

Membership

Grace Community Baptist Church



MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

We are excited that you are interested in becoming a member of Grace Community Baptist Church. This is an important step in your spiritual journey. The Bible says that every follower of Jesus should belong to a local church (Eph 2:19; Rom 12:5; Gal 6:1-2; Acts 20:28-29). It's through belonging to a church where you can **own the vision**, **build your faith**, and **be the message** of hope to the world around you.

The next step toward becoming a member of GCBC is to commit to attend two meetings that will help you understand who we are, what and how we do things here, and how you can be involved. **The meetings will be on consecutive Sunday nights from 6:00-7:30pm.** We offer these meetings several times per year to accommodate schedules.

Here is how the two sessions break down:

WEEK 1 – MEETING WITH THE PASTOR

- Hear from Pastor Cole Cleveland about:
 - Vision
 - Core Values / Essential Beliefs, Practices, and Virtues
 - Leadership Structure
- Spend some time getting your questions answered

WEEK 2 – MEMBERSHIP CLASS

- **OWN THE VISION – Church Membership**
 - What does the Bible say about belonging to the Body of Christ?
 - What is church membership and why does it matter?
 - What are the requirements of a church member?
 - What are the expectations of church members and church leadership?
- **BUILD YOUR FAITH – Get Connected**
 - **Worship Together**
 - The importance of Personal Worship and Weekly Corporate Worship
 - Observing the Lord's Supper
 - **Life Together**
 - Sunday School Classes
 - Mid-Week Bible Study
 - Small Groups / Discipleship Groups
- **BE THE MESSAGE – Find Your Place to Serve**
 - Missions Philosophy
 - Personal Evangelism
 - Weekly Opportunities to Serve at GCBC
- **JOINING THE GCBC FAMILY**
 - Covenant Membership
 - How to Join GCBC

Week 1: Meeting With The Pastor

VISION

We exist to glorify God in love and worship; to love sinners by sharing with them the things of God; to mature believers by teaching and equipping those who God has called into salvation for ministry; to love, encourage, edify and be benevolent to all believers that a Sovereign God places in our fellowship.

CORE VALUES

Biblically Based

God's Word is our guide, authority and conscience in everything. We stand firm on the Word of God. We hold fast to the Doctrine of Total Authority of Scripture. *Sola Scriptura*. (2 Timothy 3:16)

Worship Together

We magnify Jesus and the message of His gospel. We move when God moves. We carefully examine the motive and methods of our worship - new practices and old. We change willingly when necessary, according to biblical guidelines, in order to encourage every generation to live every moment in the presence of God. (Psalm 95:1-7)

Committed to Community

We are intentionally involved with one another. We grow together through encouraging, accountable relationships and partner with one another in ministry. (Acts 2:44-47)

Ambassadors for Christ

We love people. Share the gospel. And equip people to do the work of ministry. We measure our success by our ability to be and make disciples. (2 Corinthians 5:20)



OUR ESSENTIAL BELIEFS

Authority of Scripture

We believe the Bible is God's Word and has ultimate authority in our beliefs and actions.
2 Timothy 3:16

The Nature of God, the Trinity

We believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, the Three in One.
Hebrews 1:3

The Nature of Humanity

We believe all people are totally depraved and yet made in the image of God, and every person needs Jesus Christ as their Savior.
1 Corinthians 15:47-49

Salvation and God's Purpose of Grace

We believe one comes to a right relationship with God by His grace alone, through faith alone in Jesus Christ.
Ephesians 2:8-9

The Nature of the Church

We believe the church is God's primary way of accomplishing His redemptive plan.
Ephesians 4:15-16

The Ordinances of the Church

We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances symbolizing God's work in our lives and are important to spiritual life and development.
1 Corinthians 11

The Kingdom of God

We believe in God's Sovereignty over the universe and His rule over those who accept Him as Lord and Savior.
1 Peter 2:4-10

The Lord's Day

We believe the first day of the week is resurrection day and a day to celebrate His rule in our lives and fellowship with our local church body.
Hebrews 10:24-25; Exodus 20:8-11



OUR ESSENTIAL PRACTICES

Worship

We worship God for who He is and for what He is doing in our lives.

