

As we continue GROWING IN GRACE together, let us be reminded that in the end, after all has been said and done, what we all truly need the most is a miracle. In a fallen world, full of fallen people, a miracle is required or we won't make it – not now, not ever. Ultimate hopes and dreams are not to be found in or of this world. The Good News, the Gospel, is that God has intervened. The intervention is recorded as the Christmas story of Luke 2:11: *“Unto you is born a Savior who is Christ the Lord.”* The miracle itself is revealed in John 1:14: *“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”* Incarnation. It's God in the baby flesh of His Son. Simply put – a miracle. Nothing less will do. So, Christians everywhere must, without hesitation or apology, call Christmas what it is. Nothing else makes sense. May God help us help the world “catch up” to the miracle.

inSENSE,
Ed

ELDERS AND DEACONS...

Elders / Board Meeting
December 9th
Tuesday—6 pm
[American Way Campus]



LADIES CIRCLES....

Dorcas Circle Christmas Party
At Cheddar's
December 9th
Tuesday – 11:30 am



Adelphai Circle Christmas Party
Upstairs at Food City
December 11th
Thursday - 6 pm

[All ladies are invited to participate in either or both circles.]

BUTTERBEAN AUCTION



December 16th
Tuesday – 1 pm

[Everyone invited!]



[For more information about the “Butterbean Auction” and/or to donate items, you may contact “Butterbean Auctioneer” Lisa Darnell at (423)782-0963]



GEMS OF WISDOM FROM OUR FOREBEARS

“Joy to the world! Anyone for whom this sound is foreign, or who hears in it nothing but weak enthusiasm, has not yet really heard the Gospel. For the sake of humankind, Jesus Christ became a human being in a stable in Bethlehem. Rejoice!....

All over the world today people are asking, ‘Where is the path to joy?’ The Church of Christ answers loudly, ‘Jesus is our joy!’ Joy to the world!”

[by Dietrick Bonhoeffer, 1906-1945;
from “Christmas Day Reflection”. 1944;
in God Is In The Manger, 2020, p. 67]

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION / CHILDREN'S MINISTRY UPDATE

As 2025 comes to a close, it is important to remember the importance of Christian education in the church. At GCC that importance is emphasized by the number of opportunities available each week for Bible Study.

Those include the following:

SUNDAY

- Sunday School – 10 am
- Morning Worship – 11 am
- Children's Church – 11 am
- Evening Worship – 6 pm
- Grace Cadets – 6 pm

WEDNESDAY

- S.A.L.T. Bible Study – 6 pm
- Grace Cadets – 6 pm

A Christian education highlight of 2025 was the smooth transition of our children-youth leadership. Last spring Karen Cradic completed almost 3 years of faithful leadership of our young people. Following Karen, Michael Beverly led our youth for a fun-filled summer of learning, serving, and growing. Michael's leadership completed his ministry internship at Ozark Christian College and he will graduate this month to begin graduate work in January. At the beginning of the fall season, Adam McCloud became our Children's Director and Youth Minister. Under Adam's leadership the Grace Cadets program has spiritually and numerically prospered. He has done a fabulous job and the kids love him.

Adam is currently preparing our young people for the 'Children-Youth Christmas Program' to be presented on Sunday, December 14th at 6 pm. Check out more about Grace Cadets in Adam's column below.



GRACE CADETS NEWS

What a wonderful season we're in here at Grace Christian Church! Our children and youth have been diving into the amazing events surrounding the birth of Jesus—stories filled with angels, shepherds, miracles, and the hope that God brings right into our everyday lives. The energy has been high, the questions thoughtful, and the excitement contagious as we explore the wonder of Christmas together in preparation for this year's Children's Christmas Program!

On a personal note, I can't begin to express how grateful I am to be "Home for the Holidays." Returning to Grace Christian Church has felt like stepping back into the same warmth and joy I experienced here as a child. The buzz of the season, the laughter in the hallways, the glow of our church family coming together—it all reminds me why this place has always held a special place in my heart!

As we continue celebrating the birth of our Savior together as a church family, there's so much for us to look forward to at this time of the year, and I'm thankful to share this Christmas season with all of you!

- Adam

Adam McCloud – 423-607-0715 or abmccloud@gmail.com



MISSIONS UPDATE

At year's end GCC continues its support of 14 missions – 5 monthly and 9 on a rotating basis. In addition, 3 local missions are supported via donated items. In November individual snack items for the Ballard-HV "Hospitality Snack Cart" are being held in inventory. Robert Thompson delivered 8 containers of wipes to AJS for the "Clorox / Lysol Wipes Supply" project. On Monday, November 24th, Jeff Arrington delivered 1200+ bars of soap to Discovery church in Bristol. The soap is being included in "Hope Bags" distributed by the Sullivan County Jail Ministry to inmates.

Also in November, GCC once again participated in the Samaritan's Purse "Operation Christmas Child" Shoebox Outreach. Thanks to numerous participants, GCC was able to fill 28 shoeboxes. They were delivered to the collection center at Grace Fellowship Church by Jennifer Starnes and Lois Starnes on Monday, November 24th.

