



# WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

LEADING OUR CITY INTO A LIFE-CHANGING  
RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST  
& HIS CHURCH

# Name With Purpose

## Grace

For by Grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is a gift of God-Ephesians 2:8



## Bible

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness  
-2 Timothy 3:16

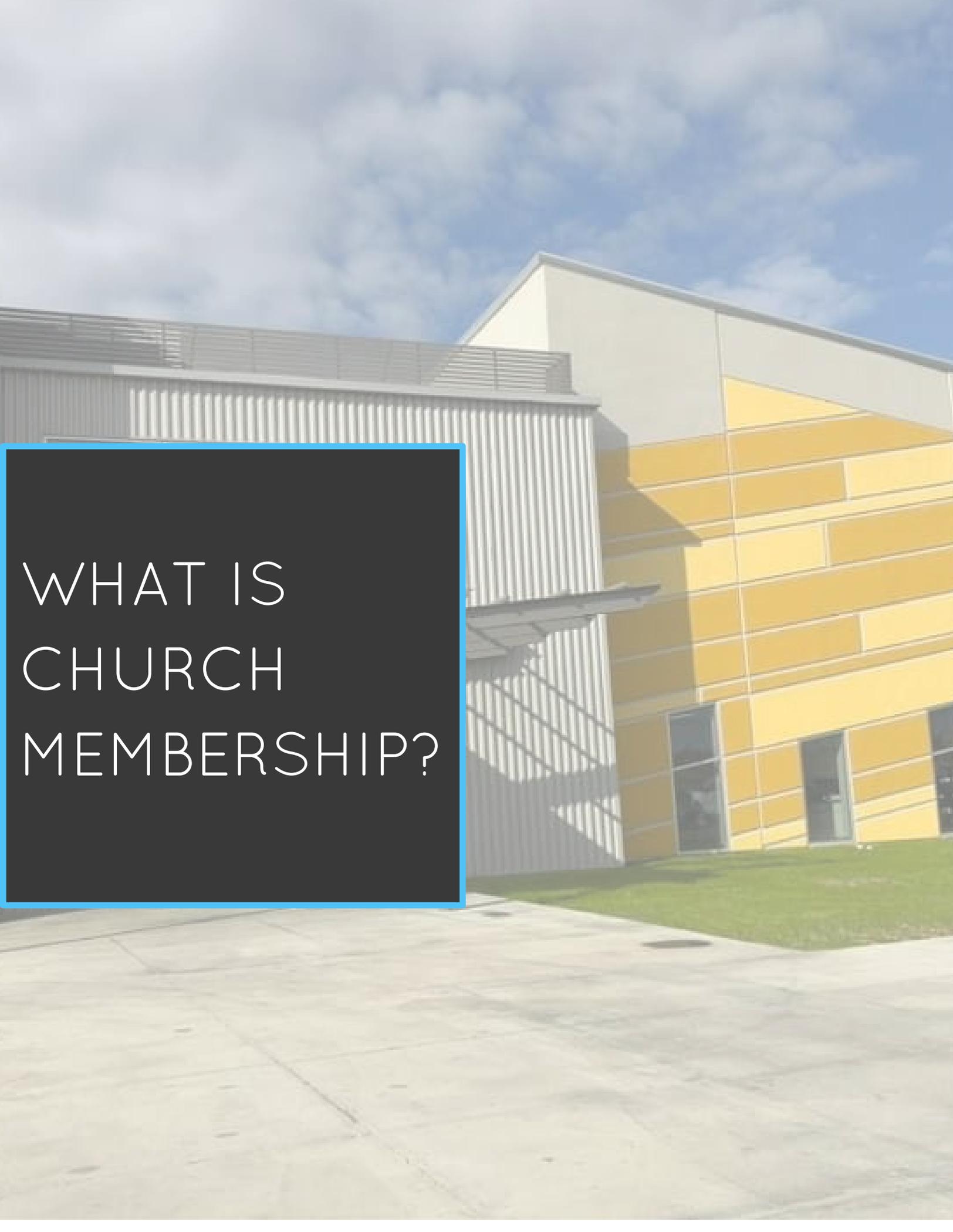
## Church

And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.-Ephesians 1:22-23

# Membership Workshop

Our main purpose today is to help you understand the membership process at Grace Bible Church. Our time will be divided into the following sections:

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|-----------|--|
| Section 1 | What Is Church Membership  |
| Section 2 | Who We Are <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Our History</li><li>- Our Staff</li></ul>   |
| Section 3 | What We Believe <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Our Mision</li><li>- Our Values</li><li>- Our Doctrine</li><li>- Our Security in Christ</li><li>- Security of the Believer</li></ul> |
| Section 4 | What We Ask  |



WHAT IS  
CHURCH  
MEMBERSHIP?



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Before talking about membership at Grace Bible Church, it can be helpful to define what “church membership” really means. What is a church, what does it mean to be a member at one, and why does church membership matter?

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# What Is a Church?

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A common misconception (even in the dictionary) is that a “church” is a building where people gather for worship on Sundays.

The Bible, though, never refers to any “church” as a physical building where people meet. Instead, the “church” is the people themselves, specifically a people who gather. The word in the Bible that is translated as “church” means “assembly.” There are several biblical references to “the church in (someone’s) house” (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 1:2), but in each instance it says that a church is in the house; it is not the house itself.

