



**Getting to know
your church family.**

Session 1: GRACE 101

COURSE OUTLINE

Session 1: Grace 101

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Our History

In February of 2001, Greg Fell (*RMD Superintendent*) and Bruce Redmond (*RMD Church Planters*) spoke with Ed Raymond (*then an Elder at an E-Free church in Aurora, CO*) about starting an EFCA church in Pagosa. Bruce & Ed relocated to Pagosa Springs to follow God's call in planting a church here. In August 2002, plans finally came into motion, and a first preliminary meeting was held to gauge interest. Seven families began attending regular Bible studies in the home of John & Jean Brooks. A "core team" was formed that helped establish the church, and give a solid foundation upon which to build.



Things began to progress quickly after that. In February of 2003, Grace called Rev. John Harris (*a retired pastor*) to serve as Interim Pastor, while the church sought a permanent pastor. The church also began renting a conference room in the newly constructed Community Center- which was a huge blessing and turning point. The pictures you see are of our first ever public meeting, held on January 5, 2003. In October 2003, Grace was privileged to call Jeff Daley as their first full-time Pastor. Jeff & Christie Daley provided caring and strong leadership, and the church really began to grow. Eventually, Grace had to move into the gym, where they initially gathered in a corner with about 30 people. We still meet in the gym to this day, though we have to set up a few more chairs now.



Jeff served Grace faithfully for 7 years until he was called in 2011 to pastor a church in Littleton, CO. Grace hired its next pastor, Dale Marks with his wife Patty, who served from 2012 to 2015. Grace then called its current pastor in 2016, Joey Dean and wife Allison. During the interim periods, Grace's Elders provided steady leadership for the church and the Preaching Team provided strong teaching, as well as dedicated guest speakers such as Larry Lindquist. During those times Grace continued to reach families throughout Pagosa and became known for its deep relational connections. Life Teams have always been the backbone of our church. Grace's ministries have continued to expand and grow in incredible ways. In recent years, we have been blessed with an explosion of young families and children in our church- who we hope will become a shining heritage of faith for God's glory.

VISION

At Grace in Pagosa, our vision is very simple - **LIVE GRACE!** This means living as a family deeply loved by God, as we transform our world through grace-filled lives.

Justice is receiving what is deserved. Mercy is not receiving what is deserved. Grace, on the other hand, is receiving something that is absolutely undeserved. As Christians, we have received God's grace freely (Romans 3:24, Eph 2:8, Acts 15:11), escaping the death of our own sin only by the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:10 teaches us that this grace, which we have freely received, is meant to flow through us and transform the world around us - to the glory of God our Father. This can be clearly seen in John 21, when three times Peter confesses his love for Jesus, to which Jesus responds "*Then feed my sheep.*" God never intended the gospel of His grace to stop with us, we are meant to be grace-filled conduits of God's love to others! This is at the core of what it means to LIVE GRACE.

John 21:1-17 - A picture of the church

Jesus **INVITES** (v.12), **STRENGTHENS** (v.13), and **SENDS** (v. 15-17)

This is discipleship. You can clearly see this modeled in the way Jesus lived, and it gives us a framework to live out his Great Commands (Great Commandment & Great Commission). LIVE GRACE means intentionally engaging in this rhythm.

It is our desire for Grace to truly be a *family of believers*. Far too many 'churches' function more like social groups, country clubs, or simply a denominational gathering. Grace is set up very differently, we operate as a family. A family is a group of unique individuals inseparably related by blood.

We are **united** by the blood of Christ (Eph 2:13), **drawn** together to be built up (Eph 4:11-13), and **bonded** together as one (Eph 4:3-6). As Christians, we are called to be committed to a local body of believers (Heb 13:17), united together to serve a greater purpose (Rom 12:4-5).

Our vision of LIVE GRACE is very simple, yet deeply dynamic. It can be applied to our church as a whole, any small group or ministry, any individual, or even a specific situation. It can be a filter through which we pass decisions, a guiding light in difficult circumstances, or a defining principle that we strive to live by. It is our banner, our battle cry, our charge to each and every committed family member - we want you to truly LIVE GRACE!

Core Values

An expression of who we are can clearly be seen in what we spend the most time and effort doing. Our core values are just that: a reflection of who we are, by describing what we do. These 5 values are a guide for our church - they act as a rudder for our decisions and direction.

