

December 2025

The Season of Advent

“Advent” means “coming” or “arrival.” During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ’s coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. In its historical origins, the season of Advent was patterned after the season of Lent, a six-week period of penitence and preparation for Easter. Similarly, the four weeks of Advent present an opportunity for communal discernment and personal examination, as the church prepares to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord and looks with hope for Christ’s return.

Advent Inspiration

Between Memory and Hope: An excerpt from the *Companion to the Book of Common Worship* (Geneva Press, 2003, p. 96)

In Advent we expectantly wait for the One who has already come. We anticipate the promised justice of God’s new world, yet we praise God who raised the “righteous branch” to rule with justice and righteousness. We hope for the restoration of the afflicted, the tormented, and the grieving, yet we delight that healing has come in Christ. We long for the beating of swords into plowshares, yet we rejoice that the Prince of Peace has appeared. We yearn for the barren deserts of our inner cities to flourish, yet we laud the desert Rose that has bloomed. We dream of the land where lions and lambs live in harmony, yet we acclaim the child born to lead us into the promised land.



Christ has come! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!



HOPE



PEACE

Advent 1 - Hope

Mark Gather together ♦ Light one candle ♦ Read together



Remember

Reader: We light the candle of Hope to show us the way.
All: And to remind us that God is with us today.

Listen

The people of God waited and hoped for a long time for Jesus. In this Psalm we are reminded of God's presence as we wait.

"I waited and hoped for God,
who bent toward me and heard my cry.
God lifted me from the noisy pit,
out of the muddy mire.
God set my feet on a firm rock
and gave me a new song.
Many will see with awe
and put their trust in God."

Based on Psalm 40
(pg. 33 *Psalms of Wonder*)

Note from the Artist

"En la tormenta, aún hay luz" (While in the storm, there's still light) is a color pencil prayer created during Tropical Storm Ernesto. Without electric power, drawing and painting, praying, under the candlelight, we trusted God would see us through.

Reflect

We wonder...



- What do you observe in the art?
- How do you wait?
- What do you hope for?

Create your own art as you wonder and pray!

Pray

God of Hope, thank you for listening and being present with us as we wait for Jesus. Amen

Bless

Give thanks to God, for God is good,
Because God's love lasts forever!
Psalm 136



Advent 2 - Peace

Mark Gather together ♦ Light two candles ♦ Read together



Remember

Reader: We light the candle of Hope and the candle of Peace to show us the way.
All: And as a reminder that God is with us today.

Listen

As we wait for Jesus we are reminded in this Psalm that peace comes from God to whom we give thanks.

"Sing thanks to the Lord,
who covers heaven with clouds,
makes rain for the earth
and grass on the mountains!
God feeds young ravens when they cry,
and all the other beasts,
blesses your children, gives you peace
and the best things to eat."

Based on Psalm 147
(pg. 40 *Psalms of Wonder*)

Note from the Artist

"Aquí encuentro paz..." (Here, I find peace) on these mountains. Travel high enough, and one can see the Atlantic Ocean. Watching the view, magnificent, vast, and emerald green, take a deep breath. Yes, here, on the mountains of my island, I find peace.

Reflect

We wonder...



- What do you observe in the art?
- Where do you find peace?
- What are you thankful for today?

Create your own art as you wonder and pray!

Pray

God of Peace, may we be thankful and share your peace. Amen.

Bless

Give thanks to God, for God is good,
Because God's love lasts forever!
Psalm 136



Advent 3 - Joy

Mark Gather together ♦ Light three candles ♦ Read together



Remember

Reader: We light the candles of Hope and Peace, and today the candle of Joy to show us the way.

All: And as a reminder that God is with us today.

Listen

As we wait for the baby Jesus we are reminded in this Psalm to be joyful.

"Sing a new song to the Lord!
Play well, and shout with joy!
For everything God does is good.
God's kind love fills the world.
God's word made the heavens,
and God's breath made the stars.
God gather the seas up in heaps
and stores the deep in jars.
Let everyone who lives on earth
stand in awe of God,
for God spoke, and there it was:
at God's command, it stood."

Based on Psalm 33
(pg. 36 Psalms of Wonder)

Note from the Artist

"Su palabra hizo los cielos"
(God's word made the heavens)
Born and raised in the city, I
rarely got to see a sky full of
stars because of light pollution.
The few times I have, it is pure
joy, a reminder that God made
everything good. A starry night is
joy.

