



KNOWING JESUS ... MAKING HIM KNOWN

Application for Membership in the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches:

General Instructions: Fill out this application form and send it with your membership fee to the FELLOWSHIP OF GRACE BRETHREN CHURCHES, P.O. Box 384, WINONA LAKE, IN 46590. The deadline for application is January 1st in order to be considered in the following annual conference. If you wish to request an extension of this deadline, include a letter of reference from a cooperating district missions board, a sponsoring church that is already a member of the FGBC, or Grace Brethren Missions.

Official Name of Church

Grace Connections Church

Church Mailing Address

705 Gibraltar Ave.

City	State	Zip
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Englewood	OH	45322
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Phone	Email
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(937) 836.3816	office@thegraceconnection.net
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Meeting Place	Web Site
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"The Warehouse" 8657 N. Kimmel Rd. Clayton, OH 45315	www.thegraceconnection.net
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Pastor or principle leader

Dale Harris

Address

705 Gibraltar Ave.

City	State	Zip
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Englewood	OH	45322
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Phone	Email
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(937) 248.7790	dale@thegraceconnection.net
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Has your church joined a cooperating district? If so, which one and when?

We are working with the Tri-State District, and we hope to join them sometime in the Spring on 2008. Ned Denlinger, the Tri-State District coordinator, encouraged us to apply to become an FGBC church now even though our district status is still pending.

Please review the Constitution and Manual of Procedure for the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches. Note carefully ARTICLE III and ARTICLE IV of the Constitution and ARTICLE I of the Manual of Procedure that deal with the membership requirements new FGBC churches are to meet.

How did your local church take official action to subscribe to the Covenant and Statement of Faith as found in Article III of the Constitution of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Inc.?

Since the majority of our core group comes from a Grace Brethren background, we simply decided by consensus at one of our first core group meetings that we would adopt the FGBC Statement of Faith as our official, full statement.

Also, in our proposed Constitution, we have indicated that we as a church intend to accept the FGBC Statement of Faith.

List the present responsible officers (or leaders) of the congregation with titles:

Dale Harris – Pastor
Joyce Michael – Treasurer
Lori Davis – Assistant Treasurer

We will not be forming an elder team until after our public launch this fall, but we have several men of elder quality who are helping with spiritual oversight of the church. These men include: Ernie Gebhart, John Janowiecki, Scott Michael and Ed Stutz. The new elder team (coming Fall 2008) will most likely be formed from among these men.

How will you identify your affiliation with the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches? (ie: on a church sign, letterhead, church bulletin, etc).

We will identify ourselves as a Grace Brethren Church on our website as well as in informational pieces we design to tell people about the new church. We are open to other ways of doing this as well.

Describe your practice of Triune Immersion and the Threefold Communion Service.

Since I (Pastor Dale) am a licensed Grace Brethren pastor, I have only performed the ordinances via Triune Immersion and Threefold Communion. Our core group has only met for five weeks as of this application, and we have not yet participated in any ordinances, but it is our firm intention to adhere to Triune Immersion and Threefold Communion. We have some people close to accepting Christ, and we would love to see them baptized this winter or spring, plus we plan to celebrate communion no less than twice a year.

To the best of your knowledge, does your church or any leadership of your church have unresolved problems with another Grace Brethren church, leader, district or cooperating organization? If so, who can we contact for clarification?

The majority of our initial core team (though not all) are families who left the Brookville Grace Brethren Church in November 2007. This happened for two reasons...

- (1) Veteran GBC (40+ years in pastoral ministry) Pastor Dan Grabill, whom the Brookville church hired to mentor Pastor Dale during the year he served there, came to Pastor Dale in June 2007 and encouraged him to 'leave this church to plant a new church with all who are willing' because 'I am impressed by how little they value the Bible and are willing to do what it says.'
- (2) Pastor Dale listened to Pastor Dan's advice but did not want to hastily split a church. However, when in September the elder board came back with a 3-2 split vote to not renew Pastor Dale's contract and word got out of the impending congregational vote (which the elders agreed would cause 40-50 people to leave the church either way), a few families approached Pastor Dale with the idea of resigning before the vote and starting a new church so that the Brookville Church could keep their name, building and finances without a fight and the people who wanted a more aggressive form of evangelism and progressive style of ministry could be freed to pursue that aim. Pastor Dale agreed and resigned before the official church vote.

During this process, Pastor Dale, Ed Stutz and Ernie Gebhart have been meeting with four Tri-State GBC pastors, seeking their wisdom and guidance. Those four pastors are: Ned Denlinger, Steve Makofka, Steve Peters and Bob Foote. Here are

two excerpts from an e-mail these four pastors sent to every Tri-State District pastor concerning our new church...

"Ned advised Dale to select several pastors from the TriState to help counsel him as he left Brookville. Dale selected Ned Denlinger, Bob Foote, Steve Makofka, and Steve Peters. We have met with Dale on numerous occasions and have invested hours and hours and hours in understanding what took place at Brookville, as well as Greencastle, PA. Up to this point, Dale has been completely teachable, transparent, honest, and has complied with all our counsel."

