

# GRACE NEWS

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DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 2 | 2024/25

Dear Grace Members and Friends,

This Sunday we continue our sermon series for Advent and this time we are talking about love. Over the past three weeks Pastor Tracey has offered some unexpected assertions about hope, peace, and joy. So far, we've heard that hope is sticky, peace is a choice, and joy is easy. Personally, I've found her assertions to be very creative and interesting, and this week I hope to continue the trend as we discuss love.

We're going to look at love through the lens of Mary's interaction with Elizabeth and her song that follows in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel. So what assertion am I going to make about love? Well, you've likely heard it before, but you will have to join us to find out. I look forward to seeing you at 9 a.m. or 11:05 a.m. as we worship enthusiastically. Get excited because love is on the way!

Peace,  
Wilson



# Get Involved at Grace

## Website GIVE Change

If you give online through the GIVE tab of our website, you will find a new interface. The steps are similar, but will include a 2 factor authentication. American Express will now be accepted. If you have a repeating gift set up, you will receive information in the near future on switching it to the new system. If you have any questions, contact John Moody at [john@gracepc.org](mailto:john@gracepc.org).

## Christmas Joy Offering - Dec. 22

During the Advent and Christmas season, we lift up past, present, and future leaders of the church. God has blessed the church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. This Offering provides support for Presbyterian church workers and their families in their time of need and leadership development and education for communities of color at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

The Christmas Joy Offering is the last of the four denominational offerings we collect each year. Please use the envelope in your bulletin, or choose Joy Offering as the designated account if you give online.

## Christmas Eve Worship - December 24

We will have two worship services this Christmas Eve at Grace. Following the family worship, you are invited to join us in the narthex for cookie decorating.

December 24 - 2PM

Family Worship Service

December 24 - 7PM

Candlelight Worship Service



## **Christmas Season Worship**

Please take note that we will be having combined worship at **10AM on Sunday, Dec. 29 and Sunday January 5**. There will be no children's or youth Sunday school or Godly Play. Mark your calendars today!

## **Church Office Closed - December 25, 26, 27 & Jan. 1**

As a reminder, the church offices will be closed on December 25th, 26th, & 27th, for the Christmas holiday, and January 1st, for the New Year's holiday. If you have an emergency and need pastoral care, call the church office for voice mail to get the emergency number for the pastor on call.

## **Generations of Grace - January 9th**

Have you ever wondered why we do some of the things we do in worship? Are you an inquiring mind who wants to know?

If you are this type of person, then you might be interested in the Bible study of Worship from the Tabernacle on Thursday nights beginning on January 9th. There is homework each week, but sometimes life gets in the way, so come anyway for the discussion!

We learn together as we study the Tabernacle that God commanded the Hebrews to build as a worship center after the Exodus. Many of the things in worship today have roots in this Old Testament worship.

Look for opportunities to sign up on the connection card in the coming weeks. I hope to see you on Thursday nights!

If you have questions or need more information, please, let me know via email at [jl.ect@verizon](mailto:jl.ect@verizon) or give me a call at 214-693-3184!

Blessings!

Lynn McCoy



## ESL Fall 2024 Summary

As the autumn wind blows in like a pirate, blustering in from sea, it can only mean one thing- that the fall ESL class just wrapped up, and another joyous celebration was had by all for those taking the class.

As always- a large shout out of thanks to our Grace ESL teachers for their time and talents:

Kelly Raaum  
Connie Key  
Julia Smith-Blonk  
Bill Burnett  
Maria Brower  
Suzanne Hopper  
Eunice Pribadi



## Thank You

Thank you to all the members of our funeral/memorial service team for the hard work they provide at each memorial service, but especially this month as we held three memorial services. The team shops for, preps, and hosts a beautiful reception for our families as well as preparing the narthex and Sanctuary for the service, and cleaning up following the event. The team is co-lead by Kelly Raaum and Gail Balbinot, and members include: Andrea Bailey, Cathy Bebee, Tracey Davenport, Susan Hasek, Amy Hicklin, Carol Hogan, Susan Hopper, Laura Jones, Lorna Little, Cathy McLaughlin, Liz Miranda, Fran Morris, Jeanne Peck, Lynne Rever, Michelle Rutherford, Jane Sackett, Julia Smith-Blonk, Melvyn Turner, Teri Waite, and Karen Williams.