The Bible sometimes uses the singular word “church” to refer to a collection of churches in a city or region, or to all churches that are under the headship of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). Usually, though, the word “church” refers to one of the many local churches that meet in specific towns or houses of worship (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:19; etc.). In fact, many of the New Testament letters were addressed to individual churches, instructing them on how to live and worship together. Each local church is led by elders (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5) who teach, shepherd and care for the members of that church (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-3).

Simply, the church is a group of people regularly gathered in a specific time and place (Hebrews 10:24-25) for the sake of God’s glory and unity with one another under His name (Ephesians 4:1-6).

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# What Is a Church?

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## God's PURPOSE

- Every follower of Christ has a part to play (Ephesians 2:19; Romans 12:5)

*“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” - **Ephesians 2:19***

*“So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” - **Romans 12:5***

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# What Is a Church?

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## God's PROVISION

- Gathering and Encouragement

*“And let us consider how we stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. “*

**- Hebrews 10:24-25**

- Accountability

*“submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” - **Ephesians 5:21***

- Burden Sharing

*“Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*

**- Galatians 6:1-2**

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# What Is a Church?

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## God's PROTECTION

- Elder and pastor oversight and care

*“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.” -Hebrews 13:17*

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# What Is a Church?

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## God's PLACE FOR MINISTRY

- Exercising of gifts & building up on one another

*“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” -1 Peter 4:10*

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# What Does It Mean to Be a Member of a Church?

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Church membership means more than just attending a church. Simply being inside the building doesn't automatically make someone a church member, and only those who have trusted Christ can be considered a part of His body.

Instead of passively attending a weekly event, church membership means participating in a community to which you belong, God's Word calls Christians to love, serve, honor, instruct, forgive, comfort, care for, encourage, exhort, admonish, submit to, speak the truth to, fellowship with, and live in harmony with one another. The only way to really fulfill all of the "one another" commands in Scripture (listed in pages 42-43) is for each believer to be a committed, regular, known member of a local church. The "one anothers" require intentional and regular time with other believers.

So, when we talk about being a member of a church, we mean that you have figuratively raised your hand and said, "Yes, I want to **commit** to this local body of believers. It is where I will deploy the **gifts** God has given me (1 Peter 4:10; Ephesians 4:11-16), **submit** to the care and protection of church elders and pastors (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5), and **gather regularly** to worship God with other members (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19)."

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# Why Church Membership Matters

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The Bible doesn't directly use the term "church member" to describe all of this, but it does say that we are all members of the body of Christ (Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 5:29-30) and members of His household (Ephesians 2:19; 1 Timothy 3:15; Galatians 6:10). And although God's Church isn't a literal building, it is a metaphorical one, as we are the building blocks of the house of God (Ephesians 2:20-22; 1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 3:6)

These descriptions make it abundantly clear that God intends for us to be in close community with other believers (Acts 2:44). If you cut off a member of a body, that's like losing an arm or a leg. If you are not a member of a household, that is akin to being homeless or orphaned. And if you remove a building block from a house, the stone loses its purpose while the remaining structure is weakened (Ephesians 4:11-16).

## To not join a church is to say:

- I don't want to be wedded to Christ (divorced)
- I don't want to be a part of His family (orphaned)
- I don't want to be a part of His body (dismembered)
- I don't want to be a part of His kingdom (exiled)

In other words, what we call "membership" is normal, expected and healthy, for every follower of Christ. It is how God orders our life together with Him and one another.

Church membership is important in every believer's life for several reasons:

### Care of the Church:

Church members are to care for one another in many ways, including bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2) and helping to meet each other's needs (Romans 12:13). The church is to assist its most vulnerable members who have no other family or means to provide for themselves (1 Timothy 5:3-16).

Though we should love and serve all people as we are able, church membership helps define who we are most responsible for and who we should go to first when we need help.

### Spiritual Leadership:

Shepherds exist for the benefit of the flock. God's leaders are to be selfless servants who care for and protect the people in the church (Acts 20:28-31). They are to keep watch over church members' souls and give an account for how they have served the flock (Hebrews 13:17).



# Why Church Membership Matters

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## Correction of the Church

Being corrected when you are wrong is rarely fun, but it is in your own best interests (Hebrews 12:11; Proverbs 15:32) After all, you have to be aware of a problem before you can do anything about it.

Loving correction is one of the roles of the church (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20). It is a responsibility all members have for each other. Church membership determines who believers are responsible for shepherding in this way. It is not our job to correct “outsiders” but only fellow believers who are inside the church” (1 Corinthians 5:12-13).

If someone within the church consistently refuses to listen to biblical correction and does not turn away from their sin and back to Christ, even after being approached repeatedly by many fellow church members, it may become necessary to remove from membership as a last resort (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-2). Even this is to be done out of love, as an effort to warn the person and convince them of the serious need to turn from their destructive ways (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15)

## Membership Is Part of God’s Provision

Being a member of a church is God’s expectation for all believers, and it is part of His provision for us.

We hope you will choose to become a member at Grace Bible Church. But, even if you don’t, we would encourage you to join another bible based Christ-following church as a member.

### In a non-committed, self-sufficient, and unreliable world, church membership says:

- I can make and keep commitments
- I am a contributor, not a consumer
- I am not independent; I belong to a body
- I am willing to submit to authority



# A Short History of Grace Bible Church

In March of 1983, seven adults (and three children) held the first official “worship service” at a Laredo home located on Idaho Street. Realizing the eventual need for a church, considerations and discussions ensued. After months of prayer and consideration, a decision was reached to have a church where God’s word would be taught and followed and where people would be committed to living a godly life. Very soon after, as other relatives and friends began attending service, the decision was made to hire a formally trained pastor to lead the church.

