



8989 Woodlands Pkwy, The Woodlands TX 77382 / Phone: 281-296-0911 / www.gracewoodlands.org

*To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest;
to all who mourn and long for comfort;
to all who struggle and desire victory;
to all who sin and need a Savior;
to all who are strangers and want fellowship;
to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness;
and to all who will come,
this church opens wide her doors
and offers welcome
in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Church Staff & Officers

David J. Wilcher

Lead Pastor

Kyle Bobos

Children's Ministries

Elders

Dan Brink

Jon Green

Mark Moore

Andy Yung

Deacons

Matt Bradshaw

Mike Bellin

Jeff Cranford

Mark Hill

Scott Johnston

Rob McIntosh

Mike Ryan

Sunny Yung

Grace Church is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

Reflections

I shouldn't push my kid to be a football star
Just 'cause I wasn't good enough to go that far
I shouldn't want my neighbors car
I shouldn't have stopped at that bar on my home
'Cause life's too hard
And I don't wanna feel it

We're all flesh, we're all bones, we're heart beating
We're all broke, we're all cut, we're all bleeding
Breaking down on our way home back to Eden
Don't know why we keep on doin' what we're doin'
I guess we're just human

— Chris Kroeze
Human

The 1970 movie Love Story gave us that memorable quote “love means never having to say you’re sorry.” Of all the phrases Hollywood has given us, this one ranks just below “yabba dabba do” as an intelligent contribution to American thought.

Love, of course, means always having to say you are sorry. Over and over again. If we care about someone, we immediately try to right any wrong we have committed. Though sometimes saying you are sorry isn’t enough—more substantial forms of proof being required—it is always the first step. For this reason, every relationship requires times of humility and repentance. And this is especially true of our relationship with God.

— Thomas S. Buchanan
in *Touchstone*

Grace Presbyterian Church

The Lord's Day, December 30, 2018

First Sunday in Christmastide

10:30 am

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Preparation for Worship¹

Praise

Call to Worship

- based on **Isaiah 9:2**

Minister: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;

People: *On those living in the land of the shadow of death
a light has dawned.*

Minister: Jesus Christ is our life and light.

All: *In his name and in his power, let us worship God!*

¹ As a courtesy, please program all communication devices to silent mode. Thank you!

Song of Praise

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Prayer of Adoration

Song of Adoration

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Private Praise and Adoration

Renewal

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 55:6-7

Seek the Lord while he may be found;
call on him while he is near.
Let the wicked forsake their ways
and the unrighteous their thoughts.
Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

Confession of Sin

*Minister &
People:*

*God of love, all year long we pursue power and money, yet you come in weakness. All season long we covet great material gifts, when you alone offer what is lasting. Through the work of this Lord Jesus, who comes among us full of grace and truth,
forgive us,
heal us,
correct us.*

Then open our lips, that we may sing your praise with the angels, and remake our lives, that we may witness to your transforming love. Through Christ, our Lord.

Private Confession and Reflection

Words of Encouragement

—based on **Isaiah 52:9-10; Luke 2:14**

Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the Lord has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
The Lord has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

People of God, through the coming of Jesus Christ,
whose birth we celebrate,
the Lord has comforted and redeemed us too!
In Christ we receive the salvation of our God.
Glory to God in the highest!

Song of Thanksgiving

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

The Peace of God and Announcements

Minister: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you!

If parents prefer, children 4 years old - 2nd grade are invited to attend Children's Church in the Education Building at this time.

The Prayers of the People (concluded with the Lord's prayer)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen!