Reflect

We wonder...



- What do you observe in the art?
- When do you feel joy?
- Where do you see God's joy around you?

Create your own art as you wonder and pray!

Pray

God of Joy, help us remember to share joy as we wait for Jesus. Amen.

Bless

Give thanks to God, for God is good,
Because God's love lasts forever!

Psalm 136



Advent 4 - Love

Mark Gather together ♦ Light four candles ♦ Read together



Remember

Reader: We light the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and today the candle of Love to show us the way.

All: As a reminder that God is with us today.

Listen

As the birth of Jesus draws near and the waiting is almost over, in this Psalm we are reminded of the wideness of God's love.

"Your love is high as the heavens,
Lord!
Your faithfulness tall as the sky!
Your justice is endless mountains.
Your judgement is deep and wide.
You rescue both people and beasts.
Your kindness is a treasure."

Based on Psalm 36
(pg. 54 Psalms of Wonder)

Note from the Artist

"En Tu luz, vemos luz" (In your light, we see light) Inspired by verse 10, this is the light of love that illumines our path and casts a multicolored glow along the way.

Reflect

We wonder...



- What do you observe in the art?
- Where do you see God's love?
- How do you share God's love?

Create your own art as you wonder and pray!

Pray

Loving God, help us remember your love surrounds us. Amen.

Bless

Give thanks to God, for God is good,
Because God's love lasts forever!

Psalm 136



JOY



LOVE

Christmas

Mark Gather together ♦ Light all five candles ♦ Read together

Remember



Reader: We light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love. Today we also light the Christ candle.

All: As a reminder that baby Jesus was born this day and modeled love and welcome for all.

Listen

The shepherds show us the way to Bethlehem.

"On the same night Jesus was born, shepherds in a field near Bethlehem saw an amazing sight. They were watching their sheep, as they did every night. Suddenly, an angel stood in front of them. A bright light surrounded them. The shepherds were frightened. The angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you! A baby was born in Bethlehem. This baby will be your Savior. He is Christ the Lord! Look for him wrapped in clothes and sleeping in a manger. Then many angels appeared and said, "Glory to God and peace to all people!"

Text based on Luke 2:8-20
(Surprise Visitors, Pg.192
Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible)

Note from the Artist

"Mi corazón, en Belén" (My heart, in Bethlehem). A piece of my heart has stayed in Bethlehem... This painted prayer is lifted in the spirit of the words of the choir of angels: "Glory to God and peace to all people!" May this be so, now more than ever. Amen.

Reflect

We wonder...

- What do you observe in the art?
- How can we extend welcome to those in need of a place to stay?
- How can we share the good news of Jesus' love and peace?

Create your own art as you wonder and pray!

Pray

God, we are joyful this day as we remember your love through the birth of the baby Jesus. Amen.

Bless

Give thanks to God, for God is good, Because God's love lasts forever!

Psalms 136



CHRISTMAS



A
SERVICE
OF
*Lessons
and Carols*

Sunday, December 7

11:00 am
at Grace Presbyterian Church

Join us for a heartwarming service filled with peace, hope, and joy! Let the glow of candlelight, uplifting carols, and a message of love guide you into the spirit of the season.

All are welcome to this free event



Session Meeting Highlights

November

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE

Financial update on page 3.

Christian Education

Next Meeting to be held Sunday, December meeting on 12/14/25.

Nominating

Elder nomination will commence soon. Meeting TDA

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE & MISSION

St. Francis House—next meal will be Friday, January 16th

Two Cents a Meal offering is now known as **Hearts and Hands Offering** and is taken the 1st Sunday of every month.

\$1.00 Fund October-December will be donated to **Heifer International**.

Grace Giving Mission for December will be canned meals (chicken & dumplings, stew, chili)

Made 8 new visitor bags.

Joy Gift Offering will be put in bulletin during December.

Next meeting: December's meeting 12/4/25 at 11am in Office Conference Room.

ADMINISTRATION & PERSONEL

Hoping to hire a new nursery worker.

Choral Scholar job description has been updated.

WORSHIP & MUSIC

Communion to be served 12/7/25 during Lessons and Carols worship service.

Larry provided a Presbyterian website for Advent Candle lighting narratives . Family Advent activities are available at this website and shared with our church families .

A YouTube channel has been created for streaming services.

The Capella Nova Choir requested GPC host their concert in the sanctuary 4/18/25 at 4pm and rehearsal time prior to that date.

