

Grace Church Grantsburg Profiles



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Grantsburg Community Profile



Grace Church is set in a prominent location near the intersection of Highway 70 and Highway 87/48 in the Village of Grantsburg. The Village has a population of 1,317, with surrounding area population totaling 15,599. We are located in Burnett County, a short one hour north of the St. Paul Minneapolis metro area and 90 minutes south of Duluth. Our 'area' reaches west to I-35 in Minnesota, east about 15 miles, north about 7 miles and south about 10 miles.

Grantsburg Area

The Grantsburg area was settled in the 1850's by Swedish and other Scandinavian settlers. Many of the Swedish immigrants were fleeing religious persecution at home, a fact that is still reflected in the significant number of local churches founded by these Swedish 'nonconformists'. The Village of Grantsburg became an economic hub in the area and was incorporated in 1886. The Blueberry Special, a branch of the St. Paul and Duluth Railroad Company, ran between Rush City, Minnesota, and Grantsburg, Wisconsin from 1884 - 1951. In the early days, area businesses and industry included: sawmills; creameries, primarily producing butter; a shingle mill; a grist mill; a starch factory, using potatoes as the starch source; a carpet factory, using wire grass growing wild in area bogs; and a blacksmith shop. Farming and logging were also important parts of the economy. Grantsburg was, at the time, the only incorporated community in the county and as a result became the county seat. In the later part of the 20th Century, the county seat moved to the Siren area reflecting changing population demographics.

Major contributors to the local economy today include: Burnett Medical Center, Northwestern Electric, Grantsburg School District, McNally Industries, Parker Hannifin, DR Tech, Burnett Dairy Cooperative and other small and light industries. There are also specialty shops, a craft brewery, pharmacy, grocery store, hardware store and the Burnett Dairy Cheese store. Farming remains an important part of the area's economy. There is an active Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, and area development group. Other resources include a municipal airport, golf course, county fair grounds and sportsman's club. You can see the Village website (<http://www.grantsburgwi.com/>) for more information.

Each year the community hosts a town celebration, Big Gust Days, named for a prominent citizen, Gust Anderson. The 7 1/2 foot giant became well known as the village Marshall and lamp lighter. A statue of him is on display in front of the old hospital and library. The Grantsburg area is also known for the World Champion Snowmobile Watercross which is held downtown at the Memory Lake park the third weekend in July each summer.

Area Attractions

The Grantsburg area is touted for being able to work and fish all in the same day. Grantsburg is surrounded by the beautiful St. Croix National Scenic Riverway: <https://www.nps.gov/sacn/planyourvisit/maps> and Governor Knowles State Park <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/StateForests/govknowles> . It is also home to the famous CREX Meadows Wildlife area <https://www.crexmeadows.org/> and thousands of acres of public land to enjoy and explore. There is access to many ATV and snowmobile trails in the area. Grantsburg is also a registered Bird City.

Who we are as a community

- Primarily rural working families; 80% compared to 13% nationally.
- We are not a largely diverse group of people
 - We're mostly white with a small percentage of African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American populations.
- 51% of households are married couples compared to 48% in the US
- Slightly higher male head of household compared to the national average
- 36% of the population is 55 or older compared to 30% of the nation
- 48% of working adults are 'blue collar' compared to 38% national average
 - Light industry (precision production and craft) primary occupation noted
 - 56% of working age individuals are employed compared to the national average of 60%
 - Average household income is \$75,900 a year compared to the US average of \$96,765
- 78% of households are owner occupied compared to the national average of 65%
- 35% of homes are valued at less than \$150,000 compared to the national average of 27%.
 - 47% valued \$150,000-\$299,999 compared to 32% nation-wide.
 - Median property value of \$186,332 compared to \$254,824 nationally
- Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, and Baptist are the major religious affiliations in the area.
 - Catholic and Baptist are close to the national average
 - Lutheran and Methodist are greater than the national average.
 - While Baptist affiliation is close to the national average, it is significantly higher than most of northern Wisconsin
- The largest population group in the area is 40-60 year olds.
- The educational level of the area is higher than the national average with the greatest numbers being High School graduates, persons with some college, and those with an Associate degree.

The School system is among the top districts in the state with a rich history of successful academics, sports teams, and music programming. Area small businesses and community members are strong supporters of school activities. The school district serves around 800 students from Early Childhood through High School. Grade levels average around 55-60, and classroom sizes are kept small in the elementary school. Realtors are expecting growth in the area with people moving in from the metro area.

Grace Church-Grantsburg Profile

Mission: We exist to worship God, share Christ, and grow people.

