

# GRACE NOTES

JANUARY 2025

Dear Friends,

I am listening to Christmas music and swimming up from the depths of memory come the words to each tune, “glory to the newborn king”, “love and joy come to you... and God bless you and give you a happy new year.” Music’s power to evoke not just words but people singing “on Christmas day in the morning”, “that wondrous song of old, of angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold...”, “and heaven and nature sing.” God has yet again given-- a gift beyond reckoning—Peace on Earth, Good will to man! But where is that gift? Where did you last see it? Where did it get put away?



Now the decorations are back in their box, if we even took them out...and the New Year’s Resolutions are already flagging for our diet has included grief, loss, illness, that appears at times to overshadow grace. The enemy desires to fill our world (and us) with fear, cruel hate, cruel behavior, betrayal, greed, self-serving desire to live and acquire, and pass by on the other side when neighbors are trafficked, innocents are murdered, and people are tortured and killed. Those who enslave— remain unsated. The prince of lies longs to control all who are not already his broken slave, and bend more to serve in fear, yet he can only kill the body, and by grace he often loses even those he has enslaved when they hear the good news of salvation. Give too much attention and obedience to worldly powers, it is easy to wonder “where is God’s gift”? Yet when we search and seek for God’s gift...HE comes as a child, born “a virgin “full of grace”, called Jesus, for “he will save his people from their sins.”

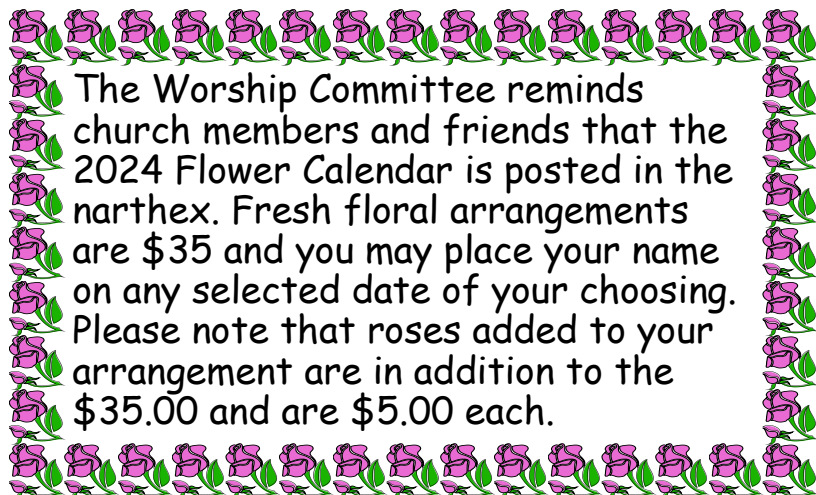
Clothed in human form, in power made perfect in weakness. Jesus came into the world as the only sinless man and defeated the prince of lies who desired to take the place of God and destroy God’s creation in everlasting death. Jesus is the gift God provided to save us from our sin, grace incarnate, our advocate. Before HIS and our FATHER, Jesus pleads HIS life, death and resurrection for us. His love for and zeal to do God’s will, required a willing sacrifice. By this HE destroyed the power of death at work in us and HIS resurrection grace frees us to receive eternal life.

It doesn’t really depend on you, this grace. It is the gift of God. But it does depend on you... to testify, to be a witness in the world that the good news is Jesus. And we identify with all sinners “Except for the grace of God, I too would still be lost, fearful, despairing.” Those who have been immobilized by fear, anger, hate (especially of themselves), often project the same onto God. But God does not hate them but will judge them. And if they are found in Jesus, then they will be judged by his life, death and resurrection. It is essential to hear Jesus knocking at the door of our heart, and hear our name spoken, inviting us to choose life in Christ and to be dead to sin. This is the meaning of this gift from God. And our WORK, if you can call it that, is to open our life and allow Jesus to shine through all its facets, even the broken parts shine with the grace light of Jesus. The greatest gift ever given is within you, not lost, nor misplaced at all. GOD WITH US.

Celebrate this New Year of “peace on earth, good will to man” with the gift of God, glowing joy & bone-deep peace, for you are one of those peculiar people God blessed to be a blessing to the world. At the right time God sent His only begotten Son into this world to **You** and called you again by WORD and deed, to share what it means to love God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

I pray you will not keep hidden the gift of God. In this new year, invite your friends over and share it and tell strangers and all those you meet that this gift is for them also. Never has a greater gift ever been given....so don’t pack away your gift from God. Share peace, give glory, sing to God the songs of the saints, put on this garment of grace, mercy, and peace from God, for clothed in this, **YOU have been blessed to be a blessing** “for such a time as this.”

New Year’s Blessings,  
Pastor Cheryl Duke



The Worship Committee reminds church members and friends that the 2024 Flower Calendar is posted in the narthex. Fresh floral arrangements are \$35 and you may place your name on any selected date of your choosing. Please note that roses added to your arrangement are in addition to the \$35.00 and are \$5.00 each.

