

## WELCOME TO GRACE CHURCH

The mission of Grace United Methodist Church is to make and grow disciples in the grace of Jesus Christ. Our worship of God is based on scripture and inspired by the Holy Spirit moving in the lives of Christians since the time of the apostles.

Below are some aspects of our church that may be helpful to know.

**Nursery** is available in Room 110 for children under the age of 4. Those younger than 2<sup>nd</sup> grade may go to Children's Church after Children's sermon.

**The Apostles' Creed** reflects the faith taught by the apostles in the New Testament, and is shared by all Christians. The expression *holy catholic church* refers to the universal body of Christ to which all believers belong, and is not about a specific denomination. This expression affirms that there are Christians in every church.

**Holy Communion** – the Lord's Supper – is celebrated usually on the first Sunday of the month. Our custom is to come forward to kneel to receive the Body and Blood of Christ by faith in the form of the bread and the cup. We practice "open communion" since this is not a United Methodist table, but it is the Lord's table. Christ is the host, inviting to his table all who follow as his disciples. The children of believers are also welcome since baptism has made them members of Christ's church. As the server approaches, open your hand to receive the bread. A tray of cups will be offered. You may eat and drink as soon as you are served. It is our custom to use only unfermented grape juice since some persons have an allergy to alcohol, and no stumbling block should be placed in the way of another. Return to your pew using a side aisle. Gifts you leave on the communion rail support the Shepherd's Purse, used to assist persons in crisis locally.

**Baptism** is a sacrament (sacred act Christ commanded all his disciples to receive) God uses through the Holy Spirit to make one a member of the *holy catholic church*, not just of one specific congregation or denomination. Since God's promises are eternal, it is not to be repeated for those who have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity)..

Baptism is celebrated in any of three ways:

- Sprinkling represents washing away of sin. *I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean.* Ezekiel 36:25.
- Immersion represents dying to self and to sin and being raised to new life. *We have been buried with him by baptism into death.* Romans 6:4.
- Anointing represents the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon each Christian. *He (Christ) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.* Luke 2:16.

Youth, adults, and children of believers are all appropriate candidates for baptism. *Repent and be baptized; and you will receive the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children.* Acts 2:38-39. In Acts 16:14-15, Lydia and her household were baptized when she came to faith in Christ.

The **colors on the altar** table, pulpit, and pastor's stole vary with the seasons of the church year which journey through the life of Christ each year.

*Purple* – Four Sundays before Christmas and Lent (40 days and 6 Sundays before Easter). It is the color of royalty and repentance as we prepare for Christmas and Easter.

*White* – Christmas and one or two Sundays after, Easter and the 50 days that follow, Epiphany, Transfiguration, and Trinity Sunday. White represents the glory of the incarnation, resurrection, and other feast days.

*Red* – Pentecost celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit 50 days after Easter, and civic days such as Independence Day and Thanksgiving.

*Green* – Sundays following Epiphany until Lent and Sundays in Ordinary Time following Pentecost until Advent. Green symbolizes the growth of Jesus' mission and ministry.

The **cross with a flame** is the official symbol of the United Methodist Church. The cross of Jesus Christ lies at the center of our faith. The two tongues of the fire symbolize the uniting of two denominations (the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren—EUB) in 1968 to form the United Methodist Church. The two tongues form a single flame as the Holy Spirit that warms the heart and empowers the church for mission and ministry.

**To join Grace Church**, you may come forward during the hymn of commitment:

1. Profession of faith - Express your faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, and commit to a life of Christian discipleship. If you have not been baptized, you will be offered a class of instruction about the meaning of baptism and discipleship.
2. Transfer from another denomination - If you have already made a profession of faith at another church, you will be asked to commit to: serve Christ in the United Methodist Church and to support Grace UMC with your prayers, presence, gifts, and service.
3. Transfer from another United Methodist congregation - You will be asked to commit: to support Grace UMC with your prayers, presence, gifts, and service.
4. Reaffirmation of vows - If you have previously professed your faith in Christ but do not have membership in a congregation that grants a letter of transfer, you may simply reaffirm your baptismal vows without repeating the baptism itself.