Psalm 95:1-7

Bible Study

We study the Bible to know God and His truth and to find direct application into our lives.

Hebrews 4:12

Biblical Community

We partner with other Christians to accomplish God's purpose for our lives, to hold one another accountable and to meet each other's needs.

Acts 2:44-47

Great Commission

We will go out of our way to reach all people with the message of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 28:19-20

Service

We intentionally give our lives away, sacrificially, in order to accomplish God's purpose.

Romans 12:1

Prayer

We pray to know God and connect with Him in order to find direction for daily life.

Jeremiah 33:3

Generous Giving

We cheerfully, generously, and obediently give out of all God has given to us.

2 Corinthians 8:7

Spiritual Gifts

We use our spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Romans 12:4-6



OUR ESSENTIAL VIRTUES

Love

We unconditionally and sacrificially love and forgive others.

1 John 4:10-12

Joy

We have inner contentment and purpose in spite of circumstances.

John 15:11

Peace

We are free from anxiety because things are right with God, others, and ourselves.

Philippians 4:6-7

Patience

We are slow to anger, anxiety, and frustration while enduring the pressures of life.

James 1:2-4

Kindness

We look for opportunities to add value to others expecting nothing in return.

Philippians 2:3-4

Goodness

We choose to do what is right in all things.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

Gentleness

We thoughtfully, considerately, and calmly deal with others.

Philippians 4:5

Faithfulness

We keep our word and do what is right.

Proverbs 3:3-4

Self Control

We pursue godliness, practice righteousness, and overcome temptation through the spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 10:13

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

Elder Staff

The Elder Staff, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, provides overall leadership and direction to the church staff, volunteers and employees. They are responsible for the daily operation and implementation of the vision, mission, and goal of the church along-side the Senior Pastor. The Elder Staff consists of the assigned leaders of each of the Ministry Teams and is assigned leadership responsibilities and held accountable by the Senior Pastor. Per the original text of Scripture, a “pastor” is also an “elder” and/or “bishop.”

- **Senior Pastor** - Directional Leader, Teaching Pastor, Worship and Arts
- **Pastor Emeritus** - Pastoral Care, Senior Ministries, Fellowship, Membership Ministries
- **Executive Pastor** - Operations, Support Staff, Campus Development
- **Discipleship Pastor** - Education, Sunday School, Bible Studies, Group Discipleship
- **Missions Pastor** - Local to Global Outreach

Church Council

Members of the Church Council are men and women called to serve among and provide spiritual protection for the church body and are accountable to Christ and the church membership. They provide overall leadership to the church through prayer and commitment to the Word of God and are to set the example for all church members by their obedience to the mission of Christ and His church. It is expected that members of the Church Council are to demonstrate a high degree of spiritual maturity and leadership ability. Any member of GCBC can join the Church Council. You can simply join by consulting with the Church Council chairman. The Senior Pastor serves as the chairman of the Church Council.

The Church Council mandates that it will consist of the Elder Staff and all team leaders listed:

- **Fellowship Director**
- **Finance Team Director**
- **Grace Community Director**
- **Local Missions Director**
- **Officers**
- **Organizational Director**
- **Sports Ministry Director**
- **Strengthened by Grace Director**
- **Sunday School Director**
- **Technical Director**
- **Women’s Ministries Director**
- **Worship Team Director**
- **Youth Pastor**



Ministry Leadership Teams

The Ministry Leadership Teams are the pillars of the organization of the church and consist of **Discipleship, Pastoral Care, Worship and Arts, Missions & Outreach** and **Operations**.

Other teams inside of these pillars can be formed as needed by the Church Council and Elder Staff.