At Grace in Pagosa, we are committed to:

1) Intentional Disciple-Making - (Matt 28:16-20)

When asked what the greatest command was, Jesus essentially said “To love God and other people with every fiber of our being” (Matt 22:34-40). Everything we do is meant to be based on that foundation of love (1 Cor 13:1-3). But what is it that we are called to *DO*, as believers? The Great Commission (Mat 28:18-20) provides us with that answer. It is the central mission of every believer - literally translating to “as you go about life, be a disciple-maker!” *At Grace, we believe our central calling is to equip believers to be intentional disciple-makers: to help people pursue intimacy with Christ, be transformed into His likeness, so that we can share His grace and love with our world!* All of our core values work in tandem to help us carry out our primary mission of intentional disciple-making. We strive to meet the unique discipleship needs of all generations, by helping people discover and utilize their spiritual gifts to build up and edify the whole church (1 Cor 14:12)

2) The Centrality of God’s Word - (2 Tim 3:16-17)

The Bible is one of God’s most important tools in developing fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. We believe Scripture is given to us to help us pursue an intimate love with God. It is our calling as ministers to preach and teach God’s Word faithfully (2 Tim 4:1-5), as it stands as a powerful witness of God’s love to others. We are committed to the centrality of God’s word in all that we do, because at the center of God’s Word is Jesus, and we want Jesus to be at the center of all that we do! We believe that God’s Word is not just for clergy or the “spiritually elite”, but is intended to be a guide for all Believers (Ps 119:105). As such, we do not focus on simply teaching what the Bible says- instead we strive to equip people to be devoted to reading God’s Word for themselves (1 Tim 4:13), to be transformed by the treasures held within (2 Tim 3:16-17).

3) God-centered Worship - (Isa 12:5; Ephesians 3:20-21)

Worship is meant to engage the heart, mind, and soul of people with God. It is meant to be both a response to God’s love and a witness to the world (Isa 12:5). Truly God-centered worship must be the hallmark of our public worship services, in order to truly connect people with their loving Father, and show the world God’s love. Therefore, we are committed to providing an atmosphere where true and intimate worship of our Lord and Savior can be experienced and expressed. We recognize that worship is not just singing songs on Sunday mornings. True worship originates from the depths our hearts (Jn 4:23), and flows out through our every action that brings Glory to God (1 Cor

10:31). There is no one “right way” to worship, different things are meaningful to the hearts of different people. At Grace, we strive to provide opportunities to worship God in ways that are meaningful for people of all generations and from all spiritual heritages.

4) Persistent Prayer - (Eph 6:18-20, 1 Thes 5:16-18)

The key to any healthy relationship is communication, and our primary means of communication with our Father is through prayer. Jesus Himself taught that God’s people should be defined by prayer (Mk 11:17). Pray is not meant to be something that we do only ritually, occasionally, or when we are in need. It is meant to be a constant flow of praise and communication from our hearts to God’s (1 Thes 5:16-18). Persistent prayer is the fuel that empowers us to present Jesus as Savior while pursuing Him as Lord. We are committed to fostering healthy prayer lives in all our members, holding prayer as a key component of what we do corporately and individually.

5) Life-Changing Community - (Eph 4:1-16, Jn 13:35)

Community is the primary context for significant spiritual growth. God doesn’t desire us to be lone wolves in our faith, rather he calls us to be a part of dedicated communities of faith (Heb 13:17). Gathering with other believers helps us develop deep relationships where we can encourage, sharpen, support, and equip one another. Ministering to and with people from other generations and spiritual heritages is a significant source of spiritual growth or “iron sharpening” (Prov 27:17). Given the broad diversity of people that EFCA churches tend to attract, at Grace, we strive to recognize, learn from, and edify the spiritual journeys of all our members through life-changing community. The primary context for these communities at Grace is through our Life Teams, which are the backbone of this core value. We are committed to providing opportunities for people to develop meaningful relationships in order to give and receive care, accountability, and encouragement.

