

GRACE notes

March 2020 — Volume 63, Issue 3

GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



On a Journey

Lent is a season of prayer, penance, sacrifice and service in preparation for the celebration of Easter. Lent is often associated with fasting or giving things up. But it's not so much about giving things up. Instead, it's about making room for God. We give up the things that distract us from hearing God's voice so that we can better respond to God's call on our lives.

Lent is a time of spiritual journey. During Lent we are called to be more intentional in our spiritual practices—prayer, devotional reading, Bible study, fasting, service and giving. In doing so we model our spiritual lives after that of Christ, taking up our own cross and following after Christ as his disciples.

This year, we will make another kind of journey during Lent—one that involves taking our prayer out into the community. Instead of just praying at the church or at home for our neighbors, you will be invited to go to where they live and learn and work and play. You will be invited to see how our local community is being transformed, what the emerging needs of our local community might be, and how God may be calling us as a congregation to meet those needs.

This “prayer journey” can be completed on your schedule at any time during Lent. It will include a variety of optional “prayer stops” in different areas to which you may walk or drive. You may complete some or all of the suggested

stops, using some or all of the suggested prayer prompts or prayers of your own choosing. And don't let transportation or mobility keep you from participating. Links will be included so you can go on-line and make it a virtual journey. See the Prayer Journey insert to get started today!



Looking Ahead

March

- 1 - Chili Cook Off/Cookie Bake Off
- 4, 11, 18, 25 - Lenten Dinner/Classes
- 8 - Teacher Appreciation Luncheon
- 22 - Blessing of the Quilts

April

- 1 - Lenten Dinner/Classes
- 5 - Palm Sunday
- 8 - Hops for Haiti
- 9 - Maundy Thursday Dinner/Service
- 10 - Good Friday Vigil
- 11 - Easter Egg Hunt
- 12 - Easter Sunday
- 18 - Grace on the Greens
- 19 - Celebration Continues Luncheon

May

- 17 - Youth Sunday
- 31 - Pentecost



Congratulations!

Rowan James Randall Blair was born February 7, 2020.

He is the son of Heath and Ashley Blair, brother of Savannah, grandson of Vantrease Blair and Mike Beam, Bill Blair, and great-grandson of Josephine Blair.

Hewett John Phillips
was born February 23, 2020.

He is the son of Britt and Ashley Phillips, and grandson of John and Debbie Womack.



In Sympathy

We extend our Christian love and sympathy to ~

The family of Fran Morrison who died October 12, 2019

The family of Erma Peterson who died November 28, 2019

Diana Ibarra and family. Diana's mother, Martha Guinotte, died December 27, 2019

Anne Roberts and family. Anne's sister, Brenda Smith, died in December 2019

The family of Tom Farnsworth who died January 18, 2020

The family of Tom Hasbrouck who died January 28, 2020

Mike Beam, Vantrease Blair and the Bober family.
Pat Bober died on January 25, 2020

Sandy Zeevark and family. Sandee's husband, Bill, died on January 26, 2020

Jo Blair and family. Jo's sister, Ruth Anna Blair, died on February 4, 2020

Reuben and Lauren Schivnarain and family.
Reuben's brother, Harold Schivnarain, died on February 11, 2020

Barbara Browning and family on the death of her cousin, Vickie Barton, who recently died.

Thank You! Buildings and Grounds and Doug Hogarth



Many thanks to Buildings and Grounds for having our buildings pressure washed, getting the steeple cleaned and painted, getting new doors on Smith Hall, and a new light pole! And we also thank Doug Hogarth who spent many hours pressure washing the sidewalks!



"Your recent gift during Christmas Alternative to Heifer International has given parents and children hope for the year ahead by providing them with the life-changing gift of animals and training they need to lift themselves out of hunger and poverty.

Thank you for your help to put people on a path to brighter healthier tomorrow."

Pierre Ferrari
President and CEO
Heifer International



"Thank you for your recent gift to Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando. Not only do we provide new beginnings for dogs and cats ,but people too. Many low income seniors receive free pet food and vet care , plus access to our Pet Food Pantry for their beloved companions. We are honored to have your church as part of our family."

Cathy Rodgers
Director of Development
Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando



Thank you for supporting the our work with the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar. Wonderful work has been done this year in health , AIDS prevention , fruit tree training and environmental education. Your continued prayers and financial support help us minister to both the physical and spiritual needs of God's people in Madagascar.

Peace in Christ
Elizabeth and Dan Turk
Mission co-workers serving in Madagascar

Meet Rev. Karen Estes Our New Parish Associate

Karen attended Vanderbilt University where she majored in Theatre, and met her husband Jon-Paul. She graduated from Columbia Theological Seminary with in 1993 and was ordained by the PCUSA in the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee. Karen served as an associate pastor in churches in Lewisburg and Memphis TN, as well as at Tuskawilla Presbyterian Church in Oviedo.



In 2008 Karen followed Jon-Paul to the Dallas area for his job. She served as pulpit supply until she found a new calling, small church part time ministry. She was Pastor at DeSoto Presbyterian from 2010 until 2014. In July 2014, Karen followed Jon-Paul to his new position at UCF and is serving on the COM and pulpit supply until God leads her to her next call.

