



# MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH  
CAMPUSES IN NORTH LIBERTY AND IOWA CITY





## INTRODUCTION

The Grace Community Church Membership Covenant was created by the Elders to bring clarity to the vision and mission that we believe, through our reading of the Bible, God has given our church. The Membership Covenant was made out of love with the goal of empowering and shepherding the flock at Grace.

THE PRIMARY PURPOSES OF THE MEMBERSHIP COVENANT ARE:

- To bring clarity to how Grace plans to live out its mission.
- To establish teaching and doctrinal parameters for the Grace body to follow.
- To clarify the Biblical responsibilities and expectations for both the Elders and the members.
- To serve as a tool for reflection and growth toward living out the Gospel individually and corporately.

## GRACE IDENTITY

Mission Statement: Our church exists to glorify God by being and making disciples who make disciples.

We strive to fulfill our mission by three main efforts (our strategy):

- Bring In** - Bringing people into a personal relationship with Jesus.
- Build Up** - Building one another up to become mature followers of Jesus.
- Branch Out** - Branching out to the community and world with the Gospel.

These three values inform our strategy:

- **Gospel Truth** - We are committed to the truth of scripture, and believe its central message is the Gospel; the message of God's gracious work to redeem sinners.
- Gospel Community** - We are committed to knowing, loving, and serving one another as brothers and sisters united in Christ.
- Gospel Mission** - Individually and corporately, we are committed to declaring and demonstrating the Gospel to our communities, our cities, and the nations.

## BASIC BELIEFS

The Gospel is the hope of the world. As we read the Scriptures, we see the overarching themes of God's providence, power and provision to reconcile mankind and the created world to Himself through the person and work of Jesus Christ. In light of this, we aim to be explicitly Gospel-centered in all that we preach, teach and practice.

To better understand how we theologically work out this Gospel, please refer to the Statement of Beliefs found in the Additional Information section at the end of this document.



## **BIBLICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ELDERS**

As shepherds and overseers of the local church, Elders are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping and caring for the corporate church body and individual church members.

The following is an overview of the roles and responsibilities for Elders as spelled out within the Scriptures.

### *The Elders of Grace Community Church covenant ...*

- To appoint male Elders, including staff members who serve in the office of Elder, according to the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures. 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4
- To prayerfully seek God's will for our church community and to steward resources to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and leading of the Holy Spirit. Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-4
- To care for and seek growth of the church in grace, truth and love. Matthew 28:16-20, Ephesians 4:15-16, Colossians 1:28, James 5:14, 1 Peter 5:1-4
- To provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture. Acts 20:27-28, 1 Timothy 4:16, 2 Timothy 4:1-5, Titus 2:1
- To equip the members of the church for the work of ministry. Ephesians 4:11-16
- To be on guard against false teachers and teachings. Matthew 7:15, Acts 20:28-31, 1 Timothy 1:3-7, 1 John 4:1
- To lovingly exercise discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined, and the health of the church as a whole. Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5, Galatians 6:1, James 5:19-20
- To set an example and join in with members in fulfilling the responsibilities of church membership stated below. Philippians 3:17, 1 Timothy 4:12, Titus 2:7-8, 1 Peter 5:3



## **BIBLICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS**

Because we experience the grace of a life changed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to reflect the character of Christ through the pursuit of certain attitudes and actions and the rejection of others. The Scriptures refer to this reality as “living by the Spirit”. Romans 8

The requirements of the Membership Covenant function primarily as an overview of what the Scriptures teach about the obedience that faith produces through living by the Spirit.

We have laid out three basic categories of what living by the Spirit looks like: Gospel Truth, Gospel Community, and Gospel Mission. Under Additional Information on page 6, you will find a more detailed description of these values with references to key passages of these teachings in Scripture.

*We, the members of Grace Community Church, covenant ...*

### • TO HOLD TO GOSPEL TRUTH BY

- Placing our trust in Christ's work alone for the forgiveness of sins.
- Following Christ publicly in believer's baptism.
- Submitting to the Bible in belief and practice.
- Repenting and confessing our sin to God and each other.
- Praying for the church's health and mission.

### • TO ENGAGE IN GOSPEL COMMUNITY BY

- Intentionally loving one another throughout the week.
- Attending worship services faithfully.
- Giving generously of our time, treasure and talents to others in the church and community.
- Submitting to the leadership of the church.
- Submitting to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit.

### • TO PURSUE GOSPEL MISSION BY

- Demonstrating the Gospel to our neighborhood and workplace.
- Practicing a lifestyle of hospitality.
- Declaring the Gospel to our community.
- Investing in global missions.
- Praying for God's mission for both the local and worldwide church.



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### BIBLICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS – DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The Bible has much to say about how the people of God are to think and act in every part of their life. Here are the core values that members of Grace are committed to.