"While we all agree that Dale has made some mistakes over the last year and a half, we recognize these as learning experiences for Dale. We also acknowledge that Dale does have some views on some controversial issues that might not agree with everyone. But differences on controversial issues already exist within our ministerium, and at this time, we don't feel that Dale's views impact any major areas of doctrine that might in any way limit our desire to support him. Unfortunately, Dale doesn't get a second change to make a first impression. But if you are a pastor who has a concern with Dale, we invite you to call any of the four of us or meet with us personally. Again, unfortunately, many of our district churches started out in this same way....they were started as split-offs from existing GBC's. So the fact that we have an "unexpected pregnancy" shouldn't hinder us from embracing the "baby" and desiring to see it be successful in advancing God's kingdom here in our district."

As leaders of Grace Connections, we have committed ourselves to not spread negative talk about the people remaining at the Brookville Church. We have followed the district's counsel in seeking to restore any hurt relationships. Yet despite our best efforts, some hurt feelings and accusations still remain. At this time, we believe we have fulfilled the admonition of Romans 12 that says, 'as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.' We believe we have done what would reasonably be expected of us, but we cannot control the rumor mill and hurt feelings at the church we have left. As a gesture of goodwill, we have agreed to continue running the AWANA program for the Brookville church through the end of the year (since nearly all the AWANA volunteer staff have left to be part of Grace Connections).

We also acknowledge that Pastor Dale and Pastor Danny Wright from the Greenville, OH church have disagreed on several areas of methodology (Danny would say theology) that are fundamentally irresolvable. Dale and Danny met with Ned Denlinger (who served as mediator) to attempt to work through these issues (and Dan Grabill was there too – since he was also deeply offended by Danny's public criticism of one of his sermons on Danny's blog). Since then, Danny has not criticized my ministry via personal e-mail or his blog, but I believe there are still some lingering issues. I know that Bob Foote is attempting to help Danny work through these issues, and the four Tri-State pastors listed above would like to see Danny join them in supporting my ministry and Grace Connections before we officially join the Tri-State District. Ned told me he believes this process just needs some more time.

Since Ned Denlinger has worked closely with us throughout this process (and has helped organize with the other three pastors), he would be the best person to contact with any further questions as well as any of the three pastors listed above. An outside voice, Ryan Cherry (who was elder chair at the Brookville Church during this process and left that church but has not yet and may never come to Grace Connections) might also provide insight. He can be reached at cherrydds@hotmail.com. Again, please know that Ned has encouraged us to take this step in applying to become an FGBC church, and we would not be forging ahead at this time if we did not have that vital encouragement from respected Grace Brethren leaders in our district.

In seeking membership in the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, does your church recognize the obligation of mutual encouragement and cooperation with other congregations and agree to fulfill the membership requirements as stated in the Constitution and Manual of Procedure?

Yes.

How many people are presently members of this church?

We presently have 40-45 people committed to our core group after five weeks of meeting.

A check payable to FGBC based on the chart below for the current year membership fee should be included with this application. Use your church's average attendance for 2007.

Attendance	Fee
Less than 25	\$ 50
26-50	\$ 105
51-100	\$ 265
101-200	\$ 525

201-400	\$ 1,050
401-800	\$ 2,100
801-1600	\$ 4,200

Attach or give a brief history or testimony about your churches ministry, including pictures of the church or church leadership that we can use to introduce your church to the FGBC family.

This is going to appear on our website as it is finished in the next few weeks...

Grace Connections is a brand new church in Northwestern Montgomery County. We're in the exciting position of creating a new church and trusting God to do great things!

In November 2007, about 40 people with a vision for a new kind of church began meeting together, dreaming and asking God to do great things. We are currently working toward a grand opening sometime in the fall of 2008.

We want our church to be known for growing relationships, community service, passionate worship, prayer and a commitment to God's Word. These are exciting days – and we'd love for you to be part of what God's doing through Grace Connections!

Here is some more information not on our website...

At Grace Connections, we are committed to reaching lost people with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ! We have been busy building relationships with unchurched people and sharing the gospel. It has been amazing to see open, receptive hearts to the gospel and growing relationships even in the short five weeks of our existence. We have also been meeting together weekly to begin planning for a public launch in the Fall of 2008.

Some of our planned and current outreaches include...

- Bible quizzing (we have a quizzier from an unchurched family, and that family is promising to come to our new church!)
- Family Fun Night (a monthly game night where we can invite unchurched friends and family)
- Phone Blitz (we will be calling over 56,000 homes in our area on January 7 to find people we can reach out to through the new church)
- Personal Relationships (each core family is agreeing to become a missionary by adding one intentional area in their life where they will seek to build relationships and share the gospel with unchurched people)
- Community Service (we want to be a church that blesses our community, and we are actively looking for ways to do that)