Session 2: The EFCA & Statement of Faith

Grace in Pagosa is affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA). The EFCA is simply an association of churches that are committed to Jesus Christ, to the gospel, and to one another. We are a collection of churches that all align within the same Statement of Faith, remaining distinct (autonomous) yet deeply connected. In the U.S., there are 1,321 established EFCA churches, 475 church plants, and 114 multi-site and second language campuses.

Structure of the EFCA

Given that the EFCA represents around 1,500 congregations around the country, organizationally they are divided into 17 districts to better help connect and serve each congregation. Here at Grace in Pagosa, we are a part of the Rocky Mountain District (RMD). The EFCA also supports almost 650 missionaries serving in 59 different countries across the globe.



The current president of the EFCA is Kevin Kompelien, who helps guide the ministries and leaders towards a common vision. Kevin works directly with District Superintendents, to ensure that each congregation is enabled to live out our vision in a way that is relevant to the cultural context. The District Superintendent of the RMD is Greg Fell, who has been standing beside Grace, supporting and encouraging us since the day we were founded. Greg does a phenomenal job of “shepherding our shepherds,” has helped us through several different transitions in the life of the church, and is intimately invested in the leadership of our church. Greg feels that if he can keep the pastors and leaders healthy and spiritually growing, then the churches will be healthy and spiritually growing as well. Greg ensures that Grace in Pagosa always has a connection to the direction, encouragement, support, and resources of the EFCA.

Origins of the EFCA

New immigrant families settling in the Midwest in the late 1800’s began gathering in homes to study the Bible and worship together. It didn’t take long for churches to blossom from those small gatherings. This is very similar to our beginnings at Grace in Pagosa! By 1884, several churches were sharing a treasury with a common vision of supporting missionaries, caring for the elderly, establishing Bible Institutes, reaching youth, as well as planting new churches and orphanages. These joint ministries, and the desire for multiple congregations to work together towards a common goal, are the roots of the EFCA. In 1950, two existing collections of churches - the Norwegian Danish and the Swedish Evangelical Free Church Associations - merged together and formed The Evangelical Free Church of America.



Distinctives of the EFCA

How is the EFCA different than some other denominations you may be familiar with? This section will address exactly that. The EFCA is not focused on controlling or complete uniformity amongst congregations, but rather equipping each autonomous church family to best serve Jesus Christ in their local context. There are 10 Biblical principles that we all hold in common (Statement of Faith), not because they are a denominational edict, but because they are clearly foundational in God's Word. Apart from those, there is great freedom for individuals and congregations to faithfully express their faith in the most personally intimate and relevant way. If you could summarize this unique attitude of the EFCA, it would be with the motto on the right ->

**“In essentials, unity.
In non-essentials, charity.
In all things, Jesus Christ.”**

Following are what we refer to as the “EFCA Distinctives” - these 6 things combined are what really sets the EFCA apart from other denominations.

1. The Evangelical Free Church of America is a believers' church—membership consists of those who have a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

The great heritage of EFCA people around the world includes the fact that fellowship and ministry opportunities in the local church are based solely on one's personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and trusting in Him alone for salvation. Membership requires commitment to sound doctrine as expressed in our Statement of Faith. However, a person is not excluded from membership because he or she does not agree on every fine point of doctrine. Within the EFCA, there is allowance for legitimate differences of understanding in some areas of doctrine.



2. The Evangelical Free Church of America is evangelical—we are committed to the inerrancy and authority of the Bible and the essentials of the gospel.

The EFCA was born out of a heritage of commitment to the authority and inerrancy of Scripture. We have deep convictions based on the authority of God's Word, but we do not draw battle lines over minor points. Nor do we make minor issues of doctrine a test of fellowship in the local church. We are evangelical. We believe in separated living and personal holiness, but we are not separatists.

3. The Evangelical Free Church of America embraces a humble orthodoxy in partnership with others of like faith.

We believe in the spiritual unity of the Church though not necessarily in structural union. We join with other Christians and other denominations of like, precious faith in common goals and ministries to accomplish the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. But we believe that there is strength in diversity and that it is important to preserve our distinctives. We recognize that union in structure does not guarantee unity of spirit. Our foremost concern is unity of spirit with our Lord, with each other and with other Christians.

