



# Grace 2 U Newsletter

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I'm sitting at my desk on the penultimate day of 2024 and reflecting on the Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas season here at Grace. We have experienced many blessings in recent weeks and have much for which we can be grateful as we glide into 2025 with our spirits rejoicing and our hopes set high.

We completed our 2024 stewardship season with a successful generosity Sunday. Many pledges were received and multiple Grace members and families were led to participate in sharing their resources to fund our 2025 budget. Our annual Kirking of the Tartans Celebration combined with our church anniversary and Thanksgiving dinner fellowship was a huge success, drawing nearly 100 worshipers to participate as a result of our "Come and See" emphasis for the special day.

We saw great attendance and participation in our Hanging of the Green and Advent worship services each Sunday morning in December, with several new readers and advent candle lighters assisting us in worship. Gene, Hannah, and the choir outdid themselves with special seasonal anthems and instrumental offerings every week. Our annual Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols service saw our best attendance since 2019 with well over a hundred folks in the pews, and featured incredible music and moving worship.

Surprisingly, the Sunday following the Christmas Eve service (traditionally one of the lowest-attended church services of the year) saw stronger than usual participation and was an encouraging and uplifting end to our 2024 worship year.

We even added some new families to our official membership roll in 2024 and have more committed to join next month. Praise God for bringing us new people with whom to worship and work in the new year!

All this to say, we ended the year on a high note and I'm looking greatly forward to riding our spiritual momentum into 2025 as we continue to look for ways to expand the kingdom of God and share the gospel of Jesus Christ with our community and the world. Thank you for being a part of our Grace family and sharing your time, talents, and treasure with our congregation as we serve God and minister to God's world.

Grace to you,  
David



Luis, Kristi, Kayla, Leia, & Kristian Deutz

Dan & Shirley Schmelzinger

Sandra White



### ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

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The Administrative Team

- Worked on plans to replace all doors in building
- Replaced worn out refrigerator in basement
- Helped prepare budget for 2025
- Made recommendation to hire Hannah as an employee – she had previously been a contractor

Peace,  
Joe



### DISCIPLESHIP TEAM

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Discipleship in a Diverse World: Embracing Our Differences

As we start a new year, it's appropriate that we refresh and update our understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Christ. In today's increasingly diverse world, discipleship takes on new dimensions. As followers of Christ, we are called to love our neighbors, regardless of their background or beliefs. This means embracing diversity and seeking to understand and

connect with people from different cultures and walks of life.

One key aspect of discipleship in a diverse world is cultural humility. This involves recognizing our own cultural biases and limitations and seeking to understand the perspectives of others. It also means being willing to learn from people of different cultures and to adapt our approach to discipleship accordingly. By practicing cultural humility, we can build bridges of understanding and create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

Another important aspect of discipleship in a diverse world is building relationships. Strong relationships are essential for effective discipleship, and this is especially true in a diverse context. By taking the time to get to know people from different backgrounds, we can build trust and foster deeper connections. We can also learn from each other's experiences and perspectives which can enrich our own faith and deepen our understanding of God's love.

Thirdly, discipleship in a diverse world requires us to be intentional about creating opportunities for cross-cultural interaction. This could involve organizing events that bring together people from different backgrounds, or simply being intentional about interacting with people from diverse cultures in our daily lives. By creating spaces for dialogue and community, we can foster a sense of belonging and encourage deeper discipleship among people from all walks of life.

Discipleship in a diverse world is a challenging but rewarding endeavor. By embracing cultural humility, building relationships, and creating opportunities for cross-cultural interaction, we

can live out the love of Christ in a way that is both authentic and transformative.

Further Reading: *Cross-cultural Discipleship* - Center for Action and Contemplation [www.cac.org](http://www.cac.org); *What is Cultural Humility? The Basics* [inclusion.uoregon.edu/learn](http://inclusion.uoregon.edu/learn); [\*Beyond small talk: how to foster deep and genuine connections\*](#)

Peace,

*Church*




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## SOCIAL JUSTICE TEAM

It has been one of the honors of my life to become an Elder for Grace Presbyterian Church. We managed through COVID-19, wrestled with the budget, ate countless meals together, and gave future generations of Grace Presbyterian the keys to...well...Grace Presbyterian. In that selfless act, we gave people we will never know a place to continue God's work in this community.

Hats off to those accepting leadership positions in 2025. There are still countless demands in the community, and we need people of faith to step up to those challenges. As the divide between people who have, versus people who have not (whether that be financial or spiritual) continues to grow, the drumbeat of biblical lessons grows quieter.