Deacons

In accordance with the meaning and practice of the New Testament church, deacons are to be men who display spiritual maturity, godly humility and servant leadership within the church. Deacons are responsible for supporting the Elder Staff in the ministry of the Word, caring for the needs of the church and community, and promoting the unity of the church. The duties of deacons include, but are not limited to:

- Administering aid to help the poor and needy in times of crisis and distress
- Assisting in the care and encouragement of widows and the bereaved
- Helping with pastoral care and membership ministries of the church
- Aiding the staff in hospital ministry
- Assisting in administering the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism

A Deacon is nominated by the Elder Staff and voted on by the church body. Every two years the Deacon Body shall nominate, in consultation with the Church Council, the Chairman of the Deacons. The Chairman of the Deacons will report directly to the Senior Pastor.

Anyone serving on the Elder Staff, Church Council, Leadership Teams, or as a Deacon must be a member of Grace Community Baptist Church.

Week 2: Membership Class

OWN THE VISION – Church Membership

The church is a family. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, God expects you to be a part of a local body of believers.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT BELONGING TO THE BODY OF CHRIST?

- It is part of what **identifies individuals as genuine followers of Christ.**
(Eph. 2:19, Rom 12:5)
- It **provides you a spiritual family** that can support, encourage, and care for you in your walk with Christ.
(Gal 6:1-2, Heb. 10:24-25, 1 Cor. 12:26-27)
- It places you under the **spiritual protection** of Godly leaders.
(Heb. 13:17, Acts 20:28-29, 1 Peter 5:5)
- It gives you **a place to discover and use your gifts** that the Lord has entrusted you with for ministry.
(1 Cor. 12:4-27)

WHAT IS CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

When an individual is saved, he becomes a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Because he is united to Christ and the other members of the body in this way, he is therefore qualified to become a member of a local expression of that body.

To become a member of a church is to formally commit oneself to an identifiable, local body of believers who have joined together for specific, divinely ordained purposes. These purposes include receiving instruction from God's Word (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:2), serving and edifying one another through the proper use of spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; 1 Pet. 4:10-11), participating in the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), and proclaiming the Gospel to those who are lost (Matt. 28:18-20). In addition, when one becomes a member of a church, he submits himself to the care and the authority of the biblically qualified elders that God has placed in that assembly.

We believe that church membership is a covenant between a local church and a Christian that consists of...

- **The church's affirmation of the Christian's Gospel profession**
By extending church membership to an individual, the church is saying, "We recognize your profession of faith, baptism, and discipleship to Christ as valid. Therefore, we publicly affirm and acknowledge you as belonging to Christ and the oversight of our fellowship."
- **The church's promise to give oversight to the Christian's discipleship**
This comes through teaching, preaching, church council oversight, and the mutual building up which all members of the church are to engage in (Eph 4:11-16).
- **The Christian's promise to gather with the church and submit to its oversight**
By committing to a church through membership, an individual Christian is saying, "I recognize you as a faithful, Gospel-declaring church. Therefore, I promise to regularly gather with this church and to submit to its authority and teaching."

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

OBEDIENCE TO LEADERSHIP

Hebrews 13:17 states that Christians are to “obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.” If there is no membership, which leaders should a Christian submit to? Do Christians have to submit to anyone with the title “elder” from any church? We believe that membership provides the direction for which leaders the members should submit to, and why.

LEADERSHIP OVERSIGHT

Acts 20:28 says to church elders, “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” If there is no membership, for whom will the church leaders give an account? Will church leaders of Grace Community Baptist Church be held accountable for all Christians in south Oklahoma City, or for the members of churches that Grace Community Baptist Church has theological differences with? We believe that membership defines the scope of authority and accountability for local church leaders.

OUTSIDE/INSIDE THE CHURCH

1 Corinthians 5:12-13 states that Christians are not to judge the morality of those outside the church, but rather are to judge those inside the church, and remove unrepentant immoral members from fellowship if needed. How is being outside or inside the church definable if there is no such thing as membership? How can you remove someone if they aren’t “in” to begin with? We believe that membership provides a proper context for making moral assessments and decisions about members’ conduct and character.

CARE AND CORRECTION

Matthew 18:15-17 states that when a brother sins against you and does not listen or respond even after multiple witnesses address his fault, you are to involve the church. Without membership, who constitutes “the church,” and who decides when someone is to be treated as an outsider (“a Gentile and a tax collector,” v. 17) and lovingly called back to repentance? We believe that membership provides a clear process and path for care, correction, and restoration when a member is caught in sin.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS OF A CHURCH MEMBER?

