



History of Grace Chapel

Grace Chapel began as a Bible study in the home of our founding pastor, George Powell. The study moved from their home to the basement of a bank in Skaneateles and then to a rented space in the Grange Hall. In March, 1977, Grace Chapel opened its doors with 27 charter members. In 1978 the property we now occupy was purchased. It consisted of two barns and four acres of land. Over the next five years the congregation gathered together on Saturdays to work on what was once our worship center but is now known as the fellowship hall or “the barn”. In 2005 we completed a brand-new wing, including our current Worship Center, Powell Hall and classrooms.

As you can see, the Lord has accomplished some amazing things over the years as He established Grace Chapel. As a congregation, we are also excited about what God is currently doing in our church, and with great anticipation look forward to what the future holds.

Our Understanding of God’s Vision

Vision Statement: We believe God wants us to give every man, woman and child repeated opportunities to see, hear and be transformed by the gospel as we live faithful lives of worship.

How do we begin to get at this? The first step is defining specific areas that we are going to take responsibility for:

- The circle around where we live and work (individual homes and businesses).
- The circle around our region (Central New York).
- And strategic circles around the world.

Our Gospel Identity

“We are the family of God, sent by God, for His redemptive mission in the world.”

How do we believe this is accomplished?

Mobilizing Individual Believers

There are 5 specific areas that we focus on in an effort to mobilize all of God’s people for the work of ministry and the pursuit of God’s vision.

- 1. Pursuing Intimacy with God**
 - Seeking the heart and activity of God, above everything else.
- 2. Living a Distinct Life**
 - Demonstrating the presence and fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives, which makes a distinct difference in all of our relationships.
- 3. Extending your Grace Story**
 - Embracing the fullness of the Gospel and being transformed by it, so that we live out and share God’s grace with others.
- 4. Using your God-given Design**
 - Discovering who God has uniquely made us to be in surrendering ourselves to His purposes.
- 5. Stewarding your Life**
 - Faithfully using all that we are and all that we have to glorify God.

Building Bridges with our Communities

As a church we intentionally look for ways to build bridges with our surrounding communities so we can allow the Gospel to be seen and heard. These bridges allow our people to engage our communities while also allowing opportunities for our community to engage the church.

Partnering with Existing Churches

Jesus prayed that the church would be united so that the world would know how much God loves them. We can accomplish so much more when we partner with churches that stand on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our Core Values

Truth

We value the truth that God has revealed in Jesus Christ and in His Word as the foundation for our lives.

Love

We value the unconditional love that God demonstrates to everyone, compelling us to love Him and others.

Mission

We value the mission that God has given us – making disciples of every man, woman and child.

Grace Chapel's Statement of Faith

- We believe the Old and New Testaments to be verbally inspired by God; inerrant in the original manuscripts; and the supreme and final authority in faith and life. (2 Timothy 3:16,17; John 10:35)
- We believe in one God - holy, eternal, self-existent, and self-revealing in three distinct persons; The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Creator of the heaven and earth. (Mark 12:29; John 10:30, Acts 5:3,4; Rev. 4:8)
- We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His perfect Deity and humanity, His substitutionary atonement for sin, His bodily resurrection, His visible, imminent, pre-millennial return for His Church; His glorious and literal kingdom over all the nations for a thousand years and His eternal reign with the Father in the New Heaven and the New Earth. (Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; Luke 1:35; 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 4:14-16; John 20:25-28; 1 Thessalonians. 4:16-18; Rev. 19:11-21)
- We believe in the Person of the Holy Spirit, who convicts the world of sin, regenerates, indwells, baptizes, seals, and sanctifies all who become children of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 16:8-11, 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:13; Eph. 4:30; Romans 8:14)
- We believe that man was directly created in the image of God but in sinning brought both spiritual and physical death to himself and his posterity who have within themselves no possible means of recovery or salvation outside of Jesus Christ. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7; 3:1-24; Romans 3:23; 5:12; 7:18; 3:19)
- We believe in salvation by grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the new birth by the Holy Spirit, in whom all true believers have a present possession, eternal life, a perfect righteousness, sonship in the family of God, deliverance and security from all condemnation and every spiritual resource needed for life and godliness. (Eph. 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:3; John 10:27-30; John 5:24)
- We believe in the existence of the devil, the archenemy of God and man and in eternal conscious punishment of all unbelievers and their father (the devil) in literal place of eternal punishment. (Literal meaning the actual place of torment.) (Matt. 4:1-11; Rev. 12:9-11; Rev. 20:11-15; Luke 16:19-31)
- We believe that the Church is an elect company of believers, the body of Christ chosen by God to glorify Jesus Christ by an aggressive effort to disciple nations through the preaching of the Gospel. (John 15:16; Eph. 1:10-12; Matt. 28:18-20)
- We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has gone to prepare a place for all the saved, that their souls go to be with Him at death, that their bodies will be resurrected and transformed at His second coming at which time they will be rewarded according to their works. (John 14:1-6; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; 1 Cor. 15:12-50; Rev. 22:12)
- We believe that the Church shall in all its endeavors be supported by God's financial plan of "Tithe and Offering". . (Malachi 3:10)
- We believe that the ordinances of the Church, given by our Lord, are Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion). (Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 8:38,39; Rom. 6:3,4; Col. 2:12; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 10:16, 11:23)

