GRACE AT THE CROSSROADS

...AN INVITATION TO RESPOND
Even in these challenging times, Grace Presbyterian Church desires to make Jesus visible in our community, to put grace in action in order to saturate the area around Grace with the gospel and transform lives.

Whether it’s inside or outside, we gather for worship and celebrate the Lord each week, connect to grow in authentic gospel-centered community, and serve to build up the Kingdom of God at Grace, across the street, and around the world.

People at Grace are living this out throughout the week. Despite the pandemic, there are opportunities to connect on a more personal level in Bible studies and prayer groups. Young mothers from our congregation and beyond find fellowship and encouragement in one such study. Middle- and high-schoolers have a special time to meet, have fun, share thoughts, find acceptance.

And we continue in our desire to serve others, whether part of the Grace community, our neighbors, or those in need around us.

People like Alana. She attends a significantly under-resourced high school nearby. A bright young woman at risk of seeing her potential go unrealized.

Then she heard about our Friends of Westchase mentor program. She signed up and participated with a member of our church engaging and encouraging her. From there, she joined the afterschool tutoring program Grace established. . . as a tutor!

Now, her classmates benefit from her growing academic skills and confidence. It’s the first peer-to-peer tutoring in the school’s history.
Alana’s is just one story.

But at Grace, it is enheartening to know we can tell hundreds upon hundreds of stories like it over our 50-plus years. Stories of families, singles, seniors, students, newcomers, long-timers—stories of people who live, work, play, and seek community in the 40 square miles surrounding our campus.

Stories of people transformed by Grace.

Just as Jim Tomforde and family were this Christmas as he shared with the world on Facebook.

*How meaningful it was, that this Christmas we walked into our church Christmas Eve service with the Morby family. We have done life off and on and through thick and thin with the Morbys. I will never ever forget what friends they were to us when we lost our son. The Sunday following Brock’s death, Greg and Pam gathered our close friends together in an upper room at our church, laid hands on us and prayed through tears with us. I have never experienced a deeper show of empathy in my life. We love Pam, Greg, and their lovely kids Amy, Dawson, and Carter. We love our family at Grace Presbyterian Church.*

It is our desire that many more find their Grace “family.” Find a warm welcome. Find a commitment to help the less fortunate, to make disciples, to be the hands and feet of Jesus to all those around us. To be transformed.

Even as we come out of today’s pandemic limitations, we envision a brighter tomorrow.

Right now, today, Grace stands at this crossroads of past and future. Of legacy and opportunity.

So, we are embarking on a bold, compelling vision to make disciples who make disciples. In this place, at this time, relying on Christ, we will equip the Grace family financially so that we make a spiritual and personal impact in this area we are called to serve. Through your faithful giving, we will raise $3.8 million to:
• Grow our ability to gather, connect, and serve the Grace family and the community around us.

• Create a firm financial and spiritual foundation to make the most of this time of transition.

• Achieve our six Major Strategy Initiatives.

• Support a committed staff so that we are well-led and equipped.

And so equipped, we will pursue our six Major Strategy Initiatives to achieve our vision of saturating the 40 square miles around us. These initiatives are:

• Develop a participatory culture of worship.

• Focus education on training disciples.

• Implement discipleship groups.

• Establish Alpha groups to reach beyond our walls.

• Develop neighborhood groups.

• Love and serve our neighbors.

There are needs on both sides of the Beltway. And below, this document expands on how our six initiatives can meet them.

We need the resources to grow the impact we envision.

And we need... you!

Working together to meet our $3.8 million goal, we will strive to ensure those living in the 40 square miles around us are be touched by Grace and led by God.

This is Grace in action!
There was no Westchase in 1969. No Energy Corridor. No Beltway.

But there was Grace.

God’s grace in guiding a mission-minded group of families from downtown Houston to Ella Lee Lane. And there was Grace Presbyterian Church, the fledgling fellowship they founded on the bald land that would become West Houston.

Throughout the more than half a century that followed, Grace Presbyterian has existed to bring the gospel to West Houston, to make Jesus visible to everyone around us. To financially blessed neighborhoods and business centers. To the less fortunate families and challenged schools.

We have persisted through hurricanes and floods, boom times and busts, times of great blessing and times requiring great faith.

Like now.

From the first days until today, we committed to being a beacon to our community, manifesting to others the love of God’s son we have received.

Now, it is the perfect time to look ahead. To consider where our journey takes us from here.

In 1969, stepping out in faith, the founding members of Grace could not have dreamed how God was going to lead them, bless them, and use them.

Neither can we.
What we can do, at this crossroad of legacy and opportunity, is continue in the same way we began—trust God, move out in faith, and allow Jesus to work through us.

What better time? As we emerge from COVID, we have this window of transition. Time to solidify how we can do ministry well. Time to evaluate where we can be more effective.