## **Year-End Giving - 2024**

To receive credit for your charitable donations in 2024:

- Checks sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be postmarked on or before December 31, 2024.
- Online donations at [www.gracepc.org/give](http://www.gracepc.org/give) should be made by December 31, 2024.
- You may drop off your year-end gift to the lockable mailbox located outside the west Narthex doors on or before December 31, 2024. Your donation is 100% secure.
- Stock transfers and IRA distributions may take additional processing time. To be eligible for a yearly tax deduction, you may need to initiate your donation early. Details for stock transfers can be found on the church website, give tab.

For questions, please contact John Moody, Director of Finance, [john@gracepc.org](mailto:john@gracepc.org) or call him at 469.429.6808.

Thank you for your continued and faithful support of the ministries of Grace Presbyterian Church.

### **Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)**

If you are 70 1/2 or older, Grace is eligible to receive QCDs directly from your IRA account. A QCD distribution is non-taxable and counts toward your current year Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). To learn more about QCDs see [How to take qualified charitable distributions \(QCD\) | Vanguard](#)

### **Offering Envelopes**

We have a limited number of boxed sets of offering envelopes. Please contribute \$5.00 to offset the cost.



# Prayers are being Answered!

Your Prayer Team meets every Sunday in MB2 to pray over the prayers that have been shared with us. We meet at 4 PM, if you would like to have personal hands-on prayer, or wish to join us. If you would like to receive a list of the prayers weekly, send a message to Mike Shaw at [brncosrbest@verizon.net](mailto:brncosrbest@verizon.net) to be added to our efforts to connect to the Lord and the community. Every week, God responds and answers.

- Anita Priest's friend, Lonnie Hinzman, had successful bone marrow surgery and is healing ahead of schedule!
- Laurie Shaw's coworker's husband, Yihe Hu, is doing much better as he heals from pancreatic cancer!

## In Sympathy

Melinda Rogers Whyte joined the church triumphant on Friday, December 13, 2024. Melinda has been a beloved member of Grace since 1981. She was an Elder, a member of the Sunday afternoon prayer group and loved attending the Tuesday morning women's bible study until health issues moved her to live nearer to family in Katy, TX. More details regarding Melinda's memorial service at Grace will be available after the holidays.

## Mission Updates

From Under My Umbrella: "I'd like to extend my gratitude for the 55 blankets collected that hit the streets today just in time for the chilly nights ahead. Thank you so much!"

Thank you to everyone who donated!



## **12 Days of Christmas Environmental Stewardship Ideas**

1. Bake, don't throw out, your (real) decorative pumpkins to soften and use in a puree in breads and muffins.
2. Use reusable bags for grocery and gift shopping.
3. Reuse wine bottles with greenery from your yard for centerpieces.
4. Bundle your Amazon purchases so there is one delivery for several items. There is a box to check to confirm this type of delivery.
5. Carpool with friends to parties and church.
6. Participate in a cookie exchange so you don't buy so many ingredients.
7. Split a meal with a friend at the restaurant instead of leaving food waste or using extra packaging and bag for leftovers.
8. When eating out, consider restaurants (Panera Bread, WingStop, Chipotle, Seasons 52, Olive Garden, etc.) that implement environmental stewardship ideas. Research the ones to go to and say thank you to their workers for their efforts.
9. Use wax paper or storage container instead of baggies for lunches and storage of food.
10. Buy canned drinks instead of drinks in plastic bottles.
11. When replacing electronics, recycle them with city programs like "Chunk Your Junk" in Frisco.
12. Reduce Food Waste - Avoid Buy 1 Get One Free Promotions and instead, take advantage of promotions that provide a coupon for a free one in the future.
13. Praise God for every bite and savor your food to avoid overeating or creating food waste. "Thank You Dear Lord for the nature you have created, the food we enjoy and the abundant life around us. Let us be good stewards of all of these blessings."



# Children & Youth Ministries

## **Confirmation - January 12**

Confirmation will begin on Sunday, January 12 in the youth room. If you have an 8th grader that is not already signed up for Confirmation, please check your connection card to sign them up. They will be introduced and prayed for at the January 5 combined service at 10am.