SALVATION

Church membership begins when a local church affirms an individual Christian's profession of faith. People might not be able to explain the Gospel well, but in one way or another they must be able to explain it. They must be able to say who they represent before the church is able to publicly affirm and acknowledge them as belonging to Christ. A profession of faith includes an understanding of the following:

- God loves you and has a plan for your life.
(John 3:14-19)
- We don't experience the abundant life God wants for us because of our sin.
(Romans 3:23)
- The price of our sin is death or eternal separation from God.
(Romans 6:23)
- God made a way to be made right with Him.
(Romans 5:8)
- We must repent from our sins and receive the gift God has offered us.
(Romans 10:9)
- We can freely receive this gift by God's Grace Alone through Faith Alone in Christ Alone.
(Ephesians 2:8-9)

BAPTISM

Church membership is a public affirmation of someone's public profession of faith in Christ, and Jesus has appointed baptism as the means by which his followers publicly profess their faith in Him.

In Romans 6:1-15 Paul teaches us that the Christian is supposed to go through a similar experience to what Jesus went through in His death, burial, and resurrection. The difference is that Jesus died physically and actually came back to life; we're to die to our sin, self, and old ways and then rise again to live a holy life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is an outward symbol of an inner change and transformation that has taken place beforehand. It's very important to emphasize the fact that this can only be accomplished through the power and strength of Jesus! It's not that we have to completely overcome sin before we can be baptized, but we need to repent of our past sins and have our mind made up that we want to overcome sin, as we will allow God to give us the victory.

In the same way that Jesus went down into the grave, we go down into the water of baptism, which represents our death to sin and the burial of our old life.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)



WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM CHURCH MEMBERS?

PARTICIPATE IN CORPORATE WORSHIP

True worship flows from the heart in recognition and response to the magnificence of Christ, and because of an understanding of the grace found solely in the gospel. When we worship, we are focusing our hearts on God. When we are in corporate worship, we should be focusing our hearts on God alongside other believers. There is something powerful, even miraculous, about believers being united together to worship God.

GROW IN YOUR WALK WITH GOD AND OTHERS

We cannot grow effectively as a believer in isolation. We need community. Growing spiritually doesn't happen when we know what Jesus says. It happens when we apply what he says. And that happens best within the context of community where you have authentic relationships with people who have the same goal of growing in their relationship with God and others. Therefore, it is vital to get involved in a Sunday School Class – a place where people can be known, loved, cared for, pursued, encouraged, and challenged to be more like Christ.

SERVE OTHERS

We believe that God has given every Christian spiritual gifts to be used to build up the Body of Christ. Because of this, our church provides many opportunities to involve as many people as possible.

BE ON MISSION

This may mean something as nearby as having a conversation with our neighbor, or it could mean something as far as taking a trip to the other side of the world. We should engage intentionally for the cause of Christ no matter where God takes us.

SEEK UNITY

John 13:35 says, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” The world will know if we are Christians or not by the way we who are believers act toward one another. We all have a responsibility to be a source of unity by loving each other unconditionally and putting other’s interests over our own.

GENEROUSLY GIVE

God calls us to be good stewards of the resources He graciously gives us. Part of our responsibility as church members is to joyfully give of our time and resources for the mission of taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

SACRIFICE

As a church member, we must put the Gospel work above our preferences.

PRAY FOR YOUR CHURCH LEADERS

Pray for wisdom and discernment as they lead, teach, provide, and care for the flock. Without prayer for our church leaders, we leave them open to enemy attack and limit the effectiveness of their ministry.

WHAT CAN CHURCH MEMBERS EXPECT FROM THE PASTORS/ELDERS?

According to the New Testament, elders are responsible for the primary leadership and oversight of a church. Church members should expect the elders to:

TEACH AND PREACH THE WORD

2 Timothy 4:2 tells the elders to “Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.”

ENCOURAGE AND ADMONISH YOU IN SOUND DOCTRINE

Titus 1:9 says, “He (elders) must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”

PROTECT YOU FROM FALSE TEACHERS

Acts 20:28-31 pleads with elders by saying, “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!”