## Prayer Requests

Please join us in lifting up prayers for those who have immediate concerns:

Glen Butler (Jerry Butler's brother)  
The Crane family (on the death of Sherry)  
Holly Durst (on the death of her husband, John)  
Kathy Franks  
Phyllis Manning  
Faye Tripp  
Wayne Wagner  
Mary Williamson  
Those effected by Hurricanes Helene & Milton

Also pray for those with longer term needs:

Margie Baker  
Jerry Butler  
Michael Crane (Carl's brother)  
Donna Fidler  
Janine Groner  
Billie Jean Jones  
Pauline Kirk  
Laura Raizada  
Libby Richardson  
C D Weaver  
Our Military  
First responders  
The people of the Ukraine, Israel, the Gaza Strip  
Our Church.

If there are other people or concerns that you would like to add or delete from this list, please contact Lois Butler by phone at 352-262-5893 or by email at [treasurer@gpconline.org](mailto:treasurer@gpconline.org)

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## 1/20 - Sterling Batie

1/24 - Nancy Niblack

1/29 - Evelyn Caldwell

1/31 - Emily Youngblood



Please call the church office at 352-376-5654, if your special day is **NOT** listed or is **NOT** correct.

## Please don't forget our Special Offerings

## HEARTS & HANDS OFFERING

We invite every member of the congregation to prayerfully contribute to support and strengthen the mutual mission effort between church partners in Jamaica, Cuba, the presbytery, and many of our local congregations.

## GRACE - GIVING AND SHARING MISSION

Grace - Giving and Sharing Mission is a food and household item collection benefiting the Bread of the Mighty Food Bank. For the month of January we are collecting coffee and tea.



# \$1 FUND OFFERING

Our \$1 Fund Offering for the month of January will go to Family Promise.

# Session Meeting Highlights

## December 9

### **CONGREGATIONAL LIFE & MISSION**

St. Francis House – dates for 2025 - Jan 17, Apr 17, July 17, Oct 17.

Family Promise – we were not able to get a firm commitment regarding a family for the Angel Tree

Grace Giving Mission for December is canned meals

Sign ups for Fellowship Hour have been going well

\$1.00 fund will remain the same as last year

Heifer International – Received triple match for our \$564.96 donation.

Pastor Cheryl requested that some canned meals be made available on hand for her to give to people who approach her at the church asking for money

### **ADMINISTRATION & Personnel**

Kirk Mead has requested change to his On-site Employee Housing Contract to allow one dog in addition to the two cats

### **WORSHIP & MUSIC**

Communion was served on Christ the King Sunday 11/24 (replacing the December first Sunday time)

Thanksgiving Eve gathering on 11/27 at Covenant Presbyterian was well- attended

Lessons and Carols were presented on 12/8 at the 11AM worship service with Organist John - Peter Ford directed the uplifting service

Christmas Eve service of communion and candlelight will be at 5 PM at Grace - Westminster and Covenant have been invited

Removing of the “greens” and decorations from the sanctuary is 1/4/25 at 10 AM.

Dinner and message from Pastor Cheryl is planned on Epiphany 1/6/25

### **PROPERTY & OPERATIONS**

Engineers assessed the roof damages on the manse, Sanctuary, and Fellowship Hall—no follow up from insurance company

Trees around the south parking lot were trimmed

Two dead palm trees were removed

Water heater at the manse was replaced

PDA presented a check for \$2,500 to the church for use in repair of damages from Hurricane Helene

Our Daily Bread booklets for December, January and February are available in the narthex



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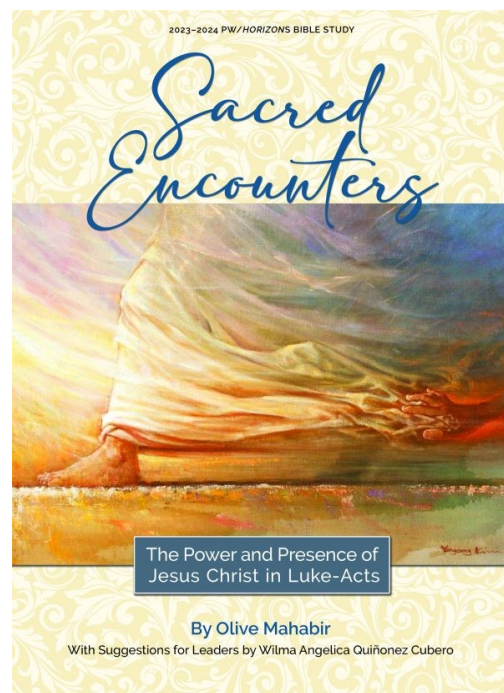
## Men's Noon Lunch & Fellowship



The men of the church are invited to meet each Wednesday from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm in the library for fellowship. Please bring your own brown bag lunch, beverages will be provided.

