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Grace Community Church Profile

Overview

GCC's Mission is, "Learning to authentically live out Jesus' grace." We are a community of Christ followers meeting in the historic district of Marblehead. Our intense love for the Lord, solid commitment to the Word of God, and passion to reach our community and the world for Christ are the common threads that bind us.

GCC membership numbers 50 with current average Sunday worship attendance of 80, which has increased over the last couple of years from an average of 60.

Church History

GCC originally was established as the First Baptist Church of Marblehead in 1810. Adoniram Judson, father of the mission to Burma and the first missionary from America, preached several Sundays during 1818 while the church was seeking a resident pastor. The Church's membership numbered 122 in 1827. In 1833, a Church building on Pleasant Street was dedicated, but subsequently burned to the ground in 1867. The current sanctuary was dedicated in 1868, and the Fellowship Hall addition was completed in 1960.

Reverend Bob Dibbs served as Pastor from 1979 until he retired in the spring of 2011.

In 2003, the First Baptist Church voted to leave the American Baptist Association-USA and made substantial changes to By-Laws. In 2004, the Church voted for a name change to "Grace Community Church."

Recent History

Reverend Eric Dokken served as Senior Pastor from 2013 until 2023, when he resigned for personal reasons. In February 2023, Reverend David Brame, who has over 30 years of pastoral experience, began serving as our Interim Pastor and is working with the Search Committee to find our next Senior Pastor.

In 2022, we hired two part-time staff for our Children's Ministry and Youth Ministry Director positions. The recent growth of our church can be attributed to the expansion of our Children and Youth ministries, which have attracted younger families. We are excited and hopeful to see how God continues to use our church and ministries to reach more families.

Theological Stance

GCC is not formally affiliated with any denomination or theological organization. Our aim is to be a historic Christian church that by faithfully following God's Word, seeks to wholeheartedly worship and honor Jesus Christ, live the Gospel before all, and minister the Gospel to our community. In practice, we seek to focus most of our attention on the major doctrines of our faith and the essential elements of a faithful walk with Christ. On non-essentials, we practice charity toward one another as each seeks to understand God's Word as clearly and deeply as possible.

Congregation

The GCC congregation is predominantly made up of residents of Marblehead, Swampscott, and Salem. The life stage distribution is as follows:

- 18 families with young children
- 8 families with teens
- 16% retired
- 42% couples
- 12% single adults
- 5% college students

Leadership of the church is comprised of 25 to 30 actively-involved people, some of whom serve in multiple leadership positions.

Sunday Worship Service

Sunday worship is held from 10:30am to 11:45am during the school year, and from 10:00am to 11:15am during summer months. Attendees are friendly, and most people dress casually. We have a "blended" worship service using traditional and contemporary music styles. Kids are always welcome in the service, and we also provide a nursery for those 5 years and younger and Children's Church for those in Kindergarten through 5th grade. We have complimentary refreshments after the service.

Tithes & Offerings

GCC's annual budget for the June 2023-May 2024 fiscal year is \$290,500. The allocation of these tithes and offerings is detailed in the 2022-2023 Annual Report.

Giving over the past several years, has increased as shown below:

- 2022-2023: \$280,673
- 2021-2022: \$279,335
- 2020-2021: \$224,238
- 2019-2020: \$204,842

Governance, Boards, Committees, and Teams

GCC governance is defined in the Constitution and By-Laws last amended in 2014.

Board of Elders

Purpose: The Board of Elders is responsible for setting the spiritual direction for GCC, monitoring progress, and taking action to make certain GCC's mission is fulfilled.

Living Out Grace: Mercy & Evangelism

Board of Deacons

Purpose: To engage, assess, and attend to the spiritual, emotional, and physical welfare of the church family. The Deacons assist the Elders and are sensitive to the spiritual and physical welfare of the church family.

Events

Purpose: To provide service projects for the community and to offer social events and gatherings for fellowship.

Heartwarmers Team

Purpose: To provide meals for new parents as well as for people who are sick and bereaved.

Hospitality Team

Purpose: To help to assimilate people into the life of the church by fostering opportunities for fellowship, including providing refreshments in the Fellowship Hall following Sunday morning worship service. Also, to maintain the kitchen and coordinate use in functions.

Mission Board

Purpose: To administer the entire mission program of the Church around the world.

Vacation Bible School

Purpose: An annual program to provide teaching, music, and crafts for children ages 4 to 5th grade during the mornings of the last week in June.

Welcome Team

Purpose: To greet parishioners upon entering the Sunday morning service and to welcome new people attending.

Learning Grace: Discipleship & Worship

Children's Ministry

Purpose: To provide teaching to children 5 years of age to 5th grade, using the Gospel Project curriculum.

Discipleship

Purpose: To provide teaching to adults in order to expand their understanding of Jesus, the Bible, and their Christian faith.

Music Team

Purpose: To coordinate music with the pastor to deliver a unified theme for Sunday worship service.

