

# Grace Notes

Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church

December 2021



## ***Picture Perfect Holidays***

Christmas is just around the corner! It's time to be sending Christmas cards, going to parties (again!) and buying gifts for family and friends. Your church is here to help with the Christmas cards. How? By setting up a Christmas Photo Booth in the sanctuary entrance. Stop by before or after worship any Sunday during Advent (starts November 28) and get your photo taken. We'll text or email the photo to you. All you have to do is print out the photo or post it online. Wear your Christmas best or your favorite ugly sweater. Merry Christmas from your church staff!

Advent and Christmas can be a difficult time for those who are experiencing past grief or loss—or for those who are overwhelmed or anxious about the future. In addition to the traditional Lessons & Carols service and Christmas Eve candlelight service, Grace Covenant will be hosting a Blue Christmas service again this year. Blue Christmas is a service that acknowledges the darkness that is present in our world and lives; and makes space for prayer, contemplative music, and candles to shine light in the darkness. If you or someone you know is looking for that hope and comfort, make plans to come to Grace on Wednesday, Dec. 15 at 6:30 p.m.

## ***Looking Forward***

### **December**

- 1 - Best Christmas Pageant Ever  
5:45pm
- 15 - Blue Christmas Service  
6:30pm
- 16- Christmas on the Front Lawn  
4pm - 6pm
- 19 - Lessons and Carols  
8:45am & 10:45am
- 24 - Christmas Eve Services  
5pm & 6pm
- 25 - Christmas Day
- 26 - One Worship Service  
9:45am

### **January**

- 1 - New Year's Day
- 9 - Installation and Ordination
- 23 - Worship at the Hourglass  
8:45am
- Worship at Grace Covenant  
10:45am
- 30 - Annual Congregational Meeting  
11:45am
- 30 - ROOTED Youth Chili Cook-Off  
Cookie Bake-Off
- 30 - ROOTED Youth Car Wash

**See the church calendar online:**

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

***Congratulations!***

To Eric and Josi (De Oliveira) Gray  
on the birth of their new baby.

***In Sympathy***

We extend Christian love and sympathy to the  
family of Ruth Shirek - October 23, 2021

***Baptism***

November 28, 2021

Son of Jamie and Sara Ward

Grandson of Phyllis Cornell

***Change of Address***

Sherri Askew

***Book Club***

Tuesday, December 28, 7:00 pm  
Panera Bread on S. Semoran

We will be discussing "Finding Noel" by Richard Paul Evans. The Christmas season is supposed to be full of joy, but not for Mark Smart. Life had dealt him one blow after another until one snowy November night, when he finds a beautiful young woman who will change his life forever. Macy Wood has little memory of her birth parents, and memories she'd rather forget of her adopted home. A Christmas ornament inscribed with the word "Noel" is the only clue to the little sister she only vaguely remembers, a clue that will send her and Mark on a journey to reclaim her past, and her family. Whether you read the book or not, we'd love to have you join us for a time of good food and fellowship! Email [jane.heppner@gmail.com](mailto:jane.heppner@gmail.com) for information.

***Cooking with Grace***

December 13  
6p.m. on Zoom

Each month, this group buys ingredients then meets online to cook together. To join, contact Carolyn at [Carolyn@findingnewjoys.com](mailto:Carolyn@findingnewjoys.com) for information about ingredients and Zoom invite.

***The Scholarship Committee***

The Scholarship Committee congratulate the 2021 recipients of GCPC scholarships.

Dylan Umpierre  
Lily Neusaenger and  
Zackary Gallagher

We wish them continued success in their academic endeavors!

***Small Blessings Child Care***

As Small Blessings celebrates the birth of the baby Jesus and learns the true meaning of Christmas through many fun activities. The Christmas Spirit is present at Small Blessings. Once again the service project this year will benefit A Servant's Heart located here in Pine Castle. Last year was a great success in fulfilling many needs for those less fortunate. The goal is to fill 40 children's Christmas bags. By the time you read this news letter, SBCC will have collected such items as school supplies, small toys, hygiene items, underwear and socks in addition to \$10 grocery gift cards. Hoping to help A Servant's Heart drive to reach their goal to feed 600 families over the holidays. We are so blessed and thankful for all the Lord has given us. The Small Blessings children and families continue with their generous support as always to lend a needed hand. Praise be to God for all of them. It is with that Christmas Spirit that we show others in need love by giving of ourselves and offering gifts. The joy of giving is a wonderful way to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Christ Child, God's ultimate gift to us. God Bless this Ministry at Grace Covenant.