CARE FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Hebrews 13:17 says, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.” As a church member you should expect your Elders to keep watch over your soul. In fact, this job is so significant that each Elder will have to give an account to God about how they did. What does this look like? Here are some few examples:

- They should help you grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ
- They should encourage you when you are burdened by the things of this world
- They should protect you from the lies and deceptions that keep you from having joy in Jesus

In short, Elders should care for your soul by teaching, encouraging, counseling, and supporting you, in every area of your life.

EQUIP YOU TO DO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

Ephesians 4:11-12 says, “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...” What does it look like to equip the saints?

- To help you grasp deeply the truth and power of the Gospel for your life
- To help you understand how to rightly handle the Word of God
- To help you discover your spiritual gifts
- To help you find a context for using those gifts to serve others

***“Elder” and “pastor” are not two different offices. They are simply two different words for the same office.*

BUILD YOUR FAITH – Get Connected

There are two primary essentials for any church member who wants to connect and get involved in the life of our church family:

WORSHIP TOGETHER

Our first act in response to a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ is always one of worship. We must get it out of our mind that worship only happens when we come to church. Every day, all day long, everywhere you go, you worship. Every person was made to worship - to bring pleasure and honor to the God who made us. However, if someone chooses for some reason not to give God what He desires, they will worship anyway; simply exchanging the Creator for something He has created. Louie Giglio sees worship as a matter of value. He says, worship is our response to what we value most. That is why it is imperative for the object of our worship to be God. Your worship matters to God. If it didn't, Satan would not be trying to steal it away. The truth is, we will become what we worship. A good practice if you don't like who you are becoming is to take an inventory of who or what is on the throne of your heart. Our service to God flows out of our worship of God. If we try and serve Him before we worship, we will end up tired and burned out. However, if our service to God flows out of our worship of him, we will be energized and our service will have power and impact. There are two arenas of worship:

- **Personal Worship**

You will find that some of the most beautiful times of worship come when you are alone. Getting alone with God and being still is something we all need to add to our spiritual life. When we encounter God's presence in our personal worship, people will know we have been with Him.

- **Corporate Worship**

Corporate worship is an overflow of your personal worship. There is something powerful, even miraculous, about believers being united together to worship God. However, for this to happen, we have to physically be there. That is why we put a priority on Sunday morning worship.

During our time of corporate worship, we will celebrate together two ordinances:

- **Baptism** (discussed in the section on requirements for church membership)
- **Lord's Supper**

We believe the Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the Church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming. We believe this meal serves as a memorial reminding us of the broken body and spilled blood of Jesus on the cross because of our sins.

At Grace Community Baptist Church, we offer a "closed/open" Lord's Supper. Only those who are Christians should partake, but all Christians are welcome whether or not they are members of our local church. We will traditionally offer the Lord's Supper quarterly.

LIFE TOGETHER

Corporate worship is the main focus of our church, but the lifeblood is found in our Bible Study Classes where people develop authentic relationships and learn how to apply biblical principles to every area of their lives. There's a place for everyone:

SUNDAY SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES - 9:00am

We have classes that reach out to people of all ages and stages of life. The vision of every Sunday School Class is to create attractive environments that will allow us to connect people to **authentic relationships** that lead to **spiritual transformation**. We believe there are some core values we need to hold one another accountable to when it comes to creating this type of community. They core values are:

- Devote ourselves daily to a personal relationship with Jesus
- Pursue deep relationships based on love and acceptance
- Commit to accountability and growth through fellowship and study of the Word of God
- Offer and receive Biblical counsel in all areas of life
- Live authentically by sharing our struggles as well as our joys
- Encourage and admonish one another faithfully towards maturity
- Engage missionally with our community and world to make disciples

Once connected to a class, you will be encouraged to find your place to serve and use the spiritual gifts God has given to you to build up the Body of Christ

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE - 10:00am

The primary focus of our fellowship is centered around our Sunday morning worship service. This is the day that we celebrate The Lord's Day. Sunday mornings are a key time for our fellowship to grow individually as collectively as we sing, pray, and listen to the preaching of the Word of God.