*We, the members of Grace Community Church, covenant ...*

#### TO HOLD TO GOSPEL TRUTH BY

*...Placing our trust in Christ's work alone for the forgiveness of sins by*

- Continually reinforcing the central message of Scripture: that God has graciously taken the initiative to redeem sinners who could not redeem themselves. Luke 24:27
- Reminding one another of the Gospel and calling one another to trust the Gospel, in both corporate worship and in small groups. Ephesians 4:15-16

*...Following Christ publicly in believer's baptism by*

- Affirming that baptism is an act of obedience by a believer who has already placed their faith in Christ. Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:38
- Understanding that baptism is an outward symbol of an inward change that has already occurred. Ephesians 2:8-9

*...Submitting to the Bible in belief and practice by*

- Submitting to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues. Psalm 119, 2 Timothy 3:14-17, 2 Peter 1:19-21
- Agreeing with the core doctrinal statements of Grace found on pages 9-10 (Statement of Beliefs).
- Pursuing the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship and practice of spiritual disciplines. Luke 18:1, Acts 17:11, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Ephesians 5:1-21, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

*...Repenting and confessing our sin to God and each other by*

- Walking in holiness in all areas of life by God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit as an act of worship to Jesus Christ. Believers should strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death while stirring and stimulating love and good deeds through the Spirit. 1 Peter 1:13-16, 4:1-3
- Practicing complete chastity unless married and, if married, complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Complete chastity and fidelity means, among other things, that regardless of marital status, we will pursue purity and abstain from sexually immoral practices such as adultery, homosexuality, premarital sex and pornography. Romans 13:11-14, 1 Corinthians 6:15-20, 10:8, Ephesians 5:3, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8, Hebrews 13:4



- Seeking to preserve the gift of marriage and agreeing to walk through the steps of marriage reconciliation at Grace before pursuing separation or divorce from our spouse. Matthew 19:1-12, Mark 10:1-12, Luke 16:18, 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 For the role of the church in the process of divorce, see Paul's concern for the resolution of legal matters within the assembly of the church in 1 Corinthians 6.
- Refraining from illegal drug use, drunkenness, gossip and other sinful behavior as the Bible dictates. Romans 1:28-32, 13:13, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:18, James 3:3-18
- Confessing our sin to God and to mature believers as appropriate. We will repent and seek help to put our sin to death. Romans 8:13, Colossians 3:5, James 5:16, 1 John 1:6-10

... *Praying for the church's health and mission* Matthew 6:9-13, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 1:15-16

### **ENGAGE IN GOSPEL COMMUNITY BY**

...*Intentionally loving one another throughout the week by*

- Rejoicing and mourning with each other through the course of life. Rom 12:15
- Sacrificially giving to those who are in need.
- Praying fervently for each other.
- Speaking the truth of Scripture to each other in love.
- Teaming up to demonstrate and declare the Gospel to the community.
- Encouraging each other with the good news of the gracious work of Christ.
- Confessing, repenting and forgiving each other in light of the Gospel.
- Practicing the "one anothers" of Scripture.

...*Attending worship services faithfully* Hebrews 10:24-25, Acts 2:42

...*Giving generously of our time, talents and treasure to others by*

- Volunteering our time to the ministries of the church for the building up of the body. Matthew 5:16 Mark 10:45, Acts 20:35, Titus 3:14
- Using our talents and skills to serve the church and community Romans 12:1-2, 1 Peter 4:10-11
- Giving financially to support the ministries of the church and outreach to the community Matthew 25:14-30, 2 Corinthians 8-9

...*Submitting to the leadership of the church by*

- Submitting to the Elders and other appointed leaders of the church and diligently striving for unity and peace within the church. Ephesians 4:1-3, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:5

...*Submitting to the discipline of God through his Holy Spirit by*

- Following the Scriptural mandate for conflict resolution and church discipline where sin is evident in another, the goal of such discipline being repentance and restoration. Matthew 7:3-5, 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 13:7, Ephesians 4:29-32, Phil. 2:3-4
- Receiving Biblical discipline when approached by fellow believers. Psalm 141:5, Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, Hebrews. 12:5-11.



## **PURSUE GOSPEL MISSION BY**

*...Demonstrating the Gospel to our neighborhood and work place by*

- Seeking the welfare of the greater community around us. Jeremiah 29:7
- Striving diligently to bring glory to God in our work.
- Praying for the needs of all people and leaders in our community.
- Actively meeting the needs of those in need. James 1:27, Matthew 25:35-40
- Supporting and participating in church planting efforts with our time, treasure, and talents.

*...Practicing a lifestyle of hospitality by*

- Welcoming all, even strangers, into our homes, lives, and space in a way that demonstrates how God has graciously welcomed us into his family.

*...Declaring the Gospel to our community by*

- Proclaiming the Gospel to our friends, neighbors, and community by speaking the Gospel clearly, graciously and generously.

*...Investing in global missions by*

- Willingly participating in sending by giving financially to international mission efforts through Grace.
- Prayerfully considering going on a mission trip (whether short term, long term, or permanent).