**SBCC December Events**

K4 Christmas Pageant Dec. 9  
Christmas parties. Dec. 17  
No VPK Dec. 20-31  
Christmas closed. Dec. 24  
New Year's closed Dec. 31

Grace Covenant wishes all Small Blessings families and staff a very Blessed Christmas and a Happy Healthy New Year.

### ***Still Stchin' with Grace***

The quilters returned to meeting in person in April and have been very busy ever since. As of this writing we have contributed quilts and pillowcases to the following organizations:

April - 30 quilts were donated to children receiving cancer treatment at Winnie Palmer Hospital.

June - 25 quilts were donated to Harbor House

October - 17 Halloween-themed quilts were donated to Winnie Palmer hospital along with 15 pillowcases and 25 quilts.

The quilters also delivered quilts to Jerrod Blair, Wayne Champion and Tessa Kelly.

The ladies put much love and care into designing and sewing their quilts. Stop by and see the work that is being done. We meet each Thursday morning from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM in the church activity room on the second floor of John Calvin.

### ***Grace Covenant Scholarship Fund***

Looking for a gift for the person who has everything? Please consider a donation to the GCPC Scholarship Fund in memory of, or in honor of someone special. For many years, GCPC has been able to provide financial assistance to our college students because of generous contributions from you, the members of the congregation.

For every gift made in honor of someone, the honoree will receive a note of recognition from the committee. Education is a gift that keeps on giving and can change the world!

### ***Young Adult Christmas Luncheon***

The young adult Christmas luncheon for those out of high school through 24 years old will be Wednesday, Dec. 17 @ 11:45am-1pm, at Tin and Taco on Michigan Ave. Lunch is FREE. So come and catch up with your old friends and maybe make some new friends. Please RSVP to Director Mike in the church office by noon on Wednesday, Dec. 15.

### ***ROOTED Youth Group 2022 Calendars***

The annual ROOTED calendar fundraiser will have calendars for sale in December. Cost is \$10 and will be available after each service on Dec. 5, 12, and 19. If you're not coming to worship, please mail in your check with your address and we'll either drop them off or mail them. Thank you!

### ***Opportunities to Serve***

A small number of dedicated leaders and volunteers worked hard throughout the pandemic to keep the church open and the ministries and programs of the church going. As we continue to move back to what will be the "new normal" for the church there is a critical need for new leaders and volunteers to step up.

Committee chairs are recruiting members who can provide new vision and new voices for a new future that looks a little different than it used to. If you are able and willing, there is a church committee or project that could use your help. Say "yes!" to the call to be a part of the future at Grace Covenant.

### ***Ruth Circle***

Our November meeting was an active one with much discussion about the topics presented in our study of 1-2 Peter. The fellowship in the group is growing and new friendships are forming. We were also able to continue and expand our service to Servant's Heart which welcomes our support.

We collected 18 gift cards for their turkey drive in which 600 local families will be fed. We continue our on-going diaper drive. And in December we will be taking up a collection for Christmas toys for Servant's Heart for children 10 and under (boys and girls.) All are invited to participate. Bring unwrapped presents to worship or deliver to the church office. Contact Barbara Hart with any questions.

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### ***ROOTED Youth Group***

ROOTED will meet on December 5 from 5:15pm-7pm. We'll have dinner, games, music, prayers, announcements, and a lesson. Bring your friendz!!!

ROOTED Christmas Party will be on Sunday, Dec. 12 from 5:15pm-7pm, location to be announced. We'll provide the main entrée, you bring either a side dish or dessert and enough to share. Don't forget to bring a white elephant gift to exchange, worth no more than \$7.77. Please RSVP by noon, on Thursday, Dec. 19.