Commitment

The Offering

The offering is a way for members and friends of Grace Church to support the church's mission and ministry. If you are our guest today, please feel under no compulsion to give.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." 3 This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

"A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"

4 John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. 5 People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. 6 Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 10 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Sermon

Mr. David Wilcher

The Cousin's Face **THE FACES OF CHRISTMAS**

Communion

Guidelines for Reception of Communion

Communion is the family meal for Christians. We welcome all committed followers of Jesus Christ to partake of this sacrament: those who are baptized members of a congregation which proclaims the gospel, who are at peace with God and with their neighbor, and who seek strength to live more faithfully for Christ. If you are not a Christian, or if you are not prepared to share in this meal, we encourage you to spend this time in prayer using the prayers that follow as guidelines. We hope that this time is helpful as you consider your relationship with Jesus Christ, and with his people, the church.

The Great Thanksgiving

Minister: Therefore, lift up your hearts.
People: *We lift them up to the Lord.*
Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.
People: *It is right to give him thanks and praise!*

Song of Communion

Angels We Have Heard On High

Prayer of Consecration and the Words of Institution

Prayer for those not communing:

Prayer for Covenant Children (Not Yet Confirmed)

Lord Jesus, thank you for placing me inside your family, the church. Help me more and more to know you, to love you, and to follow you as your faithful disciple. Amen.

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth and the life. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but, through you, I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared to hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior. Amen.

Prayer for Those Struggling with Sin

Lord Jesus, grant that I may see in you the fulfillment of all my needs, and may turn from every false satisfaction to feed on you, the true and living bread. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely, and run with perseverance the race set before me, looking only to you, the author and finisher of my faith. Amen.

Prayer of Commitment

Lord Jesus, you have called us to follow you in baptism and in a life of committed discipleship in your church. Grant that I may take the necessary steps to be one with your people, and live in the fullness of your Spirit. Amen.

Distribution of the Bread and the Cup

Grace Presbyterian uses wine in the celebration of Holy Communion. If you prefer non-alcoholic grape juice, please take a cup from the outer circle of the tray. Gluten-free wafers are provided in cups in the center of the cup trays. Please hold the elements until all have received so we can celebrate this meal together.

Silent Prayer during Communion

Song of Commitment

Joy to the World

Benediction²

The joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the Magi,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas.
And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.

Dismissal

Minister: Now, let us go forth to serve this community and the world as those who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Thanks be to God!

The pastoral staff and other church leaders are available following the service to pray with you or to answer your questions about the Christian faith or Grace Church.

Worship Music³

Thank you for sharing your gifts and talents with Grace Presbyterian Church.

Brent Allmon, saxophone
David Fox, keyboard
Damon Henrichs, guitar

Debra Moses, flute
Rae Moses, piano
Jennifer Reddick, flute

² The benediction is much more than a wish or even a prayer. It is a renewed ordination of the people of God to their service to each other, to their community and the world. God declares his own favor toward his people.

³All songs except hymns are copied under CCL # 1214497. The hymns are reprinted from *Trinity Hymnal* (© 1990, Great Commission Publications). Used by permission. All Scripture is quoted from, unless otherwise indicated, the *THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™* Used by permission

Sermon Notes

Matthew 3:1-12

The Cousin's Face

THE FACES OF CHRISTMAS

Grace Presbyterian Bulletin Board

Welcome, Guests! We are excited you're here with us today. We hope that you were warmly welcomed and would love for you to be a part of Grace. Please take a moment to fill out the visitor information on the back of the bulletin, tear it off and drop it in the offering plate or give it on to an usher.

Parents of Infants - Three-Yr Olds: Our nursery and early-childhood classes provide a warm, nurturing, and well-supervised environment. Our workers welcome the opportunity to love your child! When using the nursery, please check in and label all items (bags, cups, etc.) with your child's name. If you need assistance or have any questions about the Nursery, please contact our Nursery Coordinator, Kate Weimar, at mothersdayout@gracewoodlands.org.

Cry Room: A cry room is available for the comfort of our new parents in order to ensure that everyone enjoys our services. It is located in the back of the sanctuary and it is well equipped (comfortable rockers, changing table, etc.) but if you are in need of anything, one of our ushers will be glad to assist.

