

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH - 2507 NORTH VASSAULT - TACOMA, WASHINGTON

Our Location

We are located in the north end of Tacoma near the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. We are in a residential area which includes several apartment complexes, single homes and an elementary school. We are located on Puget Sound and within a five mile radius there are several shopping districts, schools, parks, libraries, other denominational churches, cultural opportunities, movie theaters and restaurants. We are also close to several community colleges, universities, medical care clinics, hospitals, museums and sports complexes.

We are located in Pierce County which has one of the fastest growing real estate markets at this time. The north end of Tacoma is considered to be on the high end of the market.

The climate is mild. We are within a 2-4 hour drive to the ocean, Mount Rainier, local and state fairs and several tourist attractions.

Our Beginnings

God's spirit stirred in the hearts of just a few when they began the church in a woodshed in the vicinity of North 50th and Visscher in 1905 which was dedicated as Calvary Baptist Church in 1910. The congregation relocated to N. 35th and Mullen in 1929 and the name changed to Grace Baptist Church. This is the anniversary date the church celebrates. The congregation purchased property and built the current church building in 1967 and for 51 years has been a noteworthy presence in North Tacoma. With devotion and the generosity of members, the church facilities (without loans) were remodeled with the sanctuary extended in 2001 and the kitchen and narthex remodeled in 2004. There was a church parsonage from 1967 to 1981, but today a pastoral housing allowance is provided.

Our Church Property

Today the church building sits on 2.61 acres of land with an assessed value of a little over \$1.3 million. We have chairs instead of pews and the sanctuary can become the setting for a large banquet, while the narthex often serves as an additional venue for sit-down meals, parties and community events. We have ample room for growth. We have a moveable wall between the sanctuary and narthex allowing room to expand as needed.

Our Past

The faith community of Grace has a rich history. In recent years we had several community events reaching out to youth and families. Last year we held a very successful Vacation Bible School and will have the next one in July 2018. For decades Grace hosted a local food bank, which is now located in another church. We currently have several members who help with a community breakfast program on the first Sunday of every month. Although we do not have an active youth program at this time, we do have some young families who have children who will be youth in a few years. In past years we have had an all church retreat at Camp Bethel, one of our American Baptist camps, and it was an important part of our fellowship. Although we have not held a retreat for a few years, we hope to resume our annual retreats there.

It has been our longtime practice to offer the right hand of fellowship to new members through baptism, transfer of letter or profession of faith.

Our Present

The majority of our members travel five miles or less to the church and are at or near retirement age. We do have a few young families and some members bring their grandchildren. We are an inclusive congregation.

Believing that we have a responsibility to serve our community and people within it, we have a:

- Men's and a women's Bible study that both meet during the day
- Quilting group that meets monthly and sews quilts to be given to children and youth at risk
- Cooperative preschool that has used our building for many years
- Korean Women's Association that uses our building to teach English as a second language for immigrants and also helps them with becoming citizens
- Church group (7th Day Church of God) who uses our building on Saturdays
- Community garden with 24 plots for church members and the community – as many as 35 pounds or more of produce are taken to a local food bank each week during the summer

Our worship is a combination of the traditional along with contemporary practices. The choir prepares a weekly anthem during the school year, often performs a Christmas cantata and assists the choir director and accompanist in the praise singing during the morning worship. We observe and celebrate all holidays of the church year.

Our 2017-2018 total annual budget is \$77,500 with just over \$31,000 in uncommitted reserves. We are a part of the Evergreen Association and missions are important as evidenced by the annual report of the Evergreen Association mission giving. Grace gives 10% of our annual income to United Missions and there is generous participation in all the annual offerings of the ABC. We also take offerings quarterly for our communion fund (which helps people in need in our church and the community), the local food bank and for our fellowship hour (a time for fellowship and enjoying a light lunch after church every Sunday). At no time during the past five years has the church ended the year with unpaid bills. The building and property are free of debt. In addition to the pastor, paid staff include the music director, accompanist, media technician and bookkeeper. We currently have a volunteer secretary, and nursery attendant when needed. Due to budget constraints we are seeking a part-time pastor at this time.

The church is organized around a one-board system. Elected officials include the Council members (6), Moderator, Church Clerk, Financial Secretary, Church School Superintendent and Treasurer. Teams reporting to the Council include Congregational Care, Administration and Property, Worship, Christian Education, Mission and Outreach and Pastoral Relations. When there is work to be done, willing hands are ready.

Women have been and continue to play a vital role in the church. They actively support AB missions and remain a part of the larger body of The American Baptist Women of the Pacific Northwest.

Our Future

The pastoral leader we seek is excited about ministry and has a warm and caring presence, works well with others and is approachable and collaborates with others. We are looking for a pastor with a flair for preaching, interpreting the Bible as relevant to our lives today, and encouraging and strengthening our faith. Our pastor will help us rediscover our ministry in this community. The pastor we call will deeply value and have a passion for pastoral care, worship and leadership. Within five years, it is our goal to have a healthy budget, have a full-time pastor and be a beacon in our neighborhood and community. When our neighbors and community hear the name "Grace Baptist Church" they will know who we are and what we have to offer.

Our Strengths

- Have a strong commitment to our congregation
- Welcome all persons
- Help those in need of respite time, moving, prayer, conversations or visitation
- Have a willingness to explore new approaches to ministry
- Have a talented music ministry
- Have a strong fellowship hour following worship
- Participate in several community ministries
- Have other organizations using our building and availability for more