A few months later in August of 1983, Bob Rowley, his wife JoAnn, and their two small children, Timothy and Christine arrived in Laredo. Pastor Bob Rowley, who completed Seminary in Dallas at Dallas Theological Seminary, would become the pastor of this church. Pastor Bob would be instrumental in picking out our name, Grace Bible Church.

The church gathered in several temporary locations over the next several years until the Lord allowed them to purchase a property and build. Ten years later, in August of 1993, the construction of Grace Bible Church’s first building on Alabama Street was completed. This building has 11,500 square feet of space and sits on one acre of land.

Bob Rowley served as Senior Pastor from 1983 to 2004 with a two-year absence (1987 to 1989) when he and JoAnn temporarily lived in New Jersey. During their temporary leave, Roberto De La Rosa would step in and serve as Grace’s Pastor for the two years of Bob’s absence. When Bob returned in 1989, he successfully encouraged the church to affiliate itself with the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA). Recognizing the need to grow the pastoral team, a few years later in August of 2003, Chad McCartney joined the church staff as an Associate Pastor.

Chad, originally from Minnesota, also completed his formal training at DTS in Dallas, TX. Shortly after, by January 2005, Chad would assume the role of Senior Pastor of Grace Bible Church, which is when Bob Rowley accepted the position to become the Superintendent for the District of the Texas-Oklahoma Evangelical Free Church of America. Chad McCartney served as Senior Pastor through July 2018. In his faithful serving and realizing the need for evangelism in Laredo, he cast a vision for Grace Bible Church which was to build a church in every zip code in Laredo. A campaign was launched, and through the generosity of the people of Grace but most importantly the complete reliance on God’s provision, in 2014 a \$1.3 million cash purchase of 6.2 acres at San Isidro & Springfield was completed.



# A Short History of Grace Bible Church

Our current Lead Pastor, Eddie Aranda, joined our staff in February 2010 as our Membership and Volunteer Ministry Coordinator and then later began to oversee the Small Group Ministry in January 2014. Eddie, who is a native Laredoan, received his formal training from Knox Theological Seminary and was affirmed as Grace's Lead Pastor by the congregation in January 2018.

In addition to Pastor Eddie, the pastoral team is comprised of Executive Pastor Tim Rowley and Campus Pastor Adrian Castillo. Pastor Tim joined Grace as a full-time pastor in July of 2007 in his initial role as Pastor/Director of the Student and College Ministry. Pastor Tim has served as our Executive Pastor from 2017 to the present. Pastor Adrian Castillo has been on staff since 2014. He first served as an Associate Pastor but soon felt the calling to plant the Spanish Ministry of Grace Bible Church. Somos Grace, our Spanish Ministry, had its inaugural service in September of 2020. Somos Grace currently gathers for worship at our property on Alabama Avenue in the Hillside area of Laredo.

March of 1983 is a significant time in our Grace Bible Church history as it not only marks the establishment and founding of our Church but also the embodiment of the solid faith of a few families who sought God's Kingdom first (Matthew 6:33). As of January 8th of 2023, we gather to worship in a new space and are enormously thankful for the Lord's provision for our current building at San Isidro Parkway & Springfield Avenue. We continue to be motivated by God's grace as well as the mission and vision of Grace Bible Church he has entrusted us with. Our mission is... "To lead our city into a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church" and our vision to carry out that mission is... "To have a church built in every zip code in Laredo to reach every area in our city"- Every Neighbor, Every Neighborhood.

 Elders of Grace



Tali Garibay



Scott Avant



Alex Blanco



Dominic Vallone

 Elders of Grace



Eddie Aranda  
Lead Pastor



# Adult Ministries



Tim Rowley  
Executive Pastor



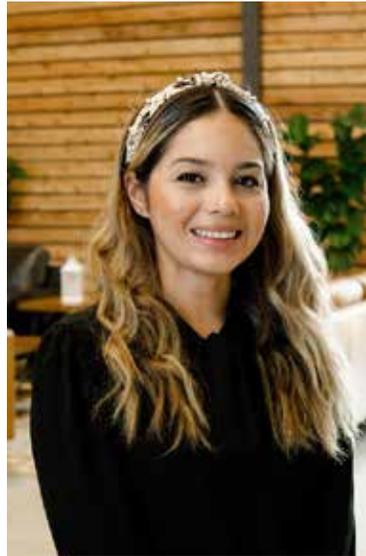
Karen Paulson  
Disciplemaking  
Director



