

Vision [Expresses the optimal goal and reason for existence.]

Grace Community Fellowship of Manheim has been birthed to be obedient to the words of Jesus.

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

Mission [Provides an overview of the plans to realize the vision by identifying the service areas, target audience, values and goals of the organization.]

The Mission of Grace Community Fellowship of Manheim based on 1 Corinthians 10:31- “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”(ESV) is to:

- 1) Be a church of influence- a church that cannot be ignored in the community.
- 2) Be a church so completely dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit that nothing will stop or stand in the way of the fulfillment of its mission.
- 3) Be a church that teaches scripture so clearly that lives are changed forever and personal growth results from the power of God’s word- the Bible.
- 4) Be a church where repentant sinners are responding to Christ’s call to salvation.
- 5) Be a church where heartfelt praise and worship connect with Heaven, exalting Christ with powerful songs of faith and hope.
- 6) Be a church where people are unified, praying and full of God’s Spirit while fulfilling the Great Commission.
- 7) Be a church so compassionate that people are drawn from impossible situations into a loving and friendly church family with answers found that bring help, hope, forgiveness, guidance, and encouragement.

I. Articles of Faith/Core Beliefs

(without exception and non-negotiable)

1. We teach/believe the Holy Bible is the inspired word of God, inerrant, infallible, and the all-sufficient authority in matters of faith, doctrine, and Christian living. (II Timothy 3:16-17 ESV)
2. We teach/believe in one God, eternally existing in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Deut. 6:4, John 10:30, John 14:16-23, Rom. 8:9 ESV)
3. We teach/believe: in the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, that He is true God and man, He died on the cross for our sins, He rose bodily from the dead, He ascended into heaven where He sits at the right hand of the Father, He is now our High Priest and Advocate and we await His return. (Luke 1:26-38, John 1:1-18, John 19:16-30, John 20:1-31, Luke 24:50-53, Mark 16:19, Hebrews 4:14-16, I Thess. 4:13-18 ESV)
4. We teach/believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and as a result was alienated from God. Only through regeneration by the work of the Holy Spirit can man's salvation and relationship with God be restored. (Genesis 1:1-3:24, Eph. 2:1-10, Eph. 4:17-24 ESV)
5. We teach/believe that eternal salvation is a free gift of God by His grace, entirely apart from man's works, and is possessed by any and all who have faith and trust in Jesus Christ and who, by the work of the Holy Spirit, receive a new heart, not only a heart cleansed of sin, but one that longs for God. "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Eph. 2:8-9 ESV)
6. We teach/believe that the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Godhead, has a unique and special work in the lives of all believers. The Holy Spirit is sent by God to empower us from on high and to lead us. We also hold that all gifts and offices of the Holy Spirit are operational until the return of Christ. (See I Corinthians 12:1-31, Romans 12:3-8, and Ephesians 4:7-16 ESV)
7. We teach/believe in regenerated church members: that is, persons old enough to understand their need for Jesus Christ and who, of their own free will, place their trust in Him as their Savior and Lord. (Acts 2:37-41, Acts 4:12, John 3:1-21 ESV)
8. We teach/believe that baptism is to be by immersion and the Lord's Supper is memorial to His suffering and the death on the cross. These are ordinances to be observed by the church in its present age. They are not, however, to be regarded as means for man's salvation. (Acts 2:41, I Cor. 11:23-26 ESV)

Baptism: The Bible teaches that Jesus came to John at the Jordan River to be baptized (Matthew 3:13-17 ESV) Later in Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus instructs his disciples to go into the world “baptizing them...” The disciples followed His instructions to baptize new believers with the results recorded in Acts 2:37-38. We understand that the word ‘baptism’ used in the New Testament means by immersion in the original Greek script. After repentance, a new believer is baptized by immersion (Acts 2:41 ESV.) This became the pattern for one’s salvation experience as shown throughout the entire New Testament.

Based on our Biblical understanding, we know that Baptism is not sacramental; rather it is an experience representing that the “believer has died and risen with Christ” (Romans 6:1-14 ESV).

Also based on scripture, we understand that Baptism does not save a person or that it is essential for salvation. “It is by grace you are saved through faith” (Ephesians 2:8 ESV) However, we encourage all believers to be baptized by immersion though it is not mandatory for church membership.