4. The Evangelical Free Church of America believes in Christian freedom with responsibility and accountability.

We believe in Christian liberty, but freedom always has its limitations. Responsible Christians do not abuse freedom. The apostle Paul wrote forcefully about Christian liberty in the Book of Galatians. He shattered the legalists with the doctrine of grace. But in First and Second Corinthians and Romans, the apostle also rebuked believers when liberty was abused. He declared boldly the principles of Christian liberty, but spoke with equal forcefulness about Christian accountability. The EFCA desires to preserve our freedom in Christ. We encourage our people to be responsible, godly men, women and young people who desire to live under the control of the Holy Spirit in obedience to the principles and precepts of God's Word, and in harmony with God's will for life as revealed in the Scriptures.

5. The Evangelical Free Church of America believes in both the rational and relational, i.e. the head and the heart, dimensions of Christianity.

We believe the Scriptures must be applied to our individual lives with warmth of heart, warmth of message and warmth of concern. We believe it is essential to have solid, biblical content in our doctrinal understanding of faith, but it is equally important to have a dynamic, vital relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son and to live by the power of the Holy Spirit. Sound Christian doctrine must be coupled with dynamic Christian experience. Ours is a ministry of love and spiritual reconciliation.

6. The Evangelical Free Church of America affirms the right of each local church to govern its own affairs with a spirit of interdependency with other churches.

The EFCA is committed to a congregational form of government as stated in our Articles of Incorporation: "The Evangelical Free Church of America shall be an association and fellowship of autonomous but interdependent congregations of like faith and congregational government..." Strong pastoral leadership coupled with discerning and well-equipped Christian lay people can produce spiritual growth as well as significant church growth. While the EFCA affirms the right of each local church to govern its own affairs, we also believe in the biblical values of interdependence and cooperation. We are a movement of churches committed to working with one another in order to fulfill the Great Commission in the United States and abroad. This is only possible when there are strong ties with other EFCA churches, with local district organizations and with the national EFCA ministries.

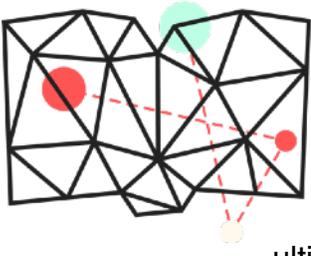
WHAT WE BELIEVE

The EFCA is an association of autonomous churches united around the same theological convictions. In the same way, Grace in Pagosa is a gathering of unique believers united around the same theological convictions and mission. Therefore, it is essential that every committed family member at Grace understand and agree with our Statement of Faith.

1. GOD

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.



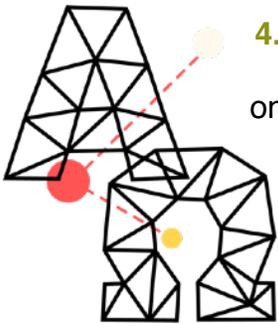
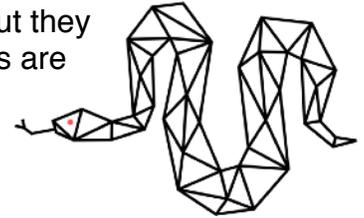


2. THE BIBLE

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.

3. THE HUMAN CONDITION

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.

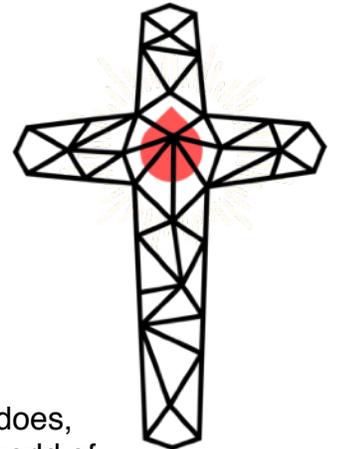


4. JESUS CHRIST

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.

5. THE WORK OF CHRIST

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.

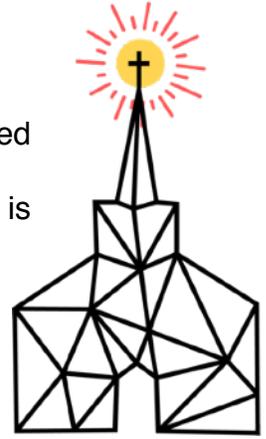


6. THE HOLY SPIRIT

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.

7. THE CHURCH

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 membership 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.