## **Save the Date – Family Ministry Pivot Summit – January 19th - 3-5PM**

Parents, family ministry leaders, and invested parties are invited to a Family Ministries Pivot Summit. Based on our work with Ministry Architects over the past 18 months, we have learned so much about ourselves and we are excited for what's next for Family Ministries. We would love for you to be a part of exploring what God is calling us to do. If you want to participate in this important work, RSVP on your connection card or to [cara@gracepc.org](mailto:cara@gracepc.org).

## **Save the Date for SHYC - January 24-26**

The senior high youth of Grace Presbytery gather each year for SHYC – a high energy weekend of challenging theme presentations, thought-provoking and encouraging small groups, music, worship, and of course, energizers.

Senior High Youth Connection (SHYC) is planned by a special team of adults and youth from across the presbytery in partnership with the Austin College ACTivators and takes place at Austin College.





# Family Ministries

## Children's Sunday School - 10AM

<u>Class</u>	<u>Room</u>	<u>Leaders</u>
Preschool	CE 211	Helen Blacklock & Lorna Little
Kindergarten - 1st	CE 212	Mark Ellis & Xenia Gross
2nd - 3rd grades	CE 214	Brad Boles & David Hurwich
4th - 5th grades	CE 216	Liz Urech & Eme Thomas

## Youth Sunday School - 10AM

<u>Class</u>	<u>Room</u>	<u>Leaders</u>
Middle School & High School	CE 200-CE203	Jack Davenport, Austin Nichols, Bryan Raaum, Teri Waite

## Godly Play - 11:15AM

<u>Class</u>	<u>Room</u>
Godly Play	CE 213 (Godly Play Worship Center)



# Want to Learn?

**Children's School Year  
Sunday School  
10AM**

**Youth School Year  
Sunday School  
10AM**

## **School Year Adult Sunday School - 10am**

Bible Boomers

Koinonia

Trinity

Visions of Faith

Word of Life

Wheelus Hall

CE204/205

MB2

MB3

MB4

## **Weekly Bible Study Opportunities**

Mon. PM Men's Bible Study, 7-9PM

MB4

Mon. Blue Angels, 12-1:30PM

MB2

Tues. AM Women, 10-11:30AM

MB2

Wed. AM Women of Wonder, 10:30AM

MB4

Thurs. PM Generations of Grace Women's, 7PM

MB2

Fri. AM Men's Bible Study, 8-10AM

MB2

Every Other Sat. Men's Bible Study, 8:30-10:30AM

MB2



# Calendar

## DECEMBER

- 21 Youth Christmas Party, 5PM
- 22 4th Sunday in Advent
- 22 Contemporary Worship, 9AM
- 22 Sunday School for All, 10AM
- 22 Traditional Worship, 11:05AM
- 22 Godly Play, 11:15AM (Godly Play Worship Center, CE213)
- 22 Prayer Group Meeting, 4PM (MB2)
- 24 Christmas Eve Family Worship, 2PM
- 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service, 7PM
- 25 Merry Christmas!
- 25 Pastor Tracey Open House, 5-8PM (Davenport's)
- 25-27 Church Offices Closed
- 29 Combined Worship, 10AM
- 29 Prayer Group Meeting, 4PM (MB2)
- 31 Austin Street Center Serving Dinner

## JANUARY

- 1 Happy New Year!
- 1 Church Office Closed
- 3 Men's Friday AM Bible Study, 8AM (MB2)
- 4 Men's Saturday AM Bible Study, 8:30AM (MB2)
- 4 Gotta Have Fun Game Night, 6:30PM (Grace Place)
- 5 Combined Worship, 10AM
- 5 Credo Bell Rehearsal, 2:45PM (Sanctuary)
- 5 Tintinnabulators Bell Rehearsal, 2:45PM (CE216)
- 5 Carillon Rings Rehearsal, 3PM (CE204/205)
- 5 Agape Bell Rehearsal, 4:15PM (CE204/205)
- 5 Cherub Choir Rehearsal, 4PM (CE215)
- 5 Exultation Choir Rehearsal, 4PM (Sanctuary)
- 5 Voices in Praise Rehearsal, 4PM (CE215)
- 5 Prayer Group Meeting, 4PM (MB2)
- 5 Grace Notes Rehearsal, 5:45PM (Sanctuary)