Sunday Mornings at Grace

8:30 am Prayer	10:30 am Worship
9:30 am Christian Education Classes	11:45 am Intercession
10:15 am Coffee Break	

Sunday Morning Prayer Ministry: To clasp hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world. We would like to invite you to be a part of this uprising at 8:30 each Sunday morning in the Prayer Room (114). Join us as we pray for the expansion of God's Kingdom.

Thank you from the Staff: We wanted to express our heartfelt appreciation for your kindness to us and for the wonderful Christmas gifts. It seems like such a small thing to simply say thank you. But, we are so thankful for the graciousness of our God and your love. You will never know how much your gift means to us. We take comfort in knowing that our Redeemer will not forget your sacrifice and your tenderness. Your labor, love, and toleration are a song of grace to our hearts. Under the mercy, the Wilcher, the Bobos, and the Haskins families.

Save the Date: On Sunday, Jan. 20th, from 4-7 pm, we will be having our church wide child abuse training for our G.R.A.C.E (Godly Response to Abuse in a Christian Environment) certification. There will be no community groups that night so that everyone can attend. Please make every effort to make this a part of your week. Childcare for children ages 0-6th grade will be provided.

All Christian Education Classes are on holiday break and will resume in the New Year.

Community Groups: To be part of the church is to be part of a community. Community is where we connect, build relationships, study, and serve together. Groups consisting of 8-15 people meet regularly on Sundays and through out the week. If you are interested in joining a group or need more information, please email the church office at admin@gracewoodlands.org. Community Groups are currently on a Holiday Hiatus, but will resume in early January.

Women's Ministry Events and More! Please join the Women's Ministry on E-Connect to get involved.

- **Women's Bible Study** is on holiday break and will resume in the New Year.
- **Rain Walks** is a grief support group for women who are dealing with the loss of a loved one, either recently or in the past. Please come to listen (and share if you like) as we discuss our journeys and ways to "walk" through our loss. Rain Walks meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 8:30 am at Black Walnut Cafe in The Woodlands. Contact Sabrina Amell for more information.
- **Girls' Night Out:** Join us at the Black Walnut Café (9000 New Trails), Thursday, Jan. 3rd we'll meet at 6:30 pm. Come and go as you like! Questions, contact Courtney Lott.

Men's Fraternal: John Weimar is leading our Men's Ministry Team..

- **Men's Discipleship Breakfast Bible Study** is on break and will pick back up again on Tuesday Jan. 8th. For more information please contact Steve Wilmoth.
- **Brew Night:** Our next monthly men's gathering is set for Thursday, Jan. 17th for dinner and fellowship starting at 6:30 pm. Join us at Wings 'N More (16580 I-45 South) for dinner and fellowship starting at 6:30 pm.
- **Men's Clay Shooting Event.** - Saturday, Jan. 19th at Creekwood Shooting Sports. Please come join us for a clay shooting event to start off 2019. Please email John Weimar if you would like to attend (or just show up). Any questions, please don't hesitate to contact John Weimar.

Children's Christian Education classes are offered for Preschoolers (2-3yrs old), Pre-K and Kindergarten, 1st-2nd Grade, 3rd-4th Grade, and 5th-6th Grade. Classes meet in the Education Building at 9:30 am 2nd Grade and under are on the 1st floor, 3rd Grade and above meet on the 2nd floor. We will resume on Jan. 13th.

- **Children's Church** is offered for children ages 4 years old through 2nd grade. During passing of the peace, the children line up with their leader in the back of the sanctuary to exit worship. During the song of communion, children will rejoin their families to observe communion with the rest of the church body. We gather in room 108 in the Education Building to sing songs, pray, and hear a children's sermon. We also collect a children's offering during the service. This format is designed to model worship for our children and teach them the importance of meeting together as the body of Christ.
- **SNiCK and 56ers** All children, 8 weeks through 6th Grade, are invited to join us on Sunday nights from 5-7 pm. We eat and laugh and play during our time together. The goal is to have fun at SNiCK through friendship and fellowship. Invite your friends and neighbors! SNiCK is on holiday break and will resume Jan. 13th.
- **PlayGroup** is an active gathering of moms and dads making space for fun, friendship, and adventure for our young children. We meet on the 2nd & 4th Friday of the month. To get involved, contact Natalie Webster. Since locations and times can change, please join the PlayGroup in E-Connect for updates.