9. We believe/teach that marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. For Christians, marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out their lives of discipleship together before God. In a service of Christian marriage, a lifelong commitment is made between a woman and a man with public witness and acknowledgment by the community of faith. (See section II of this Appendix for additional detail).

10. We teach/believe in the personal, bodily, imminent, and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ and that His Second Coming inspires believers for dynamic and zealous life and service for Him while waiting for His return. (Acts 1:10, 11, 1 Cor, 15:58)

11. We teach/ believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead, the everlasting blessedness of the saved in heaven, and the everlasting punishment and separation from God of the unsaved in hell. (1Thes. 4:13-18, Rev. 20:11-15)

12. We teach/believe in the autonomy of the local church. The church shall manage its own affairs as God directs while maintaining relationships with other churches, organizations and ministries that serve God in a fashion consistent with our vision and these Bylaws.

II. Marriage/Family/Singleness

We believe that God intends human life to begin in families and to be blessed through families. The family is created by a man and a woman entering into a covenant for life. According to scripture, God's blessing on sexual union takes place only within the marriage relationship. Marriage is meant for sexual intimacy, companionship, and the birth and nurture of children. We believe that human life begins at conception.

Children are of greatest importance as noted in the Bible. Jesus uses them as examples of how to receive the reign of God in our lives. Children are to be wanted, loved, disciplined, trained and respected in their homes and in the church. Scripture also teaches children to honor and obey their parents in the Lord.

We hold that within the church single persons are to be wanted, valued, and respected and they are to be included in the life and activities of the church family.

The church is called to help couples strengthen their marriage relationships and to encourage reconciliation in times of conflict. The church is to minister truth and compassion to persons in difficult family relationships.

There are some in the church who experience abuse, sexual misconduct and other problems that make marriage and family life extremely difficult to carry out and even impossible, resulting in divorce. Jesus affirmed the sanctity of marriage in Matthew 5:32. He pointed to the hardness of the heart as the ultimate cause for divorce in Mark 10:2-9. The church needs to uphold the permanency of marriage and help couples move from conflict to resolution.

Scripture tells us that God "hates" divorce. He hates it because it always involves unfaithfulness to the solemn covenant of marriage that the man and woman entered into before Him. Divorce is in the scripture only because of man's sins. In Matthew 19:8, legal divorce was a concession for the faithful partner when faced with the sexual sin of or desertion by their unbelieving spouse.

Jesus uses the Greek word "pornea" in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. This is the general term that encompasses sexual sins such as adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, and incest. When a spouse commits sexual "pornea", the result is death to the marriage covenant.

This, as harsh as it seems (traced throughout scripture), is the consequence of adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, and incest.

This now puts the victimized spouse in an extremely difficult situation. At this moment, the heart of God desires Holy Spirit conviction which produces repentance and restoration with God. At this point, the road for relational repentance, forgiveness, and building a new marriage covenant is possible. However, if the guilty spouse refuses God's way, the innocent spouse is now put in the difficult position of seeking a divorce. According to Jesus' own words (Matt. 5:32), this person is free to remarry.

Remarriage is permitted for the faithful partner when divorce occurs on Biblical grounds. In fact, the purpose for Biblical divorce is to make it clear that the faithful partner is free to remarry-but only in the Lord (Romans 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 7:39).

When a person is divorced and re-married prior to a conversion, the Apostle Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 7:20-27 that the couple is to stay in the relationship. If a person is saved following a divorce, is yet unmarried and reconciliation is not possible, the individual is free to remain unmarried or to re-marry another believer (1 Corinthians 7:39 and 2 Corinthians 6:14). In cases where a believer obtained a divorce and is re-married on other than Biblical grounds, the believer is living in the sin of adultery until the sin is confessed (Mark 10:11-12). God forgives sin immediately when the repentance takes place. Nothing in scripture indicates otherwise. From that moment, the believer should remain in his or her current marriage.

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January

1/15 Jim & Kim Carmody

March

3/23 John & Linda Roser

May

5/6 Virgil & Jen Weaver

5/22 Jason & Amanda Haldeman

5/22 Stan & Carol Grube

July

7/21 Dana & Shirley Keener

August

8/16 Dennis & Cindy Andrew

8/17 Paul & Kay Burrichter

8/26 Lowell & Tracy Graybill

September

9/24 Brian & Andrea McNece

October

November

11/1 Eric & Tammy Vital

December

12/25 Milt & Wanda Stoltzfus