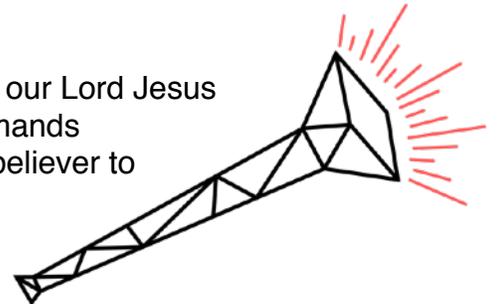
8. CHRISTIAN LIVING

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.



9. CHRIST'S RETURN

We believe in the personal, bodily and glorified 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.



10. RESPONSE AND ETERNAL DESTINY

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.



Session 3: Our Church Family, pt. 1

How our church functions is a direct result of the vision God has given us - **LIVE GRACE: living as a family deeply loved by God, transforming our world through grace-filled lives.** This vision takes mutual commitment, from the church and the members. The things that we do corporately as a church family should help each individual family member live out our vision. However, in order for the church to best equip each person, we need all of our family members to serve! That is why our vision begins with “living as a family” - we must pull together as one, with the selfless love of serving each other.

If you recall in Session 1, we saw in John 21 how Jesus modeled a discipleship pattern for us: Invite, Strengthen, Send. It is our desire to follow this model in our church life, as well as in our individual lives. We want to create a place where the love of God can flourish. **John 13:35** tells us why this is so important, because the way in which we love one another is a witness to the world around us! We strive to be a church family where God’s love is evident and inviting to all. However, salvation is not the finish line for the believer. We want people to grow spiritually when they do become a part of God’s wonderful family, and that is one of the primary roles of every local church body.

Because we know that people are very diverse, Grace strives to provide a variety of opportunities for people to pursue intimacy with Christ. Through spiritual growth, God draws us closer and closer to His mission for our lives- at Grace, we often refer to this as “pursuing intimacy with Jesus”. You can see this progression of intimacy in the way that Jesus discipled His followers: *“Come & See” (Jn 1:35), “Follow Me” (Jn 1:43), “Fishers Of Men” (Mt 4:18-20), “Bear Much Fruit” (Jn 15:8).* At Grace, we want to help you become all that God dreams for you to be - and that means equipping you to **LIVE GRACE** in a way that transforms your world!

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

In order to help us live transformed lives that transform others, God has given us all spiritual gifts. Each person also has natural abilities, personality traits, and passions that give focus to these gifts. Often, our spiritual gifts align with our passions to help us glorify God with all that He has put in us. Sometimes, our spiritual gifts take us well outside of our comfort zones, so that God’s hand working through us is much more evident to the world around us.

Spiritual gifts are given to equip the church to carry out its purpose through the service of each individual member. Paul specified that when Christ ascended to heaven He gave gifts *“to equip the saints for the work of ministry, of building up the body of Christ.” (Eph 4:12).* This verse gives us a great purpose for our giftedness, passions, and talents. The gifts listed in the Bible are found in **Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Peter 4:10-11.** It is important to note that none of these lists are exhaustive (*covering every single possible gift*), nor is the combination of these lists exhaustive. Many people have more than one spiritual gift, and you will probably find that you do as well, if you open yourself up and pursue spiritual growth!

The following is a brief definition of some spiritual gifts. After reading through the definition, check the one(s) that you believe may be gifts God has given you.

- Service: coming along side leaders and fulfilling unmet needs
- Teaching: the ability to clearly explain and effectively apply the Scriptures
- Prophecy: the special ability to discern and apply the Word of God for edification and correction in a public setting
- Leadership: effectively setting and pursuing Biblical goals for groups of people, motivating others to do God's work, and coordinating/overseeing projects
- Administration: overseeing projects, understanding and implementing goals, handling logistical needs, coordinating and communicating with others
- Exhortation: the ability to give words of comfort, consolation, counsel, and encouragement to others in such a way that they feel helped
- Shepherding: caring for the spiritual and emotional needs of others, or a group of people, to help them grow in intimacy with Christ
- Giving: the ability to earn money, manage it effectively, and give wisely, liberally, and cheerfully to the Kingdom of God
- Helps: a heart to assist and support others so that their ministries and gifts will be more effective
- Mercy: a unique heart of empathy for people who are suffering, and an ability to help alleviate the suffering with a spirit of compassion and love
- Hospitality: a love for all people, and desire to provide open homes and doors to those in need of encouragement, help, and fellowship
- Evangelism: the ability to effectively and clearly communicate the Gospel and introduce people to Christ in a personal way
- Discernment: the ability to distinguish between truth and error, good and evil, and the Spirit of God vs demonic influences
- Faith: the unusual ability to trust in the promises and power of God despite any circumstances, and to see that trust bear fruit in your life and the lives of others
- Wisdom: the exceptional ability to apply Scriptural principles to complex issues