Andie Huerta  
Disciplemaking &  
Missions Coordinator



Hilda Gomez  
Connections  
Director



Brenda Robles  
Connections  
Associate



Gilbert Martínez  
First Impressions  
Team  
Coordinator



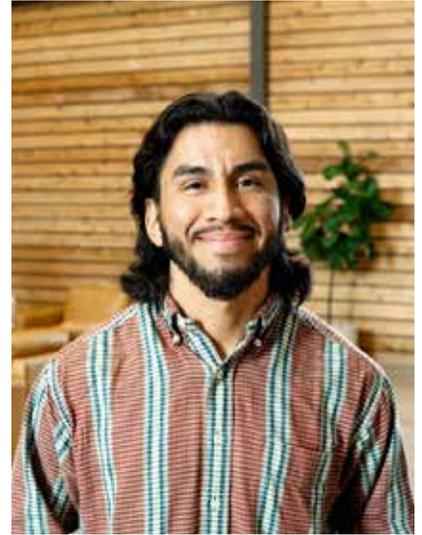
# Adult Ministries



Isai Gutierrez  
Worship Leader



Luis Angel Perez  
Music Director



Tommy Orozco  
Young Adult Ministry



Victoria Morris  
Childcare  
Coordinator



# Family Ministries



Joey Ortiz  
Student Ministry  
Director



CJ Aranda  
Middle School Ministry  
Coordinator



Aaron Villarreal  
High School Ministry  
Associate



Ludy Hamilton  
Kids Ministry Director



Gaby Reyes  
Elementary  
Coordinator



Rheanna Winters  
Elementary Assistant  
Coordinator



Abigail Ramirez  
Early Childhood  
Ministry Coordinator



# Operations Ministries



Mahalia Hurtt  
Operations Director



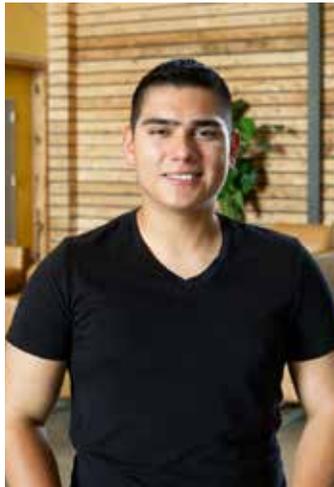
Samantha Sheppard  
Finance Associate



Kimberly Rodriguez  
Communications  
Specialist



Bea Solis  
Administrative  
Assistant



Matt Design  
Facilities  
Associate



Shere Trevino  
Facilities Associate

 SOMOS Grace



Adrian Castillo  
Pastor



Lizzy Polo  
Coorinadora de  
Ministerios



Luis Angel Perez  
Director de Musica



Ricardo Flores  
Director de Ministerio  
de Matrimonios



Irvin Quimbar  
Coordinador de  
Asimilaciones y  
Grupos



Jovita Felipe  
Facilities Associate

# BELONG

What does it look like to belong to something bigger than ourselves?

4 Bs at Grace

Be Serving

Be Giving

Be The Church

Be On Mission



# Our Mission

To lead our city into a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ & His Church

“Lead our city into a life changing relationship with Jesus Christ”  
(Evangelism)

(Mt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; Mt 5:14-16)

“...life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ” (Worship/Discipleship)  
(Rom 12:1-2; 2 Cor 5:17; Jn 14:15, 21-24; Mt 22:37-39)

“ His Church” (Ministry/Fellowship/Discipleship)

(1 Cor 12:4-7; 14-25; Rom 12:10; 2 Cor 13:11; Gal 6:2; Eph 4:32; 1 Thess 5:11; Col 3:16-17)



# Our Core Values

- We value the Gospel of Grace - faith alone in Christ alone for eternal life
- We value change over tradition in order to be effective in ministry
- We value accurately proclaiming the Word of God in a culturally relevant way.
- We value making disciples by equipping people to live and serve according to the Scriptures.
- We value people being connected with each other through community groups for accountability and spiritual growth.
- We value being a community that accepts all people in all circumstances of life as they pursue God's truth.



# What We Believe

## Doctrine:

The following is an excerpt from our Constitution that sets forth the position of Grace Bible Church regarding the doctrines and beliefs that are held to be tenets of the Christian faith.

## ARTICLE II - DOCTRINE

### 2.01 THE IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINE

All elders, deacons, pastoral staff, teachers, and partners must be in full agreement with the Articles of Faith (2.04) and agree not to teach or promote anything contrary to the Doctrinal Statement (2.03).

### 2.02 THE SCRIPTURES

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the foundation of the faith and practice of Grace Bible Church.

### 2.03 DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

A. Bible - We believe every word in the original writings of the Holy Scriptures (both Old and New Testaments) is inspired of God and without error. The Bible is the supreme authority by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried. (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

B. God - We believe the Godhead exists eternally in Three Persons, The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit, and these three are one. (Psalm 90:2; John 10:30; Deut 6:4; Mt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14)

C. Man - We believe man was created in the image and likeness of God, but in Adam all mankind fell into sin with the result that all men are sinners, spiritually dead and separated from God, apart from the grace of God. (Gen 1:27; 3:2-6; 3:24; 5:1-5; 9:6; Rom 5:12-19; 3:23; Eph 2:1)

D. Jesus Christ - We believe the eternal Son of God became incarnate in the Lord Jesus Christ, being born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man. He died on the cross, a sacrifice for our sins according to the scriptures. Further, He rose bodily from the dead and ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on high, He is our high priest and advocate. (John 1:1,14,18; 5:18; Heb 1:1-9, 5:8; 1 John 5:20; 1 Tim 2:5)

E. Salvation - We believe salvation is received by faith alone in Christ as our substitute for and Savior from sin, who died for our sins and rose again. We believe the shed blood of Jesus Christ and his resurrection provide the only ground for justification. We believe the extent of the atonement is unlimited. (Acts 4:12; 13:38-39; 1 Cor 15:1-4; Rom 4:4-5; 5:1; John 3:16; Eph 2:8-9; Acts 16:31)

F. Sanctification - We believe that sanctification, which is a setting - apart unto God, is three-fold:

1) Positional - it is already complete for every saved person because his position toward God is the same as Christ's position. Since the believer is in Christ he is set apart unto God in the measure in which Christ is set apart unto God.