Student Ministry is designed for students 7th grade through 12th grade. SNF and Sunday School are off for the rest of the month! We will get started back on Jan. 13th. Merry Christmas everyone, and a Happy New Year!

GraceCares: Caring for the church and the community: If you are interested in helping with GraceCares and the needs of the church and the community, please contact Joe Tison.

- **Autumn Grove:** Just a few minutes drive from Grace, Autumn Grove Cottage, a sixteen resident assisted living home, provides care to men and women with Alzheimer's. A small group from Grace visits roughly once a month for about 30 minutes or so to sing, pray and visit with the residents. Contact Laurel Stevens or Dan Brink for more information. We will be Christmas Caroling at Autumn Grove TODAY, following the service at 1:15. We welcome anyone and everyone!
- **Meals Ministry:** There are events in life when we all need the help and encouragement of our community. The Meals Ministry seeks to enter into these times by providing meals. If you are in need of meals, or would like to help provide meals for others, please contact our Meals Coordinator, Rhonnie Bellin.
- **Giving:** If you would like to know the best way to support those who might have needs in our church and community, we would encourage you to consider giving to the Deacon's Fund. It is through the deacons and their ministry that Grace church provides for, supports and comes alongside those who are in need. If you have questions, please contact Matt Bradshaw.
- **Prayer Ministry:** Our desire at Grace is that we take seriously the privilege of prayer and there are several ways you can participate. If you become aware of a prayer need, please communicate this to us in one of the following ways:
 - **In writing:** Fill out the back page of the bulletin and place it in the offering plate.
 - **By phone:** 281-296-0911 (Church Office)

Your requests will be communicated to our Church Staff, Officers, and our Prayer Team. If you would like to be on our Prayer Team, please let us know.

Missions Service Opportunities & Events: Contact John Zeigler for more information or to be added to our GraceMissions email list or to connect with a missions team advocate.

• **December Prayer Partners:**

- Montgomery County Women's, Conroe, TX
- Rev. Curtis & Mrs. Marian Castleberry, RUF, University of Texas at San Antonio

• **Local Mission Partners**

- Tamina Community Center | Conroe, TX
- Pregnancy Assistance Center North | The Woodlands, TX
- Cornerstone of Houston Team Counseling | The Woodlands, TX
- Redeemed Ministries | The Woodlands, TX
- Interfaith Family Services | The Woodlands, TX
- Montgomery County Women's Center | Montgomery County, TX
- Juan Carlos & Samara Martínez | RUF | Rice University
- Brooks & Meredith Harwood | RUF | University of Houston
- William & Katherine Bondurant | RUF | Texas A&M University
- Oaklawn Presbyterian Church, Houston, TX
- Leo & Ellen Schuster | City Church | Houston, TX
- Pastors Thong Lun & Mang Tiak | Greater Houston Burmese Christian Fellowship | Houston, TX
- Pastor Bhadra Rai | Canaan Bhutanese Church of Houston | Houston, TX
- Pastor "Andre" Onokoko Shang | International Ministries for the Propagation of the Gospel | TX
- Grace Presbyterian ESL Ministry
- Grace Presbyterian Diaconate

