

A Quick Word About Grace

Who are we? We are a Congregational Christians, a Protestant church, in the Reformed tradition. Our spiritual ancestors are the Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock and the Puritans who founded Boston. Their quest for religious freedom from the oppression in England motivated them to make the journey across the sea to this new land.

What church is similar? In one sense there is nothing similar to Christian Congregationalism. No other church exercises the autonomy we do, except independent churches, yet we have a strength they do not have: an interdependent fellowship with churches of like mind (other Congregational Christian churches) to accomplish tasks such as missions, and national annual and youth meetings. Churches similar to us would be the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the United Church of Christ. However there are a few significant and important differences. First, the church is autonomous under God, that is, we count on God alone to be head over our church, and there is no individual, board, bishop, or denomination that determines our direction in ministry. Under God we determine our mission, our theology, our stance, if any, on the issues of the day. Nobody dictates those to us. With this freedom, of course, comes great responsibility, and great opportunity. Second, we are a non-creedal church. That means we are not mandated to use the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, or any other statement of faith. We use them on occasion, along with some others. What binds Congregational Christians together is the church covenant (see below), which is written and/or adopted by each individual church and outlines our essential beliefs and how we order ourselves as a faith community. Three words you will hear in Congregational circles are: Faith, Freedom and Fellowship. We believe in developing an ever stronger vibrant Christian faith. We believe we are granted by God the freedom as a church to exercise that faith however we are to by God (remember the Pilgrims). We believe in fellowship with other Christians we are stronger and follow God's will more closely. And besides, it's just more fun!

What role does the Bible have at Grace Church? We are biblically based in our worship, our study, and service. Congregational Christians have historically used the Bible as their primary rule and guide to faith, above all other written sources. Grace Church proudly continues that tradition.

What is a covenant and what is the covenant of Grace Church? A covenant is basically a promise between certain parties describing how they will behave toward each other. A marriage ceremony is essentially a covenant. A church covenant describes how its members will behave toward each other and God, and how they believe God will in return, behave toward them. Below is the Grace Church covenant: We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the word and the will of God. We propose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the church to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice and peace. As did our forebears, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.