We value:

- God's Word as our Foundation and Authority;
- Loving people where they are;
- Reaching all generations for Christ;
- Growing together in life-long followers of Christ;
- Serving others using our God given gifts.

History

In 1869 a group of Swedish Baptists immigrated to the Burnett county area of northwestern Wisconsin. This emigration was prompted by religious persecution they had endured in Sweden. They established the Trade Lake Swedish Baptist Church on June 6, 1869 and erected a building at the "4 corners" area southeast of Grantsburg.

Several families had homesteaded in the Wood River area east of Grantsburg and found the travel distances to the Trade Lake church burdensome. In August, 1869 the Wood River group separated from the Trade Lake church and established the Wood River Swedish Baptist Church with 14 charter members.

A building was erected during the winter of 1870 at the intersection of current Highway 70 and Williams Road east of Grantsburg. The church was moved 7 years later to a site adjacent to the Wood River cemetery on North Williams Road. Additions were made over the years and several pastors faithfully ministered there. The original log building still exists on the grounds of the former Wood Lake Bible camp.

In 1871 a group of Baptists began meeting in homes in Grantsburg. Their numbers increased and they rented the Swedish Methodist Church for their services Sunday evenings. In September, 1884 with help and encouragement from the Wood River church the First Swedish Baptist Church of Grantsburg was established with 19 charter members. The building was completed in 1887.

The Wood River and Grantsburg Baptist churches functioned independently but worked closely together to evangelize the area for Christ under the leadership of their respective pastors. In 1963 formal discussions began considering a possible merger. A vote at each church on November 1, 1963 regarding merger passed in the affirmative, and joint services began at the Grantsburg facility in March, 1964. The church was incorporated under the name Grace Baptist Church in May, 1964. There were 162 members at the time. God was blessing and growing the church and a larger facility was needed.

Groundbreaking was held in April, 1968 for a new church building at its current site along Highway 70 east. Professional builders along with volunteer labor completed the project. The first service was held June 15, 1969 and the official dedication occurred July 27, 1969.

Numerous pastors have faithfully served Wood River Baptist, First Baptist Grantsburg, and Grace Baptist churches over their 150 year history which was celebrated at a sesquicentennial in August, 2019.

Recent History and Current Status

Grace has experienced a period of slow decline for approximately the last ten years. Although hard data are lacking, anecdotal information indicates that average attendance was about 140-150 ten years ago while pre-Covid attendance was around 100. Currently, in person attendance is about 70, with a slow trend upwards. We began live-streaming at the beginning of Covid and continue to do so.

Affiliations: Grace is affiliated with Converge Worldwide (formerly known as the Baptist General Conference) and Converge Great Lakes. In addition our pastors participate with the Converge West LEAD team - a group of Converge pastors in the local area. We also recently became part of the Eagle Brook Association.

Doctrinal Positions: We wholeheartedly ascribe to the Statement of Faith of Converge Worldwide (<https://converge.org/about/beliefs>) With regard to some doctrinal positions that are current areas of discussion in the larger church;

- *Eschatology:* We believe Jesus is coming back for His church. We recognize that there are many different interpretations of Biblical prophecy regarding the sequence of events at the end of time.
- *Spiritual Gifts:* We are not, as a congregation, charismatic in doctrine or practice. Nor are we cessationist.
- *Calvinism-Arminianism:* Historically, Grace Church has understood that God is sovereign and that He has granted mankind a measure of free will. More recently, some of our pastors have been more Calvinistic in belief and teaching. We recognize that there is a tension in the Bible between Predestination and Free-will. We also recognize that some in the local church are committed to one position, and others to another position. In this regard, we give liberty for differences of interpretation and opinion.
- *Homosexuality:* Scripture is clear that homosexual practice is sin and must be treated as such. As with any other area of sin, God's people are to love the sinner and minister God's grace with the hope of salvation and freedom from the chains of sin.

- *Marriage and Family:* We believe that marriage and the family are the first human institution instituted by God. His plan from the beginning was for one man and one woman to enter marriage, and that marriage was to be ‘until death do us part’. While there are Biblical reasons for divorce to occur, this should be a rare event and church discipline should be brought to bear when appropriate to turn people towards repentance.
- *Social and Racial Justice:* All men and women are sinners in the sight of God. We are equal in our need for a savior. Jesus died for all humanity, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or language. Justice for the oppressed is near and dear to God’s heart but the means of achieving justice is only found in Christ. At the same time, Christians must defend the poor, the oppressed, the downtrodden and defenseless.
- *Gender Issues:* God does not value men more than women. All are equal before Him. While wives are commanded to be in submission to their husbands, husbands are commanded to love their wives sacrificially. Within the Body of Christ, God has chosen to bring men into leadership roles as Elders (Pastors, Overseers). This is not discriminatory; it is a recognition of complementary roles for men and women within the home and church.