Karen and Jon-Paul have two sons, Martin who graduated from UT in Austin Texas and just got married in September, and Alexander who attends UCF.

Karen is very excited to begin working as your Parish Associate for Pastoral Care, and can't wait to get to know you.

Grace Scholarship Numbers

1995	Year GCPC Scholarship Fund Began
\$55,000+	Money awarded to students since 1995
50	Approximate number of students who have received those scholarships
?????	How much will be donated for the 2020 fund? Everybody can help with this number!

Let's keep the tradition going!

Thank you from the Scholarship Committee.

Please submit articles to
churchoffice@grace.to

Upcoming deadlines - March 15 & April 8

Meet our new Childrens Ministry Director - Sheryl Chernault

Sheryl believes in following God's leading, even when she's not sure of His plan. Sheryl



began her career in healthcare as a pediatric nurse for 8 years where she lived her passion of ministering to families, promoting holistic healing, and sharing a warm smile, a hug and a song. Understanding that God was leading her in a different direction, Sheryl then followed her calling into church ministry where she served as a Director of Christian Education for 5 years and then transitioned into Children and Family Ministry for the remaining 13 years of her church ministry. In these roles, she was able to combine her gifts and talents to fulfill God's calling. While serving at AdventHealth, Sheryl was responsible for creating and producing CREATION Kids materials for churches, hospitals, schools and homes. She is passionate about people and loves spending time with her family and with all who God brings her way. Sheryl lives in Longwood with her husband of 36 years David, and their 3 dogs, Milo, Pouska and Latezia.

Sheryl's favorite Bible text is "Be still and know that I am God"(Psalm 46:10) and her continued prayer is that God will perfect, establish and strengthen her (1 Peter 5:10).

Book Club

Book Club will meet at Panera's located at 3138 S. Orange Ave., Orlando, FL. We meet at 7:00 pm. Books can be found online and in the public library. Join Us!

March 24

The Reluctant Prophet by Nancy Rue

April 28

Twenty Wishes by Debbie Macomber

May 26

The Land of Silence by Tessa Afshar

HOPS FOR HAITI

Wednesday, April 8



Small Blessings children will have their annual "Hops for Haiti" to raise funds for the Good Shepherd School in Haiti. The children collect pledges from family and friends and then "Hop" as many times as they can in a set time limit. We need "hop counters" from the Grace Covenant family to be seated in the gym by 9:00 a.m. to count and record their hops.

Please call or email Paula Craig if you would be willing to come count the hops. It is great fun and the more counters we have, the faster it goes.

Egg-Citment Egg-Stravaganza

Egg-Citment!

Translation: GCPC Easter Egg Hunt!

Saturday, April 11, 2020

10:00 AM-11:00 AM

Preschoolers through Fifth Grade

*Everyone leaves with a bag of Easter Eggs
filled with prizes and candy!*



Volunteers needed to set out
eggs and help children.

Call "M" Waddell

SAVE THE DATE



JUNE 8-11, 2020

9 a.m. to noon

Vacation Bible School

"Rainforest Explorers"

Who: For all children who have finished
K-Grade 5 (invite your friends!)

What's happening: Fun! Bible stories, crafts,
games, mission projects, music, snacks!

For more information/want to help?

Call: Marian Bauer

ROOTED Student Ministry Schedule

ROOTED Youth Group - 5:15 - 7pm

Come for an awesome dinner, games, music, prayers, announcements and a lesson. Bring your Friendz!!! See dates below

March

1

Chili Cook Off - Cookie Bake Off

ROOTED Youth Group - 5:15 - 7pm

8

Give Kids the World - 4:45 - 10:30 pm

22

ROOTED Youth Group - 5:15 - 7pm

29

ROOTED Youth Group - 5:15 - 7pm

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.**



Annual Grace on the Greens

Golf Tournament

Saturday, April 27 at 8:30 am.

The goal is to raise money so our students can attend the Montreat Youth Conferences this summer. Montreat Youth Conferences have been impacting our students' journey in faith for several years in amazing ways. .

Please contact Mike Beam at mike@grace.to, or (407) 898-6571 for more information.

A Few More Nuts!

The Presbyterian Womens' Council have regular and chocolate pecans left over from the sale in November. We will be selling them before and after both services on Sunday, March 22nd.

The plain are \$12 a bag and the chocolate are \$13. The proceeds of the pecan sale goes toward our Scholarship fund for our youth.

If you need to purchase pecans before March 22nd please contact Josephine Blair.



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.



Church News On-Line

The subscriber list for the new on-line weekly update continues to grow. The update includes a preview of the coming week and happenings of the church including photos. The weekly update is delivered on Fridays by email. If you aren't able to come to worship to receive the weekly announcements in the bulletin and you don't follow the church Facebook, the weekly update could be for you.

Email Pastor Melanie at

GraceCovenantOrlando@gmail.com

to subscribe and stay connected to your church. You will still receive the Grace Notes each month.

