

Grace Church Community Covenant with Explanation and Scriptures

We, the members of Grace Church Tri-Cities, having placed our faith in Christ, and having expressed that faith through baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, make the following commitments in dependence upon God:

Section 1: Gospel Unity in Community

Followers of Jesus seek to honor the moral will and character of God revealed in Old and New Testament in the light of the person and work of Christ Jesus. Some topics are clearly addressed in Scripture, but others must be understood in light of the principals that are clearly addressed. As we commit to submit and pursue God's will together, we will be striving in partnership for a singular purpose: the Glory of Jesus Christ. In our common purpose we will form strong family-like friendships and also, inevitably, sin against each other. By the grace of God, we will be able to address any serious sin in our community and pursue forgiveness and restoration in Christ. This goal will require significant energy, intentionality, and prayer.

We will submit to God's Word as the final authority on all issues to which it speaks.

Isaiah 8:20 ESV

To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 ESV

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:20–21 ESV

knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

We will continually labor and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace in our midst.

Ephesians 4:3 ESV

eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Colossians 3:12–16 ESV

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

We will live in community together in Christ-like love – showing kindness, taking responsibility for each other, bearing one another's burdens, and confronting sin as occasion may require.

John 13:34–35 ESV

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Galatians 6:1–2 ESV

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

We will handle any concern or grievance with one another by speaking directly with that person, seeking resolution without unhealthy delay or gossip.

Matthew 18:15–17 ESV

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does

not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Ephesians 4:31 ESV

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Proverbs 25:9 ESV

Argue your case with your neighbor himself, and do not reveal another's secret...

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for each other.

Hebrews 3:13 ESV

But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 10:23-25 ESV

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

James 5:16 ESV

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

We will submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church as they seek to faithfully lead us, knowing that they will give account to Christ as Judge.

Hebrews 13:17 ESV

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with

joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

1 Peter 5:5 ESV

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Section 2: Ministry, Life, and Mission

Followers of Jesus are all called to represent of God in their life. The only way Christians can do this is through the reality of the gospel and the Holy Spirit in their lives. God’s people have a high calling to live pure lives with joy and to partner with God in His global purpose to make the name of Christ known. Faithful disciples are lovingly occupied with helping other people become disciples, especially in the upbringing and education of their own children. Caring disciples are concerned for the good of their neighbors and for the public awareness of the supremacy of Christ in every arena of life. Those who are most vulnerable in society of great concern to God and therefore of great concern to His church.

We will work together for long-term, faithful, gospel-centered ministry in this church by energetically upholding our practices of worship, community discipline, and doctrine.

Jude 3 ESV

Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

Philippians 1:27 ESV

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,

2 Timothy 1:13 ESV

Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

We will joyfully raise children in our care in the nurture and instruction of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example seek the salvation of our family and friends

Ephesians 6:4 ESV

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

1 Peter 2:11–12 ESV

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

We will seek to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, leading a new and holy life in Christ.

Ephesians 4:22 ESV

to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,

Titus 2:12 ESV

training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

2 Corinthians 6:14–15 ESV

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?

We will seek the good of the society in which we live, namely, the righteous rule of God realized in every corner of our community

Jeremiah 29:7 ESV

But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

1 Thessalonians 4:11–12 ESV

and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

Jeremiah 9:24 ESV

but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”

We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations

2 Corinthians 8:9 ESV

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

1 Timothy 5:17–18 ESV

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.”

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 ESV

...whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

We will, if any of us move away from this place, as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can continue to carry out the spirit of this covenant with a new community. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.