demands on our AV/Tech volunteers.

We are looking for members who are interested (or know someone who is interested) in being trained to work in the booth on Sundays or special services.

Contact the church office for details.

You Can Still Join Lenten Programs

Kristen Stieffel will pose "Questions to Ponder" about the Book of James to "ponder" at your own pace anywhere and anytime. Each week Kristen will post questions on the church website for reflection and application for one of the five chapters of James.

Scott Porter is leading a study on "Different Ways to Study the Bible" using the Book of James as a model. We will go over different ways to read, study, understand and apply scripture by yourself to your life. The study will be Wednesday nights 6:45-7:30 p.m. online and in person in Conway Hall Reception. Handouts will be supplied by email. Call the church office to register.

Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday April 3 10 a.m.

Outside in the Courtyard

Children, bring your parents and/or grandparents!

Cross of Love

Sunday April 4 North Side of Sanctuary

Bring fresh flowers to decorate the cross.

You may also want to bring your camera.

It's a great photo op!

The Balance Sheet of Life

The most destructive habit	Worry
The greatest joy	Giving
The greatest loss	Loss of self-respect
The most satisfying work	Helping others
The ugliest personality trait	Selfishness
The greatest "shot in the arm"	Encouragement
The greatest problem to overcome	Fear
The most effective sleeping pill	Peace of mind
The most crippling disease	Excuses
The most powerful force in life	Love
The most incredible computer	The brain
The worst thing to be without	Hope
The deadliest weapon	The tongue
The two most power-filled words	I can
The greatest asset	Faith
The most worthless emotion	Self-pity
The most beautiful attire	A smile
The most prized possession	Integrity
The most contagious spirit	Enthusiasm

LIFE ends, when you stop DREAMING.

HOPE ends, when you stop BELIEVING.

LOVE ends, when you stop CARING.

So please share this BALANCE SHEET OF LIFE.

FRIENDSHIP ends when you stop SHARING.

Christmas Alternatives Results Are In!

Thank you, Grace Covenant members! You donated \$1200 to our "Pandemic Christmas Alternatives" fund! Our kids and youth have had fun deciding how to spend the money and here are the results. The list and a check will be sent to the Presbyterian Giving Catalog <https://presbyteriangifts.pcusa.org>

From Mike and the ROOTED youth group: This was really great. It sparked really good discussions about the importance of food, economy, and education!! Is this going to be a yearly thing? I think our students really liked this. Here's our breakdown:

- Pair of goats - \$178
- Family of chickens - \$25

- 2 water filters @ \$50 - \$100
- Fishery kit - \$75
- Refugee food basket - \$100
- 5x Educate a child @ \$25 -\$125
- Total - \$603

- From Ms. Sheryl:
- The kids had a great time picking items!
- Family of Chickens \$25.00
 - Pair of goats \$178
 - Educate a Child \$25.00
 - Water Filter \$50.00
 - Kitchen Kit \$25.00
 - Sewing Machine \$50.00
 - Emergency Life Pack \$125.00
 - THREE (2) Piglets \$120.00
 - TOTAL \$598.00

Confirmation

BIG month for our Confirmation Class!! Confirmands, parental units, Covenant Partners and Session members will meet for brunch in Conway Hall between services on March 7. On Palm Sunday, March 28, Confirmands, parental units, Covenant Partners and Session members will meet at both services to be presented to the congregation. EXCITING times ahead!

ROOTED Youth Group News

ROOTED this month meets on the 7th and 28th from 5:15-7 p.m. We'll have dinner, games, music, prayers, announcements, and a lesson. Bring your friendz!!!

Fees for our summer youth conferences are due on March 7th (\$75) and March 28th (\$100 final payment). Middle school families who haven't made a payment yet will have a \$100 non-refundable deposit due March 28th. For more details on our events and other news, friend us on Facebook: Grace Covenant PC Youth, and on Instagram: @rootedgpc

Easter Ham Drive

ROOTED Youth Group has added a new way to help those who may need our help.