Jay Collins and John-Peter Ford are meeting to complete for Uderitz grant and research a new grant "Charles J Williams".

Christmas Eve service to be held at Westminster Presbyterian Church.

The American Guild of Organists recital will be moved to March.

Next meeting: December, Sunday 12/21/25

PROPERTY & OPERATIONS

Kirk Meade completed work on Ramp's rotting railing.

Crosier Roofing fixed part of the roof on old manse where chimney came out of furnace.

Jared cleaned off roofs of the fellowship hall, classrooms, and sanctuary.

Bill Preston fixed the urinal in the Men's restroom attached to the Sanctuary.

Next Session Meeting: Sunday, January 25, 2026 following Worship in the Church Office's Conference Room.

Financial Update

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).

DECEMBER
2025

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

Phone: 352-376-5654
Email: office@gpconline.org

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.GPCONLINE.ORG

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.

	October	Through 10/31
Income	\$ 6,378.47	\$ 83,641.70
Expenses	\$ 7,182.24	\$ 91,646.87
Pass Through Donations		
Hearts and Hands Offering	\$ 5.86	\$ 243.64
(Formerly Two Cents a Meal)		

Liturgy Passages for December 2025

Sunday, December 7

Second Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

Sunday, December 14

Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46-55
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Sunday, December 21

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

Wednesday, December 24

Nativity of the Lord /
Christmas Eve
Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

Thursday, December 25

Nativity of the Lord /
Christmas Day
Christmas Dawn
Isaiah 62:6-12
Psalm 97
Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20

Christmas Day
Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]
John 1:1-14

Sunday, December 28

First Sunday of Christmas
Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23



Prayer Requests

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

Jerry Butler's Family

Our new friend Whitney with terrible back pain.

Hannah Luciano's Family on the passing of her brother, Timothy.

Mary Chesnut

Faye Tripp

Mary Williamson

Hannah Luciano's friend and former pastor, Dr. Rev. Leanne Simmons recovering from a stem cell transplant.

Also pray for those with longer term needs:

April Riley

Patsy Bellis

Amanda Totillo

Annette McGee

Kathy Franks

Charlie Evens

Donna Fidler

Janine Groner

Billie Jean Jones

Our Military

First responders

The safety & protection of those living in areas affected by war, may they be shielded from harm & violence; for the world leaders; and those dealing with natural disasters. In addition, pray for those in our church family and 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 rickloang@yahoo.com or Hannah Luciano by email at kooiha01@gmail.com

The Worship Committee reminds church members and friends that the 2025 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.



Announcements:

- 1) **Family Promise Collection:** Family Promise is actively collecting gift cards for families instead of preparing meals. Walmart Cards and gas cards are most preferred, however, any gift cards are also welcome. Family promise is also looking for any furniture donations, please contact Jennifer Hemphill for more information.
- 2) **Cleaning up and Clearing Out:** Our Fellowship Hall has a lot of treasures in its nooks and crannies that need to be claimed or donated to make room for updates to our Sunday School room and Nursery. There a lot of left over items from previous activities, so if you would like to take a look at anything, please contact Hannah Luciano (kooiha01@gmail.com or 701-955-4497). **Hoping to have the Back Room in the Sunday School Room cleaned out by the end of December.**
- 3) On Saturday, January 24, 2026 will be the **Annual Equipped to Serve Training** event (formerly known as Back Together Again (Again)). This will be held at Montgomery Center again this year. More information on page 6 & 7.

December BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES



Birthdays:

12/6—Varian Osteen

12/11—Ruth Mize

12/15—TeAna Williams

12/23—Mary Williamson

Please email Hannah (kooiha01@gmail.com) if your special day is **NOT** listed or is **NOT** correct.

28 NOVEMBER, 2025

HOLIDAY NEWS BLAST

Family
Promise
of Gainesville

★ IGNITE THE LIGHT: HONORING RACHAEL RYAN'S LEADERSHIP

This holiday season, we celebrate the remarkable leadership of Rachael Ryan, whose journey from program participant to Interim Executive Director embodies the true light of Family Promise of Gainesville. Her lived experience reminds us that when one light shines, it sparks another, and together, those lights guide families toward safety, stability, and opportunity.

Your generosity strengthens our programs, and ensures more families can find their own light in the midst of crisis. This is the time of year when hearts are open, and your support can brighten an entire family's future.