2) Progressive - We believe, however, that he retains his sin nature, which cannot be eradicated in this life. There is, therefore, a progressive sanctification wherein the Christian is to "grow in grace" and to "be changed" by the power of the Holy Spirit.

3) Ultimate - We believe, also, that the child of God will yet be fully sanctified in his state as he is now sanctified in his standing in Christ, when he shall see his Lord and shall be "like Him". (John 17:17; 2 Cor 3:18; 7:1; Eph 4:24; Jn 3:2; Cor 6:11; Eph 5:25-27; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 10:10, 14, 12:10)

G. Satan - We believe that Satan is a creature who is the open and declared enemy of God and man. (Job 1:6-7; Mt 4:2-11; Eph 2:2; 1 Peter 5:8)

H. Angels - We believe angels were originally created holy, but now exist as unfallen and fallen, including Satan. (Col 1:16, Job 38:6-7; Ps 148:2-5; Jude 6; Mt 25:41; Rev 12:9, Eph 6:11-12)

I. Assurance - We believe all who are born of the Spirit through faith in Christ can have assurance of salvation and are eternally secure in Christ. (Rom 5:1; 1 Jn 5:13; John 10:27-29; John 17:12; 6:37; 2 Tim 1:12; Eph 4:30)

J. Holy Spirit - We believe the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Godhead. His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and during this age to convict sinners, regenerate, indwell, baptize, and seal all believers in Christ and fill those yielded to God. (Mt 28:19; Jn 3:3-7; 16:8; Titus 3:5; 1 Cor 2:12; 1 Cor 6:19; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 4:30; Jn 14:16; Acts 5:3-4; Eph 5:18)

K. Church - We believe the Church is composed of all believers, and is the body and bride of Christ, is formed by the baptism by the Holy Spirit and exists in two aspects, universal and local. (Mt 16:16-18; Acts 2:32-47; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Eph 1:22-23; 5:24-30)

L. Spiritual Gifts - We believe that a spiritual gift is a God-given ability for service for the building up of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:4-7; Eph 4:11-16). Every believer has at least one spiritual gift (1 Cor 12:7; 1 Pet 4:10). However, no single spiritual gift is given to every believer, therefore the presence of a certain gift can not be a sign of salvation (1 Cor 12:29-30). Spiritual gifts are listed in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. We believe that the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts for the edification of the church (1 Cor 12:7, 11; 1 Cor 14:12). Therefore, it is his will, not ours that determines what gift(s) we receive. We also believe the Scriptures teach that spiritual gifts should be used in an orderly manner in a corporate setting and for the purpose of edifying others (see 1 Cor 14; especially verses 5, 12, 16-17, 19, 19, 26-28, 40). Therefore, the practicing of spiritual gifts in a manner that is not orderly, nor for the purpose of edifying others will not be allowed in a corporate setting (1 Cor 14:37-38).

M. Christian Walk - We believe that we are called with the Holy calling to walk, not after the flesh but after the Spirit, and so to live in the Spirit that we should not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. We are to be holy in all our behavior as we present our bodies a living and holy sacrifice.

(Rom 8:12-16; 13:14; 12:1; Gal 5:16-25; Eph 4:22-24; 1 Peter 1:14-17)

N. Ordinances - We believe the Scriptural ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Table are for all believers in Christ. (Mt 28:19-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26)

O. Dispensations - We believe that God has revealed different dispensations or stewardships with corresponding rules of life, of which the present dispensation is the age of grace. (Rom 3:21-26; 6:14; Eph 3:2-6; Heb 7:18-19; Gen 1,3,8,12; Ex 19; Acts 2; Rev 20)

P. Eschatology. - We believe that the blessed hope of the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His church is to be followed in order by: The Tribulation; the second coming of Christ to the earth for one thousand years, the eternal state of punishment for the unsaved and the eternal state of blessing for the saved. (Titus 2:13; 1 Thess 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:4-10; Jn 14:1-3; Rev 3:10; Mt 24:21, 29,30; 25:31-46; Rev 20:1-6; 20:11-15).

## 2.04 ARTICLES OF FAITH

We believe:

- A. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.
- B. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

- C. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.
- D. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus-Israel's promised Messiah-was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.
- E. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.
- F. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.
- G. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose Partnership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

- H. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.
- I. We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.
- J. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.



# Security of the Believer

An important value at Grace is the priority of the bible's teaching on salvation. Our church value that states, "We value the Gospel of Grace – faith alone in Christ alone for eternal life." Because salvation is totally from God through Jesus Christ, and not of our works, we maintain a firm commitment to the biblical teaching that salvation, once received by faith, can never be lost. We are sensitive to the fact some traditions teach when an individual sins they lose their salvation and must repeatedly be forgiven and their salvation renewed; however, we maintain that while believers may struggle with a lack of assurance regarding their salvation, that once a person receives salvation by grace through faith they can never lose their salvation. As a part of our commitment to the gospel of grace, we require that anyone who desires to be a member of Grace affirm the teaching that once a person receives salvation by grace through faith they can never lose their salvation.

The following passages present a brief discussion that clearly speaks to the security we have in our salvation. If there are still questions, the pastors are available to discuss this teaching in greater depth. (Next Page)

## Can I Lose My Salvation?

- Since my salvation is based on what God has done for me, then only He can take it away.
- So, what does God say about the permanence of His gift of eternal life (salvation)?

John 10:27-30 Jesus said the following...