What Church Ordinances Do We Practice?

Jesus gave the church two visible symbols called ordinances: Baptism and The Lord's Supper

Baptism - Commanded by Jesus and symbolizes His death, burial and resurrection.

- *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age."* **Matthew 28:19**
- *"Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through glory of the Father, so we too might walk in the newness of life."* **Romans 6:4**

Grace Chapel baptizes by immersion - Why do we do this?

- Because Jesus was baptized that way.
 - *"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him."* **Matthew 3:16**
- Every baptism in the **Bible** was by immersion.
- The word "baptize" means to dip or immerse.
- Immersion best symbolizes the burial and resurrection of Christ. Baptism is an outward symbol of an inward spiritual change.

When should you be baptized?

- After you have accepted the gospel. - *"Those who accepted His message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."* **Acts 2:41**

THE LORD'S SUPPER

"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup."

1 Corinthians 11:23-28.

- The Lord's Supper is a time to proclaim our salvation through **Jesus' death**.
- The Lord's Supper is an opportunity to **confess** our sins, seek God's forgiveness and **exalt** our Savior.

At Grace Chapel we celebrate the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of the month. All of those who have professed their faith in Christ as their Savior are welcome to celebrate this ordinance with us.

Our Leadership Structure

The structure of a church is important to help it accomplish its mission. Grace Chapel is a non-denominational Bible Church with Christ as Head. We seek to partner with other like-minded churches that stand on the gospel. There are four key leadership teams within our church. Each of these teams has a specific function, while at the same time striving for the same goal; which is to glorify God and to point people to Jesus. Here is an overview of our leadership structure:

Elders

- The elders are a team of spiritually mature men whom God has called to lead Grace Chapel. The elder team consists of both paid pastoral staff members, and lay leaders, as is appropriate with their calling and gifting. Their focus is to cultivate an environment where growing disciples of Christ seek to produce more growing disciples of Christ. They are responsible for leading, shepherding, and protecting the entire church, as well as holding firmly to proper church doctrine, as we pursue God's vision in everything we do.

Pastoral Staff

- The Pastoral Staff is a team of individuals hired to utilize their spiritual gifting to focus on a specific area of ministry, and to assist us in pursuing the vision of giving every man, woman and child repeated opportunities to see, hear and be transformed by the gospel. Pastors maintain their accountability to the Elders of the church.

Trustees

- The Board of Trustees is a team of men and women who focus their efforts on the stewardship of the finances and the physical structures of the church. The trustees work alongside the Pastoral Staff and Elders as we pursue God's vision for His church.

Ministry Leaders

- The Ministry Leaders team is comprised of all the heads of the various ministries within the church. This team exists to ensure that all of our ministries and ministry resources are working in harmony toward effective discipleship, and the pursuit of God's vision. The Ministry Leaders team meets under the supervision of a pastor.