*...Praying for God's mission for both the local and worldwide church by*

- Praying for the lost in our families, neighborhoods, region, and throughout the world.
- Praying for our local congregation as well as our missionaries who are taking the Gospel to the lost.



## STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

### BIBLE

We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God, without error in their original writings, and are our sole authority in all matters of faith and life. Matthew 5:17-18, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 2:20-21. We believe the central message of the Bible is the Gospel: the story of God's gracious work to redeem sinners which culminates in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Titus 3:4-7. The Old Testament promises and foreshadows Christ's coming. Genesis 12:1-3, Isaiah 53:4-6. The Gospels describe Jesus' work and the New Testament letters build upon this foundation while also calling us to joyfully worship God with our lives. Romans 12:1-2.

### GOD

We believe there is one living and true God, who is one in essence, with one indivisible will, while eternally existing as three distinct persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Though each person of the Trinity possesses the same nature, each functions differently but harmoniously in respect to God's dealings with man. God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere present. Deuteronomy 6:4, Psalm 139:1-24, Matthew 28:19, Mark 12:29, John 10:30, Acts 5:3-4, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Hebrews 1:1-3

### THE FATHER

We believe the first person of the Trinity orders and directs all things according to His own purpose, pleasure and grace. He has decreed all things that come to pass for His own glory. He graciously involves Himself in the affairs of men, hears and answers prayer, and saves from sin and death all who come to him through Jesus Christ. Matthew 6:9, John 5:19-24, 14:10, Ephesians 1:3-6

### THE SON

We believe Jesus is God's only son, born of a virgin, and is fully God and fully man. Having led a sinless life, he satisfied by His death the Father's justice concerning sin. We believe in his bodily resurrection, his physical ascension, and his visible return to this earth to establish his earthly kingdom. We believe that he is now in heaven at the right hand of God, where he personally advocates and intercedes on behalf of all who have put their faith in him. John 1:14-18, Romans 3:24-26, 1 Corinthians 15, Philippians 2:6-8, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 1:3, 2:17-18, 4:15, 1 John 2:1-2, Revelation 20:11-15

### THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father to bring glory to the Son and convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe the Holy Spirit indwells permanently and seals every believer in Christ. He is an abiding helper, teacher, comforter and guide, empowering each believer with selected spiritual gifts. John 14:26, 16:7-11, 13, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 12:4-11, Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30

### MAN

We believe that all people, male and female, are created in the image of God to enjoy His fellowship and to fulfill God's will on earth as his representatives. The fall of humanity was a once-for-all historical event, and since then, all humans are by nature and choice sinners. All are spiritually dead and subject to the certainty of both physical and spiritual death apart from Jesus Christ. In a fallen world, humans struggle against the sinful influences of the world, the flesh and the devil. Genesis 1:26-27, 2:7, 3:3-4, Psalm 51:5, Romans 1:18-32, 3:10-23, 5:12, Ephesians 2:1-3, Titus 1:15



## SALVATION

We believe that salvation can only be obtained through God's grace, not by our own good works. Only by repenting and personally receiving, through faith, the substitutional act of Jesus Christ dying for our sins can we obtain justification before God. All who receive Christ are forever secure in their salvation, it cannot be taken away. John 1:12, 10:28, Acts 4:12, Romans 3:21-22, 6:23, 8:38, 10:9-10, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 7:25

## CHURCH

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated believers are members. We also believe in the local church, consisting of a body of believers in Jesus Christ who worship together, pray together, study Scripture together, build one another up in Christ in love, and meet one another's needs. The church's twofold responsibility is the task of bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world and maturing them in Christ. Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:41-47, Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12,

Ephesians 4:11-16, Colossians 1:27-28, Hebrews 10:25

## ORDINANCES

We believe that our Lord Jesus committed two ordinances to those who believe in him: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that baptism is by immersion, thus serving not only as a public declaration of our faith in Christ, but a symbol of Christ's (and by picture, our own) death and resurrection to new life. We believe that the Lord's Supper commemorates our Savior's death, and is open to all self-examined believers in Jesus Christ. Matthew 3:15-17, 28:19-20, Acts 2:41, Romans 6:1-4, 1 Corinthians 11:17-32, Colossians 2:12

## THE GREAT COMMISSION AND COMMANDMENT

We believe that our purpose and mission in life as individual Christians and as a church are summed up in the Great Commandment and Great Commission which are spelled out in Scripture:

Great Commandment - Our purpose as the church is to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul and mind and to love others as ourselves. Matthew 22:37-40

Great Commission - Likewise, our mission is to go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey all Christ has commanded. Matthew 28:19-20, Acts. 1:8

## CHRIST'S RETURN

We believe in the imminent physical return of Jesus Christ to gather his church to himself. We believe he will judge both the living and the dead. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessings of the saved in Heaven and the everlasting punishment of the lost in Hell. Matthew 25:41-46, Mark 13:34-37, John 14:1-3, Acts 1:10-11, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 2 Thessalonians 1:3-10, Revelation 19:11-20:15