*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give ETERNAL life to them, and they will NEVER perish; and NO ONE will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and NO ONE is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.*

- Eternal means Forever.
- God says that His sheep will NEVER perish.
- God says that NO ONE can snatch us from Him.

Ephesians 1:4-5; 13-14

*... Just as He CHOSE us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy BLAMELESS before Him. In Love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind of intention of His will... In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation – having also believed, you were SEALED in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as PLEDGE of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.*

- God says that He CHOSE us first.
- God says we are BLAMELESS before Him.
- God says we are SEALED by the Holy Spirit when we believe.
- God made me a PLEDGE to keep us that would cost Him his character and Person to break.

## Summary.

- Since God is responsible for our salvation and He has assured our protection, we are secure once we have believed in Jesus Christ.
- However, we can lose the reward of inheritance God desires to give His children through our lack of obedience (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). However, this loss of reward is not the same as losing our salvation. It is important that we first understand the clear passages regarding the security of the believer in Scripture before we try to interpret the more difficult passages.

# BAPTISM

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. - **Matthew 28:10-20***

Baptism is a way to publicly proclaim your faith in Christ. It is not necessary for salvation, because we are saved by God's grace, not through our own efforts. Followers of Jesus are commanded to baptize new believers as part of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). Thus, baptism is an act of obedience to God after being saved.

Baptism process:

- Email your written testimony to [hgomez@gracelaredo.org](mailto:hgomez@gracelaredo.org)
  - **Life before you trusted Christ** (Acts 26:4-11)

*What was your life like before you began a relationship with Christ? You may want to highlight how it was marked by sin or self-reliance.*

- **How you came to trust in Christ** (Acts 26:12-18)

*What were the circumstances that led you to place your faith in Jesus? Remember to include the gospel in this part: that you are saved from the penalty of sin through Christ's work on the cross*

- **Life after you trusted in Christ** (Acts 26:19-23)

*Since becoming a believer, what has your life and your relationship with Christ looked like? Life does not become perfect or easy after becoming a believer, but there should be a change in your attitude and actions.*

Once testimony received, a conversation will be coordinated for you to meet with someone in our Believe Team.

# COMMUNION

## INVITATION TO THE TABLE

*For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes - **1 Corinthians 11:26***

**GOAL:** Refreshes our heart and compels all of us to ponder afresh what Christ has done for us.

### Salvation in the present

*"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup"*

### Salvation in the past

*"You proclaim the Lord's death"*

### Salvation in the future

*"Until he comes"*

# COMMUNION

## FENCING THE TABLE

### OPPORTUNITY TO SHEPHERD

### OPPORTUNITY FOR REPENTANCE

### OPPORTUNITY FOR RECONCILIATION

*Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord” - 1 Corinthians 11:27*

**GOAL:** Urge the unbeliever to use this allotted time to consider Christ’s work on the cross. and his resurrection. Encourage the believer to draw to the table with a repentant heart, that they might not partake in an “unworthy manner.” An opportunity is created to confess sins to God and follow Him in repentance. As the time of examination and repentance takes place, this affords each person in the room an opportunity for both vertical and horizontal reconciliation.

*Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

**- 1 Corinthians 11:28**

*I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

**- Ephesians 4:1-3**



# Maintaining the Unity of the Church

In order to carry out our mission and maintain a ministry driven by our values, we must be in unity as a church in regards to our mission, values and doctrine. Grace follows a pattern of Peacemaking that is outlined in the Gospel of Matthew 18:15-17. In this passage, we have instructions in regards to making peace with someone who sins against us.

*“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” (Matt 18:15-17)*

In the rare and unfortunate event that this process does not persuade an individual to take responsibility for his/her actions and continues to sin, the church leadership will take appropriate steps to maintain unity in the body.

# Be Strong in a Life of Ministry and Worship Through Your Giving



All of life is an expression of our ministry and worship to God. Ministry is not something that only full-time pastors do; in fact, the role of church leaders is “to equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:11-12). The saints - all believers in the church - are to do the work of ministry. God has given us gifts that we are to use to serve others (1 Peter 4:10).

Therefore, we encourage all members at Grace Bible Church to “be strong in a life of ministry and worship” by faithfully stewarding everything God has entrusted to us.

## Be Strong in Ministry and Worship Through the Giving of Our Talent

God has provided each of us with unique strengths, experiences, and personal characteristics. Being strong in ministry includes discovering, developing, and stewarding those gifts.

Our gifts may be different, but God’s Word assures us that no one’s gifts are more important than another’s (1 Corinthians 12). We have different gifts so that we can effectively play different roles and thereby meet all the needs of the body.

There are times we should simply meet an urgent need, regardless of how well the opportunity “fits” our gifts. But, in general, we should look for ways to serve with our specific wiring and gifting. That is where we will have the biggest impact and continue to develop our God-given talents.

How is it worship? By giving our talent to God, we put His creative handiwork on display (Psalm 139:13-14) and bring glory to Him in using our gifts to serve instead of gain (Mark 8:36)

### 4 Bs at Grace:



- Be Serving



- Be Giving



- Be The Church



- Be On Mission



# Be Strong in a Life of Ministry and Worship Through Your Giving



## Be Strong in Ministry and Worship Through the Giving of Our Treasure

God owns everything, and we are simply managers of the material resources He has entrusted to us. Being strong in ministry includes using our finances and other resources to impact others. Grace Bible Church members give financially both to the church and to many other ministries throughout our city and around the world.

