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Grace Community History

Grace Community United Methodist Church, Fort Mill

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Grace Community United Methodist Church, Fort Mill, "Grace Community History" (2023). *Methodist Local Church Records*. 182.

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A Brief History of
Grace Community Church
June 2006 — January 2023
1190 Gold Hill Road Fort Mill, SC 29708

Vision: Through the spirit of Jesus Christ, we will prayerfully seek intentional opportunities to meet people where they are through discipleship and service.

Grace Community United Methodist Church began as a church planting mission of the South Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in June 2006 with appointment of Rev. Randall A. Madsen. Prayer meetings began at the Indian Land Recreation Center in September of that year, seeking Christ followers to discern a common call to new church start.

Currently, GCC is working towards disaffiliation with the United Methodist Church. The current timeline for disaffiliation is June 30, 2023. At that time, the UMC will release the trust clause from the property deed and transfer all assets of Grace Community UMC to a new non-profit corporation, Grace Community Church of Fort Mill.

- Spring 2007 - 15 Planting Families were meeting on Saturday evenings for Prayer and Praise. In July, Grace Community hired Cathy Trotter as Worship Director.
- Late 2007 - Attendance at Saturday evening Praise and Prayer had grown well beyond the Planting Family...as many as 50. Children's programming and adult Choir had formed. Several successful fellowship and content events had been planned and executed. It was clear, however, that neither the Lancaster County location nor the Saturday evening time could sustain momentum.
- October 2007 - Grace Community moved its field of ministry to Fort Mill, relocating to Leroy Springs Recreation Complex and began Services of Worship and Praise on Sunday mornings. Our yet-unbroken record of new guests every Sunday began. Grace Community began to grow in ministry with launch of Sunday morning formational programming for children and youth, monthly youth activity programming, and our first 'Great Day of Serving' community outreach.
- April 2008 - Grace Community made public launch with a 6-week series of Praise and Messages, 'Finding Your Way.' The public launch and series were advertised in York and Lancaster Counties, and in southern Mecklenburg. Visitations and attendances significantly increased, and held.
- September 2008 - Grace Community Launched Forever Friends at Philadelphia UMC Fellowship Hall, the 3rd Thursday evening of every month. Forever Friends is a Service of Praise and Worship for adults with special needs and disabilities. An immediate success, Forever Friends became the "tail that wags the dog," signaling Grace Community's presence in Fort Mill and our importance to an under-served population in York, Lancaster and Chester counties.
- April 2010 - having grown adequately in ministry, attendances, and financial stability—Grace Community prayerfully discerned the call to find a permanent facility. When the former ARP church location on Gold Hill Road became available, Grace Community and District leadership began working with ARP Presbytery leaders regarding sale. God lead the way. Grace Community chartered as a United Methodist congregation, convening it's initial

Charge Conference April 11, 2010.

- June 2010 - Grace Community consecrated and occupied the Gold Hill Road location. A second Service of Worship and Praise began. Attendance and giving increased significantly. The new-guests-every-Sunday-morning trend continues.
- Summer 2012 - Five years beyond initiation, Grace Community leadership begins intentional 5-year focus on transitioning from being a new church start-up—in which high degree of pastor dependency is to be expected—to being a church that is still new—which must grow into discernment-centered, gift-oriented leadership.
- April 2013 - Grace Community Council commissions 'ad hoc Committee for Exploration Possibilities, Limitations for Expansion' to study impact of congregation growth.
- November 2013 - Ad hoc Committee for Exploration recommends expansion of current facility to provide space for formational ministries that Grace Community has not been able to adequately provide. This expansion during 2015-16 would put into place significant new ministries in 2016-17 that would boost Grace Community ministry development and population toward its vision for 2025. The November 2013 Charge Conference unanimously receives the Committee's report, and unanimously votes its Resolve to expand.
- July 2015 – Rev. Madsen, Founding Pastor, retired and the SC Conference appointed Rev. Kim Eans as our Senior Pastor. With that change and the uncertainty that comes with it, Grace Community put expansion plans on hold indefinitely. Those plans remain on hold.
- July 2018 – Pastor Eans was reassigned to another church and the SC Conference appointed Rev. Brandon Candee as our Senior Pastor. Pastor Brandon and his family have been a tremendous addition to our church. He is providing great vision and leadership to Grace Community and we anticipate a long and prosperous stay at Grace Community.
- As with many churches, the Covid pandemic shut down in-person for several months in 2020 and 2021.
- Present – Grace Community continues with:
 - Services each Sunday morning including on-line services,
 - Prayer service each Tuesday evening,
 - Forever Friends Praise and Worship every 3rd Thursday,
 - A tremendous children's program including Vacation Bible School that serves over 200 children in our community each summer,
 - A thriving youth program,
 - A men's program (Grace Good Guys) dedicated to ministry, service and fellowship,
 - A revitalization of our Life Groups with 6 new life groups starting up in the last year.