• **National Mission Partners**

- Wil & Mary Nettleton | RUF | Trinity University
- Way & Amy Rutherford | RUF | Baylor University
- Ryan & Laura Anderson | RUF | Texas Christian University
- John & Chrissy Trapp | RUF | University of Texas
- Curtis & Marian Castleberry | RUF | University of Texas at San Antonio
- Robbie & Kelly Mills | New City Fellowship | Dallas, TX
- Nathan & Falon Moretto | New City Presbyterian Church | Royal Oak, MI
- David & Kelly Richter | Christ the King Presbyterian Church | Somerville, MA
- Francis A. Schaeffer Institute | Covenant Theological Seminary | Saint Louis, MO
- PCA Southwest Church Planting Network | Dallas, TX

• **International Mission Partners**

- Titus & Crystal Bagby | RUF International | Texas A&M University
- Terry & Mary Rose Dykstra | RUF International | University of Texas
- Charles & Bonita Davidson | MTW | Monterrey, Mexico
- Joe & Felicity Congdon | MTW | Yokkaichi, Japan
- Andy & Missy Shadburne | MTW | Fremantle, Perth, Australia
- David & Eowyn Stoddard | MTW | Berlin, Germany
- Kay Burklin | MTW | Refugee Liaison, Europe
- Arab Baptist Theological Seminary | Beirut, Lebanon

Banners Explained: The visuals of the worship space change dramatically from the Fourth Sunday of Advent to the celebration of Christmas. White, yellow, and gold are the colors of Christmas. These colors bring to mind the angels, the star of peace, the shepherds, the manger, and Jesus coming to earth as the light of the world. All of these things combine to communicate that this season of Christmas is a time of joy and light.

Grace Online gives users access to the church directory and event calendar. Users can also join groups, print giving statements and give online. If you need any online instructions contact Dianna in the office at 281-296-0911 or admin@gracewoodlands.org.

- **Website:** Grace Online directory link, gracewoodlands.org under the Connect tab.
- **Mobile App (Elexio Community):** can be found by clicking the Apple App Store and Google Play icons on the church website. To log on, replace "Domain" with gracewoodlands and use your directory username and password for the app.
- **Online Giving:** If you would like to give online, you will need to set up an account, the link is under the Care tab on our website.

Stewardship Update: Grace thanks you so much for your generous gifts and offerings to our Savior for November 2018.

	November	YTD	
Projected Budget	70,858	779,438	
Actual General Fund	58,390	697,407	
Variance	(12,468)	(82,031)	*Based on a 2018 budget of \$850,300

As 2018 comes to a close, please be mindful that our General Fund ministry budget goal for 2018 is \$850,300. This year we need to receive \$152,893 in December to make the budget. Would you prayerfully consider helping us by making an end of the year gift? If you would like to give securities or need other gift-related assistance, please contact Mike Ryan.

Missed a Recent Sunday Worship? MP3s of Sunday morning messages are available on the website at www.gracewoodlands.org under Media. You can listen online, download them or subscribe to the Podcast. If you need help or are having trouble, please contact the church office⁴.

⁴ Office Hours 8:30 am-3 pm M - F Phone: 281.296.0911
Email: admin@gracewoodlands.org Website: www.gracewoodlands.org

We are glad to have you as our guest today. Please use this page to let us know of your visit and to make us aware of any ideas, suggestions or concerns you may have. You may deposit this page in the offering plate as it comes by, or give it to an usher or greeter. Have confidence that no one will call or drop by your home; this is for us to have a record of your visit or your prayer requests.

Name, Email & Cell Number: _____

Spouse, Email & Cell Number: _____

Home Address: _____

Children, Age & Grade: _____

Please let us know if you are:

Visitor Regular Attendee One time visit from out of town

I am interested in learning about:

Community Groups Music Usher, Greeter
 Sunday Volunteer Children's Ministry Women's Ministry
 Student Ministry Men's Ministry Membership

Prayer Request

I would like to speak with someone about this prayer request or other spiritual concern; please have someone contact me at: _____.

I would like the prayer team to pray for the following needs or concerns:

Prayer of Belief...

Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but through you, I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope.

I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, bearing my punishment and offering forgiveness.

Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as Savior and Lord. Amen.