Social Justice is not just the name of a committee. Social Justice should be a way of life.

The Author Erskine Caldwell was from the small community of Keysville in Jefferson County, Georgia where his mother was a teacher. It was there that he drew inspiration for his characters in God's Little Acre and Tobacco Road. The lessons of the author's words are simple, but easy to miss. There will always be people who need help to manage life. "Easy" is something a lot of God's people never get to know.

As the curtain closes on my time with your session, I want to share with you a prayer. When I can't figure it out (whatever it happens to be in the moment), these words leave my soul... "Put in front of me what you would have me to see. Open my arms wide to receive it, open my mind to understand it, and open my heart to give it love."

May the peace that passes all understanding light your path this day and always.

Kristie



## WORSHIP TEAM

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As we roll into a new year and begin to anticipate all the changes that come with it, I know you're asking yourself "What changes do I want to see in myself this time next year?" Maybe you no longer make resolutions because you don't expect to stick to your goals long term. Personally, I like to make silly resolutions on top of my loftier goals. This is partially

because I feel less guilty when I don't accomplish everything on my resolutions list.

In 2024 I resolved to run a 30 minute 5k, practice Spanish 5 minutes every day, and watch every James Bond movie. I was actually really consistent with my Duolingo app until August when I broke my streak. Then an injury kept me from running for several months so I gave up on my 5k. I didn't even start watching a James Bond movie until July! Not one of my new year's resolutions was accomplished by December 2024.

For some, a new year is a great opportunity for a fresh start. I'm back on the treadmill three times a week. I'm probably going to dust off my DVD player and watch The Man with the Golden Gun before the month ends. I might even redownload Duolingo

My point is this: Whatever your goals are, you might not achieve them in the time you anticipate; but don't give up on anything that's worthwhile. Just like with personal goals, Christian life is about accepting our need for a fresh start. We make old and new mistakes and need to lean on God's forgiveness daily. Thankfully, God is faithful to forgive and to guide no matter how many times we fall into the same habits. All God asks for is our resolution to keep trying.

Lynette



## GRACE NOTES

Another beautiful Advent season comes to a close. It was our honor to present the music for the Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols service to so many members and guests this year. A special thanks to former interns Jaycey Hudson & Anna Grace Martin for joining us and sharing their talents once again with our congregation.

Change is constant, and the choir is no exception. As we close out this season and we look forward to the next, we welcome one new member and say goodbye to another. Macie Hunt has joined us in the soprano section while we wish Sydney Godbey good luck as she joins the college intern program at Walt Disney World next semester.

Blessings to you all in the new year and we look forward to seeing you in the sanctuary (or in the loft!) in January.

Grace2U,  
Gene



In October the Ladies of Grace enjoyed a lovely soup, salad, and dessert potluck luncheon hosted by Shirley Schmelzinger and Joann Keller. The tables were beautifully decorated for

fall and each lady in attendance was given a decoration to take home with them. Thank you so much Shirley and Joann.

In December, we were treated to a delightful Christmas luncheon at the beautifully decorated home of Kristie and Joey Homans. Our meal had a Mexican twist with delicious tamales, guacamole, and Tres Leche being served. These dishes were accompanied by salads and Red Velvet Cake. It was a rainy, gloomy winter day outside, but our hearts were filled with Christmas cheer as we laughed and talked with one another. Thank you so much, Kristie, for always being such a wonderful hostess.

We will begin 2025 with a soup, salad, and dessert luncheon hosted by Peggy Thornton in the church fellowship hall. Please mark the date on your calendar - Tuesday, January 21st at 12:30. The Ladies of Grace invite all women to join us for Bible study each Tuesday at 10:00. Our luncheons are scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month. I wish you all a happy and healthy 2025. – Peggy Thornton



**In Our Prayers:** John and Susan Adams (Marsha Loftin), Susan Atkins, Frank Ball, Ruth Ann Ball, the Barnes Family - Carey and his son Baron (Mary Ann Sheehy), Dick Beacham (Husband of Jane), Bill and Sandy (Dan Scott), Gretchen Blackwell, Cathy (Kristi Deutz), Tyler Chadwick, Keith Chastain, Lisa Conn, Trey