Missions at Grace Chapel

At Grace Chapel we believe that every follower of Jesus is a missionary. We believe this is our gospel identity, so when we discuss missions it includes everyone. The distinction comes as we talk about the places that God has called us as missionaries. We support regional partners as well as global partners as we seek to share the good news of Jesus Christ with the lost world around us.

As a church, we believe that God wants us to be invested in the efforts of our regional and global partners. We do that through prayer, giving and being involved, whenever possible, in any initiatives or efforts that further the proclamation of the gospel. Each year we ask our people to make a missions pledge that is over and above their tithes and offerings, which goes in its entirety, to the support of our regional and global partners.

In 2005 Grace Chapel sent 12 individuals on their first missions trip overseas. Since then, a number of our people have traveled to foreign countries, as well as regionally and nationally, to assist in the spread of the gospel.

Our Global Partners

Devendra & Koko Rai - Thailand
Hany & Natalie Emmanuel - North Africa & Middle East
Shane & Eden Niles - Senegal
Peter & Robin Knapp - Guam
Steve & Donna Niles – France
David & Diane Stoddard - Guatemala
Langshukyu Sangtam – Hope Outreach Center – India
Pastor Nauraj Thapa - India
4 Church Planters – Northeast India



Our Regional Partners

New Hope Family Services – Syracuse
Young Life – Syracuse West
Syracuse Nepali Church – Syracuse
Pregnancy Care Center of Auburn



What Does it Mean to Be a Member?

The difference between “attendees” and “members” can be summed up in three words- Commitment, Partnership, & Service.

At Grace Chapel we recognize the need for formal membership. We ask you to commit to membership for four reasons.

- **A Biblical Reason – Christ is committed to the church**

“... Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for her.” Ephesians 5:25

- **A Cultural Reason – It is an antidote to our society**

We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything – a job, a marriage, our country. This attitude has even produced a generation of “church shoppers and hoppers.” Membership swims against the current of America’s “consumer religion.” It is an unselfish decision. Commitment always builds character.

- **A Practical Reason – It defines who can be counted on**

Every team must have a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Membership identifies our church family.

- **A Personal Reason – It produces spiritual growth**

The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you’re not committed to any specific church family.

Ministries of Grace Chapel

GRACE KIDS

Nursery - Infants to 3 years old

- Offered during both services, and during Engage (adult Sunday School)
- Responsibilities include caring for, playing with, protecting, and praying for our youngest kids
- This ministry is staffed on a rotating schedule of volunteers

Kids' Church – 4 years old through 1st grade

- Offered during both services
- Teachers and helpers facilitate fun learning environments for kids
- Methods of teaching and helping include crafts, music, Bible lessons, and games
- Great opportunity for families to serve together
- This ministry is staffed on a rotating schedule of volunteers

Sunday School – For children Pre-K through Fifth Grade

- Offered at 9:45 am between services during the school year
- Teachers and helpers facilitate fun learning environments for kids
- Methods of teaching and helping include crafts, music, Bible lessons, and games
- Roles Include:
 - Large group communicators - Teach large group lesson to all kids on a schedule with others
 - Small group teachers - Weekly interaction and teaching with the same age and classroom of kids
 - Kids Facility Cleaners - Purchase, clean and maintain kids facilities and supplies
 - Check-in assistants - greet and help families at computer check-in desk

Student Section

Engage

- Sundays - Currently middle and high school students meet during the Engage hour with small group leaders to unpack Scripture and grow deeper in relationship with others

Wednesday Nights

- All middle and high school students gather each Wednesday evening during the school year for spiritual growth, relational connection, and large-group activities
- Includes Snow Camp (winter), Summer Camp, and special events throughout the year also (skiing, movie nights, etc)
- This team is also responsible for larger seasonal events or larger one-time emphases

G-3 Groups

- Grace Growth Groups are a connecting point for two or three people of the same gender, who are committed to meeting together weekly for spiritual growth, strengthening, and prayer.