Church Structure: Grace operates with a Congregational form of governance. Many decisions are delegated by the Congregation to an Executive Committee consisting of the Congregation Chairperson, the Pastor, the Associate Pastor, the Lead Elder, the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer and Ministry team leaders. In addition, there is an Elder Board (called the Deacon Board in the Constitution) consisting of the Lead Pastor, the Associate Pastor, and three Elders elected by the Congregation. The Executive Committee and Elders meet monthly while the Congregation meets quarterly. The Constitution is quite detailed regarding church structure and is generally recognized as being outdated and in need of significant revision.

- Leadership is currently a shared responsibility between the Pastors and key Congregational members such as the Church Chairperson and Elders.
- Empowered Leadership was identified as a growth area in a Natural Church Development survey conducted a few years ago but this seems to have found a natural solution due to the year-long vacancy of the Lead Pastor position.
- As is true in many small-town and rural churches, ad-hoc and informal structures are as important in decision making as are formal structures.

Staff: Current staffing calls for a full-time Lead Pastor, full-time Associate Pastor, part-time office administrator, and part-time custodian. We currently operate with a part-time Interim Pastor, full-time Associate Pastor, part-time office administrator and volunteer custodians.

Ministries: Ministries include Youth, Children's, Missions, Evangelism and Outreach, Worship, Deaconess. Each ministry area, except Worship, has a leader and committee. The committee structure is not working as well today as it did in the past due to lack of volunteers and changing cultural priorities.

- *Sunday School* continues to be an important part of Grace Ministry, with classes for all ages presently except Nursery age.
- *Youth Ministry* is led by the Associate Pastor and is a combined ministry for Junior High and High School students.
- *Children's Ministry* is led by a volunteer team. Children's Sunday School, VBS, and Christian Service Brigade for boys are key elements of this ministry. We also had a robust Wednesday night ministry Pre-Covid.
 - We also operate *Grace Nursery School*, a state licensed preschool, with two degreed teachers two days a week. This ministry has served families in the church and the larger community for over 45 years.
- *Missions*, both at home and abroad, are an important part of our church culture both historically and presently. At home, we financially support the MN Adult and Teen Challenge-Duluth Campus, Ken & Debby Milhous in Boston, reaching the Japanese speaking population, and we prayerfully support the Pregnancy Outreach Center in Pine City, MN. Abroad we financially support 4 full-time missionary families with whom we have long-standing relationships, and prayerfully support a Front Line Gospel worker in the persecuted church.
- *Evangelism and Outreach* is primarily structured around planned events such as Grace at Work, an annual local mission outreach focusing on practical outreach through repair and construction projects in the community and an outdoor service on the Sunday of Watercross.
- *Worship* is led by a highly talented long-time volunteer and a rotating team of singers. Instrumental musicians are currently limited to a primary and back-up piano player. Our worship style is a mix of hymns, gospel songs and older contemporary choruses and would be considered to be more traditional than current contemporary. Sunday worship services are geared to believers more than non-believers although non-believers are very welcome.
- *Discipleship* tends to be structured and cuts across ministry areas and includes Sunday Worship, Sunday School, Youth and Children, and Small Groups that meet weekly throughout the year.
- *Benevolence* is funded via congregational free will offerings. Its purpose is to aid attendees and non- attendees with short term financial needs and is administered by the Deacons.

Facilities: The main portion of our facility was built in 1968 and is in generally good repair. A major addition was built in 1994-1995 and is also in good repair. Together, we have approximately 24,253 square feet of space which is more than adequate for present operations. The sanctuary seats 265 people. This facility sits on a 2.33 acre parcel which fronts on State Highway 70 just east of the intersection with State Highway 87 on the southeast corner of the Village of Grantsburg and has excellent visibility and access. We also have a garage on the property.

Next door to the church facility is a 4 bedroom, 2.5 bathroom parsonage, with an attached 2.5 car garage. The parsonage was built in 1991 and was recently updated with new carpet and flooring.

Financial Status: Our fiscal year is May 1 through April 30. Our current annual budget is \$206,868.80, down from last year's budget of \$209,758.04. We're debt free and have no upcoming building projects slated.

Tithes and donations to the General Fund for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2021 were \$171,166.58. Other current income streams include facility use donations and parsonage rent.

Congregation Demographics: We are currently an 'older' congregation with approximately 80% of adults aged 50 or older.