Session 4: Our Church Family, pt. 2

The Local Church Family

Contemporary Western cultures are enthralled by choice and committed primarily to preserving the freedom to withdraw, move on, reconsider and renegotiate. We are faithful to our spouses until fidelity is uncomfortable and inconvenient. We are loyal to our employers until we get a better offer. Ours is a culture committed to consumerism, and if Christians are not careful, even our churches will be nothing more than a semi-sanctified microcosm of the surrounding world. We attend when we want, are accountable to the degree we want, submit to whom we want and only when we want and give only when it is convenient. Is this really how the church was created to be?

Even a casual reading of Scripture reveals that the commitment of believers to one another is anything but casual. In both descriptive and prescriptive language, the Bible attests to the formal and profound relationship that exists among those who have been reconciled to God and each other. The Scriptures call us to love one another, outdo one another in showing honor, live in harmony with one another, instruct, greet, comfort, serve, bear each other's burdens, forgive, encourage, always seek to do good, exhort, stir up to love and good works, confess our sins together, pray for and show hospitality to one another.

Membership Matters

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul draws on the imagery of a body as a metaphor for the local church. The apostle upholds a radically countercultural vision of desperate interdependence marked by love, service, humility, sacrifice and sympathy. And, as participants in the body are called "members," so this participation in the local church body is called membership.

Membership is not about privilege or prestige. It is not some elevated level of access with secret insider benefits. It is not a legal document or means of control. **Membership recognizes and responds to the call of discipleship in the context of gospel-centered community.** It is an affirmation and agreement to contribute to the good of the body rather than consume from it. It is a formalization of that which already implicitly exists. It is an obligation to sacrificially seek the good of others in the body of Christ by taking the general call toward service and incarnating it within a particular people.

Covenant Membership

When the Bible speaks of these formal relationships, it uses the concept of a covenant. Some of these are between people (*1 Sam. 18:3, 20:16; 2 Sam. 5:3*) while others are between God and man (*Gen. 6:18, 9:16, 15:18; Luke 22:20; Heb. 8:6-7*). The difference between a covenant and a contract is unconditional obligation. In a contract (*the way Westerners most often see commitment*), one party is only obligated to the other as long as the other party fulfills their end of the deal. If any part is unfulfilled, the whole union can be dissolved. This is not so with a covenant. A

covenant is one person declaring their unconditional commitment to another. A contract says *“I will love you and bless you as long as you love and bless me.”* A covenant says *“I will love you and bless you... regardless of anything that may happen.”*

What better way to evidence the formal relationship between a member and the church, than the same way in which God himself has always related to man (Adamic Covenant - Gen 3; Noahic Covenant - Genesis 9; Abrahamic Covenant - Genesis 12, 13, 15, 17, & 22; Palestinian Covenant - Deut 30; Mosaic Covenant - Deut 11; Davidic Covenant - 2 Samuel 7; New Covenant in Jesus Christ - Jer 31 & Heb 8). If we are going to live as a true church family, it will take mutual unconditional commitment from both the church and its members.

There are many misconceptions about a covenant, and we want to clear them up as to be certain of what we mean when using the word. A covenant is NOT a perpetual life-long obligation that you cannot ever get out of. No one is saying that you can never leave the church. Rather, a covenant speaks to the commitment in your heart to your church family. A covenant is NOT a means to control people. This is not something that is held over people's heads to get them to fall in line. A covenant is two parties each expressing their commitment and devotion to one another. The way in which we live out our covenant with one another in God's Family (the Church), should be a beautiful picture of the New Covenant LIFE we have in Christ. A covenant is a gospel witness!