Men's Ministry

- The Men's Ministries exists to provide moments of connection and spiritual growth for men throughout the year. This is done through various rhythms:
 - Monthly breakfasts – Large group gathering that allows men to connect in community and develop deeper faith in God through learning about Biblical manhood
 - Need based service and Missions opportunities – If there are specific needs within the church, the men gather together to serve. This is done through Grace Chapel Campus projects and maintenance, specific member need projects, and various other outreach events.
 - Special seasonal Events - Men's retreat(s) and Sportsmen Dinners have been primary seasonal events that are done to encourage and admonish men to grow deeper in their God-given identity.

Women's Ministry

- We host occasional gatherings to edify and build up the women in our church and community.
 - Monthly women's gatherings – These times are held to encourage women in their faith with God and to deepen relationships with one another.
 - Wednesday Evening Bible Study: 6:30 pm at Grace House (various studies throughout the year)
 - Periodic seasonal events for encouragement, mission, and fellowship

ENGAGE

- Weekly discipleship for adults and teens happens at 9:45am each Sunday between our regularly scheduled services.
- Purpose - To continue to spur on growth within the adult population of Grace Chapel. We usually focus on a book of the Bible or a specific topic that we address from a biblical perspective. Sometimes we meet as a large group and at other times we utilize a small group format. Everyone is encouraged to be part of this discipleship experience either through leading, serving or participating.

Connect Team

- Our Connect Team is a vital team within the life of our church family on a Sunday morning. This ministry is for those individuals who have a welcoming heart for our visitors and guests. Roles include:
 - Welcome Center & Foyer Hosts
 - Greeters & Ushers
 - New Guest follow-up

Hospitality

- A welcoming environment for everyone that attends Grace Chapel is imperative for furthering the mission of the church. The Hospitality team is at the front lines of making this happen and serves the church family in various ways, such as:
 - Helping serve coffee and refreshments
 - Assisting in decorating for special events
 - Coordinating of special events (weddings, funerals, etc.)

Missions

- Our Missions Team exists to mobilize the people of Grace Chapel to join the mission of God by spreading the gospel from their neighborhoods to the ends of the earth. They cultivate our strategic partnerships and provide opportunities for us to get involved.

Music/Audio Visual

- This is a great way to express your heart for worship and a passion to help others do the same.
 - Instrumentalists
 - Vocalists
 - Soundboard and audio tech
 - Computer and visual tech

MOPS - Mothers of Preschoolers

- Connect and grow alongside other mothers of preschoolers on the first and third Thursday of the month from September to May. We are always looking for:
 - Mentors to encourage other moms
 - Moppet Workers - Provide quality childcare during the MOPS program

Grace Chapel's Membership Commitment

1 Corinthians 12:12 tells us that the church is a body made up of many parts. No part is more important than another, and all parts should have equal concerns for one another. At Grace Chapel we consider ourselves family, and families make commitments to one another. These commitments are as follows.

Growing

Colossians 2:6-7 – “Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding thanksgiving.”

- **I will invest in my relationship with my God:**
 - Through faithful reflection and meditation on His Word
 - Through regular prayer time and communion with God
 - Through ongoing discipleship growth within the Church

Gathering

Hebrews 10:24-25 – “And let us consider how to 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.”

- **I will support the testimony of the church**
 - Through weekly gatherings with the church body to celebrate God with one another
 - Through demonstrating the character of Christ in the context of my relationships
 - Through dealing with disagreement in a biblical way
 - Through loving my brothers and sisters in Christ as God has loved me

Giving

2 Corinthians 9:7 - “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

- **I will support the ministry of the church**
 - By using my gifts and talents to edify the body
 - By giving financially to the mission and ministry of the local church
 - By stewarding my time in a way to serve others both in and outside of the body

Going

Matthew 28:19-20 - “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.”

- **I will share the mission of the church**
 - By praying for those who don't have a relationship with God
 - By sharing the gospel with those who haven't heard
 - By supporting our partners as they spread the gospel