For the month of December, the "Warm Tree" is standing in the fellowship hall. Everyone is invited to fill the tree with gloves, socks, toboggans, etc. At the beginning of January, the items will be delivered to a local ministry TBA.

Missions support – financial, prayer, and hand-on involvement – is exceedingly important. Thanks to everyone for being missions-minded and to Jennifer Starnes for keeping us missions-reminded via the fellowship hall missions board.

MISSIONS QUOTE

"Our God is a missionary God. He initiates the mission to save humanity through Jesus, making Jesus the ultimate missionary.... God's very nature is to reach out, with Jesus' incarnation and work being the greatest missionary act of all"
[by John R. W. Stott, 1976 – from "The Living God Is A Missionary God" – opening lecture at Urbana 1976]

CONDOLENCES FOR NOVEMBER

The GCC family of faith extends prayer of condolence to the following families whose loved ones have recently "passed out of death and into life" (I John 3:14).

- The Family of Rita Lucas (1959-2025)
[Sister of Billy Davis]
- The Family of Amy Thorpe (1982-2025)
[Sister-in-Law of Adam McCloud]
- The Family of Carol Brown (1960-2025)
[Daughter of Carolyn Phillips]
- The Family of Shirley Rutherford (1935-2025)
[Aunt of Gary Beverly]
- The Family of Steve Honeycutt (1977-2025)
[Oakdale House renter / resident]

DECEMBER

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CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

December 14th

Sunday – 6 pm

[followed by

"All-Church Christmas Party"
w/snacks and goodies]

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

December 24th

Wednesday – 8 pm

WEEKEND OF GIVING

Roller-Russ House "Christmas Outreach"

December 21st

[Sunday – 5:30 pm]



DECEMBER SERMON SERIES

"'Tis the Season... For Soul-Searching"
(Nov. 30, Dec. 7, 14, 21, 28)

graceFULLY-noted

- Thanks to our November worship leaders for helping us commence morning worship services with hearts, minds, and spirits turned Godward, Christward, and Heavenward. Those included ADAM MCCLOUD (November 2), SAMUEL PIERSON (November 9), DIANNE PATRICK (November 16), ROSE LANE (November 23), and PHYLLIS JACKSON (November 30).
- Thanks to the GCC PRAISE TEAM for practicing each week to proclaim the Gospel in song during our morning services. The fruit of their labors is a family of faith spiritually-enriched by the ministry of music. Specials for November were “Just As I Am / I Come Broken” (November 2), “Shelter Me” (November 9), “Finish the Race” (November 16), “For These Blessings” (Nov. 23), and “O Little Town – The Glory of Christmas” (November 30). Also thanks to VICKI CLEVINGER for faithfully leading the Praise Team and to LILY WISE, PIANIST and CINDY HARDEE, ORGANIST for their excellent musicianship at the instruments.
- Thanks to PAT HULL for leading our Veterans Day thoughts on Sunday evening, November 9th. The lessons about service and sacrifice were a fitting tribute to all our veterans as well as a well-timed exhortation for us all to follow in their footsteps. Pat’s Veteran’s Day lesson was installment #4 of the E. Patrick Hull “Patriot Series”. Much appreciation to Pat for sharing his heart with us all year long. He has helped us all find Biblical grounding for our patriotism and has reminded us of people, principles, and events that are important in our history and heritage.
- Thanks to VICKI CLEVINGER for leading the Veterans Day Tribute as part of our morning worship service on Sunday, November 23rd. Her spirited reflections gave us pause to express gratitude to our veterans and to present them with flag-embazoned ceramic coasters as a token of our appreciation.
- Thanks to WHITTNEY KITE for sharing an absolutely soul-stirring testimony at our Thanks-Living Service on Sunday, November 23rd. Her faith conviction and love for Jesus were (and are) contagiously inspirational and inspirationally contagious. What an awesome servant of Jesus! Special thanks to VICKI CLEVINGER, for sharing with us George Washington’s 1780 “Thanksgiving Proclamation” and to PATTY TURNER for sharing A. B. Simpson’s poem, “Thanksgiving” as a poetic benediction.
- Thanks to CODY SHIVERS for providing special music at our Advent Celebration Service on Sunday, November 30th. His God-given talent as a vocalist, pianist, organist, and cellist helped us all commence the Christmas season “prepared”, as it were, to receive the Christ Child anew. Also thanks to LILY WISE, our ever faithful pianist, for accompanying Cody and for making all of our Christmas music a praise-offering to Jesus whose birth we celebrate. Special thanks to LONDON HELTON for sharing her musical talent on the flute to accompany Lily as we sang “Deck The Halls”. Much appreciation to a host of GCCers whose participation brought together a wonderful service in the best “Hanging of The Greens” tradition. Participants included JEFF ARRINGTON, PHYLLIS ARRINGTON, SAMUEL PIERSON, LESLIE LAWSON, PAULA KEITH, TONY TIPTON, KAYE TIPTON, GAVIN COLLETTE, KAILEY MAGIERA, NICK BUSH, PATTY JOHNSON, HENRY FUNKHOUSER, SUZANNE JETER, KATHY HAKES, and VICKI CLEVINGER.
- Thanks, once again, to FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH per pro CHARLOTTE DADE, for entrusting to GCC the painting of the church. It is a Raymond Williams ‘original’. Also, many thanks to NYKI BRIGGS for hanging the picture, and designing, obtaining, and hanging the accompanying plaque. The picture is located in the fellowship hall on the left hand side of the street view windows.
- Thanks to KAYE TIPTON and PAULA KEITH for shepherding the Christmas decorating on Friday, November 28th. Also thanks to TONY TIPTON, KAREN JAYNES, SUZANNE JETER, LAURA GRESH, and JANICE COBB for assisting with the decorating. Everything is so well put together, so tastefully done, and so beautifully displayed. It all creates a worshipful ambience consistent with the sacred sense of the season.
- Thanks to SUZANNE JETER, PAULA KEITH, ROSE LANE, and GARY BEVERLY for assisting with the mailout of the November newsletter. Their teamwork of folding, stuffing, labelling, and stamping expedited everything in good order.
- Thanks to the GCCers for preparing the 28 “Operation Christmas Child” Shoeboxes to brighten and bless the Christmas of children around the world. Also thanks to JENNIFER STARNES, LOIS STARNES, KAY COOK, and PATTY TURNER for being the box preparation “go-to’s”. Much appreciation to JENNIFER and LOIS for delivering the boxes to the Samaritan’s Purse collection center at Grace Fellowship Church.
- Thanks to LEEANN BROOKS for serving as the ‘Chief Administrator’ of this year’s Christmas Poinsettia orders. Her careful organization of a mass of name and relationship information over 5 weeks kept everything in good order. Be sure to thank LeeAnn for a job well done.
- Thanks to a HOST OF GCCers for providing so much extra “hands-on-help” in November to meet all the needs regarding transportation, visitation, food, and home assistance. An explosive increase in the quantity of such needs was a call for “all hands on deck”. The GCC family of faith rose to the occasion. [“I am forever grateful” – Ed]