WEDNESDAY SERVICE - 6:30pm

Each month, we offer several classes on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-7:30pm. These classes focus on specific ways to help you grow in your relationship with God and one another. Each month is different, but each class is designed to challenge you and help you grow spiritually.

OTHER SMALL GROUPS / DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

This is the newest element of our church, as we believe that it is important to continue to Live the Life and Tell the Story outside of the church walls. We are in the process of putting small groups together for all ages. Currently we have men's discipleship groups and are working toward putting women's discipleship groups together.

BE THE MESSAGE – Find Your Place to Serve

MISSIONS PHILOSOPHY

Acts 1:8 says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Every member of Grace Community Baptist Church plays a dynamic role in God's plan to be glorified in the nations of the world. We believe every member is a missionary, and as such, they are to participate in God's missionary purposes by going to, sending toward, and praying for, the nations of the earth. We will equip our members to understand God's heart, and discover and accomplish their specific role in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Evangelism is at the core of everything we do. However, it is viewed as the first step in the discipleship process. Jesus commands us to go unto the ends of the earth and make disciples, not merely converts. Our aim therefore, is to prioritize disciple making and integrate it into every facet of our missional efforts—from the sending our people to the equipping of the people we serve so they are able to carry on the mission when we return home.

LOCAL MISSIONS – South OKC and the Surrounding Areas

The proclamation of the Gospel is imperative, and God's command to "go and make disciples" starts right here at home in South OKC, Oklahoma. The heartbeat of local missions is no different than what we do nationally or internationally. It is to see lives transformed by the message of the Gospel. That Good News accompanied by the great need of those around us leads to the various ministries of local missions. What we do at home validates what we do abroad. Pray about how God could use you right here in our community.

Some of our local missions ministries and partners include:

- The Spencer House
- Hope Pregnancy Center
- Grace Home
- Fall Festival
- OKC Ambassadors Baseball Clinics
- Public Schools
- College Campuses
- Tinker AFB
- Local Law Enforcement

NATIONAL MISSIONS – Oklahoma and North America

"And He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'" Luke 10:2

There are many opportunities for reaching people for Christ in our own country. With a culture that's drifting away from God more and more, Americans are hungry for the truth of the Gospel and genuine love. Discover more information about how you can get involved in ministry in other parts of Oklahoma and around the United States.

Our national missions ministries and partners include:

- OKC Ambassadors
- Annie Armstrong Missions Offering

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS – Around the World

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 28:19–20

Did you ever think you would be an international missionary? About 50 years ago, it would have been nearly impossible. We now live in an age where God has allowed us the opportunity to engage the poor, the lost and the hurting through strategic short-term mission trips. Grace Community Baptist Church partners with churches and missions agencies to reach out to people all over the world by praying for them, providing for them, and mobilizing our people to serve them. Our heart is to see souls and societies transformed through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our international missions ministries and partners include:

- OKC Ambassadors
- Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

PERSONAL EVANGELISM

Every Christian has a story of how God changed their destiny and daily guides them through the ups and downs of life. That story needs to be told. Whether it is sharing with your neighbor, co-worker, friend, or family member, we want to help you have confidence in sharing your story. If you have not already, take time to work through the **"Share Your Story"** document. This will help put it in writing so you can begin to articulate it with your words. Trust God to open doors of opportunity for you to give testimony to his amazing grace in your life!