At Grace Bible Church, we choose not to pass an offering plate during our services. Instead, people can give online or through the offering boxes at each exit of the Sanctuary. We don't want people to feel under compulsion to give (2 Corinthians 9:7). We believe giving is a great joy in the life of the believer, as it is active participation in advancing God's mission and glory throughout the earth (Habakkuk 2:14)

How is it worship? By giving our treasure to God, we remind ourselves that we are only stewards of what is already His, and that God is honored by our giving (Proverbs 3:9-10).



## Be Strong in Ministry and Worship Through the Giving of Our Time

God has entrusted each of us with a certain number of hours, months, and years. Being strong in ministry includes stewarding our time for His glory and the good of others. The Bible says that God has already prepared specific "good works" for each of us (Ephesians 2:10). These include many everyday occurrences as well as special opportunities to invest deeply to help others. But all of these "good works" involve spending time.

Because of this biblical calling, Grace Bible Church members are asked to commit a portion of their time to serving (generally at least once a month) in a ministry at Grace Bible Church.

How is it worship? By giving our time to God, we acknowledge God's rule over our calendar and put the needs of others before our own (Mark 10:45).



## Leading Our City Into A Life Changing Relationship With Jesus Christ & His Church

# BELONG

Be part of something bigger than  
yourself!

4 Bs at Grace

Be Serving

Be Giving

Be The Church

Be On Mission



# Membership and Grace Bible Church Commitments

Membership at Grace is based on the foundation of a commitment to a relationship with Christ. This commitment can be summed up as: “Faith alone in Christ alone” in regards to the forgiveness of sins and eternal life in the presence of God.

This means that we have recognized our sinfulness toward God and the fact that because of those sins we are under the eternal judgment of our Holy God. However, because of God’s great love for us, He sent Jesus to pay for our sins by dying in our place. Jesus died to pay for MY sins. As a result of Jesus’ death, forgiveness of sins can be mine if I believe/trust in Jesus for the payment of my sins.

John 3:16-17 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

2 Cor 5:21 “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Based on your commitment to Christ, Grace Bible Church asks you to make two commitments to the church as a member:

First: we ask for a commitment to unity. Unity does not mean uniformity. We respect the individuality of each person as God has created them. The unity commitment is a commitment to remain unified as a congregation in the areas of mission and vision, expression of faith, and the resolution of conflict. We are asking that each member of Grace commit to being unified together in the direction the church is headed.

Second: we ask for a commitment to participation. We ask our members to not just support the direction of the church, but also participate in the ministry of the church. We are asking our members to participate in Sunday worship on a regular basis, to participate in a community group, to serve in a ministry, to develop a missional lifestyle, and to financially support the ministry of Grace in a God-honoring way.

## Membership Covenant

If at this time you feel God is leading you to take the next step in the membership process, and you are ready to make a commitment to Grace, you can complete the Membership Covenant. The next step after signing the commitment is to have a conversation with a member of our church leadership. If you feel you need some more time to pray about membership, or if you have any questions you would like to discuss with a pastor, please do not feel pressured to make a decision today.

## Membership Conversation

The membership conversation is the opportunity for you to meet two leaders of our church and it allows them to know you as well. In the membership conversation you will be asked about three areas of your Christian life that will help you affirm where you are in your spiritual life.

1. Your Spiritual Journey – you will be asked to share about your spiritual journey and how/when you became a Christian.
2. Security of the Believer – you will be asked if you understand that your salvation is secure in Jesus Christ. If you have any question about this teaching we can discuss it in advance.
3. Baptized as a Believer – you will be asked if you have been baptized after trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior. (This is not a requirement of salvation, but it is for Partnership)



# The One Anothers of Scripture

**Bear the burdens of**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(Galatians 6:2)

**Comfort**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(2 Corinthians 1:3-11)

**Bear with**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(Ephesians 4:2-3; Colossians 3:13)

**Confess sins to**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(James 5:16)

**Be at peace with**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(Mark 9:50)

**Do good to**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(1 Thessalonians 5:15)

**Be humble toward**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(1 Peter 5:5)

**Do not envy**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(Galatians 5:26)

**Be kind to**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(Ephesians 4:32)

**Do not grumble**  
against  
ONE ANOTHER  
(James 5:9)

**Admonish**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(Colossians 3:16)

**Build up**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(1 Thessalonians 5:11)

**Do not judge**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(Romans 14:13)

**Agree with**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(2 Corinthians 13:11)

**Care for**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(1 Corinthians 12:25)

**Do not provoke**  
ONE ANOTHER  
(Galatians 5:26)

**Do not speak  
evil against**

ONE ANOTHER  
(James 4:11)

**Encourage**

ONE ANOTHER  
(1 Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11;  
Hebrews 10:25)

**Exhort**

ONE ANOTHER  
(Hebrews 3:13)

**Forgive**

ONE ANOTHER  
(Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13)

**Greet**

ONE ANOTHER  
(Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20;  
2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Peter 5:14)

**Have fellowship with**

ONE ANOTHER  
(1 John 1:7)

**Honor**

ONE ANOTHER  
(Romans 12:10)

**Instruct**

ONE ANOTHER  
(Romans 15:14)

**Live in  
harmony with**

ONE ANOTHER  
(Romans 12:16, 15:5)

**Love**

ONE ANOTHER  
(John 13:34-35, 15:12, 15:17; Romans  
12:10, 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 3:12,  
4:9-10; 1 Peter 1:22, 4:8; 1 John 3:11,  
3:23, 4:7, 4:11-12; 2 John 1:5)