DONATE



SCAN CODE ADOPT A CHILD

This Christmas will be more difficult than ever for families facing housing insecurity, and by adopting a child in our program, you can help ensure they still experience the joy, warmth, and magic of the season.



STATE OF FUNDING: A CRITICAL GAP IN PERMANENT HOUSING SUPPORT

Across Alachua County, the need for stable housing continues to rise. More families are experiencing evictions, doubling up with relatives, or living in cars and motels as rental costs climb beyond reach. The number of families reaching out for help has increased significantly, and many are facing longer periods of instability due to a growing shortage of affordable units.

At the same time, funding for Permanent Housing programs, the very programs that help families exit homelessness, has been reduced across multiple funding streams. These cuts limit our community's ability to move families from crisis to stability, leaving far too many without a clear path forward.

Family Promise of Gainesville is committed to bridging this gap, but we cannot do it alone. Community support is essential to keep housing programs strong, responsive, and accessible. Your holiday donation directly helps families secure safe, permanent homes and ensures local children do not remain stuck in cycles of housing insecurity.



<https://www.familypromisegvl.org/>



352-378-2030



P.O. Box 5189 Gainesville, FL



Equipped to Serve:

Presbytery Enrichment and Elder Training

Saturday, January 24, 2026
Registration begins at 8:30am

Join us for fellowship, leadership development, and spiritual growth.

Who should attend? All newly elected and currently serving ruling elders, teaching elders, clerks, personnel committee members, commissioners, small church members, big church members, communications directors, youth leaders, church volunteers, and any other interested members!

[Register Now!](#)

Order of the Day:

8:30 Registration & Continental breakfast opens

9:30 Meditation/Lectio Divina

10:00 Session 1A

11:15 Session 1B

12:20 Keynote

1:00 Lunch

1:50 Session 2A

3:00 Session 2B

4:00 Wrap-Up

Registration Cost

\$30 pre-registration includes a continental breakfast and lunch on Saturday, as well as workshops, keynote, and materials.

Register now! Day-of registration is \$35.

Optional Lodging

Want to extend your retreat? Skip the early morning drive and wake up refreshed and ready for a day of intentional fellowship and development. Call or text the office today at 352-473-4516 to reserve your accommodations. See the [Montgomery Center website](#) for more information on lodging options: Inn Rooms, Cabins, RV hook ups, and lodges for group stays.

Inn Rooms: \$60 shared, \$100 individual stays

Cabins: \$40 per person, shared or individual (max \$250 per cabin)

Lodges: \$40 per person (max \$300 Gregory Lodge; max \$600 Williams)

RV hook up: \$35

Tent Camping: \$10

For more information and to Register go to <https://www.montgomerycenter.org/equipped>

Mid-Week Bible Study



On the **1st and 3rd Thursdays** from **6pm - 7:30pm**. We will meet via zoom. If you're interested in joining us, you will need the link. For security reasons we won't publish the link, so please contact Larry at (larry@gainesvillecounselingcenter.com) and he will send you the link. So mark off **December 4th** and **December 18th**. If you can't join, we will record the study so you can view it later.

Bible & Brew

Join Larry at Bible & Brew the 2nd Thursday in **December 11th from 7-8:30 pm** at the **University Club** (18 E. University Ave.). All are welcome to join us in an open conversation and relaxed environment. Topics will be decided closer to the date. Please contact Larry if you have any questions. Starting back up in January B&B will meet 2nd and 4th Thursdays.



\$1 FUND OFFERING

Our \$1 Fund Offering for the month of **October—December** will go to **Heifer International**. Heifer will be matching funds in the month of December!

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 **December** we will be collecting **Canned Meals (chicken & dumplings, stew, chili, etc.)**



ELDERS ON

Elders on Call
for December are:

Jay Collins— 352-870-2843
Faye Tripp— 904-307-4082

Two elders volunteer to be on call to help church members and friends who may need assistance when the church office is closed.

Our Daily Bread booklets for December are available in the narthex



Men's Noon Lunch & Fellowship

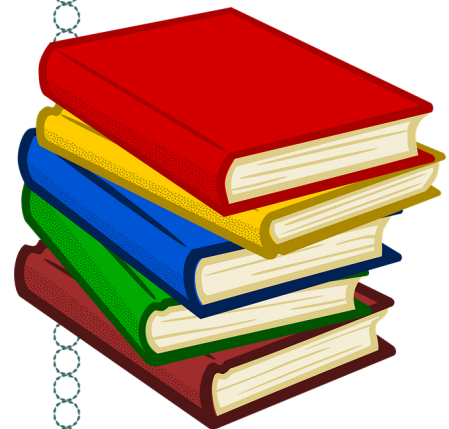


The men of the church are invited to meet each Wednesday from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm in the library for fellowship. Please bring your own brown bag lunch, beverages will be provided.