- Compared to the average age of our surrounding community, we are somewhat older on average.
- We are somewhat more affluent on average than the local community.
- We have slightly higher educational levels than the local community.
- We come very close to reflecting the ethnicity and racial composition of our community.

Strengths:

- Strong commitment to God's Word.
- We see ourselves as being very friendly.
- We are 'Missions Minded'.
- Strong and committed core of congregational volunteers.
- We have a heart for both physical and spiritual needs of our community.

Challenges:

- Age of Congregation
 - Currently we have only one family with nursery age children.
- Changing Cultural dynamics as compared to decades past.
 - Volunteerism is less prevalent today.
 - Christianity is not as much of a cultural norm. Our area is perhaps more “Christian” in allegiance than many areas of the US, but faith and practice are less influential than in the past.
- We do not always solve conflict in a Biblical manner; reflecting the local cultural imperative of ‘niceness’ that often ignores conflict rather than resolving it.
- Differences of preference regarding worship and preaching styles.
- Current lack of Volunteers outside of the long-time core.
- Limited pool of capable and skilled musicians.
- Declining budgets have made maintenance of traditional staffing problematic.

Future

We know we have many challenges going forward. Our ten-year history of declining attendance and participation will not be easy to turn around, but we believe God’s plan and desire is for Grace to once again be a strong light and witness in the community. Our current Mission and Values are a result of a fairly long period of consideration and prayer by our Elders. Once developed, the Executive Committee and Congregation unanimously supported adopting them. Although our systems, processes and behavior do not always coincide with mission and values, we seek to use them to guide decisions and activity. We see our area of influence as reaching from across the St Croix River into Minnesota to our west, east towards Siren, south about 15 miles and north about the same distance. There are between 15-16,000 people in that area, most of whom need Jesus Christ to become their Lord and savior. Our vision is to continue the tradition of being a praying, God-honoring, Bible believing/following church with an active, missions minded program both locally and globally. We want our worship times and other church gatherings to be a welcoming time where guests feel valued and wanted. We want to ‘do life together’ so that the family of God is even more important than the family of birth and where our commitment to God and each other allows us to safely confess our sins one to another and practice forgiveness. While our influence has waned in recent years, our desire is to be well-known in the community for our love for those who are hurting, to become a church that is influencing and impacting our community, and as people come to faith in Jesus Christ, leading them in their growth in faith and relationship with the Lord. We see a change from the current ‘older’ congregation to a ‘younger’ congregation with church involvement opportunities for all ages as being necessary to achieving our vision. To do this we recognize that there must be a willingness of older age groups (silent generation, baby boomers) to try new approaches to ministry.

LEAD PASTOR

At this season in the life of Grace Church, we're fervently praying for a Lead Pastor who provides dynamic leadership while respecting the work of staff and congregational leaders while building and maintaining a strong collaborative relationship with them. It is of utmost importance for our pastor to have a rich, intimate, and growing relationship with the Lord; we rely on him to regularly encourage us to remain faithful to our core beliefs (<https://converge.org/about/beliefs>) and to equip us to fulfill our God-directed mission. Above all, we desire for lives to be transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and are praying for a pastor who exemplifies this same passion.

Key Qualifications and Requirements

- Fulfill the qualifications of the office of an Elder as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9
- The Pastor must be a man of prayer and a man of the Word, sensitive to what the Holy Spirit is saying to Grace Church. He will devote himself to daily prayer and Bible reading for the sake of guarding himself from sin and stirring up his heart and mind to a renewed passion for Christ; he will lead his family in regular times in the Word and prayer; and he will gladly participate in mutual care and accountability with other believers.
- The Pastor will seek to undertake his duties in the power of the Holy Spirit, undergirded with prayer, guided by the Scriptures, and manifesting the character of Christ for the glory of God.
- The Pastor must become a member in good standing of Grace Church Grantsburg upon acceptance of the pastoral call. Must agree with, and sign, the church covenant below.
- A Master of Divinity from a conservative seminary is preferred.
 - Another ministry related master's degree with a strong emphasis on church leadership and theology is also acceptable.
 - A bachelor's degree in a theology/ ministry related field combined with strong pastoral experience may be substituted for a master's degree.
- Previous experience in a pastoral role is highly desired. In the absence of full-time pastoral experience, appropriate part-time or volunteer experience may be considered.
- Evidence of a heart for ministry in a rural or very small town church setting is required.
- Must agree with the articles of faith of Grace Church and Converge Great Lakes (<https://converge.org/about/beliefs>.)
- Must be able to abide by the Converge ministerial code of ethics (https://converge.org/docs/librariesprovider2/resource-documents/converge-great-lakes-code-of-ministerial-ethics.pdf?sfvrsn=4bb86e_4)
- Agree with, and be able to regularly communicate, Grace Church Mission and Values.