## Circle News

The Anna circle will meet on Tuesday, January 14 at 12:00 noon in the library. Diane Millican will lead our study of Lesson 5 "A Person with Leprosy Encounters Jesus" in *Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts* by Olive Mahabir. Please bring your study book, Bible and your own brown bag lunch and beverage. All women are welcome. Please come and enjoy the fellowship.





# Liturgy Passages for January

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## **1/5 2nd Sunday of Christmas**

Jerimiah 31:7-14  
Psalm 147:12-20  
Ephesians 1:3-14  
Luke 1:(1-9) 10-18

## **1/6 Epiphany of the Lord**

Isaiah 60:1-6  
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14  
Ephesians 3:1-12  
Matthew 2:1-12

## **1/12 Baptism of the Lord**

Isaiah 43:1-7  
Psalm 29  
Acts 8:14-17  
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

## **1/19 2nd Sunday after Epiphany**

Isaiah 62:1-5  
Psalm 36:5-10  
1 Corinthians 12:1-11  
John 2:1-11

## **1/26 3rd Sunday after Epiphany**

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10  
Psalm 19  
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a  
Luke 4:14-21

## DIRECTORY CHANGES

Please add Patsy Bellis' email address to her page - [bellispatsy2021@gmail.com](mailto:bellispatsy2021@gmail.com)

Beth Hartwell has a new address - 3362 NW 16th Terrace; Gainesville, FL 32605

## Elders on Call

**Elders on Call  
for January are:**

**Debbie Harris 352-213-5645  
Karen Russ 352-262-5419**

Two elders volunteer to be available to church members and friends who may need assistance. When the church office is closed, these elders are on call to help.

## JANUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>5</b> 9:45 – Choir Practice 11:00 – Worship Service <b>Communion</b> <b>Congregational Meeting</b> 7:00 – ESWT(AA)	<b>6</b> <b>5:00 – Epiphany Dinner</b>	<b>7</b> 7:00 pm – Barbergators	<b>8</b> 12:00 noon – Men's Lunch 7:00 pm – ESWT(AA)	<b>9</b> Girl Scouts 6:30 pm – Gainesville Harmony Show Chorus	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 2:00 pm Arabic Evangelical Church
<b>12</b> 9:45 – Choir Practice 11:00 – Worship Service <b>Worship Committee</b> 7:00 – ESWT(AA)	<b>13</b> 4:00 pm – Square Dance Group <b>6:00 pm – Session</b> <b>Meeting in Church Office</b>	<b>14</b> <b>11:00 am -</b> <b>Congregational Life &amp;</b> <b>Mission</b> <b>12:00 – Anna Circle</b> 7:00 pm – Barbergators	<b>15</b> 12:00 noon – Men's Lunch 7:00 – ESWT(AA)	<b>16</b> Girl Scouts 6:30 pm – Gainesville Harmony Show Chorus	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> 9:45 – Choir Practice 11:00 – Worship Service <b>12:00 – Lunch Gathering</b> 7:00 – ESWT(AA)	<b>20</b> 4:00 pm – Square Dance Group	<b>21</b> 7:00 pm – Barbergators	<b>22</b> 12:00 noon – Men's Lunch 7:00 pm – ESWT(AA)	<b>23</b> Girl Scouts <b>Grace Notes</b> <b>Articles Due</b> 6:30 pm – Gainesville Harmony Show Chorus	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 9:45 – Choir Practice 11:00 – Worship Service <b>Annual Congregational</b> <b>Meeting</b> 7:00 – ESWT(AA)	<b>27</b> 4:00 pm – Square Dance Group	<b>28</b> 7:00 pm – Barbergators	<b>29</b> 12:00 noon – Men's Lunch 7:00 pm – ESWT(AA)	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	



**JANUARY**  
**2025**

Grace Presbyterian Church  
3146 NW 13th Street  
Gainesville, FL 32609

Phone: 352-376-5654  
Email: [office@gpconline.org](mailto:office@gpconline.org)

**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**  
**[WWW.GPCONLINE.ORG](http://WWW.GPCONLINE.ORG)**

**For it is in Giving That We Receive**

**Ways to Support Grace  
Presbyterian Church:**

1. Mail a check to the church office.
2. Use your bank's online bill pay system.
3. Use the electronic funds transfer from your savings or checking account.
4. Use a debit/credit card at the link on our website under the giving tab (there is also an image that you can click).

The finance committee would like to keep the congregation informed about our General Fund income and expenses and our pass through donations. If you have any questions, contact Lois Butler at 352-262-5893 or [treasurer@gpconline.org](mailto:treasurer@gpconline.org).

	November	Through 11/30
Income	\$ 4,103.23	\$ 91,108.27
Expenses	\$ 14,316.43	\$ 102,094.18
Pass Through Donations		
Hearts and Hands Offering	\$ 3.00	\$ 197.48