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.

amazon smile

Survey Results

What brought you to Grace Covenant and what keeps you here? Location, location, location. Church location was the number one answer. Friendliness and worship style also matter. And while many of you said it was the pastor who brought you here, it's your friends who are keeping you here now.

What characteristics are you looking for in a pastor? Someone who is warm and friendly, someone encouraging and inspiring, and someone who is a strong leader.

What are the top ten leadership traits for which the search committee should look?

Communication; preaching and worship leadership; compassionate; spiritual maturity; interpersonal engagement; motivator; strategy and vision; public communicator; teacher; and initiative.

What aspects of the position would you prioritize? Preparing and preaching inspiration sermons was the clear winner followed by participating in church fellowship activities, and planning and leading worship. Not far behind, though, was supporting children's and youth ministries.

Your responses to the survey will be of assistance to the pastor search committee when they begin their work. Thank you to all who participated and to Jim Pate for crunching the numbers.

Mission Study Focus Groups

Over 65 members gathered over a shared meal on one of three Wednesday nights or a Sunday brunch to tackle the hard question of what the vision of the church could be moving forward. New emphasis was given to keeping doing the things the church already does well; and a surprising number of new, creative, out of the box ideas were floated. Each session began with a call to

"flip the paradigm" of how we do church. That is, we are called to love God, love neighbor and make new disciples. That hasn't changed. What has changed is our culture generally, and our community in particular. The one common take away is that we don't know—yet—what the future at Grace Covenant will look like, but we know that to get there it will take doing some things differently. Thank you to the Fellowship Committee dinner hosts for each meal and to all who participated.

Grace Prayer Focus

The Care committee invites you to pray with them each week for businesses in our community. Businesses to pray for are listed weekly in the bulletin.



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

Session Summary

February 20, 2020

A newly revised format for the Treasurer's Report was presented which will make it easier for elders to track and account for the finances of the church.

Session approved the terms of contract for Rev. Karen Estes as parish associate and the hiring of Sheryl Chernault as the new Director of Children's Ministry.

A bequest from the Estate of Karl Kesler was received. The Finance Committee will bring a recommendation to Session at the March meeting regarding use of the funds.

Session approved the Technology Committee proceeding with the payment of a deposit on monitors/AV for the sanctuary.

The 2020 Distribution Allocation Plan recommended by the Outreach Committee was approved. A portion of the distribution was left unallocated for new outreach programs and new initiatives. Also approved was the Outreach Committee request to transfer annual distributions from the Robert Eckard Fund (of the Endowment) to the Bob Eckard Haitian Scholarship Designated Fund for 2018-2022.

A Central Florida Presbytery Micro Grant application for a "Free Funerals" initiative brought by the Worship and Care Committees was approved.

Revisions to the Usher Guidelines were approved.

The results of the PNC Survey were presented. The Mission Study Focus Groups have been completed.

A commission of elders and members was appointed to make recommendations regarding improving church communications.

Session noted with sadness the passing of members Tom Farnsworth and Tom Hasbrouck. Elders were appointed to receive new members on March 1.

LENTEN STUDIES

Come Join Us

Wednesdays March 4 through April 1

Dinner at 5:30 PM

Discussion at 6:30 PM

- "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

"If we all do a little, it adds up to a lot"

The Presbyterian Church (USA) receives several Special Offerings each year. Our Session has approved 4 Special Offerings in 2020: One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Thornwell, and Christmas Joy. The church's makeup may be determined by who comes in, but the church's identity is defined by opening its doors, to venture out and partner with the most vulnerable of God's children in the world. Special Offerings are an important way individual PCUSA churches can band together to become the Church in the world, making a difference in people's lives. You'll be hearing more about the Special Offerings as the year goes on. Please be prayerful in your response.

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.

March 2020

**GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Rev. Melanie Ruta

Interim Pastor

Rev. Karen Estes

Parish Associate for Pastoral Care

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

1655 Peel Ave., Orlando, FL 32806

Phone: 407.898.6571

E-mail: churchoffice@grace.to

WWW.GRACE.TC

To:

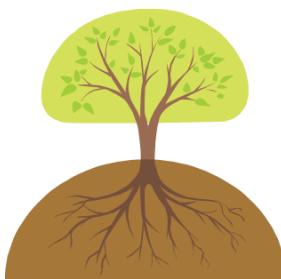
Return Service Requested

AIR Guatemala

Alliance for International Reforestation

How Does Our 2 cents a Meal Make a Difference?

Every month we set aside a few coins for our 2 cents a meal offering. Do we really know where it goes or the difference it makes in the lives of real people? Please join the Mission/Outreach team as we welcome Anne Hallum, founder of AIR Guatemala, an important recipient. As we enjoy a light lunch, she will share her



Sunday
March 19
Conway Hall
Noon

story of being called to dedicate her life to the indigenous population of the region, and how, through the years, AIR has saved the mountainsides from countless mudslides, introduced fuel-efficient stoves, and educated the people in preserving their environment and way of life. We are so privileged to have this rare opportunity.