Courtney, Patricia Crain (Ruth Ann Ball), Darren (Chris Yarbrough), Joan and Randy Davis, Mary Delasota (Bob Thornton), Mike Eason (Joey), Grace (Chuck), Jim Hambright, Patrick Hawkins family (Shirley), Clara, Hogan (Shirley), Margaret Hunt (Jim Hambright), Irena (Gretchen Blackwell), Jenna (Reece Neidlinger), Doug Jones (Margie O'Byrne), Julia (Kristi Deutz), Cynthia Kodua, Shelby Lee, Linda (Jaycey), Martha's Family (Dan Scott), Penny McDaniel (Kay), Anna McQuilken (Kristi Deutz), Eric Nelson (Katie), Betty Powell, Mandy Power, Brenda Reagans (Kristie), Kathy Silvio (Marsha Loftin), Nancy Smiley (Ruth Ann Ball), Gran Stiemke and family (son of Jane), Jacob Stone (Nancy McCue), Susan (Ruth Ann Ball), Priscilla Taylor, Thos -Thomas (Mary Ann Sheehy), Viviana Torres, the family of John Trammel (Emma Teems), Theresa Tucker (Chris Seese), Carol Watkins, Bill and Sherry Weeks, Wilma & her husband (Sandy), Anonymous leukemia patient

**Sympathy:** The family of Jane Beacham (paternal aunt of Amanda Herritt), the family of Elaine Wilkes McSwain

**Assisted Living:** Sandy Grimes, Zoe Putnam

## USHER /LITURGIST SCHEDULE

### Liturgists:

#### January

1/5 Grace Walden  
1/12 Lynette Steritz  
1/19 Joey Homans  
1/26 Andrew Permenter

### Liturgists:

#### February

2/2 Bob Thornton  
2/9 Kristie Homans  
2/16 Gene Seese  
2/23 Nathan Steritz

### Liturgists:

#### March

3/2 Joyce Ball  
(Ash Wed.) Margie O'Byrne (3/5)  
3/9 Chuck Achuff  
3/16 Andrew Permenter  
3/23 Peggy Thornton  
3/30 Richard Smith

### Ushers:

#### January

Marsha Loftin, Margie O'Byrne, Priscilla Taylor  
Bill & Joann Keller, Jane Miller  
Susan Atkins & Kristie Homans  
Michael & Joyce Ball, Nancy McCue

### Ushers:

#### February

Elaine Coker, Joann Keller, Barbara Quintrell  
Dan & Jane Miller, Betty Powell  
Gordon & Jeannette Brand, Barbara Quintrell  
Kristie Homans, Bob & Peggy Thornton

### Ushers:

#### March

Dan & Jane Miller, Priscilla Taylor  
**Volunteers Needed**  
Mike & Joyce Ball, Betty Powell  
Ron & Elaine Coker, Barbara Quintrell  
Jerry & Susan Atkins, Nancy McCue  
Marsha Loftin, Bob & Peggy Thornton



**January Birthdays**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> - John Joh
- 12<sup>th</sup> - Linda Clemons
- 15<sup>th</sup> - Andrew Permenter
- 18<sup>th</sup> - Penny Kelley
- 22<sup>nd</sup> - Nancy McCue
- 30<sup>th</sup> - Tom Quintrell

**February Birthdays**

- 1<sup>st</sup> - Barbara Richeson
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - Margaret Lassen
- 9<sup>th</sup> - Rebecca Rainey
- 15<sup>th</sup> - Marsha Loftin
- 15<sup>th</sup> - Priscilla Taylor
- 16<sup>th</sup> - Janice Dunbar
- 17<sup>th</sup> - Margie O'Byrne
- 20<sup>th</sup> - Chris Seese
- 21<sup>st</sup> - Rachael Lorenz

**March Birthdays**

- 1<sup>st</sup> - Richard Smith
- 7<sup>th</sup> - Joyce Ball
- 9<sup>th</sup> - Joe Fortune
- 10<sup>th</sup> - Ron Coker
- 12<sup>th</sup> - Kay Parrish
- 12<sup>th</sup> - Dan Schmelzinger
- 18<sup>th</sup> - Kathy Westra
- 20<sup>th</sup> - Jim Hambright
- 22<sup>nd</sup> - Glorianna Wilson
- 24<sup>th</sup> - Leia Deutz
- 25<sup>th</sup> - Reed Maurer
- 30<sup>th</sup> - Jane Miller



March

- 4<sup>th</sup> - Gail & Marty Horne
- 20<sup>th</sup> - Sherry & Bill Weeks



Mark your calendar...

- January 12*      *Renewal of Baptismal Vows*
- January 19*      *Annual Congregational Meeting*
- February 9*      *Souper Sunday*
- March 5*          *Ash Wednesday*