“He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant - not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” - 2 Cor 3:6

Requirements for Membership

Biblical covenants also include some sort of visible representation. All cultures have symbols to signify comprehension and consent. At times those agreements include cutting animals in two and walking between the pieces (Gen. 15), placing a hand under a thigh (2 Sam. 24), removing and exchanging a sandal (Ruth 4) or instituting and enjoying a ceremonial dinner (Matt. 26:17-29). While the symbol may change, the abiding call to covenant is clear. Christians commit themselves to each other in the context of the local church in countless cultural ways. At Grace in Pagosa, our process for membership involves a class, a subsequent meeting with an Elder and some paperwork, and to be presented as a member before the church family. They are not just mere formalities; these expressions are important representations of the formal commitment.

Becoming a Committed Family Member of Grace in Pagosa

- ***Be a authentic born-again believer, professing your faith through baptism***
- ***Attend a Discover Grace class***
- ***Meet with an Elder to share your story, affirm our theological beliefs and commitment to our church family, and sign the covenant***
- ***Be presented before your church family as a new committed family member***

The Elder's Commitment to the Church Family

As shepherds and overseers of a local church, elders are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping and caring for the corporate church body and her individual members. The following is an overview of the Biblical commitments for elders:

The elders covenant...

- ***to appoint elders and deacons (including staff members) according to the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).***
- ***to prayerfully seek God's will for our church community and steward her resources to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and following of the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).***
- ***to care for the church and seek her growth in grace, truth and love (Mat 28:16-20; Eph 4:15-16; Col 1:28; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4).***
- ***to provide teaching and counsel and spiritual shepherding from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; 1 Tim 4:16; 2 Tim 4:1-5; Titus 2:1).***
- ***to equip the members of the church for the work of ministry (Eph 4:11-16).***
- ***to be on guard against false teachers and teachings (Mat 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Tim 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 (Mat 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:1-13; Gal 6:1; James 5:19-20).***
- ***to set an example and join members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership stated below (Phil 3:17; 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3).***

Elder's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Family Member's Commitment to the Church Family

Romans 8 discusses how believers are to “live by the Spirit,” and that is precisely our desire for every committed family member at Grace. The requirements of this membership covenant are in no way intended as an addition to the biblical obligations of a believer. Rather, this document functions primarily as an accessible explanation of what the Scriptures teach about the obedience that faith produces.

I covenant that...

BELIEF

- **I have realized my guilt before God, confessed my sins to Him, and received the Lord Jesus Christ, who bore my sins on the cross as my personal Savior** (Rom 3:19-23, 5:8; John 1:12; Mat 28:19-20; Rom 6:4).
- **I follow Jesus Christ as Lord of my life, and seek to confess Him as such before others by the testimony of both life and lip** (Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 15:14-15).
- **I trust in the power of the Holy Spirit, who lives in me, to keep me, guide me, and lead me to holiness and intimacy with God** (John 14:26, 16:13; Rom 8:2-4; Gal 5:22-25).
- **I accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and my final authority in all matters of faith and practice** (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
- **I have read, and affirm my belief in, the EFCA's 10 point statement of faith** (1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7; Jude 3).

ACTION

- **I commit to support my church family through sacrificially and joyfully giving of my spiritual gifts, time, talents, and resources for the ministry of this church** (Mal 3:8-10; 1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 9:7; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Cor 11:26).
- **I commit to pray regularly for the work of this church, the pastors & leaders, and the members** (Eph 6:18-19; 1 Thes 5:12-25; Heb 13:17; 1 Peter 5:11-15).
- **I commit to engage in the life of this church family through regular attendance of church services, involvement in discipleship, serving in outreach, and sharing together at the Lord's Table** (Mat 28:18-20; Acts 2:42; Heb 10:25; 1 Cor 11:26).
- **I agree to share my life with others, and pursue life changing community through intentional and intimate involvement with my church family.** (Acts 2:42-47; Eph 4:1-16).
- **I submit to the authority of God and that of the church He has placed me in the care of, including discipline if necessary** (Mat 18:15-18).
- **I commit to supporting and advancing the vision of Grace in Pagosa, and being actively invested in the life of this church family.**

Family Member's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Print Name: _____

Family Member's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Print Name: _____