Introducing the **Easter Ham Drive!!!**

On March 21st and 28th, we'll be taking monetary donations to buy Publix gift cards, which will then be given to Dover Shores Elementary School for the needy families in our area. It's just like our Thanksgiving Turkey Drive, but now it's for Easter hams!!!

Book Club

Tuesday, March 23

Zoom 7 p.m.

The Paris Architect by Charles Belfoure

During World War II, Lucien Bernard, an architect living in Paris, France, is offered a large fee to design hiding places for Jews being hunted by the Nazis. He desperately needs the money to make a living, although he knows that if caught, he will most likely be killed.

Contact Jane Heppner for more information.



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

COVID-19 Update

We all share the goal of a speedy and safe return to in-person worship and other church programs and events. Achieving that goal means continuing to wear masks and maintain social distance. The vaccine protects those who have received it but may not prevent transmission and infection of others or, with new variants emerging, the possibility of infection or reinfection of those who have been vaccinated. Please continue to be vigilant for the sake of others in the congregation and community.

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

Session Summary

February 2021

Session appointed elders to meet with the Confirmation Class of 2021 on March 7 and approve them for membership. The confirmands will be received as new members on Palm Sunday.

Received the Treasurer’s Report which reflects a \$156,000 equity position.

Received reports from the standing committees of the church reflecting the work being done to hire new staff, improve and maintain the property, provide for Christian discipleship of all ages, reach out to the local community, and offer in person and online worship.

Discussed how and when non-church groups and community users could safely return to meetings and events at the church and circulated updated policy, procedure, guidelines and forms to do so when the time comes.

Unanimously approved temporarily moving the 10:45 worship service to Conway Hall.

**10:45 a.m. Service
is Moving to Conway Hall**

Beginning Sunday, Mar. 7, the 10:45 a.m. service will move to Conway Hall. This temporary move will enable us to safely accommodate increased attendance for those who are returning after being vaccinated and all who want to worship in person for Lent and Easter. The 8:45 a.m. will continue in the sanctuary where we record the service for our online worshippers.

Pastor Nominating Committee Report

This month, the PNC received the first batch of applications for review. Keep praying for the members of our hard working PNC.

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

**Christian Service Center
Needs Volunteer Drivers**

The Christian Service Center needs volunteers to pick up food at Second Harvest on Mercy Drive and deliver it local schools for their Love Pantries. Volunteers can decide how many deliveries they want to make in a week or a month. Contact the

church office for details on how to sign up or if you have questions.

One Great Hour of Sharing

For over 70 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has provided Presbyterians a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need around the world.

Typically received during the season of Lent, each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing supports efforts to relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promote development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and assist in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

There are several ways to give:

Mail donations to the church office noting OGHs on your check, use a credit card online at www.presbyterianmission.org/give-oghs or text OGHs to 20222 to give \$10.

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

Hungry Children in Our Community!

Monthly food donations will resume going to two community elementary schools, Dover Shores and Eccelston. Each school has set up a pantry to stock back-packs with food for the children to take home for the weekends. Please bring items the first Sunday of the month. Food items requested from the schools:

- Cereal (dry or instant)
- Juice Boxes
- Pop Tarts
- Peanut Butter
- Canned Pasta Meals
- Jelly
- Beef Jerky
- Crackers-plain/cheese/peanut butter
- Canned Meat (Spam, Vienna sausages, tuna, chicken)
- Fruit (individual cups or dried)
- Canned (full strength) Soup and Stew

Ziplock bags to separate the food and pack it into backpacks.

Food can be placed in the wooden box located by the north door in the Narthex or dropped off in the office. Thank you for helping Hungry Children in Our Community.

March 2021



**GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Sunday Worship

8:45 a.m.
10:45 a.m.
Online

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

To:

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

Return Service Requested



Holy Week Services



April 1: Maundy Thursday Service

6:45 p.m. In the Sanctuary

April 2: Good Friday Vigil

Online

April 4: Easter Sunday

7:30 a.m. In the Courtyard

8:45 a.m. In the Sanctuary (will be recorded for online)

10:45 am In Conway Hall Gym

Sunday School for all ages - 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Nursery available from 8:30 am - Noon.

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.