Watch our social media outlets for some possible fun times together during the Christmas break!

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

### ***Food Donations***

Just a reminder that the first Sunday of each month we are requesting **non-perishable** food items from the congregation which will go to Dover Shores and Eccelston elementary schools. Each school has set up a pantry to stock back-packs with food for the children to take home on the weekends.

Your donation can be placed in the wooden box located by the north door in the sanctuary lobby or dropped off in the office.

### ***Toastmasters***

Grace Covenant is hosting a Toastmasters group in Smith Hall on Thursday evenings which is open to all and newcomers are invited and welcome. Check out the church calendar at [www.Grace.to](http://www.Grace.to) for dates and times.

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### ***Happy Birthday***

### ***Happy Anniversary***

Please contact the church office for a copy of the birthday and anniversary list



## ***Session Summary***

November 18, 2021

The 2022 Generous Life Stewardship Campaign continues as Session works with staff and committees on the 2022 budget. The church's equity position remains strong with revenues exceeding expenses in October.

Session approved several requests for use of Session Discretionary 2021 funds for various outreach projects and programs including Christmas on the Front Lawn. A request to establish a Refugee Relocation Assistance Fund to solicit donations from the congregation for an Afghan family was approved.

The 2022 Officer Nominating Committee slate was presented: Nancy Venable and Carole Pate (elders), Minnette Mullings (deacon), and David Alchin, Morgan DeMarco, Craig Marquis and Lynn Taylor (congregation.) Election set for the annual Meeting in January.

Building & Grounds reported progress on a number of needed upgrades and repair projects. Session approved the installation of a "Little Library" as an Eagle Scout project.

A new funeral policy and guidelines for the selection and hiring of a future SBCC director were approved.

Session authorized the renewal of the Charter with Pack 42 and Troop 23; and for Grace Covenant to become the Charter Organization for Venture Crew 911 (ages 14-21).

Bruce Lampman was elected 2022 Church Treasurer; and Diana Ibarra was elected 2022 Clerk of Session. The 2022 Church Calendar was approved including communion dates and offerings.

Baptisms were approved for two babies and an adult. Ruth Shirek was removed upon her passing.

### ***"Share Your Care" with our Seniors***

Every Christmas, we like to remember our seniors at Share the Care with gift bags for their Christmas Party which have been filled with small presents and useful items. Red gift bags are available in the sanctuary lobby to take home and fill with items off the donation list. Or simply donate one or more items from the list and drop off in the bin in the sanctuary lobby or deliver to the church office.

Please return all bags and donated items by December 7 so we can sort and deliver timely to Share the Care.

- 1) Large print playing cards
- 2) Word search and puzzle books (Spanish and English)
- 3) Large print coloring books with markers or colored pencils
- 4) Socks with grippers
- 5) Hand lotion, lip balms, tissues, hand sanitizer
- 6) Nail polish, sunglasses, hair accessories (women)
- 7) Manicure sets, combs, brushes,
- 8) Individually packaged snacks i.e. Ritz crackers, Cheezits (no hard or sticky candies as these can be choking hazards and hard on dentures)
- 9) Soft plush toys or small squeeze ball (good for stiff fingers)

**December 2021**

Volume 64, Issue 11



**GRACE COVENANT  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**Sunday Worship**

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

**Office Hours**

Monday-Thursday: 9a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Friday: 9 a.m.- noon  
1655 Peel Avenue  
Orlando, FL 32806  
Phone 407.898.6571  
E-mail: churchoffice@grace.to

**WWW.GRACE.TO**

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
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Orlando, FL

Return Service Requested

To:

**CHRISTMAS  
PAGEANT**

**Wednesday  
December 1  
5:45pm**  
in the sanctuary  
SHINE Kids  
will share their  
Christmas Production  
(approx. 20 min)  
Reception to follow  
in Conway Hall



**CHRISTMAS ON  
THE FRONT LAWN**

**December 16  
4pm – 6pm**  
Hot Chocolate  
Cookies  
Santa  
Crafts  
Games  
FREE and FUN  
See you on the  
Front Lawn!



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](http://www.grace.to) and click on the "Give Now" button.