Key Responsibilities

- Along with the other Elders, provide spiritual oversight of the church.
- Preach and teach at weekend services at least 45 weeks a year.
 - Preaching and teaching must be Biblically based and focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - The Pastor is encouraged to develop skill in preaching and teaching using different styles including expository, topical and narrative.
- Preach, teach, counsel and interact with others with a view towards building up the body by equipping the saints for the work of ministry.
- Provide visionary pastoral leadership that expresses the mission of the church through:
 - Casting/evaluating/updating vision,
 - Regular communication of the vision in preaching, teaching and other opportunities,
 - Shaping and influencing the ethos of the church,
 - Knowing the current state of affairs of the church and community,
 - Understanding current cultural influences and geographic context surrounding the church and community and the opportunities and challenges arising from that context.
- Continuously evaluate worship services, activities, mid-week programming, special events and ministries of the church for effectiveness in shaping ethos, congregational participation, and effectiveness in reaching ministry goals.
- Lead the church in developing annual planning in the areas of discipleship of current believers of all ages and evangelism of those in our area who do not yet know Christ.
 - To be effective in this area, we expect that our Pastor will model relationship building with believers, and non-believers through involvement in the community.
- Function as Chief Operating Officer of the church ensuring the church adheres to legal guidelines and standards and operates effectively and efficiently.
 - Supervise all other pastors, other staff and volunteer ministry leaders.

Other Requirements

- Regularly engage in continuing education.
- Attend the Converge Great Lakes annual conference.
- Regularly participate with the Converge West Lead Team.
- Along with other Pastors and Elders, visit the sick and shut-ins, officiate at weddings and funerals, lead the Lord's Supper observances, baptize those desiring water baptism, and dedicate infants and children when requested by parents.

Person Skills

Servant Leadership—the Pastor should be able to lead in a variety of contexts (individual, small groups, large groups) in such a way that Jesus Christ and his gospel are central. He should be a self-starter and take initiative. He should be wise and discerning and know when to be decisive, sensitive, tender, and firm.

Relational—the Pastor should have a heart to care for people. That drive should manifest itself in the appropriate use of time.

Administrative—while seeking mainly to shepherd people, the Pastor should have the skill set and ability to effectively manage the various administrative tasks associated with the position.

Teaching/Equipping—the Pastor should be a fruitful, biblical teacher and champion of Grace Church mission and vision. His teaching should effectively “equip the saints for the work of the ministry.”

Communication—the Pastor should be able to communicate clearly, concisely, and in a loving and biblical manner.

Peacemaking—the Pastor should be able to tactfully and winsomely unite people with varying perspectives to advance harmony and love, and to achieve common goals.

Preaching—the Pastor should be an effective preacher who is able to rightly handle the word of God.

Salary and Benefits

Base Salary range is between \$55,000 and \$70,000 depending on experience. In addition the church will provide either a parsonage or housing allowance as agreed by the Pastor and Executive Board.

- The church will also contribute to the Pastor’s Converge Retirement Account.
- A small accountable reimbursement budget is available to help with church related expenses.
- We do not currently provide health or life insurance coverage.
- Vacation time of between 2-6 weeks per year is available depending on years of pastoral and other ministry experience, and years at Grace Church.
- Additional time off due to illness or recovery from accident or surgery is available IAW written policy.
- After five years of pastoral service at Grace, the pastor is eligible for a sabbatical. It is expected that this will be taken prior to the completion of seven years of service.

Our Church Covenant

Having been led by the Holy Spirit of God, to receive Jesus as Savior and to confess Him as Lord, and on confession of this faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we earnestly and joyfully covenant with one another as one body in Christ, to lead a life worthy of the Lord. As members of Grace Church, we will support and sustain its purpose and uphold its ordinances and doctrines endeavoring to make Christ preeminent in all things, and contributing as faithful stewards, time, talent and money in measure that God prospers each of us.

We will encourage family and private devotions; we will teach the Bible in our homes, seek the salvation of the lost, be exemplary in our conduct, avoid unkind words and unrighteous anger and encourage abstinence from the use of mood-altering chemicals unless prescribed by a physician.

We will give and receive admonition with meekness and affection, pray for each other, aid each other in case of sickness and distress, and cultivate Christian compassion. We will be courteous in speech, slow to take offense, always ready for reconciliation, mindful of the Scriptures, prompt in seeking it.

When we move from Grace Church we will as soon as possible, unite with some local church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and principles of the Word of God.