WEEKLY OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE AT GCBC

NURSERY & PRESCHOOL MINISTRY

To volunteer with our Nursery Ministry Team, contact:

- Jill Cleveland
405-517-5997

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S CHURCH MINISTRY

To volunteer with our Children's Ministry Team, contact:

- Ryan Bowers
405-693-3858

STUDENT MINISTRY

To volunteer with our Student Ministry Team, contact:

- Hannah Mobly
405-664-5301

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY

To volunteer with our Discipleship Ministry Team, contact:

- Tom McDonald
405-623-0963
- Caden Cleveland
405-388-8048

MISSIONS MINISTRY

To volunteer with our Missions Ministry Team, contact:

- Natalie Cleveland
210-860-8757

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

To volunteer with our Women's Ministry Team, contact:

- Neva Hill
405-692-2225

FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY

To volunteer with our Fellowship Ministry Team, contact:

- Clancey Stewart
405-388-5646

WORSHIP / CREATIVE ARTS MINISTRY

To volunteer with our Worship / Creative Arts Ministry, contact:

- Chris Stewart
405-410-7891
- Jordan Demeter
405-833-5134

BUILDING & PROPERTY MINISTRY

To volunteer with our Building & Property Ministry Team, contact:

- Rob Cleveland
405-517-5993

JOINING THE GRACE COMMUNITY FAMILY – Are You Ready?

As Christians, we are members of God's household called to function, participate, and minister in a particular local church within the body of Christ. A healthy body requires that each member do its part well. A healthy church requires the same: members who are sacrificially committed and well-equipped to do the works of service that God has prepared in advance for us to do. Grace Community Baptist Church holds its covenant members in high regard; we expect them to live daily as missionaries of the Gospel to the culture. God, in his sovereignty, placed us in this city, among these people, in this century, for His purposes.

Being a member of Grace Community Baptist Church is really about being part of a **family**. All members are disciples of Jesus, unified by their identity in Christ. This unity is expressed in the way they collaborate in loving God, loving fellow Christians, and loving non-Christians. Members who enter into a covenant with their local church are called to a higher degree of responsibility and service. At the same time, the elders and leaders are covenanted to assist members first and foremost, to love and lead, provide counsel and aid, and pray for, teach, and guide them.

WHAT IS COVENANT MEMBERSHIP?

A covenant is a promise. It is not a vow of "till death to us part." By covenanting with us here at GCBC you are agreeing to fully participate and remain faithful to the specifics stated in the signed covenant for as long as God has you here in this city at this church. Because you value and respect the promise you have made, the authority of this church's leadership, and those God has placed in your life, a Covenant Member will prayerfully seek God, His Word and those over and around him or her before parting ways with GCBC. [The Membership Covenant is on the next page.](#)

HOW DOES SOMEONE JOIN GRACE COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH?

- 1. Attend Meeting with the Pastor**
- 2. Attend a Membership Class**
- 3. Sign the Membership Covenant and Complete a Membership Card indicating how you are joining Grace Community Baptist Church:**
 - **By Profession of Faith / Baptism** – as a new believer who wants to be baptized or a believer who has never been baptized by immersion
 - **By Letter** – as a Christian who wants to transfer their membership from another Southern Baptist Church
 - **By Statement** – As a Christian from another church of like faith who has given their life to Christ and been baptized by immersion

Membership Covenant

Grace Community Baptist Church

OUR VISION

We exist to glorify God in love and worship; to love sinners by sharing with them the things of God; to mature believers by teaching and equipping those who God has called into salvation for ministry; to love, encourage, edify and be benevolent to all believers that a Sovereign God places in our fellowship.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

- We believe the Bible is God's Word and has ultimate authority in our beliefs and actions. (2 Tim 3:16)
- We believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, the Three in One. (Hebrews 1:3)
- We believe all people are totally depraved and yet made in the image of God, and every person needs Jesus Christ as their Savior. (1 Corinthians 15:47-49)
- We believe one comes to a right relationship with God by His grace alone, through faith alone in Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- We believe the church is God's primary way of accomplishing His redemptive plan. (Ephesians. 4:15-16)
- We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances symbolizing God's work in our lives and are important to spiritual life and development. (1 Corinthians 11)
- We believe in God's sovereignty over the universe and His rule over those who accept Him as Lord. (1 Peter 2:4-10)
- We believe the first day of the week is Resurrection Day and therefore the best time to come together as a church family to worship and celebrate His rule in our lives. (Hebrews 10:24-25; Exodus 20:8-11)

WHAT WE WILL DO

Covenant Membership in Grace Community Baptist Church represents a significant commitment to following Jesus and taking part fully in the life, ministry, and fellowship of the church. Jesus is the head of the church, but the vitality and strength of his body depends upon the participation and involvement of the members.