Circle News

The Anna Circle will meet December 9th in the Library at Noon.

This session will be Parables by John Mac-Arther. Chapter 4 will be this month's discussion.



DECEMBER 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 4:00 pm- Square Dancing Group	2 7:00 pm- Barbergators	3 12:00 pm- Men's Lunch 5-6:30 pm- OE Anonymous 7:00 pm- ESWT (AA)	4 11:00 AM Congrega- tional Life & Mission Committee 6:00 pm—Mid-Week Bible Study via Zoom Girl Scouts 6:30pm- Gainesville Harmony Show Chorus	5	6
7 9:45-Choir 11:00- Worship- Lessons & Carols Communion Sun- day 7:00-ESWT(AA)	8 4:00 pm- Square Dancing Group	9 12:00 pm- Anna Circle 7:00 pm- Barbergators	10 12:00 pm- Men's Lunch 5-6:30 pm- OE Anonymous	11 7:00 pm—Bible & Brew at "University Club" Girl Scouts 6:30pm- Gainesville Har- mony Show Chorus	12	13
14 9:45-Choir 11:00 Worship Christian Ed Committee after worship 2 pm-Girl Scouts 7:00-ESWT(AA)	15 4:00 pm- Square Dancing Group	16 7:00 pm- Barbergators	17 12:00 pm- Men's Lunch 5-6:30 pm- OE Anonymous 7:00 pm- ESWT (AA)	18 6:00 pm—Mid-Week Bible Study via Zoom (contact Larry for Link) Girl Scouts 6:30pm- Gainesville Harmony Show Chorus	19	20
21 9:45-Choir 11:00- Worship Worship Com- mittee 7:00-ESWT(AA)	22 4:00 pm- Square Dancing Group	23 7:00 pm- Barbergators	24 12:00 pm- Men's Lunch Christmas Eve Service @ Westminster	25 Christmas Day 	26	27
28 9:45-Choir 11:00- Worship 7:00-ESWT(AA)	29 4:00 pm- Square Dancing Group	31 7:00 pm- Barbergators	31 New Years Eve 12:00 pm- Men's Lunch			

JANUARY 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Happy New Year!!!	2	3
4 9:45-Choir 11:00- Worship— Communion Sunday 7:00-ESWT(AA)	5 4:00 pm- Square Danc- ing Group	6 Epiphany 7:00 pm— Barbergators	7 12:00 pm— Men's Lunch 5-6:30 pm— OE Anonymous 7:00 pm— ESWT (AA)	8 11:00 AM Con- gregational Life & Mission Committee 6:00 pm—Mid- Week Bible Study via Zoom	9	10
11 9:45-Choir 11:00 Worship Christian Ed Com- mittee after wor- ship 2 pm-Girl Scouts 7:00-ESWT(AA)	12 4:00 pm- Square Danc- ing Group	13 12:00 pm— Anna Circle 7:00 pm— Barbergators	14 12:00 pm— Men's Lunch 5-6:30 pm— OE Anonymous 7:00 pm— ESWT (AA)	15 7:00 pm—Bible & Brew at "University Club" Girl Scouts 6:30pm— Gaines- ville Harmony Show	16	17
18 9:45-Choir 11:00- Worship Worship Com- mittee 7:00-ESWT(AA)	19 4:00 pm- Square Danc- ing Group	20 7:00 pm— Barbergators	21 12:00 pm— Men's Lunch 5-6:30 pm— OE Anonymous 7:00 pm— ESWT (AA)	22 6:00 pm—Mid- Week Bible Study via Zoom (contact Larry for Link) Girl Scouts 6:30pm— Gainesville Harmony Show Chorus	23	24
25 9:45-Choir 11:00- Worship Session Meeting 7:00-ESWT(AA)	26 4:00 pm- Square Danc- ing Group	27 7:00 pm— Barbergators	28 12:00 pm— Men's Lunch 5-6:30 pm— OE Anonymous 7:00 pm— ESWT	29 7:00 pm—Bible & Brew at "University Club" Girl Scouts 6:30pm— Gainesville Harmony Show Chorus	30	31