Time to prepare as a congregation for fruitful service in the decades to come—prepare spiritually and financially.

It was the great preacher Charles Spurgeon who said:

Begin as you mean to go on,
and go on as you began,
and let the Lord be all in all to you.

Let us begin with renewed commitment to see God work through Grace and to be God’s work through Grace.

Karen Welton did. This Grace member had a heart for the many young families on her street whom she didn’t know. First, she prayed and asked her discipleship group to pray—over time—about how to reach out. Then, she acted. COVID or not, she extended an invitation to her backyard, and 20 people came! Relationships were born.

Like Karen, let’s begin with the end in mind of re-engaging with our faith and seeing it at work. Let us go on to seize the opportunities for service to which we are called. And let us invite the Lord to “be all in all.”

One journey led us here. And from here, we journey on in faith.
A PLAN
FOR
IMPACT

Make no mistake, we are not entering an “interim” time of waiting for something to happen. We start now on an exciting time of transition.

Interim connotes a gap to be crossed. Transition speaks of change, movement. . . progress.

The coming year is absolutely foundational to the longer journey ahead. We will set a course, always seeking the Lord’s blessing and guidance, and establish the financial capability to “begin as we mean to go on.”

All of this rises from a carefully conceived plan to see gospel transformation in our members, our students and children, and all those who visit us. And to be sent out to saturate the 40 square miles around us with the same transforming gospel.

In fact, we’ve already begun implementing our six Major Strategic Initiatives:

1. Worship Evolution—This moves worship away from a performance orientation to a participatory one that reflects our value of “worshiping not observing.” Over the last year, we have evolved our service to be more formational.

2. Equipping Hour—Reorient current education time into an Equipping Hour that helps train Grace’s people for a life of discipleship. In February, we will offer the first course of our discipleship training curriculum, EPIC—Equipping People in Community—adding courses each semester.
3. **Discipleship Groups**—Implement micro groups composed of three to five people that disciple each other for a period of time before multiplying into additional groups. Our Session members are currently doing a pilot program of small, four-to-five-person discipling groups to eventually expand into more groups.

4. **Alpha Small Groups**—These create a place to reach beyond our walls to bring people into conversations about faith, life, and God. Members of our staff will be participating in the Alpha Conference later this year to learn from other churches and launch our effort.

5. **Neighborhood Groups**—Develop a neighborhood group model where people connect relationally with their friends, neighbors, and coworkers to invite them into the Kingdom of God. We anticipate beginning a pilot neighborhood group in 2021 and then expanding.

6. **Serve Our Neighbors**—Our neighbors are around the corner and around the world. We’ll continue to love and support each intentionally with acts of service, prayer, and our finances.

   We have reduced personnel expenses—our largest budget item—by half a million dollars through voluntary attrition and voluntary reduction of hours and cut the entire budget from $4.2 million to $3.8 million. Yet, we retain an amazing team to minister across every age and stage of our congregation and community.

   The chart that follows illustrates what our $3.8 million campaign will accomplish, including:

   - Funding our goal to gather, connect, and serve.
   - Maintaining our excellent staff in ministry and administration.
   - Ensuring our “home” is well-maintained, attractive, and welcoming.
   - Continuing the many missional outreaches we pursue in Houston and around the world.

   Writing to the early church, the Apostle Peter encouraged them to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

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**GRACE AT THE CROSSROADS**
Our Stewardship Campaign 2021 will enable us not only to pursue that but to grow with Grace as well, as we strive to make Jesus visible.

Despite the challenges, this is as exciting a time as we have faced in our history. And with your help, we’ll seize the opportunities before us.

**GRAACE AT THE CROSSROADS**
In Matthew 28:19, Jesus gave final instructions to his followers –
All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make
disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.

These words have echoed down through the centuries. They issue a
call today that the Grace family seeks to answer by making Him visible,
making disciples, serving each other, and serving our neighbors.

And as we answer the call, as we journey forward, we come now to a
crossroads. Certainly, among the most important moments we will see at Grace.

We have traveled over half a century to be here. We have faced many
obstacles and challenges. God have been faithful every step of the way.

He is faithful now.

Faithful to lay a path before us in keeping with His will and his ways.

Faithful to draw each of us here where His grace abounds and where
we share it near and far.

Now is the time to trust in His faithfulness, put discipleship in action,
and move out in His guidance.
OUR $3.8 MILLION GOAL IS A COMMITMENT, IN FAITH, TO A FUTURE FOR GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WE CAN SEE UNFOLDING BEFORE US. A FUTURE OF HOPE. A FUTURE OF SERVICE. A FUTURE OF GROWING IN GRACE. LET’S WORK TOGETHER NOW AND MAKE THIS VISION A REALITY!

WE HAVE BEEN CALLED FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS.