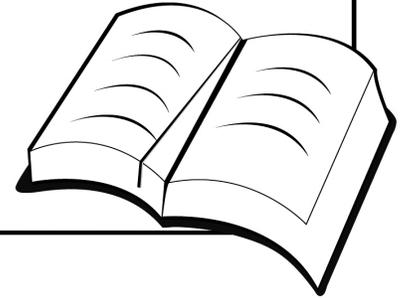


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C E notes

GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



February 2020 — Volume 63, Issue 2

A Vision of the Future

Where do you see your church in ten years? Five years? Maybe even just next year? Ten years ago, Conway Hall was a new facility. Small Blessings Child Care was a new ministry. Fellowship events were hosted in John Calvin; but with the addition of a new reception area and kitchen, events could be hosted in Conway, and Share the Care didn't have to share the space anymore.

Remodeled church offices, projectors and screens in the sanctuary, prudent management of funds generously gifted to the church and many other changes have impacted the way we worship and how we do mission over the past ten years.

Over the next four weeks, Session will host a series of Mission Study Focus Groups to talk about the changes we could make now to plan for the future.

We will ask questions like:

- How will we reach out to meet the emerging needs of a changing congregation and community?
- How will the next pastor help us meet those needs?

All are invited to come to one of the focus groups. Bring a potluck dish to share if you have time to make, bake or buy.

Wed Jan 29 6-7 pm (Italian food potluck)

Sun Feb 2 Noon-1 pm (Brunch food potluck)

Wed Feb 12 6-7 pm (Southern food potluck)

Wed Feb 19 6-7 pm (Mexican food potluck)



Looking Ahead

January

26 - Congregational Meeting

29 - Focus Group

February

2 - Focus Group

2 - Souper Bowl Youth Food Drive

9 - Youth Sunday

12 - Focus Group

14 - Youth Valentine Date Night

19 - Focus Group

23 - Scout Sunday

26 - Ash Wednesday

March

1 - Chili Cook Off/Cookie Bake Off

4, 11, 18, 25 - Lenten Dinner/Classes

8 - Teacher Appreciation Luncheon

Dear Friends,

I miss you. I have been in and out of the hospital multiple times. I haven't been able to send my cards and greetings recently.

Thanks to you for all your love, cards, prayers and concerns. I hope to see you soon.

Love,

Gene Lang



A huge thank you to the Care Committee and the Seekers Sunday School Class for your amazing help in giving my granddaughter Ella an amazing Christmas. Thank you to the entire congregation of GCPC for showing Ella what a real church family is, from the Christmas Eve Service to her Sunday School class. And nothing makes me happier than when we are talking to people and she will tell them "my church".

God Bless You All!

Sheila Heinemann



Our special thank you to Pastor Melanie for her visits with Dick and the family while he was hospitalized. Also, we appreciate her inspiring message of hope and caring at his funeral service.

Wilma Beekman and the family

Souper Sunday

Souper Sunday canned food drive has kicked off, leading up to the big game on February 2. GCPC is a vital part of Christian Service Center's ongoing mission against hunger and homelessness. The Souper Sunday food drive restocks the Christian Service Centers depleted food pantry shelves so they can continue to feed hungry individuals and families during the lean winter months when giving traditionally goes down. We will collect your donated canned goods after each service on Feb. 2 in the Narthex.

Vacation Bible School

Do you have gifts for storytelling, crafts, music, mission project, games and snacks? Come meet with other talented people who can help guide our children at Vacation Bible School, from 7-8 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 3, 2020 in the Conference Room. Contact Marian Bauer for more information.

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.

ADULTS of GRACE

Have you made your Valentine's Day plans yet?

Maybe a romantic dinner out – check!

Present(s) – check!

Time with your significant other – check!

Babysitter – OOPS!

Let the Youth Dept. help you! We will once again have our annual **Parents Night Out fundraiser**, Feb. 14 from 5pm-9pm. We will watch your children while you go out for a romantic evening. Use us as an outreach for your friends. We'll provide dinner for the kids. All monies raised go to help offset costs for our summer conferences at Montreat, which cost each student over \$800 to attend. To sign up, contact Mike at: mike@grace.to or (407) 898-6571.



Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday services will be held February 26. There will be a dinner in Conway Hall at 5:30 PM followed by worship in the Sanctuary at 6:30 PM.

The church will also be offering "Ashes to Go" earlier that day in the Sanctuary drop-off area between 7:00 am and 9:30 am. Commuters, neighbors, Small Blessings parents, Meals on Wheels and Share the Care drivers and others will be able to pull in for the imposition of ashes as they start their day. Church members who are unable to attend the evening dinner and service are also welcome to come in the morning.

Still Stitchin' with Grace

2019 was a busy year for the quilters the Sewing Machines were humming. A total of 70 quilts were sent to Harbor House this past



December along with 15 pillowcases and 27 Christmas Stockings filled with gifts and candy. A total of 2,946 have been made since the group began in 2004. We plan to hit 3,000 this year.

Also a quilt was made for Candy and was given to her at our Christmas Luncheon. It is such a joy to see the expressions of the receiver of one of the quilts made, as so much love are put into them.

We thank all of you who have supported us and if you are at the Church on a Thursday drop in and visit for a while. We meet every Thursday from 10:00 to 2:00.

Annual Congregational Meeting

Join us on Sunday, January 26, 2020
at Noon in the Sanctuary.

Prayer Chain

We are grateful for the Prayer Chain that has been very busy lately praying for our members and friends who have sick ones or lost love ones. Thank you for your prayers.

Presently the church has the e-mail group of about thirty addresses and a phone group of two people. If you are interested in joining to pray for others please call the church office at 407-898-6571 and you will be advised how to join.

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" 1st Thessalonians 5: 16-18.

Blessings.

Minnette Mullings

College Care Packages

A surprise box full of necessities and fun stuff can brighten a student's day and remind them that folks back home are keeping them in prayer. During the month of **March** (until **March 15**), the Deacons will collect items for Care Packages for church members who are college students. Below is a list of suggested items to put in the box located in the narthex labeled "**College Care Packages.**" If you have a student away at college, be sure we have their address.

highlighters	Nutella
gift cards	tea or lemonade mix
Sharpies	sticks
post-it notes	hot chocolate packets
cleaning wipes	coffee / tea bags
party mix / crackers	instant soups
candy / gum	ramen noodles
protein or granola bars	tuna / canned chicken
cookies	popcorn
brownie mix	cereal / oatmeal
peanut butter (small jar)	pretzels / chips

Survey Update

There's still time to take the on-line survey about pastoral characteristics and leadership traits of the next pastor. The survey consists of ten questions and should take less than 10-15 minutes. It is completely anonymous and open to all who worship at Grace Covenant. To take the survey go to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KW355XL>

If you receive Grace Notes electronically hover over the link and it should direct you to the survey. You can also go to the church website and find the electronic newsletter there. Printed copies of the survey have been made for those who are experiencing difficulty getting to the survey online.

Fourth Thursday at the Garden

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

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

Book Club

Book Club will meet at Panera's located at 3138 S. Orange Ave., Orlando, FL. We meet on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm. Currently, we are planning discussions of the following books:

February 25

When Crickets Cry

by Charles Martin

March 24

The Reluctant Prophet

by Nancy Rue

Small Blessings Landscaping

Make sure you check out the new landscaping at the entrance to Small Blessings. There is the cutest little custom made caterpillar!

Support GRACE

when shopping online!

When you make a purchase on Amazon, go to

<https://smile.amazon.com/>

Designate GCPC as the non-profit to support.



ROOTED Student Ministry Schedule

February

9

Youth Sunday

14

Youth Valentine Date Night 5 - 9PM

Students should be here at 4:30 PM

23

ROOTED Youth Group - 5:15 - 7pm

We'll have awesome dinner, games, music, prayers, announcements and a lesson. Bring your Friendz!!!

Sunday School meets every Sunday in the Youth Room with FREE, yessiree Bob, FREE donuts, juice, and Jesus!!! Sunday School runs 9:30-10:30 a.m.

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

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

Session Summary

January 2020

Session received year-end financial reports which reflect that 2019 income exceeded expenses allowing the church to reduce the outstanding liability to designated funds. The church is starting 2020 on a firmer financial foundation.

A recommendation from the Outreach Committee regarding the distribution of Endowment Funds was presented and tabled. Special PC(USA) and congregational offerings were approved.

Session approved a job description for a parish associate for pastoral care. The Administration and Personnel Committee will be interviewing candidates for that position while also continuing to search for a Director of Children's Ministry and Facilities Managers.

Session approved terms of contract for the Interim Pastor beginning in March, 2020.

Reports were received from other standing committees of Session, including reports from Building and Grounds outlining extensive work that has been and will be done on church property; from Christian Education regarding dates and classes for Lenten dinners, Vacation Bible School and Music Camp; from Fellowship with 2020 planned events; from Worship regarding the worship schedule for 2020; and from Youth regarding their 2020 planning. Technology will be previewing a "mock-up" of the proposed monitors to replace the sanctuary screens.

Mission Study Focus Groups are scheduled for February.

Session approved the statistical report for General Assembly. The report reflects the work done by Session in 2019 to remove a large members who have not been active in the life of the congregation for several years.

Nominations were made for the Foundation Board election at the Annual Meeting.

LENTEN STUDIES

Dates are March 4 through April 1. Leaders and topics are :

- "The 'I Am...' statements of Jesus"
Marian Bauer
- "What It Means to Be Presbyterian"
Jim Pate
- "Under Appreciated Women of the Bible"
Kristin Stieffel
- "The Power of the Cross by Bill Crowder"
Winifred Rutherford

Descriptions of and sign up for classes will be in the bulletin soon.

Teacher Appreciation Luncheon

A luncheon will be held for the Sunday School Teachers and their families following the 10:45 service on March 8.

This is just a small way to say thank you for the time, commitment and love shown by this special group as they follow the command to "go, therefore and make disciples...teaching them..."

Won't you take a moment to write a note or say a special thank you to the teachers on this day?



Explore the Rainforest

at Vacation Bible School

June 8-11, 2020

9 a.m. to noon

K through Grade 5

All are welcome!

Come explore how Jesus is our guide through all of life..."I am the way, the truth, and the life."

John 14: 6

February 2020



**GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Rev. Melanie Ruta
Interim Pastor

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

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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:

Chili Cook-Off and Cookie Bake-Off

March 1, 2020



Chili Cook-Off
and
Cookie Bake-Off
Noon
Conway Hall



\$5 donation benefits youth programs

Prizes awarded. Interested in cooking/baking? Contact Mike

mike@grace.to or (407) 898-6571