**Pray for**

ONE ANOTHER  
(James 5:16)

**Serve**

ONE ANOTHER  
(Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 4:10)

**Show hospitality to**

ONE ANOTHER  
(1 Peter 4:9)

**Sing with**

ONE ANOTHER  
(Ephesians 5:19)

**Speak the truth to**

ONE ANOTHER  
(Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:9)

**Stir up**

ONE ANOTHER  
(Hebrews 10:24)

**Submit to**

ONE ANOTHER  
(Ephesians 5:21)

**Teach**

ONE ANOTHER  
(Colossians 3:16)

**Wait for**

ONE ANOTHER  
(1 Corinthians 11:33)

**Wash the feet of**

ONE ANOTHER  
(John 13:14)

**Welcome**

ONE ANOTHER  
(Romans 15:7)



# Membership Covenant

 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Community Group Leader Name:  
\_\_\_\_\_

I need to get connected to a community group

## Ministry Leader

\_\_\_\_\_

If you are currently not serving, check off below the ministry you are interested in

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee Ministry            | <input type="checkbox"/> Production Ministry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Impressions Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Worship Ministry    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer Team                | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Ministry    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Team             | <input type="checkbox"/> Kids Ministry       |

## Baptism Date

\_\_\_\_\_

I need to get baptized

Having professed my faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and thereby obtaining the gift of eternal life, I have considered the information presented in the Membership Workshop at Grace Bible Church. Today, I covenant together with Grace Bible Church to uphold the conditions and commitments of this Membership covenant. I will provide a written letter to Lead Pastor when I need to be removed as a member due to relocation or any other reason.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Serve at Grace

This is the team that brews and prepares our delicious coffee to keep us caffeinated. They engage and welcome guests in a more intentional way as they get their cup of Joe.

- Frequency: Once a month



coffee  
ministry

This is the team that creates a welcoming environment for our attenders to feel noticed and comfortable. You can expect to have fun, care for new people, share community with your team and play a significant role in helping someone have a wonderful Sunday experience. First Impressions Team is made up of parking crew, door greeters, sanctuary ushers, and connections table crew,

- Frequency: Once a month



first  
impressions

This is the engine to our Sunday. This team is available to pray and be intercessors for specific needs communicated by the attender.

- Frequency: Once a month



Prayer  
ministry



# Serve at Grace



## First Aid ministry

This team gives immediate assistance to any person with a minor or serious illness or injury until full medical treatment is available. (Must be state certified in Emergency Medical Technician, Paramedic or Board Certified Nurse)

- Frequency: Once a month



## Production ministry

Do you like working with audio, lighting, cameras or visuals? Join the production ministry and take part in the Sunday worship experience! The best part is, no prior experience is necessary.

- Frequency: Once a month



## Worship ministry

Do you play an instrument or know how to sing? This is the place for you.

- Frequency: Once a month



# Serve at Grace



## Student ministry

Our Student Ministry team leads kids in 6th-12th grade in worship and small groups on Wednesday nights.

- Frequency: Weekly



## kids ministry

Our Kids Ministry exists to introduce children to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to help them to live their whole lives in response. Our Grace Kids Team provides loving care for babies and toddlers as well as dynamic teaching and small group environments for preschooler and elementary age kids.

- Frequency: One month on, one month off



# Glossary of Term at Grace Bible Church

**Believer's Baptism-** This is the public confession of faith in Christ as the Son of God and as your Savior through His sacrificial death on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins. You are baptized when you have come to believe. Believer's Baptism takes the form of complete immersion at Grace Bible Church. Baptism is one of the two ordinances (sacraments) practiced at Grace.

**Communion-**Also known as The Lord's Table. This is the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the atoning sacrifice that removed our sins and restored those who believe to right relationship with God.

**Deacon-**These are men in our church who exemplify Scripture in and through their lives in regards to serving the church. Deacons oversee and give direction to the various service areas of our church.

**E.F.C.A.-**Evangelical Free Church of America. This is the association of churches of which Grace Bible Church is a member.

**Elder-**These are the primary leaders of our church. They exemplify Scriptural conduct in their lives in the church, community and in their homes. These men are responsible for the spiritual growth of specific individuals within our church community.

**Gospel-**The Gospel is the heart of the Christian faith. It can be summed up like this: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who lived a perfect sinless life, was crucified as the sacrificial payment for our sins and rose again on the third day to deliver us from death.

**Member-**A member is someone like you who has committed their faith to The Gospel of Jesus Christ for their eternal life with God and have committed their time, talents and resources to Grace Bible Church.

**Ministry-** Ministry is the activity that takes place primarily "inside"the church. That is, not that it happens within the walls of the church, but that ministry is directed towards the visitors, and those who attend on a regular basis in addition to our members



# Glossary of Term at Grace Bible Church

Missions-Missions is the activity that takes place primarily "outside" the church. That is, not that it happens outside the walls of the church, but that missions is geared upon reaching and teaching those who have not yet heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ and assisting those who work towards that end.

My Grace Community- At Grace, we have developed an online database and directory using the program Church Community Builder which is a web based program. This is a secure site where you can find contact information about yourself and other members at Grace. You can also stay connected through the online discussion boards, calendars and other useful information.

Grace Kids-This is our children's ministry on Sundays. We have classrooms established for children three years of age all the way to fifth grade. Children ages 0-2 are also taken care of.

Community Groups- Community Groups are the primary place of growth within our church community. This is where you can learn to study the Bible and be encouraged to apply its truth to your life.