graceFULLY-noted, continued

- Thanks to the DORCAS and ADELPHAI CIRCLE LADIES for preparing and delivering food for several families during times of sickness and bereavement. It was a wonderful gesture of our mutual caring, sharing, and bearing within the church.
- Thanks to LARRY MOORE, SCOTT TREADWAY, and GARY BEVERLY for tending to several internal house and grounds repair and maintenance issues during the month of November. Their help has helped us all.
- Thanks to the entire GCC FAMILY OF FAITH for giving, serving, helping, contributing, donating, caring, sharing, bearing, etc. - all in the name of Jesus. We are blessed beyond measure with a fellowship that is, as the hymnwriter says, “a foretaste of glory divine”. Throughout the year each one has supported everyone and every has supported each one. So to one an all, please know you are appreciated more than words can express. Merry Christmas and a Joyful New Year!
- As always, thanks without end to the GCC STAFF & VOLUNTEERS for working all year long to keep our family of faith functioning in good order. Those include the following:

VOLUNTEERS

- Lisa Darnell [Adelphai Circle Leadership / Butterbean Auction]
- Vicki Clevinger [Praise Team Director / Worship Leader / Adephai Circle Leadership]
- Lois Starnes [Dorcas Circle Leadership]
- Janice Hill [Dorcas Circle Leadership / Adult Sunday School]
- Henry Funkhouser [Adult Sunday School]
- Wayne Darnell, Tony Tipton, Joie Kerns [House & Grounds Exterior]
- Larry Moore & Gary Beverly [House & Grounds Interior and General Maintenance]
- Kaye Tipton [Interior / Exterior Flowers]
- Jennifer Starnes [Missions Board]
- Jamie Abernathy, Jordan Arrington, Brian Brooks, Kitty Beverly [Tech Team Support]
- Brian Brooks [Webmaster]
- Kay Cook, Robert Thompson, Jeff Arrington [Local Missions item inventory and delivery]

STAFF (Paid & Unpaid)

- Kitty Beverly [Secretary, Administration, Media Arts]
- Rebecca Phillips [Bookkeeping]
- Adam McCloud [Children's / Youth Ministry]
- Ethel Busick [Outreach / Inreach Assistance]
- Vicki Clevinger [Music Ministry Leadership]
- Lily Wise [Pianist]
- Cindy Hardee [Organist]

CARDS & LETTERS

GCC,

I want to thank all of you for the beautiful flowers. I love all of you. May God bless each of y'all.

Billy Davis

Your blessings to me have allowed me to bless others as well! Thank you so much from the top of my head to the depths of my spirit!

*Sincerely,
Sarah Short (Sarah Dykes - on Facebook)*

HOW CAN I THANK YOU?

Thank you for your PRAYERS.

Thank you for your calls.

Thank you for your beautiful cards.

Thank you for the good food.

Thank you for your visits.

Thank you, Ed, for your visits and encouraging words for me and my girls.

I know that it is by God's love and grace and His healing power that I am still here.

I will try to do my best to keep doing His work until He allows me to go “home”.

I love each one of you dearly and I treasure our friendships.

Love, Karen Jaynes