Prayer Team

Purpose: To provide prayer for individuals in need, the community, and our church.

Youth Ministry

Purpose: To provide Christian teaching and fellowship for teens in our church.

Supporting Ministry: Administration & Facilities*Administration*

Purpose: To create the weekly bulletin, electronic newsletter, digital and paper flyers for events, and update the church website.

Communication

Purpose: To provide information and discussion at our leadership meetings and our annual church meeting.

Custodian

Purpose: To clean and maintain a welcoming atmosphere in all areas of the church.

Decorating Team

Purpose: To decorate the sanctuary during Christmas, Easter, and other special events.

Facilities Team

Purpose: To steward the church building and parsonage.

Finance Team

Purpose: To prepare annual financial statements; prepare monthly financial statements for Elders; count, record and deposit contributions; and prepare tax statements for contributors.

Tech and Audio/Visual Team

Purpose: To maintain the A/V equipment and provide A/V support for Sunday morning worship.

Other*Ad-Hoc Pastor Search Committee*

Purpose: To identify pastoral candidates and recommend to the Board of Elders.

Outreach Efforts & Events*Small Groups*

We have several small groups that meet together for Bible study, fellowship, accountability, support, and sharing at various times during the week. Each of these groups has a slightly different feel, and uses either study guides or focuses on discussing different topics, but each group is designed to help believers grow in their relationship with Christ and with one another.

Nursery

Held during Sunday worship service for children of ages 0-4 years old and is using the Gospel Project curriculum.

Grace Kids

A midweek ministry program for children that encourages them to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ and others. The development of a strong faith is facilitated through fellowship, fun, and familiarization with God's word.

Christmas Walk

GCC opens our Fellowship Hall on Saturday of the Marblehead Christmas Walk and provides a warm atmosphere and serves coffee, tea, hot chocolate, cookies, and other sweet treats for free to approximately 300 people who stop in for refreshment. Tracts are provided to anyone interested.

Vacation Bible School

GCC runs a VBS program each summer. Parents, friends, and neighbors attend a closing event to highlight the gospel message.

Other outreach programs, past and current, include:

- Men's Bible Study
- Women's Bible Study
- International Students event at a parishioner's house
- Marblehead Food Bank, Halloween Can Drive, and ongoing contributions
- Donations of citrus, socks, and belts to the Lifebridge shelter
- Donations of Mother's Day baskets filled with small gifts for teenage mothers at the Centerboard shelters
- Donations of backpacks filled with school supplies for the North Shore Foster Children
- Donations of Christmas boxes filled with small gifts for the North Shore Foster Children
- Donations of gifts for children of an incarcerated parent, through the Project Angel Tree

Physical Facility

Grace Community Church is located at 17 Pleasant Street in the heart of the historic district of Marblehead, Massachusetts. The church building, which is owned by GCC with no mortgage, is a classic white clapboard New England style colonial building dedicated in 1868. The main sanctuary has padded pews and a seating capacity of 200, and includes stained glass windows at front, rear, and sides. The front part of the sanctuary includes a baptistery, choir loft, and raised stage on which a pulpit is located. The choir loft is occupied by a drum kit that is used by the music team during Sunday morning services. An electric piano, various microphones, speakers, and other equipment used by the worship team also occupy parts of the raised stage. A grand piano and an electronic organ are present in the front of the sanctuary on either side on the pulpit stage.

The church building is located on a 12,171 square foot lot and the Fellowship Hall is situated on a 9,160 square foot lot. The Fellowship Hall portion of the facility was constructed in 1960 and consists of a 1,100 square foot room that is used for informal meetings, potluck meals, the annual Sunday School kick-off pancake breakfast, the Christmas Walk, game and movie nights, crafts

and fellowship, and other events. It is contiguous to a kitchen equipped with a refrigerator, oven and stove, and sink. Men's and women's restrooms are located in the corridor leading from the sanctuary to the Fellowship Hall. In addition, a small (168 square foot) parlor is located in this corridor for use as a prayer room prior to the Sunday service and overflow during Sunday worship, and various other purposes. Air conditioners are used on the lower level of the Fellowship Hall.

The lower level of the church includes an administrative office, the pastor's office, two staff offices, a small room for nursing mothers, two Sunday school classrooms, and a nursery area of 660 square feet. Two restrooms are located on the lower level.

The church is heated by oil and natural gas and central AC is provided to the sanctuary. Portable window air conditioners are used to cool the Fellowship Hall during the summer months.

Parsonage

GCC owns a single-family house located two blocks away from the GCC church building. This home traditionally has been used for our pastor or youth pastor. This house is around 100 years old and is heated with natural gas. The first floor has a kitchen, half bath, dining and living rooms. These two rooms are separated by recessed sliding doors. The second floor has three bedrooms and a small study or office area and a full bath. The basement has a washer and dryer connection and a soapstone sink. An unheated attic is available for storage. There is off-street parking for four cars.