The following are indicators one is fulfilling the responsibilities of Covenant Membership in Grace Community Baptist Church:

- I will attend worship regularly. (*Psalm 100, Colossians 3:1-17*)
- I will strive to be a part of a Sunday School Class where I can develop authentic relationships with others, so we can help one another grow in our relationship with Christ. (*Acts 2:44-47*)
- I will work to protect the peace and unity of Grace Community Baptist Church by acting in love toward other members, refusing to gossip, and following the leaders as they follow Christ. (1 Peter 1:22, Ephesians 4:29, Hebrews 13:7)
- I will practice and demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit in all circumstances, especially in times of difficulty or conflict. (*Galatians 5:22-26*)
- I will use my spiritual gifts, time, and talents to participate in some form of ministry or service. (*1 Corinthians 12 and 14, Ephesians 4:7-16*)
- I will join my church family in sharing Christ's love in our local communities and around the world by being involved in our missions strategy. (Matthew 28:18-20)
- I will give generously, cheerfully, and regularly to financially support Grace Community Baptist Church and its ministry. (*2 Corinthians 9:6-13, Malachi 3:8-10*)

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord, having professed my faith and been baptized by immersion, and agreeing with the above statements, I joyfully affirm my desire to enter into covenant with this local Body of Christ.

Name _____ Date _____

YOUR STORY

Writing Your Personal Testimony

The aim of giving a personal testimony is to tell of the working of God's grace in your own life, that the cross of Christ may be proclaimed and the faith of your listeners built up.

Things to Remember When Writing Your Story:

- Keep it focused on Christ, the cross, and on God's initiative and grace—God focused as opposed to self-focused.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you, so that the most important and helpful aspects of your gospel story will be shared clearly. Believe that God will empower you through his Spirit to be a witness to His good grace (Acts 1:8).
- Be brief—**1/2 of a page, single-spaced, 12 pt. font!** Your testimony isn't every life event. It is a simplified version of life before Christ, receiving of the Gospel, and life after.

Practical Guidelines on How to Write Your Story:

READ ACTS 26

In this passage, Paul stood before King Agrippa and shared simply and plainly the story of his life. Essentially, Paul's testimony followed a guideline that can help you prepare your testimony.

1. BEFORE YOU MET CHRIST (ACTS 26:4-11):

- What was your life like? What characterized you? How did you think of God? What were your thoughts about religion? How was the Lord justly angered toward you because of your sin during this time?
- **REMEMBER:** We can all say, "I was once a _____" and fill in our own description of our sinful state. And we don't need a dramatic testimony to do so. Even if your story doesn't involve drugs or immorality, it is still a miracle of God's grace. You didn't write it by yourself. God intervened. God changed your heart. God saved you.

2. HOW YOU CAME TO KNOW CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED (ACTS 26:12-20):

- Help your readers & hearers to understand what drove you to consider Christ, whether it was the circumstances or time.
- Share the specific steps of how you became a Christian. If there was a particular Scripture or word that someone said that drew you to Christ, share it here. Explain the gospel clearly:
 - You were sinful and fully deserving of God's wrath
 - Christ died in your place on the cross as your substitute—bearing the wrath of God in your place
 - When you repented of your sin, turned from your old lifestyle, and placed your faith in Christ's sacrifice, then you were forgiven of all sin, becoming a child of God and obtaining new life in Him.

3. AFTER YOU MET CHRIST (ACTS 26:21-23):

- *There is forgiveness in the gospel of Jesus Christ, but there's also power!* What difference has Christ made in your life? In the way you think, feel, and act? In the way coworkers see you? In the way your family sees you? In the way you view your coworkers or family members?
- Don't be afraid to share honestly that you still have struggles, but be sure to share how Christ helps you with these struggles.
- Conclude by sharing that you now know you have eternal life (according to 1 John 5:11-13) in Jesus Christ.